

# Money Management

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Money Management is a weekly column on personal finance prepared and distributed by certified public accountants.

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## **GOING GREEN: IT'S EASIER THAN YOU THINK**

"Going green" is a hot topic these days. More and more people are trying to make changes that reduce energy usage, minimize the waste that ends up in landfills and support the sustainability of our environment. In fact, 90% of Americans say they buy green products at least sometimes, according to market researcher Mintel. But what exactly is involved in going green? Because it's tough to give a precise answer, the New Hampshire Society of CPAs offers easy-to-implement ideas that are friendly to the environment and to your wallet.

## **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF INCENTIVES**

Many states are in the process of handing out rebates to consumers who purchase appliances carrying the Department of Energy's Energy Star® label. Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), these rebates are for purchases made to

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replace used products, ranging from water heaters and furnaces to dishwashers, refrigerators and room air conditioners. The ARRA also featured enhanced tax incentives that encourage individuals to make more energy efficient home improvements. An energy-smart purchase can, in other words, not only cost you less but also lower your utility bills over time. Turn to your CPA for more details on these opportunities. In addition, the Department of Energy's Web site provides many tips on energy efficiency that can help reduce carbon emissions and lower your utility bills. Check it out at [www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov).

#### **FIND OUT WHO'S GOING GREEN**

Being kind to the environment means you have to dig a little deeper in your pocketbook to go to a specialty store to buy specific items that are designed to be earth friendly, right? In fact, that's really not the case. Many big retailers have changed their operations or policies to do a better job of supporting environmental sustainability and used their purchasing power and economies of scale to promote environmentally friendly efforts, such as being more energy efficient. So before you spend extra money on products or stores that advertise themselves as earth friendly, find out what your

usual tried-and-true shopping choices are doing to change their habits. Local stores may have information about their efforts or you might be able to get details on a chain store's Web site. You may find that many of your long-time favorites are more environmentally friendly than you thought.

#### **SMALL STEPS ADD UP**

There are many small steps you can take each day that will reduce waste and save you some money. You can, for example, lower your home thermostat settings, especially during hours when your home is empty and heat or air conditioning are being wasted. Consider also walking or biking instead of driving whenever possible. Less unnecessary packaging will be created if you carry a thermos with water, coffee or other drinks from home instead of buying these beverages in disposable containers. In addition, as part of your own personal recycling effort, look into online sites or garage sales for inexpensive, gently used items. You may find some great and useful bargains. All of these simple efforts lower your expenses, making it possible to save green while going green.

#### **CONSULT YOUR CPA**

Your local CPA can help you reach any financial goal, whether it

involves changing your spending habits, saving for your future or lowering and managing your debt. Turn to him or her for answers to all your family's financial questions.

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