

## What we do!

The Interfaith Coalition on Energy (ICE) works with about 7,400 congregations within a 50-mile radius of Philadelphia's City Hall. ICE helps them reduce their energy use and cost through this newsletter, workshops, publications and on-site energy surveys. See our website [www.interfaithenergy.com](http://www.interfaithenergy.com) for more information.

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## Caller ID Fraud

PECO Energy wants to inform consumers that there is a "Caller ID" fraud product on the market which allows anyone to program the "Caller ID" box for potential fraudulent purposes. For example, this product can be programmed to display the name "PECO", when you receive an incoming telephone call on your personal "Caller ID" box at your home or business. This technology, if in the wrong hands, certainly could be used to take advantage of the trust PECO has established with their customers.

There are a few things customers should remember to make sure they are not taken advantage of:

- PECO does contact customers directly at times to make them aware of certain situations. For example, PECO's efforts to restore service during an emergency, or to follow up on past due balances.
- All calls to customers are logged in PECO's customer care database. If a customer is unsure that the call truly is from PECO, they should end the telephone call and call the company immediately at 1-800-494-4000 to verify.
- If customers receive a call from PECO requesting payment on a past due balance, a PECO representative always will be able to provide the following information:
  - ⇒ Account Name, Account Address, Account Number, and Amount of Past Due Balance



If the caller cannot provide this information, it is likely that the call is not coming from PECO. In this case, customers should not provide any type of payment or financial information, and call the company immediately at 1-800-494-4000 to report the situation.

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## Warning of Another Possible Fraud

An Episcopal church sent us a letter asking for our advice about paying an invoice for \$44.90 to a California company to make sure that state and federal labor law posters were up to date. The payment also was a guarantee to pay a fine up to \$17,000 for non-compliance. We looked up labor law posters on the Internet to find dozens, if not hundreds, of companies selling labor law posters. To determine what posters actually need to be posted, go to [www.dol.gov/elaws/asp/posters/default.asp](http://www.dol.gov/elaws/asp/posters/default.asp).

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## Get a Refund of Federal Excise Tax on Telephone Bills

Here is an opportunity to receive some extra dollars. Federal excise taxes go back to 1898 to finance the Spanish American War. The US Treasury recently lost a law suit and must refund \$10 billion to us. Refunds are available to your congregation for past payments of a 3% federal excise tax on telephone long distance and bundled service (but not local service) for your telephone. The refunds can be claimed in 2006 federal tax filings, even if you are tax exempt, as long as your congregation did not claim exemption from telephone excise taxes.

(continued)

Individual tax payers have two options. First, with no data required, claim a tax reduction of \$30 for a single person, \$40 for a single person with a child or parent dependent, \$40 for married couples with no dependents, \$50 for married couples with one dependent, \$60 for married couples with two or more dependents. Just enter the amount on Line 71 on Form 1040.

Or, review your telephone bills. Use IRS Form 8913 and instructions to identify your paid federal excise tax on long distance and bundled telephone service in 14 specified months starting March 2003 and ending after July 2006. A quick look at the federal tax amount on your April 2006 total telephone bill compared to your October 2006 telephone bill (for local tax only) helps determine your refund.

Nonprofit and business organizations should utilize the same IRS form and instructions. Some filers qualify for a shortcut April/October 2006 estimation method. Congregations, organizations and individuals who do not file federal tax returns can claim refunds by filing Form 1040 EZ-T "Request for refund of Federal Telephone Excise tax, 2006."

ICE Board member Jack Sullivan, PE reports a tax reduction of \$115 compared to the automatic \$40. Larger families may exceed this amount easily by doing some homework. Consult with your accountant, armed with this article. For example, Jack's accountant provided the IRS forms and instructions. His software added up the monthly numbers and calculated the interest to be added for each of the fourteen periods, which added 15% to the tax reduction.

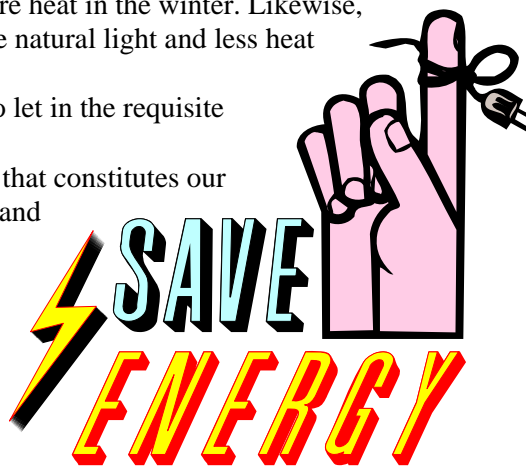
Remember that congregations should not pay state sales tax and can get up to 3 years' refund for past taxes paid.

