

FINANCIAL WELL BEING AND MONEY SAVING TIPS

This information is presented as a public service, courtesy of Summit Point Apartments
504 N. E. Chipman Road, Lee's Summit, Missouri 64063
816-525-5255
www.summitpointapts.com

The information has been compiled from varying expert sources. Retain a copy for future reference and pass along a copy to your associates, friends, and family.

Are you short of cash...having problems paying bills....paying your rent or mortgage...want to get out of debt.... start a savings account.....or any number of other reasons for needing more money or just plain saving money?

There are various reasons for having money problems. However, many people who have money problems are simply living beyond their means. It happens to the best of us. The underlying cause of spending beyond ones means and/or getting deep in debt **is that many people, most of the time, mistake wants for needs.** What is the difference? We can identify **needs** fairly simply. **Needs** are those things that are necessary to live and sustain us such as shelter (a house, condo, apartment etc), food, clothing, transportation, and a way to communicate (a telephone). **Wants** are those things or services we really don't need, but want for convenience purposes, or to impress friends, or to satisfy ego, or to improve life in some fashion. **Most people confuse wants and needs.** When someone says, "*I really need this (thing or service),*" most of the time what they mean is, "*I really want this (thing or service).*" There is a constant barrage of advertising to sway people to spend money on things or services they really don't need.

Behind on your bills, payments, rent or can't pay?

You often hear people say, "I can't afford to pay my rent, or pay my monthly mortgage, or make my car payment, or my educational loan payment, or pay my utilities." If this sounds like you, analyze what you are spending money on, what is most important to you. How important is having a good credit history? Many people, especially young people, do not think that having a good credit history or credit rating is important. A good credit history and credit rating is very important. It affects many areas of our lives, how much we pay for insurance, what interest rate we might pay on a credit card or loan, whether or not we can purchase a home, rent an apartment, and a variety of other things. Being foreclosed on, evicted, a vehicle repossessed, a financial judgment levied against a person, slow pay on bills, taking bankruptcy, all have a negative effect on our credit rating.

Many people are one paycheck away from bankruptcy. They have no savings, no back up funds.

Every penny is spent on satisfying wants. They are unwilling to sacrifice today, to have a better life tomorrow. Instant gratification is the by-word. They do not realize how not making the payments they have obligated themselves to pay and when the payments are due, has a negative effect on them. Nor do many people realize the necessity for putting some money aside for emergencies or to build a savings nest egg.

How do I get out of debt?

The first thing that must be done is quit getting deeper in debt. That might mean no more charging anything on a credit card. It might mean not buying anything for which you don't have cash on hand to purchase or finding other ways (bartering) renting, or borrowing an item. It might even mean going without something until you are out of debt and can afford it. It might mean selling a high priced vehicle and getting a less expensive one, thus reducing interest payments, insurance costs, personal property tax, and high servicing and repair costs. It might mean selling your large home and downsizing or renting a less expensive apartment.

Ask yourself these questions:

Does my installment debt, including mortgage payment or rent payment or other types of loan payments, exceed more than 20% of my **take home** pay?

Have I taken a cash advance on one or more credit cards to pay the monthly payment on other cards or credit accounts?

Am I at my credit limit?

Am I receiving letters, phone calls, or notices from people or companies I owe money to or from my landlord, my lender, or from collection agencies?

Do I have difficulty imagining what my life would be without good credit?

Have I written a check knowing I don't have sufficient funds in my bank account for the check to clear?

If you have answered yes to even one of these questions, you may be in serious financial difficulty.

Contact Consumer Credit Counseling Service for **free** advice and debt counseling. Call 1-800-355-2227 for an office nearest where you live. There are two offices in the Kansas City area: 3737 So. Elizabeth, Suite 103 in Independence or at 9300 Troost, Kansas City, Missouri (in the offices of Mazuma Credit Union). Call the 800 number above and they will set up an appointment. If you live in Kansas call the number and they will tell you the office nearest you. You have nothing to lose and all to gain in seeking this free counseling

If you are having problems paying bills or you want to start building a savings nest egg, what can you do?

Below are some suggestions that come from the experts.

Step One for saving and having more money at the end of the month is to identify what is really needed and what is really wanted. Then ask yourself a question every time you start to purchase something.....Do I really need this? Can I wait and purchase it later when I can afford it? Sometimes less is more. For example: many times we insist on the biggest, the best, or the latest gadget, no matter how much it costs .

