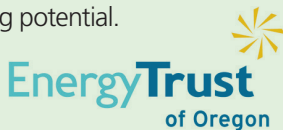


Connections

Kick off the new year with an energy-efficient home

As we get ready to welcome the new year, it's the perfect time to assess your home's efficiency. Energy Trust of Oregon's online home assessment offers personalized recommendations to help you make impactful improvements—from sealing drafty windows to upgrading appliances. This easy-to-complete assessment can be revisited anytime, ensuring your home stays efficient year-round.

Start the new year right. Visit energytrust.org/tips/homeassessment to review the information you'll need to unlock your home's full energy-saving potential.



Freedom Farms also cultivates people

Any gardener will tell you that there is just something about getting your hands dirty. Pulling weeds, getting your hands in the soil, planting, nurturing, watering; it's therapeutic and it tires you out. It's calming.

At Freedom Farms, recently incarcerated people get a chance to switch the concrete prison environment for the soft, fertile soils of the Rogue Valley. "Coming out of prison is a very sensitive time in a person's life," said Sean O. Caellaigh, executive director. "People first have to have their basic needs met: housing, getting their driver's license back, all of the day-to-day stuff."

Once a person is stabilized, Caellaigh said they can join Freedom Farms to learn about gardening and sustainable farming. "The contrast between prison with its metal bars and concrete floors and this rural setting surrounded by nature is surreal," Caellaigh said. "For recently incarcerated to work here with the land, surrounded by people who really care about them can be very emotional."

Freedom Farms, which recently received a grant from the Avista Foundation, employs about ten newly released people. They all learn job skills related to gardening and farming, some stay on as part-time employees and others move on to school or other jobs. "We watch the recidivism very carefully and so far, none of the people who have been in our program have reoffended," Caellaigh said. "We are about breaking the cycle of people going endlessly in and out of prison."

Part of the program is also selling the veggies at farmers markets in Ashland and Medford, twice a week. "We try to have some really good conversations there," Caellaigh said. "It's a good place for our participants to meet the community and talk about their life experience."

Go to freedom-farms.org to learn more about this program.





Avista Foundation spreads cheer year-round

As we embrace the season of giving, it's a fitting time to reflect on the importance of serving the community.

There is no greater inspiration than the nonprofits making a difference in Oregon. We're honored to announce that this year, the Avista Foundation awarded more than half a million dollars in grants to Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Alaska nonprofits.

Some of the organizations that received support this year include Boys & Girls Clubs of the Rogue Valley, Klamath Falls CASA, Freedom Farms, and many others.

It's important to note that the Avista Foundation does not receive funding from Avista Utilities customers through rates. It is a separate, non-profit organization established by Avista Corp.

Visit avistafoundation.com to learn more.

NEED HELP WITH YOUR ENERGY BILL?

We know managing energy usage and costs can be challenging in winter. That's why we work with local community action agencies to offer billing and payment assistance, as well as home energy-saving programs, to eligible customers.

Thousands of customers also qualify for our ongoing monthly bill discount program called **My Energy Discount**. It lowers energy costs for two years. Eligibility guidelines were updated in October and include higher household income levels than last year.

Visit myavista.com/ORassistance to find your local community action agency and sign up for My Energy Discount.

Why are energy bills higher in winter?

As the temperature drops, you might notice your energy bills rising and wonder why this happens. Here are some of the main reasons:

- 1. Heating Needs:** During winter, homes use more energy to keep warm. Heating systems, no matter the style, need a lot of energy to maintain a comfortable temperature inside. The colder it gets outside, the harder these systems have to work, which means they use more energy.
- 2. Hot Water Usage:** We tend to use more hot water in the winter for things like showers, laundry, and washing dishes. Heating water requires a lot of energy, so increased hot water usage can lead to higher energy bills.
- 3. Staying Indoors:** When it's cold outside, we spend more time indoors. This means we use more energy for cooking and other activities — all of which contribute to higher energy consumption.

Visit myavista.com/winterbill to learn more about how you can lower your energy usage and save on your bills this winter.

Safely storing flammable liquids

One cause of household fires is improper storage of flammable liquids. Did you know that liquids such as paint thinner, gasoline, cleaning solvents and contact cement can produce invisible, explosive vapors?

These vapors can catch fire or explode if exposed to a flame or small spark—even at considerable distances from the flammable substances.

To prevent accidents, flammable liquids or combustible materials need to be kept away from your furnace, water heater, vent pipe, or any ignition source. When using flammable liquids, always do so in open, well-ventilated areas, far away from any possible source of ignition.

Here are some tips for properly storing flammable liquids:

- Keep them in accurately labeled, tightly closed, non-glass containers.
- Store away from heaters, furnaces, water heaters, ranges, and other gas appliances.
- Keep out of reach of children.
- Store outside the house when possible.
- Keep flammables away from any item marked "oxidizer" (e.g., pool chlorine).
- Only use containers specifically designated and approved for flammables, the label will reflect that it's UL listed or FM approved.

Taking these precautions helps ensure everyone's safety. For more safety tips, visit myavista.com/safety.



**FLAMMABLE
LIQUID**

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