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## News You Can Use: Lowering Summer Utility Bills

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## News You Can Use: Lowering Summer Utility Bills

**UM mechanical engineering professor shares insights for cutting cooling expenses**

JUNE 7, 2019 BY EDWIN B. SMITH

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UM employee Gwen Hutchins (right) replaces an energy-saver light bulb inside a classroom in Bondurant Hall. Bulb replacements can help reduce electricity bills. Photo by Kevin Bain/Ole Miss Digital Imaging Services

OXFORD, Miss. – While summer doesn't officially arrive until later this month, warmer temperatures already have many Mississippians looking for ways to stay cool. To that end, a **University of Mississippi** professor is sharing insights on how to chill without raising your utility bills in the process.

The first step to keeping utility costs low during summertime is recognizing what causes them to rise in the first place, said Tyrus McCarty, assistant dean and associate professor of **mechanical engineering**.

"Some major causes of higher utility bills include homes not being properly insulated, using old televisions and appliances that are outdated and running the air conditioner while doors and windows are open," McCarty said. "Other reasons for higher bills are keeping lights on unnecessarily and simply not unplugging some electrical devices when they are not in use."

After determining what the problem is, McCarty said there are a number of ways the average consumer can lower their bills.

"Start with something as simple as replacing the light bulbs," he said. "Instead of using traditional light bulbs, try buying UMEnergy-efficient light bulbs. While these may cost a bit more, they definitely use less electricity and lasts longer."

Homeowners should make sure all their doors and windows are sealed properly, McCarty said.

"Improperly sealed windows and doors leave tiny cracks for cool air to go out and hot air to come in," he said. "By caulking or using rubber fillers, these cracks will be eliminated, keeping rooms cooler and requiring less air conditioning."

McCarty offered a few more tips for keeping utility expenses to a minimum:

– **Add ceiling fans to rooms.** These help circulate cool air apart from using central air or window air conditioning units.

– **Replace air conditioner filters on time.** Usually, it is best to change these every two to three months, depending on the amount of time the units run on a daily basis.

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U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to abate. The Federal Reserve's

– **Update to energy-efficient appliances.** Washers, dryers, dishwashers, refrigerators/freezers and ranges/ovens should be the first items updated to more current models.

– **Adjust the thermostat a few degrees.** Instead of lowering and raising the thermostat according to how a room feels, set it at the desired temperature and leave it there. Avoid frequently turning the heating and air conditioning system on and off, as this can cause it to use more electricity.

Besides these tips, McCarty suggested consumers should visit the website of their local utility company or other utility companies for specific information on costs savings.

"By making a few easy and inexpensive adjustments, anyone can enjoy a cooler summer without seeing significant increases in their utility bills," McCarty said.

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