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Neighbors InDeed CFL Program Hits 100

BY BARRY MACKINTOSH

Still haven't switched to CFLs? Get with the program!

The advantages of compact fluorescent lamps, or CFLs, are clear. They cost more than traditional incandescent bulbs but use about 75% less energy, which offsets their extra cost in about 200 hours. They emit much less heat, reducing air conditioning demands. And they last much longer.

Larry Schurr, Neighbors InDeed's talented Handy Helper Coordinator, was delighted with the CFLs he installed at home two years ago—so delighted that he launched a Neighbors InDeed program to help other Lincoln Hills households convert to them.

The program starts with free home "CFL audits," now conducted by Handy Helper Jim Wronkiewicz (backed up by Larry and Herman Tijsseling, our other talented Handy Helper Coordinator). Jim spent much of his professional engineering career designing and installing lighting systems, so he's particularly qualified to help residents select the right lights for their needs.

Jim brings a plug-in CFL display to demonstrate the range of available lighting, recommends which incandescent bulbs should be replaced and what CFLs should replace them, and estimates the resulting energy and dollar savings. CFLs are unsuitable for some specialized applications, they generally don't work well with dimmer switches, and they can take about 45 seconds to reach full brightness, which may make them less desirable for some areas. So Jim's advice covers which bulbs to keep as well as which to replace.

If the resident decides to proceed, Jim orders the desired CFLs from the Lincoln Home Depot, Neighbors InDeed's partner in this program. The resident picks up and pays for them when notified, and he or she may again call Neighbors InDeed for a Handy Helper to install them at no charge.

Resident Stefanie Spikell received the first CFL audit in October 2009 and replaced 16 bulbs with CFLs. Others soon followed—including an audit at this writer's home yielding a 20-CFL order. As word spread, more than 50 households took advantage of the program during 2010.

The pace increased this year, and Phyllis Hecht became the 100th beneficiary of a CFL audit in July. Home Depot recognized this milestone by generously donating the 28 CFLs she ordered. Phyllis says she's "extremely happy" with her new lighting and raves about Neighbors InDeed's "wonderful service."

At this point Neighbors InDeed could take credit for helping to replace 1,309 standard bulbs and 676 floodlights with a total of 1,985 equivalent CFLs throughout Lincoln Hills. This substantial conversion will save about 17,720 kilowatt hours and \$13,895 per year.

No doubt some residents have switched largely to CFLs on their own. Others have been replacing burnt-out incandescents with CFLs on an individual basis. So it's safe to say that our community's progress in this area isn't limited to what Neighbors InDeed has done.

Still, many more of our 6,783 households will surely want to benefit from Neighbors InDeed's comprehensive program with its expert advice and free assistance.

So what are the next 100 of you waiting for? Call Neighbors InDeed at 223-2763 to schedule your own CFL audits soon!

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DOUG BROWN represented Neighbors InDeed in these pages with some 30 informative and engaging articles over the past three years. After recently accepting a demanding new responsibility as resident editor of the Lincoln Hills *Compass*, Doug asked to be replaced in this assignment.

As in his many other community activities, Doug set a high standard here, making him a hard act to follow. When I offered to try to fill his shoes, he pledged his help and advice. This article has benefited from both, as will those in coming months. All who have followed Doug's byline here will surely echo my thanks for his contributions.

Barry Mackintosh