

# CITYSTYLES

## GOING GREEN

Are you  
ready to

go  
solar?

BE A SMART SOLAR  
POWER CONSUMER

**+** PLUS

Conservation programs  
to help you save energy  
Family friendly events  
all summer long

# Are you ready to go solar?



## We live in interesting times.

As I write this, the Ontario Power Authority has just announced the province-wide conservation

programs that will be running over the summer months. The goal behind *peaksaver*®, The Great Refrigerator Roundup and Summer Sweepstakes is to encourage Ontarians to conserve more electricity. Not that they're not doing a great job, conservation-wise, already. According to recent research, customers in PowerStream's service area last year saved over 33 million kilowatt-hours of electricity, thanks to conservation programs designed to help Ontario enjoy a more secure and stable energy future. That's enough to power 3,667 average homes for one year. Congratulations to all our customers who stepped up to the conservation plate by enrolling in these programs last year.

While many people are starting to get the hang of energy conservation, there's still more to be done to make it second-nature. The programs I referred to above are a start; you can read about them in the 'Programs' section on page 4.

But there's also another approach worth considering: generating some of your own electricity. In this issue, we pick up where we left off in the last issue on the topic of solar power. On page 3, you can find out what you need to know about hiring a contractor to install solar panels at your home. And on page 8, you can read about Richmond Hill resident Geoff Green, who has gone the distance with a total of eight solar panels installed on the roof of his house.

These are interesting times, indeed. Not only are there more options for generating electricity than ever before. But there are more programs than ever to help us conserve what precious resources we have. It's the combination of these two approaches that can add up to a stronger electricity future for Ontario, to say nothing of the money saved on your electricity bill.

There is no right way and no wrong way to do your part; all it takes is a little knowledge, some motivation to get started and the will-power to follow through. I'm going to start by putting on my shades and firing

up the barbecue. Then I'm going to enter the Summer Sweepstakes.

Here's to many sunny days ahead!

—Eric Fagen, PowerStream

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TRADEMARK OF TORONTO HYDRO. USED UNDER LICENCE. PHOTO BY TOM HASIAK



PHOTO BY STEVE PAYNE

## Be a smart solar power consumer

BY STEVEN ENG



If you read the last issue of *City Styles/Going Green*, you understand how the sun's energy is captured and can be used to heat hot water heaters or swimming pools, or even generate electricity.

Assuming you want to go the next step and are ready to install solar panels on the roof of your home or cottage, here are some guidelines to help you make informed decisions about contractors and their installation plans.

**Hire a licensed electrical contractor.** Installing a solar panel, or an array of solar panels, on your home is work for licensed electrical contractors only. These contractors are trained to work safely with electricity. After all, it might be generated by the sun, but the power being generated by your solar panels is still electricity and if not handled properly, it can be dangerous.

For a list of licensed electrical contractors, visit [www.pluginsafely.ca](http://www.pluginsafely.ca), or call the Electrical Safety Authority at 1-877-ESA-SAFE (372-7233).

**Check your contractor's references.** You wouldn't hire a contractor to do renovations on your home without checking their references first. The same

applies when you hire an electrical contractor to install your solar panels. A good contractor will be able to talk about his work, show you samples and explain his plan for your home in terms you understand. Check to be sure he has at least one year of experience and that he has seen four or five projects through to completion. If you don't want to be a guinea pig, be prepared to ask lots of questions. It's also wise to get quotes from more than one contractor.

### Meet the electrical contractor face-to-face.

Solar panel installation is too specialized a job to be left to someone you've never met. Make sure the person who is doing the work is the person whose references you've checked, not a sub-contractor. If there are liability issues, you want to be able to hold your contractor accountable, rather than chase down a sub-contractor whose obligation is to his boss, not necessarily to you.

**Get a permit.** Insist that your contractor obtain a permit and that he presents it to you before work begins. If you don't have a permit, PowerStream will not connect you to the electricity grid and you will not be able to net meter. Expect to pay a few hundred dollars for a permit; and know that once you have it in hand, your contractor's work can be inspected for safety. If there are safety issues because of his work, it is up to him to fix them as a condition of payment.