A few examples: When purchasing a vehicle, we might stretch the limits of our income by purchasing a vehicle for \$30,000 or more, when a lesser-cost vehicle (\$15,000 to 18,000) would serve the purpose. Rather than buying designer clothing, (because we are paying for the label) a non-designer item would work just as well at less cost. Or we may want a pet, not thinking how much it will cost in food and veterinary costs. Or we might want all the features on a computer or cell phone. There are many examples of wants. You can save a lot of money by making a realistic list of needs and wants, then acting to either eliminate, reduce, or postpone purchases of things and/or services that you really don't need. It is surprising how these things add up. The problem is most of us don't want to sacrifice, or to postpone purchases until we can afford it....we want it all TODAY.

Step Two: If you want to know how much you are spending, and on what you are spending it, make a detailed list of each expenditure, no matter how small, for a one-month period. Seeing it all in black and white, on a piece of paper might be eye opening. When making a list include everything no matter what it is you spend money on, even coffee at your favorite coffee shop, no matter how small the purchase, write it down. You might be amazed at what you are spending on things or services you really don't need.

Step Three: Live within your means. This is to help you get started. Once you make your list of what you are spending money on, ask yourself these and other questions you might think of? Can I:

- get a part time job and use the extra money to pay off debt or get caught up on bills? __Y__N
- get along with a landline instead of a cell phone? If not can I get along with basic cell phone service and not all the extra features such as text messaging, email etc. __Y__N
- reduce my cell phone usage, thus saving money on extra minute charges? __Y__N
- do without a pet? (Saving money on food and pet care?) __Y__N
- do without cable TV or satellite service, thus saving a monthly fee? __Y__N
- reduce or eliminate money spent on tobacco, alcoholic beverages, snack foods, sodas, expensive coffee drinks? __Y__N
- reduce or eliminate purchasing convenience foods? __Y__N
- reduce entertainment expense; vacation expense? __Y__N
- reduce or eliminate magazine or other subscriptions (internet etc)? __Y__N
- go to the library and use an Internet connection rather than have it at home? __Y__N
- reduce expenses on high cost clothing, shoes, etc? __Y__N
- pay all my bills, rent or mortgage on time and save on late fees? __Y__N
- save money by buying things and food at a Dollar store or other discount store? __Y__N
- eliminate one or more credit cards? __Y__N
- drive less or with better driving habits and save money on gas and oil? __Y__N
- renegotiate the interest rate on my credit card(s)? __Y__N
- refinance my vehicle or home at a lesser interest rate? __Y__N
- find cheaper vehicle or homeowners insurance or raise my deductible? __Y__N
- buy furniture and other items at garage sales or thrift stores? __Y__N
- purchase a Sunday paper and clip coupons on items I need? __Y__N
- purchase generic prescription drugs or over the counter medications? __Y__N

Start today! Keep track of how much you save on each item that you reduce or eliminate. You will be surprised o how much your can reduce your expenses and have more money at the end of the month.

MORE WAYS TO SAVE MONEY

Airfare and Travel:

- Compare air carriers to your destination. Also check flights from or too airports that are not close to you or exactly in the destination to which you are going. The best airfares may to these other airports, such as John Wayne Airport near Los Angeles versus the Los Angeles Airport.
- You may save some costs by staying over a Saturday night stay-over or by purchasing your ticket 14 days or longer in advance. Ask what days of the week and time of day that have the lowest fares.
- If you are a Senior Citizen, check on Senior Fares.
- Even if you use the services of a travel agent, check airline and Internet travel sites for special deals.
- Check for the lowest hotel rates. Check Internet sites. If you are a member of AAA, AARP, an Alumni Association or other group, ask what room discounts might be available.
- If you are going to rent a car, compare rates including taxes and surcharges. Ask about discounts and membership rates, if you are a member of any group, association, or organization.
- Rental car companies offer various insurance and waiver options. Check with your vehicle insurance company and credit card company in advance to avoid duplicating any coverage you may already have.

Auto Leasing:

- Don't decide to lease a vehicle because the payments are lower than an auto loan. The reason they are lower is because you don't own the car and will have no equity value in it. Sometimes it makes sense to lease versus buying. It takes a careful analysis.
- Leasing a car can be very complicated. When shopping around, consider the price of the car, which is know as the capitalized cost, your trade-in allowance, any down payment, monthly payments, various fees such as (excess mileage, excess wear and tear) and the cost of buying the car at the end of the lease. Check to see who pays the sales tax and license fees. Check various publications regarding vehicle leasing on the pros and cons of leasing before entering into a lease.

