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Streetlight outages may be reported at: www.centerpointenergy.
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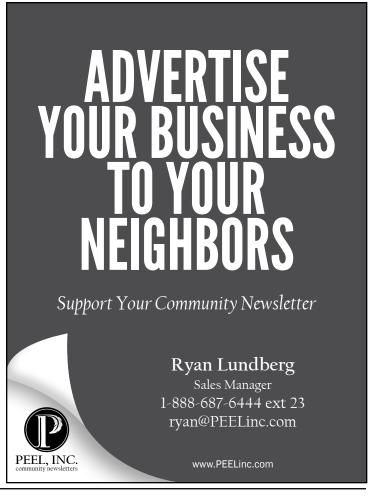
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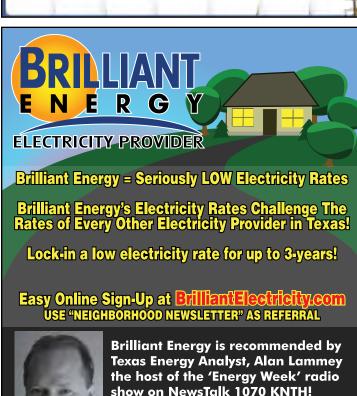


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# Green for the Holidays!

### **REDUCE - REUSE - RECYCLE**

It's that time of year again for all the holiday hustle and bustle. You're looking forward to finding those special gifts to share with loved ones. As you begin all the holiday preparations, consider that during each holiday season the typical household waste increases by about 25% and almost half the paper consumed is used to decorate and wrap holiday gifts. This year while making the holidays special, let's consider how to share it with our environment by making it easier on the earth too. There are many simple ways to make the holidays more sustainable with just a little planning and flexibility.



- As you shop for food and gifts, bring your own shopping bags to cut down on the amount of plastic bags you use.
- When you buy gifts, choose those that are made from recycled materials.
- If you are buying batteries to go with a gift, pick rechargeable batteries.
- Buy good quality, durable items that are more likely to last longer and reduce the amount of waste going to the landfill.
- If you normally bring flowers as you go visiting take a plant instead.
- Give the gift of your time instead of material goods. You can give special food items —brownies from an old family recipe, homemade cookies, or hot chocolate mix. Give a gift certificate (printed on recycled paper) for something unique such as an hour of babysitting time, washing the car, or cooking dinner.
- When it comes to wrapping gifts, get creative! Use colorful comics, old maps or magazines. If you are giving food, use a decorative tin or jar that can be used again.
- Save ribbon and bows that are in good shape to reuse next year. Gift bags can be used several times.
- Everyone loves to receive holiday cards (though we don't all love writing them). Consider sending e-cards to save on paper or choose cards made from recycled paper. Keep your old cards and use them to make holiday decorations. Another way to reuse holiday cards is to turn them in to new cards. Cut the front, decorative part off and paste it onto construction paper. You can make these new cards as a holiday craft project and give them to those in hospitals. This is a great project for kids to do.
- If you have a Christmas tree, recycle it. If you want to keep that holiday spirit going, buy a live tree in a pot and plant it in your yard or buy a (reusable) artificial tree.
- After the holidays, reuse items that you no longer need or use. Donate outgrown or unused toys and clothes to a local charity.
- If you receive gifts or packages that have been shipped with those plastic or Styrofoam peanuts or bubble wrap keep them to reuse or recycle them. Some shipping stores will also take the peanuts for reuse.

Make "REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE" one of your New Year's Resolutions for 2013!



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