

November 17, 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Contact: Todd Murphy, 503-680-9539
todd@marketshiftstrategies.com

Smart Electronics and Smart Care Will Ensure Maximum Performance ***Tips for choosing and maintaining energy-efficient electronics***

Consumers are spending more and more money on televisions and home theater components, sometimes shelling out thousands of dollars per household. To protect that investment, the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance, in partnership with local utilities and retailers, suggests that shoppers consider both “before” and “after” purchase tips.

According to Dr. Raymond Soneira, President of DisplayMate Technologies Corporation (www.displaymate.com), following these steps should improve picture quality, reduce energy consumption (and cost), and therefore reduce the amount of heat generated by the TV and lower its internal temperature.

Since heat and high temperature have an adverse effect on most electronic components, this should also increase the life of the television and reduce the need for servicing.

• Energy Forward – Engineered to be Most Efficient

Northwest consumers in the market for new electronics should look for signage carrying a bright orange “Energy Forward” button, indicating electronics that are among the best made today — and that are also at least 30 percent more energy efficient than the ENERGY STAR threshold. More information, including a list of retailers and a complete list of super energy-efficient consumer electronics, is available at www.energyefficientelectronics.org. Consumers can also join in the energy-efficiency conversation at twitter.com/energy_forward and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/energy_forward).

• Screen Size Matters

Yes, it *is* possible for your television to be too big. Viewing experience actually diminishes if sitting too close to a very large high definition screen, particularly in small or moderately sized rooms. A rule of thumb for optimum viewing distance from a flat screen television is about two times the size of the screen. So if your couch is eight feet from the screen, you should have a television no larger than 48 inches.

Size also matters a lot in energy usage. On average, a 52-inch LCD television uses twice as much energy as a 32-inch LCD, according to an energy efficiency study by the technology website CNET. (CNET’s comparison chart is [here](#).)

• Control Your Viewing Environment

Soneira notes, “All new televisions come preset from the factory set for maximum brightness and intense colors so that they will look good in the store, and they use more power when the screen is set to high brightness.” Take the following steps to adjust brightness:

First, control and reduce ambient light in the TV viewing area — with window treatments, for example. Orient the TV so that it isn’t facing a window because the light will reflect back to the viewer. The lower the ambient light, the lower you can set the TV’s brightness, which actually improves picture quality. Arrange room lighting so lamps don’t reflect off the screen into the eyes of any viewer. Turn off unnecessary lighting and consider getting light dimmers. Never watch TV in complete darkness, as it will cause eyestrain.

Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
421 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 600, Portland, OR 97204
503.688.5400 | Fax 503.688.5447
neea.org | info@neea.org

- **Adjust Your Settings**

Almost all televisions arrive set to a "Vivid" mode that produces a bright and colorful picture. Consider changing the mode to "Standard," "Movie," "Cinema" or equivalent energy saver modes. The names will vary from manufacturer to manufacturer. This will improve picture quality and reduce brightness and power consumption.

Most TVs have an automatic Brightness Control, sometimes called "Energy Saver" mode, that will raise and lower the screen brightness based on the amount of ambient light. Consider turning that option on, and manually adjust screen brightness for best viewing comfort.

- **Beware of "Stand By" or "Quick Start" modes.**

Some high definition televisions and other audiovisual devices come equipped with "Quick Start" or "Standby" buttons. In essence, this allows you to seemingly turn off your television or device without completely turning it off, allowing the device to fire up much more quickly when you want to use it again. What you may not know is these modes consume a lot of power — all while you aren't using the television. Turn your television completely off; it will only take a few seconds for it to warm up when you turn it on again, and you will save electricity.

- **Use a power strip or universal remote to power down your television and other devices.**

Newer televisions don't use a lot of "vampire" power — power that is used even when the television is turned off entirely. But some of the devices associated with your television, which never turn off entirely, do. A high definition cable set-top box with DVR uses 350-kilowatt hours of electricity per year – more than most home appliances.

You can switch off all vampire power by using a power strip to power all of your television-related devices, and switch it off when you're not using them. You can also use a universal remote to power down all of the devices.

- **Watch less TV**

Finally, you might consider the outrageous: watch less television. Take your kids outside and get some exercise. It will lower your electricity bill, and improve your health.

About the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance

The Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA) is a non-profit organization working to maximize energy efficiency to meet our future energy needs. NEEA is supported by and works in partnership with the Bonneville Power Administration, Energy Trust of Oregon and more than 100 Northwest utilities for the benefit of more than 12 million energy consumers. NEEA uses the market power of the region to accelerate the innovation and adoption of energy-efficient products, services and practices. Since 1997, NEEA and its partners have saved enough energy to power more than 450,000 homes each year. Energy efficiency can satisfy more than half of our new demand for energy, saving money, and keeping the Northwest a healthy and vibrant place to live. For more information, visit neea.org.

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For more information about energy efficient electronics, go to www.energyefficientelectronics.org.