



MEDIA RELEASE

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ELECTRICITY TARIFFS RISE, BUT THE NGEWANA FAMILY'S COSTS FALL

Beat the winter utility-bill shock with help from 'My Green Home'

July is the coldest month of the year, with temperatures bottoming out early in the month. And July 1 is the most biting day of the year for most South African electricity users, the day that municipalities raise their electricity tariffs for the coming year. The combination of price increases and the extra use of heaters, geysers and kettles to ward off the cold can make July a shock to the family budget.

Electricity tariffs are rising by about 8 percent in most municipalities. (Eskom customers already got the same tariff increase in April.) Households that use more than 600 kilowatt hours per month can now expect to pay anywhere from about R1,20 to R1,85 for each extra kWh unit of electricity. Most electricity tariffs have more than doubled in the past six years.

The Ngewana family, however, is spending less on electricity this July, as they find more efficient ways to keep warm. They've blocked gaps around windows with insulating weatherstripping tape and insulated their ceiling with Saint-Gobain Isover insulation. They're insulating themselves, too, with layers of warm clothing.

Their open fireplace, which sent more heat up the chimney than into the house, was replaced by an efficient Calore closed-combustion fireplace. Their model burns pellets made of sawdust and scrap wood, a renewable energy source.

Any South African can join the Ngewana family in beating the July 1 tariff increase with guidance from My Green Home at www.mygreenhome.org.za. The website is full of videos, guides and no-cost, low-cost and invest-to-save ideas for keeping warm and saving kilowatt hours. The information is not at all limited to heating, but includes such topics as energy-efficient lighting, hot water and appliances, saving water, and reducing waste

My Green Home is led by the Green Building Council South Africa, with main co-funding from the German government through the South African-German Energy Programme (SAGEN). It's also supported by the 49M campaign, Karebo Systems, the South African National Energy Development Institute (SANEDI) and a range of product sponsors and partner organisations.

Those who participate in My Green Home stand a chance to win green prizes, including the grand prize: their own 'green home makeover'. Anyone who submits a 'selfie' photo to the website or via Twitter (@mygreenhomesa) showing how they or their family save energy while staying warm indoors by 12h00 on Monday 7th July is eligible for this week's prizes in a random draw, as well as the grand prize in early August.

For those who take on the saving challenge, July can bring pleasant surprises too.

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