

# Connections

## FREE energy-saving home upgrades

**Every home uses energy differently.** A home that uses a lot of energy may have less insulation than it needs or air leaks around windows and doors.

To help lower usage and energy costs, FREE home improvements for income-qualified homeowners and renters are offered.

Eligible customers may receive a home energy inspection, insulation upgrades, caulking, and more.

Visit [myavista.com/ORLIEE](http://myavista.com/ORLIEE) or call us at (800) 227-9187 to see if you qualify.

See if you qualify



Photography: Kim Lee | Ownership: Grande Ronde Hospital Foundation

## Building for the future of healthcare in La Grande, Oregon

**When Patrick Flynn took the job as manager of the Grande Ronde Hospital Foundation eight years ago, one of the first investments the foundation made was to purchase one of two 3D mammography machines for the hospital.** “We were told we were one of the first critical care hospitals west of the Mississippi to purchase these machines,” Flynn said. “That was my very first year on the job and right away the difference was felt in the community.”

One woman got an early breast cancer diagnosis because of the new equipment. “Her husband came up to me at an event later that year and said thank you for saving her life,” Flynn said. “You never forget that.”

**“This campaign is going to affect generations to come... Our grandkids will be able to confidently get their care here.”**

The Grande Ronde Hospital Foundation, which recently received some grant funding from the Avista Foundation, has also been the driving force behind a major expansion of the hospital. “Since 2023, we have been doing a Healthier Together Campaign to support a 96,000 square foot expansion to our campus,” Flynn said. “We are in the last stages of that expansion which will give us new ORs, a new sterile core area, and double the footprint of our campus.”

Flynn said access to care in La Grande is critical because larger hospitals in Walla Walla and Tri-Cities are hours away. Mountain passes on each side of the town can

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## Building for the future of healthcare in La Grande, Oregon

make emergency ground transportation very difficult in the winter. “The hospital is so important to us all,” Flynn said. The additional space in the new expansion will allow other departments to spread into larger areas, utilizing the space that’s left behind when the ORs move.

The goal for the Healthier Together Campaign is \$7.5 million by April 2025. At a recent gala, Flynn was able to announce another \$708,000 in funding taking the total to \$6.6 million. “This campaign is going to affect generations to come. I grew up here, I remember what things looked like,” Flynn said. “Our grandkids will come and see these buildings and departments. They will be able to confidently get their care here.”

To donate and to learn more about the fundraising campaign, visit [foundation.grh.org](http://foundation.grh.org).

## Rooted in safety

**If planting trees and shrubs is on your summer to-do list, make sure you start your landscaping project by knowing where underground utilities, including natural gas lines, are located.** Planting too close to underground lines can cause safety concerns while digging and as the vegetation matures. It’s a good practice not to plant a tree within ten feet of a natural gas line.

Tree roots will spread out at least as wide as the tree’s canopy and often much further. As the roots spread and grow deeper, they can entangle or even break natural gas lines or damage protective gas pipeline coatings. Severe storms can also uproot trees which can pull up or break a natural gas line, potentially causing a serious gas leak.

Shrubs, flowers, and ground cover are good choices for landscaping near natural gas lines since their root systems are not as extensive as those of trees. When selecting your plantings, consider the size of the root ball, the matured plant’s roots and keep in mind the distance to a natural gas line. Before starting any project that involves digging, always call 811 at least two full business days in advance to have your underground utilities located. The service is free. Privately-owned lines can be located by a third-party for a fee. Otherwise, one strike with a shovel could nick a line, creating a dangerous safety situation. Plus, it’s the law.



**SAFETY IS IN YOUR HANDS.  
EVERY DIG. EVERY TIME.**

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Visit [myavista.com/811](http://myavista.com/811) to learn more.



## Need help with your energy bill?

**Helping our customers manage energy use and costs is important to us.** From financial assistance to home energy upgrades, we’re partnering with local community agencies across our service territory to provide options that address customer needs.

Tens of thousands of Avista customers are eligible for My Energy Discount, a program that lowers natural gas bills every month. Enrolling is quick and easy, with no paperwork or appointments required. Compared to previous bill assistance programs, My Energy Discount’s eligibility guidelines are more inclusive, so more people qualify.

Visit [myavista.com/assistance](http://myavista.com/assistance) to find an agency near you and learn more about your options.

## Connect with us

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