Auto/vehicle insurance:

- You can save money by purchasing vehicle insurance from a licensed, low priced insurer. Contact your state insurance department for a publication listing typical insurance prices charged by different insurance companies. Then call at least three or four of the lowest-priced to learn what they would charge you for the same coverage. Or, find reputable insurance broker who can compare costs for you.
- Discuss with your insurer or agent about increasing your deductibles on collision and comprehensive to at least \$500 or more. This can save you quite a bit of money each year.

- Make sure you have a new policy in effect before dropping an old policy. Keep your insurance current at all times, especially your liability coverage.

Auto/vehicle:

New vehicle purchase:

- You can save hundreds of dollars by selecting a vehicle and model that combines a low purchase price with low depreciation, insurance, maintenance and repairs, financing, and gasoline costs. Check the library for new car guides or look on the Internet at “Edmunds.com” or other such sites. Compare prices at several dealerships, either on the phone or by visiting them. Let each one know you are contacting others as well. You can save hundred of dollars by comparison shopping. Don’t buy more vehicle than you need. High horsepower vehicles use a lot of fuel. Cars with multiple options and features cost more to repair and maintain. Be conservative. If possible purchase a Hybrid vehicle.
- Keep in mind there is no “cooling off” period when you purchase a vehicle. When you sign the contract, you are obligated to purchase the vehicle.

Used vehicle purchase:

- Before buying any used vehicle compare the seller’s asking price with the average retail price in a “bluebook” or other car guide to car prices which can be found at many libraries, banks, credit unions and on Internet sites such as “Edmunds.com.”
- Consider purchasing a vehicle from an individual you know and trust. They may be more likely to charge a lower price and point out any problems with the vehicle.
- Have a mechanic you trust check the car carefully, especially if the car is sold in an “as is” condition.

Vehicle Loans:

- To save as much as several hundred or thousands of dollars (depending on the price and age of the vehicle) in finance charges, pay cash for the vehicle or make a large down payment.
- Always get the shortest-term loan possible. This will lower your interest rate.
- Make certain to get a rate quote (or pre-approved loan) from your bank or credit union before seeking dealer financing. You can save as much as \$1000 in finance charges by shopping for the cheapest loan.
- Make certain to consider the dollar difference between low-rate financing and a lower sale price. If you are buying a new car keep in mind that getting zero or low-rate financing from a dealer may prevent you from getting any rebates they might offer. Ask them before you make a commitment.

Vehicle Insurance:

- You can save quite a bit of money by purchasing vehicle insurance form a licensed, low-cost insurer. Call your state insurance department for a publication showing typical prices charged by different companies. Then call at least three to four of the lowest-priced, licensed insurers to learn what they charge for same coverage. Be sure to ask about costs at various deductible levels.

- Another option to is purchase insurance through a credible insurance agent or broker who can check several companies for you.
- If you currently have low cost insurance, ask your agent or the company what the cost would be if you raised your deductible. This can save you quite a bit of money.
- If you change insurance companies, make sure your new policy is in force before canceling the old one.

Vehicle Repairs:

- Consumers lose millions of dollars each year on unneeded for poorly done vehicle repairs. The most important step you can take to save money on repairs is to find a skilled, honest mechanic.
- **Before you** need repairs locate a mechanic who is certified and well established; who has done work for someone you know, and who communicates well about repair options and costs. Don't wait until you need the repairs. Locate a mechanic in advance, unless you use a credible dealership where you purchased the car and even then is it best to get a quote from another party also.

Contracts, Leases, and Loans in general:

- Before you sign any type of contract to purchase goods, services, a home; sign loan documents, a lease to rent a housing unit (apartment, home, duplex, condo) or a lease for a vehicle, be sure and read the document(s). Understand all late fees, charges, and penalties.
- If you are late making your payments you can pay out several hundreds of dollars per year in late charges, fees, or penalties.
- Always make your payments on time and in the proper amount. This also enhances your credit rating.

Checking Account/Debit Card:

- You can save more than \$100 per year in fees by selecting a free checking account or one with no minimum balance requirement. Request a complete list of fees that are charged on these accounts, ATM charges and Debit Card charges from your bank. Shop around at more than one bank and compare.
- Be aware of charges for using an ATM not associated with your financial institution. Ask your bank about the charges for using other ATM's before you use one.