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## Walking the Walk: The Sacred Art of Energy Conservation

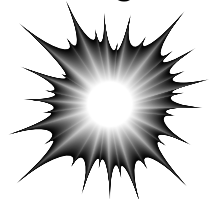
Excerpts from a sermon by Rabbi Brant Rosen, Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation. Evanston, Illinois

- Energy conservation might well be considered the spiritual imperative of our time.
- Our new building will be built with a tight, energy conserving shell, with thicker walls and more insulation that retains more cool air in the summer and more heat in the winter. Likewise, our windows will be made of special glass that lets in more natural light and less heat from the outside.
- Our ventilation system will use motion and CO2 sensors to let in the requisite amount of oxygen for ventilation at any given time.
- Our construction plan stipulates that 100% of the concrete that constitutes our current buildings façade and front steps will be ground up and reused in our new building's foundation. This also has implications for energy consumption, since no fossil fuels will be expended in transporting new concrete to our building site.
- All of the wood on the exterior of our building will be made from reclaimed cypress wood dredged from the bottom of the Great Lakes, insuring that no new trees will be cut down. Moreover, 20% of the overall building materials must be manufactured locally, and 50% of the interior wood in our facility must come from certified sustainable forests – meaning forests that do not engage in the practice of clear cutting. And then there is what I consider to be perhaps the coolest feature of all: our solar powered Ner Tamid!... [the eternal light over the ark]
- Amen



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## Burning Buried Sunshine: Human Consumption of Ancient Solar Energy



Jeffrey S. Dukes of the Biology Department of the University of Utah wrote a research paper on fossil fuels. The paper is posted at

[http://globalecology.stanford.edu/DGE/Dukes/Dukes\\_ClimChange1.pdf](http://globalecology.stanford.edu/DGE/Dukes/Dukes_ClimChange1.pdf).

He summarized his paper: "Fossil fuels developed from ancient deposits of organic material, and thus can be thought of as a vast store of solar energy from which society meets >80% of its

current energy needs. Here, using published biological, geochemical, and industrial data, I estimate the amount of photosynthetically fixed and stored carbon that was required to form the coal, oil, and gas that we are burning today. Today's average U.S. Gallon (3.8 L) of gasoline required approximately 90 metric tons of ancient plant matter as precursor material." ICE

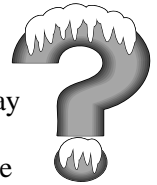
## What does it cost to build a church in Philadelphia?

R.S. Means is a company that keeps score on construction costs. In the October 2006 issue of *Building Design and Construction* magazine, they listed the costs for building a typical church building:

Their estimate for building a church in Philadelphia in 2006 would cost \$172.24 per square foot, up 8.2% from 2005. The lowest cost was Winston-Salem, NC at \$119.24 per square foot. The highest was in New York City at \$197.19. ICE

## How Cold Has the Winter Been So Far?

Degree days are a rough way to judge outside temperature. The technique assumes that building occupants are comfortable at 70°F and that 5° of that comes from internal heat gain, such as people, lights, computers, appliances and so on. For each day, the maximum and minimum temperatures are averaged. One degree day is one degree below 65°. If the average temperature is 50°, then that day has 15 degree days. We have been keeping track of degree days since we began in 1980. Here is the score for the last five months. November through February counts for about 70% of the annual degree days.



Month	HDD	Diff.*	12 months	Diff.**
10/2006	281	27%	4389	-10%
11/2006	404	-13%	4330	-11%
12/2006	683	-37%	3921	-20%
1/2007	978	32%	4159	-15%
2/2007	1030	26%	4373	-9%

\* Difference from last year. \*\* Difference from annual heating degree days. ICE

## Some of Our Advice Works for a Small Townhouse



Michael P. Rebic, Director of Property Support for the Episcopal Diocese of New York, recently emailed us: "By the way... I'm quite proud of myself... a year and a half ago I began renting a small town house here in NYC....when I moved in, the level billing for Con Ed was \$496 a month to provide electricity and gas for heating/cooking.... I followed all of the advice from you ICE newsletters (switched to compacts, new thermostat, turn things off, keep the temp down to 52 when no one's home and during sleep time). Con Ed has just lowered (for the third time) the level billing plan...I'm now at \$145 a month!"

If our math is right, Michael is saving over \$4,200 per year! ICE

## From long-time ICE supporters:

*We hope you are OK and that this little check helps.*  
*Shirley Perkins, Minnesota*

*Thanks for all your help and valuable information.*  
*Edd Murphy, Corpus Christi parish*

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## THE INTERFAITH COALITION ON ENERGY



**There are a number of reasons to give money to us:**

- You may have extra money lying around, and you don't know what to do with it.
- Perhaps you want to support an energy conservation organization that solely represents the interests of people of faith.
- Maybe you like ICE; maybe one of our articles or a phone conversation saved your congregation money.
- Your contribution is tax-deductible.

Whatever your reasons, please send ICE a check so that we may continue to serve.

ICE, 7217 Oak Avenue, Melrose Park, PA 19027

Thanks. ICE