

## **MAYOR'S COLUMN**

**June 19, 2007**

Summer is upon us, which means a rise in the use of electrical energy mainly for cooling purposes and historically an increase in power outages because air conditioners use more energy than any other appliance. Just several days in a row of high demand due to increased temperatures can create stress on the electrical system and can overload the Con Edison system. The equipment then overheats causing surges, dimming, flickering or complete power outage.

In response to the anticipated increase in usage, Con Edison has enhanced its outage reporting capabilities for customers experiencing problems with service. Over 250 additional phone lines have been installed to handle customer calls at 1-800-75CONED and problems can now be reported via the Internet to [www.coned.com](http://www.coned.com)

After an outage, Con Ed has a fixed protocol of repair. Power is first restored to facilities and individual customers who depend on life-sustaining equipment such as the homebound, hospitals and police stations. Power is then restored to the lines that will bring back the most customers in the fewest repair hours possible. Isolated outages affecting a small universe of customers and complicated repairs will come on line last. It is important to remember that even the occasional power surge can destroy sensitive equipment such as computers and flat screen TVs. High

quality surge protectors should be connected to all such equipment going into the summer months.

There are many things we can do on an individual basis to reduce our aggregate energy use and decrease our chances for overload and outages.

Larger scale energy saving projects include:

- Repairing drafts and leaks with caulking or weather stripping and upgrading insulation in attics and crawl spaces.
- Installing reflective film on windows saves about 75% of the sun's rays easing the load of air conditioners.
- Buying new air conditioners or refrigerators with the Energy Star label to ensure the product is energy efficient.

Inexpensive energy saving tips include:

- Cleaning the air conditioner filters at least once a month and setting timers on units to turn off when the house is empty.
- Maintaining a temperature no cooler than 78°. A setting of 75 ° costs 18% more and a setting of 72° increases your bill by 39%.
- Replacing incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent ones, which produce the same amount of light for about a quarter of the cost.

- Using lower wattage bulbs for halls and non-reading areas and keeping bulbs clean to increase their brightness.
- Shutting off computers, VCRs and CD players. When in the “on” mode, they use energy even if not in use.

It is important to report outages on an individual basis. Please do not assume that because your neighbors have no power that Con Ed is aware of every address. Often, nearby homes can be on different lines or experience different outage problems. Each home must be reported to maintain a tracking record. The Village also calls in outages by neighborhoods and alerts Con Ed to citizens with particular health needs who require priority service.

On the Village level, we have installed a geo-thermal heating and cooling system in the renovated Village Hall to save energy and reduce utility expenses. Though start-up costs were higher than a conventional system, we are projected to recoup our costs in just five years.

We all have the ability to make significant reductions in energy usage without spending a lot of money or making major lifestyle changes.