



PowerWatch

A Canadian innovation for energy conservation.

By Judy Penz Sheluk

As the cost of electricity continues to climb, energy conservation has become a key concern. Residential energy usage in Canada increased by 10 per cent from 1990 to 2004. It's not that we aren't trying – programs such as Energy Star have been embraced by consumers. It's just that until recently, we couldn't see the impact of something as simple as turning up the air conditioning by a single degree, or turning off our computers at the end of the day.

Enter PowerWatch, a Canadian designed and manufactured low cost, easy-to-use residential energy-monitoring and measuring device. PowerWatch says it puts 'tangibility' in energy conservation, instilling a culture of conservation and savings at the same time. Usage is reported in real-time, and PowerWatch forecasts usage/cost estimates and much more on an accumulated hourly, daily, weekly or yearly basis and stores the data for up to 10 years. The data software, which is included, provides historical analysis, conservation goals and advanced cost forecasting.

Replace a 60-watt incandescent light bulb with a 15-watt compact fluorescent, or unplug that beer fridge in the garage, and you'll see that small changes can have a significant positive impact. Accurate and timely information is the key for users to make truly informed long-term decisions. When provided with real-time energy usage information, studies show typical households will reduce electricity consumption – and their energy bills – by 10 per cent to 20 per cent.

How it Works: The PowerWatch main module can be installed adjacent to the existing power distribution panel (fuse box) in any residence. It reports instantaneous usage statistics via a secure wireless network to any number of attractive remote LED display modules throughout the home. Installation of the main module is a simple process, and when installed during construction or as a retrofit, the cost impact is negligible. Builders or consumers may also be eligible for regional incentive programs or government subsidies. For more information, see page 89.