**Educate yourself about the basics.** Does your home need a south-facing roof in order to install a solar panel? Will having a white roof make your solar panels work better? Is your home's roof strong enough to withstand the extra weight (about 10-15 kgs) that will be added when solar panels are installed? What about aesthetics? These are all good questions. For answers, check out Natural Resources Canada's website, [www.canren.gc.ca/tech\\_appl/](http://www.canren.gc.ca/tech_appl/) or the Kortright Centre's at [www.kortright.org](http://www.kortright.org).

Steven Eng, P.Eng., is owner of Enviro-Energy Technologies in Toronto. He will be delivering four Solar Power Workshops in May and June. For details, see the Calendar section on page 6.

# Summer starts now with these hot programs

BY JOHN SHERIN, COORDINATOR,  
CONSERVATION PROGRAMS



Mike Evans, owner of True Value Hardware in Aurora, saved 46 per cent on his electricity bill after signing up for the No Catch to Conserve program.

towards approved energy retrofits. For more information, call PowerStream at 905-532-4633.

To learn more about the fourth program – *peaksaver*® – read the Gadgets section on page 10.

For energy-saving tips to carry you through the dog days of summer, visit [www.powerstream.ca](http://www.powerstream.ca)

## Register now, save all year long

### Summer Sweepstakes

Ontario Power Authority  
[www.everykilowattcounts.com/sweepstakes](http://www.everykilowattcounts.com/sweepstakes)  
or call 1-800-322-7417

### The Great Refrigerator Roundup

1-877-797-9473

### No Catch to Conserve

905-532-4633

Did you know that saving money on your electricity bill can be as close as your phone?

This summer, PowerStream is offering four energy conservation programs that are specially designed for residential customers and small businesses. Check out the following list of programs. If you think you or your business qualify, simply pick up the phone to register.

### Summer Sweepstakes

This is a new program from the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) that PowerStream is pleased to offer residential customers who have been living in its service territory for the past 12 months. If you use 10 per cent less electricity between July 1st and August 31st, 2008 as compared to the same time period last year, you may be eligible to win a prize from the OPA ([www.everykilowattcounts.com/sweepstakes](http://www.everykilowattcounts.com/sweepstakes)) or call 1-800-322-7417 for more details.



### The Great Refrigerator Roundup

This OPA program was launched in June 2007. Since that time, more than 50,000 energy-guzzling fridges, freezers and window air conditioners have been retired at no cost to customers. PowerStream customers

rounded up over 1,300 fridges and freezers, helping to save over 1.4 million kilowatt-hours and reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 332 metric tonnes.

Congratulations to everyone who kissed their energy inefficient appliances goodbye last year! According to the OPA, fridges that are 10 years old or older cost more to operate than more energy-efficient models.

Removing them from service can save approximately \$150 a year

in electricity costs. If this isn't a good enough reason to retire your old energy-guzzler this summer, think of how much electricity would

be saved if 100,000 old appliances were retired. That's enough to power 154 average-sized homes for one whole year. Interested in rounding up your old fridge? Visit [www.everykilowattcounts.ca](http://www.everykilowattcounts.ca) for more information or call 1-877-797-9473.

### No Catch to Conserve

Small business owners with an eye on their bottom-line can also be part of the energy conservation movement with the No Catch to Conserve program. This new program was developed by PowerStream, in partnership with the Town of Markham's Energy Conservation Office, Green\$aver, Enbridge Gas Distribution and the Ontario Power Authority.

If you have a small business and use less than 50 kilowatts of demand each month, then you might be eligible to apply. Approved businesses will receive a free energy assessment and potential funding

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# Mark your calendars for great fun this summer

After months of snow and cold, who wants to stay indoors? It's time to get out and enjoy all that these early days of summer have to offer, including plenty of sunshine and a whole list of happenings in your community. So mark your calendars and let this be the start of the best summer ever.

**MAY 4**

## Markham Youth Week Kick-Off

A celebration of youth, for youths. A variety of performances will be featured, as well as cultural booths and free give-aways. 12:00pm-3:00pm. Location: Markville Mall, 5000 Highway 7, Unionville.

**MAY 6**

## Solar Power Introduction Workshop

Interested in learning more about solar power for your home or small business? PowerStream has teamed up with the Town of Markham to offer a special series of free solar power workshops. 7:00-8:30pm. Location: Thornhill Library, 7755 Bayview Avenue. Space is limited. To sign up, call 905-477-5530.

