

Connections

Upgrade your windows

Would you like to increase your home's value and lower energy costs? Upgrading to ENERGY STAR® qualified high-efficiency windows can help decrease drafts and air leaks, while also improving the overall aesthetic of your home.

Our partner Energy Trust of Oregon offers cash incentives to help lower the cost of installation and can connect you with a contractor in your area. Learn how window upgrades can help reduce energy usage at energytrust.org/windows.



Don't let heat escape

Heat is always trying to escape in the winter, causing your energy use to increase and your home to feel chilly.

Heat escapes through air leaks, commonly found in floors, walls, ceilings, ductwork, fireplaces, exhaust fans, windows and doors.

If you can see light coming in through cracks around your windows or doors, you can be sure that heat is going out and cold air is coming in. A small, 1/4 inch gap around a doorframe is equivalent to a softball-sized hole in the wall, letting air travel in and out freely. The good news is, sealing these leaks can be easy. Find quick DIY videos with Lisa, an Avista customer on our website.

Looking for other possible culprits responsible for letting your heat out? If you've got a window or wall air conditioning unit that isn't covered, wrap it up now to stop air leaks. Not using your wood fireplace? An open chimney flue acts as a giant funnel for air to escape, so close the damper. Finished cooking or showering? Turn off your ventilation fans to prevent warm air from getting sucked straight out of your house. Not feeling much air coming out of your central air vents? You can lose up to 60% of your heat before it ever reaches your room vents, if your ductwork is poorly connected or uninsulated. Learn more about what impacts your winter bill at myavista.com/winterbill.

If you're in need of new insulation, windows or more, Avista may have a money saving rebate for you. Visit myavista.com/orrebates to see how you can save on your next project.



Investing in our rural youth

Fourteen-year-old Berklie Sheppard has been involved in 4H since she was in first grade, showing and then raising animals. This spring, she raised and sold her steer "Jackpot" at the Asotin County (WA) Fair. A portion of her proceeds was funded by Avista.

Avista allocates just over \$30,000 each year to support 4H/FFA Fair Livestock purchases in nearly two dozen rural communities across our service territory. The company has a long history of support and appreciates the educational experience that the kids get from participating in 4H and FFA programs.

"4H is so amazing! I think everyone should do it," Berklie smiled. "I've learned so much about leadership, work ethic, speaking in front of people. 4H really broadens your experience!"

Like many 4H kids, Berklie comes from a 4H/FFA family and started at a young age. She showed rabbits during her first two years and when she reached third grade, she could start raising and selling livestock.

"I started out raising and selling pigs; this is my second year raising a steer," she explained, adding that in addition to participating in the livestock auctions, she has also consistently shown animals including rabbits, dogs, horses, goats and cats. "I think everyone should do rabbits because you have to learn all about them, take care of them and do a five-minute presentation to a crowd of people."

Clarkston Operations Manager Colby Witters is one of many Avista representatives in rural communities who attend county fairs to support 4H/



FFA students. Each Avista representative is allocated a modest budget and encouraged to talk with the student exhibitors about their animals before the auction. At the auction, Avista offers support which is a bid price that is usually over and above the market value of the animals. Avista doesn't possess the animals they support, they simply turn the animal back to the contracted meat processor and pay the difference between the bid price and the market value, which directly benefits the student exhibitor.

"This year, Avista's support has been especially important with the cost of animals and feed increasing dramatically," said Witters. "Feed has gone up about 25 percent since last year. The kids usually buy their animal and then raise it for about five months before the county fair. Between the purchase cost for the animal and the feed, this is a great lesson for the students about money management and volatility of market pricing."

Witters comes from a long family history of 4H and knows first-hand the value and positive effect the program has on kids. He has enthusiastically represented Avista at the Asotin and Nez Perce (ID) County Fairs for eight years.

"It's great that Avista supports 4H and FFA," Witters smiled. "Kids can get involved at young age, learn personal responsibility and be part of a consistent, positive culture as they grow up. It has such a positive effect in smaller communities because it opens up a lot of opportunity for kids to take different paths. Many of these kids go on to participate in the ag industry, which is an important part of our local economy."

Out of sight, out of mind

It's a phrase that could refer to the jar of half-used pasta sauce buried in the back of the fridge. Not that we don't care about refrigerator hygiene, but it won't surprise you to know we are referring to gas meter safety.

Avista will need access to your gas meter for periodic readings and maintenance. And in case of an emergency, we'll need immediate access to the shutoff valve. With these things in mind, take a look at your meter with fresh eyes. Is there anything in the way? Are there plants hiding the dials? Is debris gathered around it?

In the winter, is it buried under six inches of snow? If the answer is yes to any of these, help us out by carefully removing these obstacles and making the pathway

to the meter safe. While we're talking about the meter, we'll also ask that you never lean objects against it, place objects on top of it, or build anything (like a deck) above it. Finally, be careful when operating a vehicle near your meter. It can be relatively easy to forget about and accidentally back into it, which could result in a dangerous situation.

Beyond these simple steps, Avista will take care of everything else, like periodic maintenance. Out of sight, out of mind is a cliché. But when it comes to the natural gas meter on your property, it's best to keep it in mind, even when it's out of sight.

Visit myavista.com/resnfsafety for more information.



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