



Channel that energy



CVN

LIVING THE GREEN LIFE

ERIN MAKER

It shouldn't come as a surprise to readers of this column that I am passionate about all aspects of environmental stewardship. My family has always been forward thinking about the environment—their actions born out of necessity. When you live in a rural area, you have to think about what you are going to do with everything you use: Trash service wasn't available; all of our water came from springs on our property; and if the power went out it could be days before it was restored.

I know that people in many parts of the planet still live like that. And I feel lucky that my mother instilled a sense of responsibility about those things in me and my brother, and that eventually led me to where I am today. People often ask me what my title at work means, but I don't have one clear answer. Working for a small agency where each person takes on many roles is something I enjoy.

When I first started taking over the energy efficiency role, all I really knew about energy efficiency was that you turn the light off when you leave a room and don't keep your heat or air conditioning running all the time. Fast forward several years, and while I am still not an expert, I have learned more than I ever thought there was to know about energy storage and renewables, how to make cost effective upgrades to homes and businesses to help save money, and a host of other things, which brings me to an upcoming direct-install program for small businesses.

As part of my job, I participate in a local government partnership that includes the cities of Carpinteria, Goleta and Santa Barbara, the County of Santa Barbara and Southern California Edison and Southern California Gas utility companies. The South County Energy Efficiency Partnership, or SCEEP, is a venue for agencies to work with the utility companies to best serve municipal, residential and commercial customers. There are a number of incentive programs to help customers retrofit aging infrastructure while reducing their overall costs. One of these programs is known as the Direct Install Program for small commercial customers.

Direct Install is a Southern California Edison program that offers long-term energy savings to qualifying customers. Edison has contracted with energy efficiency experts, who evaluate businesses free of charge to identify qualifying en-

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ergy savings. Working with the customer, Edison replaces outdated equipment with more efficient products, often at no cost to the customer. All work done is approved by the business prior to install. This program helps small business owners lower electricity costs by using less energy, with the added benefit of reducing their carbon footprint. The Direct Install program is coming to Carpinteria in the next month, so if you are interested in participating, please contact me.

There are additional programs available to both large and small commercial customers, as well as residents. Incentive programs are a great way to maximize your return on upgrades—in both gas and electrical equipment. Have a thermostat you want to upgrade, or looking to replace your old air conditioner with a newer version, or possibly with a more efficient evaporative cooler? There are rebates for those. Have a water heater you are looking to upgrade, or want to replace your aging washer and dryer with new, more efficient models? There are rebates for those as well.

Those are just a few of the programs available to customers, and I know that any help with the bottom line on any project makes a difference. And not only are you saving money when you make these upgrades, but new equipment can help your home or business operate more smoothly. Interested in learning more about any of these programs? I am always available to guide people in the right direction. You can contact me at erinm@ci.carpinteria.ca.us, or call 880-3415.

Erin Maker is the Environmental Coordinator for the City of Carpinteria. She studied biology after discovering her love of nature and science while growing up in Vermont. Always interested in improving water quality and recycling, she currently oversees the City's Watershed Management and Solid Waste Programs. For more information, contact Erin at erinm@ci.carpinteria.ca.us, (805) 684-5405 x415.

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Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia

Join us as Norma Featherston, RN, MS, Geriatric Care Manager at New Hope Senior Services and the Area Director of the Ventura County Alzheimer's Association offers advice and answers intimate questions about caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease or dementia.

Complimentary refreshments will be served.

Saturday, March 18th • Seating is limited

EVENT "Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia" Seminar
TIME 10:00 - 11:00am
PLACE GranVida Senior Living and Memory Care
5464 Carpinteria Ave., Carpinteria, CA 93013
RSVP Call 805.881.3032 by Thursday, March 16th or register at GranVidaSeniorLiving.com/RSVP

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