**MAY 15**

## Solar Power Introduction Workshop

See above for details. 7:00-8:30pm. Location: Markham Village Library, 6041 Highway 7. Call 905-477-5530 to book a spot.

**MAY 24**

## Richmond Hill Public Works Week

Richmond Hill residents are invited to attend the National Public Works Week Public Open House, with activities

for the entire family, including equipment demonstrations and a charity barbecue. Blue boxes and green bins will be on sale. 10:00am-3:00pm. Location: Richmond Hill Operations Centre, 1200 Elgin Mills Road East. For more information, call 905-884-8013.

**MAY 24**

## Vaughan Public Works Week

If you want to pick up some free mulch for the garden, drop off household hazardous or electronic waste, or have old papers shredded, then don't miss this annual event. Plus, take a few minutes to visit PowerStream's energy efficiency display. Blue boxes, green bins and composters also for sale. 10:00am-3:00pm. Location: Vaughan Joint Operations Centre, 2800 Rutherford Road.

**MAY 25-31**

## Energy Conservation Week

Looking for ways to make energy conservation part of your daily routine? Energy Conservation Week may be just what you're looking for in order to jump-start your summer. For event listing, including Count Every Kilowatt Day on May 29th, check out [www.energyconservationweek.ca](http://www.energyconservationweek.ca). Sponsored by the Ontario Power Authority.

**MAY 29**

## Solar Power Introduction Workshop

Sponsored by PowerStream and Town of Markham Energy Conservation Office. 7:00-8:30pm. Location: Angus Glen Library, 3990 Major Mackenzie Drive East. To register, call 905-477-5530.

**JUNE 1**

## Richmond Hill Mill Pond Splash

Help celebrate the headwaters of the Don River at this free family-focused street party, organized by Toronto and Region Conservation. Activities include environmental and historical exhibits, displays and demonstrations, live animals, music, entertainment, food and refreshments. 11:00am-5:00pm. Location: Mill Pond Park, Mill Street. For more information, call Michelle at 416-661-6600, ext. 5280.

**JUNE 1**

## Aurora Street Festival

Visit the Town of Aurora's 12th annual street festival featuring hundreds of vendors and lots of entertainment for young and old. 11:00am-5:00pm. Location: Yonge Street.

**JUNE 4**

## Solar Power Introduction Workshop

Sponsored by PowerStream and Town of Markham's Energy



Conservation Office. 7:00-8:30pm. Location: Milliken Mills Library, 7600 Kennedy Road. To reserve a spot, call 905-477-5530.

**JUNE 7-8**

## Unionville Street Festival

Kick the day off by attending the festival parade at 10 am. Then take a train ride aboard an historic train, sponsored by the Merchants of Main Street Unionville BIA. Wonder the village market all day long and end the day with fireworks at dusk. Village market and events at Crosby Park continue on Sunday. Location: Main Street.

**JUNE 21**

## Markham Village Music Festival

Whether your tastes run to jazz, bluegrass, rock 'n roll, big band, classical, world or country, you'll find something to enjoy at the Markham Music Festival, a tradition in Markham for the past 28 years. To see the schedule of events, visit [www.markham-festival.org/schedule](http://www.markham-festival.org/schedule). Location: Main Street, Markham Village.

**JULY 1**

## Aurora Canada Day Celebration

Celebrate Canada's 141st birthday at this special all-day event. 11:00am-11:00pm. Location: Lambert Wilson Park.

**AUGUST 2-3**

## Woodbridge Italian Festival

A celebration of community and culture for all ages, the festival is a two-day spectacular filled with entertainment, sports, fashion, music, carnival rides, games, and much more. Featuring Anthony Von's Elvis Tribute. Location: 7601 Martin Grove Road. For information, call 905-856-2823.

**AUGUST 9-10**

## Pine Valley Carnival

The Pine Valley Carnival has something for all ages to enjoy: rides for kids, displays, food, 500 cent auto show, VIP pancake breakfast, basketball tournament, soccer tournament, and procession of the Assumption. Come out and enjoy the artistic skills and talent of a special group of entertainers all vying for the coveted position of Vaughan Idol. Location: 300 Ansley Grove Rd, Woodbridge.

