

Xcel offering new rebates

The two-year program is expected to reduce electricity usage by 125 megawatts a year.

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As part of a two-year, \$143 million program to cut the state's energy consumption, Xcel Energy is offering rebates of up to \$300 to customers who install high-efficiency appliances or additional home insulation.

The ratepayer-funded program is expected to reduce electricity usage by 125 megawatts, enough to serve 94,000 homes, and natural-gas usage by 7.2 million therms, enough to supply 9,000 homes annually, Xcel said Tuesday.

The incentives, launched this month and aimed at lowering natural-gas use, include:

- Rebates of \$80 to \$120 for the installation of new natural-gas furnaces or boilers.
- Rebates of up to \$80 for the installation of standard natural-gas water heaters and \$100 for tankless water heaters.
- Rebates of up to 20 percent of the cost of upgrading attic or wall home insulation, up to \$300. The rebate also applies to home air sealing and weather stripping.

"The rebates are a welcome assistance for consumers who are having difficulties paying their utility bills and thinking about investing in efficiency measures in order to lower those bills," said Howard Geller, executive director of the Boulder-based Southwest Energy Efficiency Project.

Under the program, Xcel will provide rebates later this year for home-energy audits, appliance upgrades and energy-efficient shower heads.

Regulators approved the program last year. It is expected to add \$1.64 a month to typical residential bills and \$2.83 a month to typical small-business bills.

Xcel spent about \$20 million on energy-efficiency programs in 2008. Under the new program, the utility will spend \$63 million this year and \$80 million in 2010.

"Investment in energy efficiency is the most beneficial and economic way to in effect add new generation to our system and to better use our precious natural-gas resources," Xcel vice president Fred Stoffel said.

Xcel estimates the program will save consumers \$450 million this year and next because it is expected to cut the need for additional generating stations.

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