Credit Cards:

- To avoid late payment fees and possible interest rate increases on your credit card(s), make sure you send in your payment a week before the statement due date. Late payments on one card can increase fees and interest rates on other cards.
- You can avoid interest charges, which may be considerable, by paying off your entire bill each month. If you are unable to pay off a large balance, pay as much as you can. Try to shift the remaining balance to a credit card with a lower annual percentage rate (APR). You can find listing of credit card plans, rates, and terms on the Internet, in personal finance magazines, and in newspapers. Be aware that credit cards with rebates, cash back, travel awards, or other perks may carry high rates or fees.

- If you are paying a high rate of interest on your credit card balance and have a good record with the issuer call your credit card company and negotiate a lower interest rate.

Credit Rating:

- If you do not think that having a good credit rating saves you money, think again. Insurers, lenders, credit card companies, and others factor in your credit rating when calculating an interest rate, the size of a loan you can get, etc. A poor credit rating costs you money. Late paying, skipping out on a lease, having a judgment filed against you, your income garnisheed, or taking bankruptcy, all have a negative impact on your credit rating. You may not be concerned in the short run, but it will catch up to you.

Food/Cleaning supply purchases:

- You can save hundreds of dollars per year by shopping at lower-priced food stores rather than at Convenience stores, which costs more. You can save by purchasing store brands rather than name brand merchandise. Shop for groceries after you have eaten, you tend to buy less that way.
- You will spend less on food if you shop with a list, take advantage of sales, and purchase basic ingredients, rather than pre-packaged components or ready- made items.
- You can save hundreds of dollars per year by comparing price-per-ounce or other unit prices on shelf labels. Stock up on those items with low per-unit costs. Individually packed (individual servings) items cost more than buying in larger containers or packages.
- You can save money by joining a wholesale club or shopping at a Dollar store for certain items.
- You can save money on food and other items by investing in a Sunday paper and clipping coupons for goods and services.
- You can save money for cleaning supplies by shopping at wholesale clubs, Dollar Store, or looking for sale items.

Home Purchasing/Home Loan:

- Don't buy a larger home than you need. You can save thousands of dollars in interest costs, utility cost, repair costs, insurance, furniture, and other costs by only buying what you need and not more house than you need.
- Make as large a down payment as you can. Make your payments on time and in the full amount.
- Shop around for the shortest-term mortgage that you can afford. For each \$100,000 that you borrow at a 7% annual percentage rate (APR) for example, you will pay \$75,000 less in interest on a 15 year fixed rate mortgage, over the life of the loan, than you would on a 30-year fixed rate mortgage.
- Shop for a loan with the lowest points. Paying two points instead of three for example would save you \$1000 on a \$100,000 loan.
- If you are going to be in a home longer than five years, stay with a fixed rate mortgage rather than an adjustable rate mortgage. Be aware that the interest rate on most adjustable rate mortgages (ARM's) can vary over the life of the loan. An increase of several percentage points might raise your payment by hundreds of dollars per month. If opting for this kind of a loan ask the lender what the highest monthly payment might be.

- If you are already in a home and have a mortgage, check around to see if you can re-finance at a lower rate.

Home Equity Loan:

- Be cautious about taking out a home equity loan. The loan reduces or may even eliminate the equity that you have built up in your home. (Equity is the cash you would have if you sold your home and paid off your mortgage loan(s). If you are unable to make payments on a home equity loan you could lose your home, so be careful
- Do not take out a home equity loan to finance a vacation, buy luxury goods, or to invest in the stock market. If you do decide to take out a home equity loan, think it through thoroughly.

Homeowners Insurance:

- You can save money on your homeowners insurance by shopping around for the lowest cost insurance for the coverage you are seeking. Higher deductibles also lower annual insurance costs.
- Make certain you have enough coverage to replace the house and its contents. Replacement means rebuilding the house to its current condition.
- If you are a homeowner and have a high premium policy, call three or four other insurers and see if you can get a lower rate policy.
- Don't drop your current policy until you know the new policy is in force. Don't forget to notify your lender if you change insurance companies.

Home Improvements/Repairs:

- Home improvements and repairs can cost thousands of dollars and are the subject of frequent complaints and disputes. Select from among several well-established, licensed contractors who have submitted written, fixed-price bids for the work you want them to do. Make sure they have liability insurance also. Check with the Better Business Bureau before signing any agreements with a Home Improvement Contractor, Painter, or Roofing Company to see if there are any complaints against them. Ask for and check out references. Get more than one bid. Keep in mind the lowest bid is not always the cheapest in the long run. Compare the work that is proposed and the type of materials used.
- If you are hiring a handy man/woman, try and find someone who has done work for someone you know. Get referrals from friends, family, or associates at work.
- Do not pay for any type work in advance. Only pay when the work has been completed, whether for home improvements or for repairs.

