

# Get energetic on saving energy

BY PETER LOVE

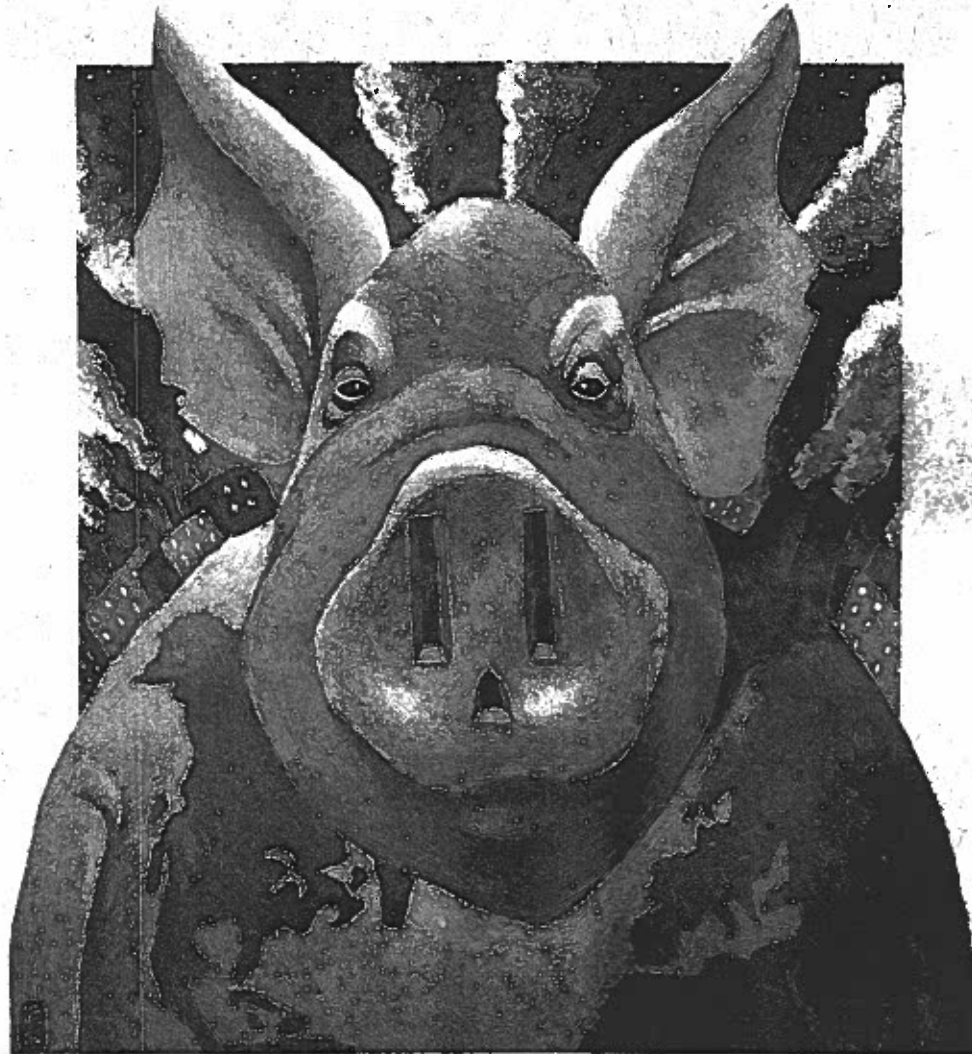
Energy conservation has real value in Ontario. It helps us to reduce our energy consumption when demand is at its highest, but that's only part of the equation. Today, Ontarians see conservation as a regular and responsible part of everyday life. Together, we're creating a culture of conservation.

When we work collaboratively, many small steps can have a large impact. The international Earth Hour campaign, held just a few weeks ago, is a great example. Communities around the world united for a common cause — to reduce consumption by increasing awareness. Whether they played charades in the dark or attended candlelight concerts, people joined together to help each other and the planet. Now it's time to turn that moment into momentum for the benefit of Ontarians.

Ontario's first Energy Conservation Week, May 25 to 31, is a prime opportunity to do just that. Initiated by the Ontario Power Authority (OPA), Ontario Ministry of Energy, Independent Electricity System Operator and the Electricity Distributors Association, the goal of this week-long campaign is to encourage grassroots participation.

Each day of the week has its own theme. It starts with Blue Jays Conservation Awareness Day on May 25 and builds toward Count Every Kilowatt Day on May 29. Other days include Electricity Impact Monday (May 26), Tieless Tuesday (May 27) and Save the Watt Wednesday (May 28). Of course there's no obligation to follow this formula — we're aiming to provide people and communities across Ontario with the inspiration and ideas to create their own events.

We hope to see local events across the province highlighting ways to conserve electricity at the office and at home. There are lots of ways to do it. Raise your thermostat a few degrees in summer to cut down on air conditioning, wait until after 8 p.m. to run electrical appliances, and turn off your lights when they're not needed. We also



hope you'll tell us what you're doing. A new website, [energyconservationweek.ca](http://energyconservationweek.ca), is the place to share ideas and tips, events and testimonials from one part of this vast province to the other.

Energy Conservation Week is set to join a constellation of awareness-building efforts, and tangible conservation measures, being embraced across Ontario. However, even considering these initiatives, we still have a long way to go to reach our targets.

With the filing of the Integrated Power

System Plan by the Ontario Power Authority last August, the need for energy conservation was firmly established — it is the foundation on which everything else relies. The plan sets ambitious conservation goals that will drive the energy agenda in this province for the next 20 years.

Consider this: Ontario must reduce its electricity demand at peak periods by 1,350 megawatts by 2010, and by 6,300 megawatts by 2025. This means a reduction of electricity demand within two years that

is roughly equivalent of the total generation capacity of B.C. and Alberta combined.

The 2025 target is the equivalent of taking one in five electricity consumers in Ontario off the grid. This challenge cannot be underestimated.

However, the good news is that our achievement of these goals will reap benefits for Ontario's economy in the short- and long-term. In an era of rising energy costs, households will save money. Businesses, by reducing their costs, will become more competitive. In a North American and global marketplace that is increasingly favouring companies that are environmentally responsible, Ontario-based enterprises will be seen as "suppliers of choice." Reducing electricity demand is sound public policy.

This is how Energy Conservation Week can contribute. It will encourage people to think about conserving energy, to believe that they can make a difference when they conserve, and to take action on conservation so that all Ontarians benefit. Energy Conservation Week is a start — because it helps make conservation visible — but it's not an end unto itself.

If Ontario is going to reach its energy savings goals, we need to make conservation a habit during the remaining 51 weeks of the year. New generation and transmission capacity will be needed, but it is expensive to build and very time-consuming to bring online. By comparison, conservation is less costly and faster to implement. It offers distinct advantages for the environment, for the economy and employment.

With Energy Conservation Week soon upon us, it is time to take part and take action. You can begin to take action by visiting the website and sharing what you'll be doing during the week of May 25 to 31, before or even after the week is over.

We can each contribute to tangible and important savings available through conservation, and that collective action is the real power of conservation.

Peter Love is Ontario's chief energy conservation officer.