



## New Year's resolutions to keep



**W**hat's a new year without New Year's resolutions? Here's one goal we'd like to add to your list — **"Use energy more efficiently."** We know, we know. Like losing five pounds or getting more exercise, it's a resolution that sounds good, but all too often slips through the cracks. It's really not that hard. Little steps do make a difference. Here are several energy saving tips to help you start off the new year right:

- Cover liquids and moist food in your refrigerator. The moisture can make the compressor work harder, using more energy.
- Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator. While thawing, it helps to keep the refrigerator cool.
- Remove all heavy wrapping paper before storing food. Paper acts as an insulator, prolonging the time it takes food to cool.
- When using the self-cleaning cycle on an electric oven, start the cycle right after cooking while the oven is still hot. At the very least, wait until the late evening hours when the use of electricity is lowest.
- Preheat the oven for baked products like breads, cakes and pastries so they will rise properly. Preheating is NOT necessary for food requiring long cooking times, such as roasts, turkeys or casseroles.
- Match the size of cookware to the surface unit on your stove. The bottom of the pan should cover the element, but not extend more than one inch beyond the outer ring of the element.
- Take short five minute showers instead of tub baths. Filling the bath tub may take over 25 gallons of hot water.



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### We've come a long way, baby

With all the talk of a new millennium, it's worth noting that electrotechnology has become much more efficient over the past decades. Did you know\*:

- A microwave oven can cook a meal using up to 90 percent less energy than a conventional oven.
- Induction cooktops lower energy use by up to 60 percent.
- Compact fluorescent bulbs consume 75 per-cent less electricity than incandescents.
- Refrigerators made today consume 80 to 90 percent less electricity than those built in the late 70's, and
- Electric heat pumps can now return up to \$4 in heating/cooling for each \$1 spent to run them.

\*Information from the Edison Electric Institute



## **YAHOO!** ANOTHER SITE FOR E-BILL

Last month we announced that MECO has teamed up with CheckFree, the nation's leading provider of electronic commerce service, to offer our new **E-Bill** service. With this service, you can view — and pay — your electric bill online via the Internet. E-Bill is free when you pay your bill through the CheckFree E-Bill web site or through links from MECO's web site.

We've got more good news. Now you can view and pay your MECO bill and other bills through Yahoo! Bill Pay at <http://bills.yahoo.com>. Yahoo! is the latest addition to the list of many other online sites. Note that Yahoo! charges a small fee for customers to receive and pay bills via their site. However, if you're already using Yahoo! for bill payment, you may find it more convenient to receive and pay all of your bills via this one site rather than logging on to multiple Internet sites.

For more information on MECO's E-Bill service, visit the website at <http://www.heco.com>.



### Purchasing a home in 2000?

Did you know that having a solar water heating system in your new home may lower your monthly out-of-pocket expenses? The slight increase in monthly mortgage payment can be more than offset by the electricity savings. The result: More money to be spent on other things. Incorporating a solar water heating system in your new home makes sense! Talk to your developer or contractor or call meco at 1-888-MECOSUN (632-6786) for more information.



### Submitting a damage claim

Look for the flyer in this month's electric bill that explains how to make a claim if you have losses due to a power outage.

As a reminder, the rules of MECO's tariff, approved by the Public Utilities Commission, say that you have a responsibility to protect your equipment. Consider devices like surge suppressors or an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) to protect your computers and other sensitive electronic equipment.

### Can we read your meter?

Want to make sure your electric bill is accurate? Help us take accurate readings of your electric meter by allowing our meter readers the proper access. Here are a few tips:

- Keep dogs and other pets from blocking access.
- Keep plants, high walls and fences from blocking the view of your meter.
- If you are remodeling, do not enclose or obstruct the meter.
- If the meter is in a secured area, give MECO personnel a duplicate key or other necessary security information to access the meter. All keys, combinations, etc. are kept secured.
- Meter rooms in buildings should be labeled so they can be easily found.



### RECIPE OF THE MONTH

## Microwave Tofu Turkey Hash

- 6 shiitake mushrooms, soaked
- 1 block (20 oz) soft tofu, cut in half lengthwise
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 lb ground turkey
- 3 tablespoons oyster sauce
- 1/2 cup chopped green onions
- 1/4 cup chopped Chinese parsley
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 egg, beaten
- Dash of garlic salt
- Dash of pepper



Remove and discard mushroom stems; sliver caps. Drain tofu halves well; place in bottom of a microwave-safe dish. Pour soy sauce over tofu. Combine remaining ingredients; spoon over tofu and pat lightly. Cover dish with plastic wrap and microwave on high power for about 10 minutes or until turkey is cooked. Makes 6 servings.

