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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, 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 keep in mind as you deck the halls and spread holiday cheer:

HOLIDAY DECORATING SAFETY TIPS

-  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.
-  Use a timer or 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.

For more energy-saving tips, visit www.ouc.com/conservation.



ENERGY-EFFICIENT GIFT IDEAS THAT KEEP ON SAVING

CORDLESS POWER TOOLS — Cordless screwdrivers, drills and saws, as well as yard tools like lawn mowers and leaf blowers that are equipped with ENERGY STAR battery chargers, use about 30 percent less energy than their corded counterparts.

PROGRAMMABLE THERMOSTAT —

A programmable thermostat can provide nearly \$200 per year in energy savings. Some can even “learn” your family’s schedule to provide more personalization. Perhaps best of all, many smart thermostats now allow you to adjust your climate controls remotely from a smart phone.

MOTION-SENSOR POWER STRIPS — A power strip may seem like a boring gift, but you can purchase models that switch on and off as you enter or leave a room. This keeps electronics from wasting energy when not in use and eliminates the need to hit the red power button all the time.

PRESSURE COOKERS — Pressure cookers provide, by far, the most energy-efficient way to cook. Not only do they heat up faster, but they can cut energy usage by as much as 70 percent.



OUC BILLING ALERTS

Soon, you'll be able to register for OUC voice, text, or email billing alerts to help you stay connected to all your important billing information.

OUC Billing Alerts will let you know when your bill is ready to be viewed and when your payment is due. You can also request your current balance. Stay tuned for more on how to register in January.



2018 NISSAN LEAF EV REBATE — *Extended Through December 31!*

Ever wanted to get behind the wheel of an electric vehicle (EV)?



There's no better time than now! Not only has OUC installed a robust network of EV charging stations around town, but through December 31, Nissan North America is offering OUC customers a \$3,000 incentive OR 0% APR for well-qualified buyers toward the purchase of an all-new, 100% electric 2018 Nissan LEAF.

On top of that, buyers can take advantage of OUC's \$200 electric vehicle lease/purchase rebate. For details and requirements, visit OUC.com/EV.



FREE TAX HELP FROM UNITED WAY

Need assistance preparing your taxes, but don't want to pay a fortune?

Heart of Florida United Way can help! United Way has partnered with H&R Block to offer MyFreeTaxes.com. This is the only free, national, online tax filing product offered by a nonprofit. If you made less than \$66,000 in 2018, you can file your taxes online for free! MyFreeTaxes.com is safe, secure and easy to use.

If you prefer to file your taxes with in-person help, there are Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) locations opening in January

across Central Florida. United Way trains IRS-certified volunteers who will help you get 100% of your refund, including tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). You could qualify for a tax credit of up to \$6,431 if you worked even one-day last year.

To find the VITA site closest to you, dial **2-1-1** or text **"MyMoney"** to **898-211** or visit HFUW.org/taxes.



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