**AUGUST 15-17**

## Maplefest

The Glen Ottawa Magic Show, the Little Mermaid Show, the Pirate Show, Mad Science, the Fab Four and the Cobra Kings are just a few reasons to come out to Maplefest this summer. Friday 4:00pm-10pm, Saturday 9:00am-11:00pm, Sunday

9:00am-5:00pm. Location: Maple Community Centre Park. Free shuttle bus from St. Joan of Arc High School.

**SEPTEMBER 20**

## Thornhill Festival

This year's festival features a parade, vendors, art shows, music, rides and events for kids and teens, a beer garden, and battle re-enactments. Admission free for children under 12 and visitors in historic costume; adults \$4. 9:00am-4:30pm. Location: Yonge Street & Centre Street, Thornhill.

**SEPTEMBER 27-28**

## Green Energy Home Show

Be a part of the most specialized event for consumers interested in sustainable energy and green building solutions. Enjoy two days of workshops, tours, demonstrations, guest speakers, indoor and outdoor green vendor exhibits. Saturday 10:00am-4:00pm, Sunday 10:00am-4:00pm. Location: 9550 Pine Valley Drive, Woodbridge. South of Major Mackenzie Drive, west of Highway 400. For information, call 905-832-2289.

**OCTOBER 2-5**

## Markham Fair

Since 1844, the Markham Fair has provided the community with a showcase for talent and products in a friendly competitive spirit. Location: 10801 McCowan Road, Markham Fairgrounds.

**OCTOBER 11-13**

## Woodbridge Fall Fair

Come visit the 160th Woodbridge Fair this Thanksgiving weekend in the heart of the Historic Village of Woodbridge. Location: Fairgrounds, Kipling Avenue, north of Highway 7.

# Solar power is an investment in the planet

On a good day, the eight solar panels on Geoff and Martha Green's home in Richmond Hill can generate 8.6 kilowatt-hours of electricity – more than half of what they use every day.

BY DEBBIE CONTE, CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST



When I went to visit the Greens, I learned as much about solar panels as I did about all the other little things they do year-round to maintain a small environmental footprint.

## Why did you choose to invest in solar panels?

We did it because it made sense to us, both environmentally and economically. The sun is a renewable resource and the technology that's needed to harness it is readily available. We felt the investment might pay off at some point; but the main reason we did it was to reduce our carbon footprint.

## Are you pleased with the results?

Yes, so far, so good. We installed the panels two years ago and I'm estimating that we've saved between 1,500 and 2,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity per year since then. On the very first day the panels were installed, we watched the meter turn backwards – an indication that we were producing more electricity than we were using at that time.

## What happens on days when the sun doesn't shine?

The solar panels still generate electricity even on cloudy and hazy days. We've come up with a system to rate the intensity of light and

to predict, more or less, how much will be produced each day. Believe me, once you start relying on solar panels for electricity, you'll never look at the sun or a blue sky in quite the same way ever again.

## What happens during a power outage?

The solar panels are connected to a battery in the basement of our house, which means that during a power outage, electricity can be stored in the battery. We figure the battery can store enough electricity to keep our fridge running for about three days; if the outage were longer, we would have to find the right balance between what we use and what the sun produces in order to keep the house powered.

## What else do you do to conserve electricity?

We learned a lot about conservation from the engineer who installed our solar panels, Steve Eng, from Enviro-Energy Technologies. He taught us about phantom loads and the amount of electricity that is used by appliances even when they're not in use. With his help, we came to realize that it's the small incremental changes that add up to a big difference, rather than that one grand gesture. For example, last year, I painted my

roof white so that the strong summer sun would be reflected off the roof rather than be absorbed into the house. What a difference that made inside our home. The white colour also intensifies the light that's reflected back into the panels and helps them produce even more electricity.

We also eliminated our hot water heater and installed a tankless hot water heater. That alone is saving us about 30 per cent on our bill. I'm a committed (re)cyclist, and that's another way that I've decided to lessen the environmental impact I have on the planet.

## What advice can you give to people who may be considering solar power?

I would say, start small. Start by trying to use less electricity first. If that feels right, and you have a bit of a budget, think about solar heaters which tend to be very effective and are not as costly as solar panels. Like I said, small changes can add up to big changes. I think of it as behavioural change; once you start to see improvements, you do a bit more, then a bit more again. That's the only way I think we're going to solve our energy problems, by committing to consume less and to doing our part, whatever that is, for as long as we can.