Home Appliances:

- Consult Consumer Reports Magazine, which is available in most libraries, for information about specific appliances, brands, models, how to evaluate them, recommendations for the best ones to purchase for the money as well as Energy Ratings. There are often big price and quality differences. Look for appliances that have earned the government's ENERGY STAR® rating, which can save up to 50% in energy use thus saving on utility costs.

- Once you have selected a specific brand and model, check the Internet or yellow pages to learn what stores carry the brand. Call at least four of these stores to compare prices and ask if that's the lowest price they can offer you. Comparison-shopping can save you \$100 or more.

Life Insurance:

- If you are purchasing insurance for protection only, and not a saving and investment policy, buy a term life insurance policy, which is much cheaper. Shop around for the best price, but also check to make sure the insurance company is financially solvent. Check the National Association of Insurance Commissioners website (www.naic.org/cis) or your local library for information on the financial soundness of insurance companies.

Medical:

- Dental needs. Many times you can save money on dental work that you need or just basic teeth cleaning by going to a Dental School or Dental Clinic nearest you. This is much cheaper than going to a regular dentist, if you cannot afford one.

Medications:

- Since brand name drugs are usually more expensive than their generic equivalents, ask your physician and pharmacist if a less expensive generic or an over the counter alternative is available.
- Since pharmacies may charge widely different prices for the same medicine, call several and comparison shop. When taking a drug for a long period of time, also consider calling mail-order pharmacies, which often charge lower prices.
- Over-the-Counter medications: Look for store brands of what you are looking for. They are less expensive than brand name medications.

Renting a place to live:

- Do not limit your rental housing search just to classified ads or referrals from friends and acquaintances. Select buildings or apartment complexes in an area where you would like to live and contact their owner, manager or visit their websites to see if anything is available. Do not rent a larger home, duplex, condo, or apartment than you need or can afford. Look for a convenient location to roadways, your employment, schools, shopping, services, and recreation.
- Make sure they have good management and keep up the property. Visit the property; physically look at the premises you might wish to rent. If you are going to rent at an apartment complex and having a clubhouse is not that important to you, then consider renting at a property that does not have one. Keep in mind that you indirectly pay for all the amenities you might not use or just use infrequently.
- Remember, signing a lease obligates you to make all monthly payments for the term of the lease.
- It is a good idea to have Renters insurance. Building owners insurance policies do not cover your personal effects. Compare renter's insurance prices with several insurers to get the best price and coverage.
- If you cannot afford to rent on your own and get a roommate, make sure you have a written agreement between you regarding each roommate's responsibilities, payment obligations etc.

Savings Accounts:

- Establish a savings account. Every month discipline yourself to put something, however small the amount in a savings account. It builds up over a period of time. Don't take the money out of the account unless you need it for an emergency such as losing your job, being laid off, or illness. It is always smart to have a nest egg set aside.
- Many people do not plan for their retirement. Social Security is not enough money to maintain the lifestyle you might want. The earlier you start saving for retirement, the better.
- Before opening a savings account, find out whether the account is insured by the federal government (FDIC for banks or NCUA for credit unions). Financial institutions offer a number of products, such as mutual funds and annuities, which are not insured.
- Once you select a type of savings account, call around or check the newspaper to compare rates and fees offered by different financial institutions. These rates can vary quite a bit and over time can significantly affect the interest you receive on savings.
- To earn the highest return on savings, with little or no risk, consider certificates of deposit (CDs) or U. S. Savings Bonds such as (Series I or EE).
- Consider Treasury Bills that are issued by the U. S. Government.
- Money Market Accounts might also be an option and pay more than just a regular savings account.
- Check rates periodically and if you see an institution paying a higher rate of interest than where you have your account, consider moving the account or change the type of account to earn a greater rate of interest.
- Try this technique, if you are not already doing it. At the end of each day take whatever change you have in your pocket and put it in a jar or other container. At the end of the month wrap the coins you have saved and deposit the money in your savings account. You will be surprised how it adds up. Also if you practice any of the money saving tips in this write up, calculate your savings from implementing the tip, then take 10% of that amount and deposit it in your savings account. At the end of the year, you will be surprised how much you have saved.
- Consider a Christmas or other Holiday savings fund. Put aside some money each month for your next year's Christmas or other Holiday shopping. Then you will have cash available to purchase gifts and you won't have big bills to pay after Christmas or the holiday for which you want to give gifts.

