



Wind energy drying device

Do you have a wind energy drying device? Sure you do. It is called a clothesline. If you are one of the few Americans who hang their clothes on the line, then you are saving up to six percent of household electricity consumption.

What does this mean? The cost of electricity per kilowatt hour is \$10.60. If your household consumes 300 kilowatt hours, this six percent nets a savings of \$2.71. If your household consumes 1,500 kilowatt hours, this six percent nets a savings of \$9.03. Total the \$2.71 per month or the \$9.03 over seven months of the year or maybe as much as nine months, and your savings can add up. Most of us don't hang our clothes on the line during winter.

Why bother? When I was growing up, we hung the clothes, the sheets and most things on the line. We enjoyed the fresh smell of the outdoors. We did not need to save money, nor did we think about the environmental impact in the '60s and '70s. We just did it. It was a way of life for middle class Americans.

We certainly did not think about community ordinances that prohibit hanging your clothes on the line. There are 60 million Americans who are prohibited from doing just that. With community associations, it is viewed as an eyesore. It also lowers property values.

Frank Rathbun, a spokesman for the Community Associations Institute, said, "It's already hard enough to sell a house in this economy." I say don't hang your clothes on the line the day the house is being shown.

In 2009, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Vermont, Florida and Utah have overridden these rules. They now have legislation protecting the right to hang laundry outdoors. This spawned the right-to-dry movement. Virginia State Senator Linda T. Puller introduced a bill to prohibit community associations from restricting the use of "wind energy drying devices." Connecticut, Maryland, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Nebraska are also considering some form of

Extension Corner

Written by Linda Langelo

the right-to-dry legislation.

To add to this already humorous debate, Oregon, Washington and Idaho have redefined their existing solar right laws. These states reclassified their law in property agreements for clotheslines as air drying solar energy collectors. This lifted the ban from the previous law banning the use of clotheslines.

Others of us use a clothes dryer. We just don't have the time to hang clothes on the line. Did you know that clothes dryers cause more than 12,000 annual household fires a year, according to Jack Kennon of Sightline Daily? This is something a clothesline will never do. People often forget to check the vent and clean excess lint build-up. People operate their dryer when they are not at home. If a fire started, no one would be home to take action.

Another benefit of a clothesline is it provides exercise. Hanging your clothes on the line can quickly add some extra steps to your daily routine.

Holyoke Enterprise June 14, 2012