From top: Geoff and Martha Green on the roof of their home in Richmond Hill; the 8 solar panels that are installed on the couple's white roof; and with engineer Steve Eng who oversaw installation of the solar array.

# Will **you** be a **peak saver** this summer?

ERIKA MIETO, CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

## It's a small thing. But it's also a big thing.

It's a thermostat. But it's also a transmitter.

It's an energy saving device. But it's also a money-making tool.

If you're one of the 2,000 customers in PowerStream's service territory who signed up for the **peaksaver**® program last summer, you know what 'it' is all about.

If not, here are a few clues. The 'small thing' is a free Honeywell programmable thermostat (valued at \$250 including the cost of installation) that allows you to manage your electricity consumption while you're away or at night.

The 'big' thing is the transmitter inside that allows PowerStream to cycle down air conditioning systems temporarily during a power advisory. Customers registered for the program hardly notice a change in temperature.

The 'energy saving' part comes thanks to your programmable thermostat.

And the 'money making' aspect happens in two ways. First, you will receive \$25 simply by signing up for the **peaksaver** program. As an added bonus, this summer

PowerStream has announced a new "**peaksaver** Neighbours" promotion. Starting May 15, if you are an existing PowerStream customer and you refer one of your neighbours to us and they sign up, we'll give you \$25. Participating customers can refer a maximum of three neighbours (\$75 maximum bonus). This promotion applies to the first 500 referrals.

Last summer, 17 PowerStream customers who signed up for **peaksaver** went one better by winning special prizes in a unique promotional contest. First prize winner was Prashanth Dinavahi, from Markham, who won an electric bike. Giovanni Testani and his wife, Maria, from Maple, won a Gardina cordless electric lawn mower as second prize winners, as did Michael and Veronica Cheong from Richmond Hill, Ian Marnoch from Markham and Domenic Fazari from Aurora. Congratulations to our winners!

To sign up for **peaksaver**, call 1-866-323-0206.

## peaksaver Contest Winners



FIRST PRIZE:  
**Bionix Electric Bicycle**  
Prashanth Dinavahi

SECOND PRIZE:  
**Gardina Cordless Electric Lawn Mower**  
Giovanni & Maria Testani  
Michael & Veronica Cheong  
Ian Marnoch  
Domenic Fazari

THIRD PRIZE:  
**Toronto & Region Conservation Journeys Family Membership**  
Teresa & Blair Coffin  
Tony & Patricia Durso  
S. Singh  
Kaushik & Shyamoli Roy  
Mr. & Mrs. G. Fitzpatrick  
James & Sherry Wu  
S. Ganeshalingham  
Agapi Prolos  
Daniel Rife  
Sharon & Bill Wilson  
Vanda Clarke  
Tommy Chow

TRADEMARK OF TORONTO HYDRO. USED UNDER LICENCE.

# a taste of **summer time**

BARB HOLLAND, PHEC

The warm main dish salad is a wonderful combination of colour, texture and flavour and perfect for warm days.

## Warm Asian Chicken & Nappa Cabbage Salad

### Dressing

2 tbsp each: rice wine vinegar & vegetable oil	25 mL
1 tbsp minced fresh ginger	15 mL
½ tsp each: sesame oil, sugar and salt	2 mL
¼ tsp pepper	1 mL

### Salad

1 small nappa (Chinese cabbage), about 1lb/500g shredded (about 8 cups/2L)	1
½ red pepper, thinly sliced	½
½ cup fresh coriander leaves	125 mL
2-3 oranges	2-3
1 tbsp chili garlic sauce	15 mL
2 green onions, sliced	2
1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts	500 g

■ In a 1 cup (250 mL) glass measure or small microwaveable bowl, combine dressing ingredients.

■ In large salad bowl, place cabbage, red pepper and coriander leaves.

■ Using a sharp knife, peel oranges, removing peel and white pith. Over a bowl, cut between membranes to release sections. Catch juice in separate small bowl, squeezing remaining membranes to get all the juice. Add chili garlic sauce and green onions to orange juice.



