



CONNECTIONS

News and Information from OUC—The *Reliable One* | DECEMBER 2016

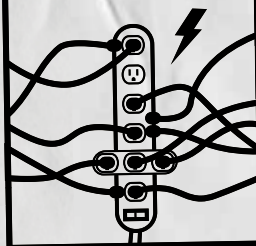
INSIDE

Make Holiday Safety Stick
 OUC Powerpass More
 Control Than Ever
 New Look For Your OUC Bill
 Tax Refund - United Way

MAKE HOLIDAY SAFETY STICK



CAUTION



**OVERSTUFFING YOUR
 SOCKETS COULD
 PUT A SHOCKING IN
 YOUR STOCKING**

While this is certainly the most wonderful time of the year, the holiday season can also present some not-so-wonderful safety hazards and higher utility bills. So, as you make plans to gather the family and enjoy quality time and delicious food, OUC wants to make sure you and your loved ones stay safe and save on your power bill at the same time. *Here are some important tips to stick in your mind as you deck the halls and fire up the oven:*

Decorating Safety

- Thoroughly inspect light strands before you hang them. Be sure to discard any with frayed or loose wires, as those are more prone to catching fire.
- Check all lighting instructions for “indoor,” “outdoor,” or “indoor/outdoor.” Only hang them in those designated areas.
- Keep live Christmas trees watered daily. A dry tree decked with electrical lights can be a major fire hazard.
- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for one that’s fire resistant.
- Turn off all decorations before leaving the house or heading to bed.

- Keep candles away from trees and draperies, and never leave them unattended.
- Consider using LED lights. They’re much more efficient and reduce the risk of fire.



Energy-Efficient Kitchen Tips

- Resist the temptation to open the oven door. Instead, keep the heat inside by turning on the light and peeking through the glass.
- Use small appliances like microwaves, slow cookers, electric skillets and toaster ovens. They consume about one-third the energy of an oven or stove.
- Consider roasting your turkey on an outdoor grill. Chances are it won’t be too chilly outside in sunny Florida.
- Clean your stovetop burners and reflectors. A clean stove distributes heat more efficiently.
- Keep your fridge/freezer doors closed. These are among the largest energy consumers in your home.
- Since turkeys and hams slow roast for hours, don’t bother pre-heating the oven before popping them in.



OUC Powerpass Gives You More Control Than Ever Over Your Utility Bill



More than 6,000 customers are currently saving money by monitoring their electric usage via OUC Power Pass, a prepaid program that lets you pay-as-you-go for utility services. Instead of waiting for a monthly bill, you can check your usage daily from a PC, tablet or smartphone.

It's simple. You add funds to your account as needed, so you can pay when you want, how you want and the amount you want. Just replenish it when it gets low.

OUC Power Pass is also great for people with roommates or for those who travel frequently and don't consume electricity and water on a regular basis. For more information on this innovative program, visit www.ouc.com/powerpass. Or to sign up, call **407-957-7373**.

New Look For Your OUC Bill – Coming Soon

OUC's monthly utility bill will have a new look beginning February 2017.

Thanks to customer feedback, we've made your bill simpler and easier to understand.

Colorful graphics will provide an overview of electric usage, while detailed consumption data will be better organized and easier to find. More information will be provided in your January Connections newsletter.



Get the Tax Refund You Deserve – for FREE!

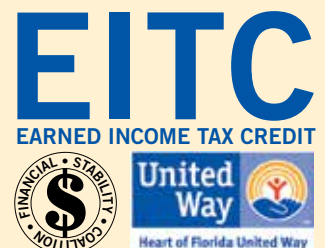
It's hard to think about tax preparation in the midst of the holidays, but it's worth it! This year, Central Floridians could qualify for a tax credit of \$6,269 through the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC is easy to claim and if you worked a single day last year, you may qualify. If you have not claimed the EITC during the past three years, then you could receive a tax refund of more than \$20,000. Additional requirements to qualify include:

- Have worked during the past year and earned income.
- Have a valid Social Security number, U.S. citizenship, or resident alien status all year, or you are a non-resident alien married to a U.S. citizen, or a resident alien filing a joint tax return.
- You earned less than \$53,505 in 2016.

Heart of Florida United Way partners with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program to offer free tax preparation sites for qualified residents.



These sites can help you apply for the EITC, file your taxes and ensure you receive 100% of your refund absolutely free. To learn more about EITC or find the nearest VITA site, call **2-1-1**, visit HFUW.org or text "MyMoney" to **898-211**. If you would rather file your own taxes online, go to MyFreeTaxes.com for free assistance.



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