■ Trim any fat from chicken and cut chicken into strips. Place in a shallow microwaveable dish. Add orange juice mixture to chicken and toss to coat. Cover and microwave at Medium-High (70%) 3 to 5 minutes, or until chicken is opaque (chicken will look slightly pink due to chili sauce).

Stir at least once during cooking to move less cooked pieces to outer edges and cooked pieces to centre.

■ Microwave dressing at High for 30 seconds or until warm.

■ With slotted spoon, remove chicken and green onions to cabbage along with orange segments.

Pour dressing over and toss well. Serve immediately.

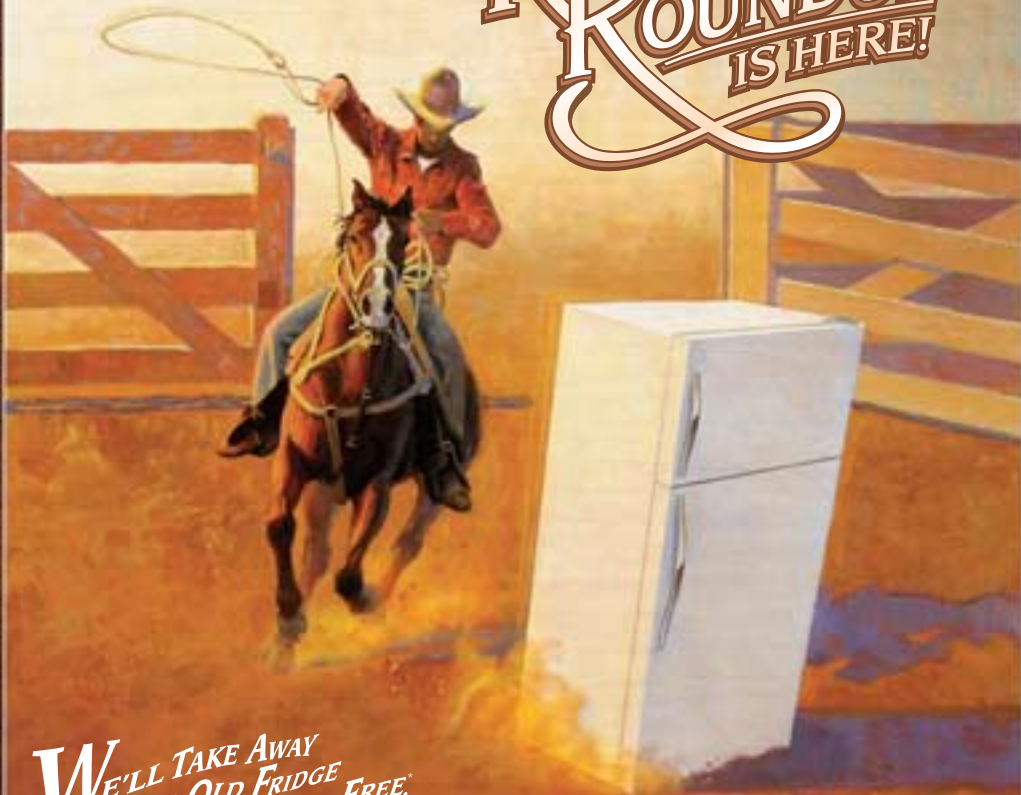
Makes 4 servings.

**note:** Tested in a 700 watt microwave oven. Adjust cooking time if the wattage of your microwave oven differs.

The author is a professional home economist and food writer. She is the co-author of *Microwave Cooking with Style* and author of *Milk's Microwave Cookbook*.



# THE GREAT REFRIGERATOR ROUNDUP™ IS HERE!



**WE'LL TAKE AWAY YOUR OLD FRIDGE FOR FREE.\***

*That old, inefficient second fridge of yours is wasting up to \$150 per year in electricity. We'll come pick it up for FREE\* – we'll even haul it out of your basement for you. Then we'll take care of it in an environmentally responsible manner. When we're finished recycling and reclaiming material, all that's left for the landfill will just about fit inside a cowboy hat!*

*To schedule an appointment or learn more, visit  
[www.everykilowattcounts.com/roundup](http://www.everykilowattcounts.com/roundup)  
or call 1-877-797-9473*

\*Fridge must be at least 10 years old and in working order.

A program offered by

**OPA** Every Kilowatt Counts  
Ontario Power Authority™

In cooperation with

**Power Stream** †  
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