Telephone/the Internet/Cable TV:

- Once a year, review your phone bills for the previous three months to see what local, local toll, long distance, and international calls you normally make. Call several phone companies which provide service in your area, (including wireless and cable) to find the cheapest calling plan that meets your needs. Consider a bundled package that offers local, local toll and long distance, and possibly other services, if you heavily use all the services in the package.
- Check your phone bill to see if you have option calling features or additional services, such as inside wire maintenance, that you don't need. Each option you drop could save you \$40 or more each year.
- If you make very few toll or long distance calls, avoid calling plans with monthly fees or minimums. Or consider disconnecting the service altogether and use dial around services such as 10-10 numbers

or pre-paid phone cards for your calls. When shopping for dial around services, look for fees, call minimum, and per minute rates. Get the least expensive. Treat prepaid cards as cash and see if there is an expiration date on the card.

- If you use a cell phone, make sure your calling plan matches the pattern of calls you typically make. Understand peak calling periods, area coverage, roaming, and termination charges. Contract offered by most carriers will provide you with a trial period of 14 days or more. Use that time to make sure the service provides coverage in all the places you will be using the phone (home, work, travel, etc.). Prepaid wireless plans tend to have higher per minute rates and fees but may be a better option if you use the phone only occasionally. Eliminate unnecessary options and features. You can save a considerable amount of money by not having all these features that you don't need or cannot afford.
- Before making calls when away from home, compare per minute rates and surcharges for cell phone, prepaid phone cards, and calling card plans to find how to save the most money.
- Dial your long distance calls directly. Using an operator to place the call can cost you up to \$10 extra. To save money on information calls, look the number up on the Internet, or in the directory.
- Compare landline costs to cell phone costs. If you can get by with a landline you will save money.
- When subscribing to Internet services or an ISP find one with the cheapest rate. Eliminate all the extra features you don't need.
- The monthly cost for cable TV or satellite TV can get quite expensive. If you don't need this service it can save you \$40.00 per month or more.

Shopping (general)

- You can save quite a bit of money by looking for items (clothing, furniture, children's clothing, toys, books etc) at garage sales in your area.
- You can save quite a bit of money by shopping at a Thrift store near you. Or go to a thrift store in more affluent area. You would be surprised at the expensive items more affluent people donate to thrift stores and where you can get great bargains on all sorts of items. Don't be too proud to shop at a thrift store. The savings can be significant.
- Shopping at area Dollar stores can also save you quite a bit of money.
- Buy things you need only when they are on sale, especially clothing items.
- Avoid designer clothes as much as possible. You pay for the label, when you can get just as good of merchandise that is not designer labeled.
- Joining a wholesale club such as Costco or Sam's Club can save you considerable money on a lot of goods and services, especially if you have a family.
- Buy your next year's Christmas or other holiday cards immediately after the holiday. Also gift-wrapping. You can buy these items for 50% or more off their original price.

Utilities:

- Saving on utilities can generate considerable savings. Set your thermostat at 76-78 degrees in the hot summer months and 68 degrees in the cold months. On hot summer days, when you leave for work, school, or shopping close your drapes or blinds to keep the hot sun out.
- Purchase the new energy efficient fluorescent light bulbs for your lamps. The cost a little more to purchase than an incandescent bulb, but they are more energy efficient and last longer.

- When you leave your residence or apartment, leave on only lights necessary for security reasons.
- When you are at home only turn lights on in the rooms that are being occupied by someone.
- You can save hundreds or thousands of dollars on utilities. Call your utility company and ask for energy saving tips, go to the library and ask for energy saving tip publications or look on the Internet.
- Call your utility company and ask if they perform home energy saving audits for free or at a reasonable cost. If not ask them to refer you to a qualified professional.
- You can save a considerable amount of money on water bills by looking on the Internet for tips such as on www.americanwater.com/49ways.htm. Or log onto a search engine such as Google.com and type in “ways to save water,” which reduces water bills and can amount to a considerable annual savings. Or if you live in apartment help conserve water, which helps holds down rental increases.

Conserving on energy and water not only benefits you personally with greater savings but also it greatly helps your community, state, and the nation.

Some home spun philosophy for you to consider

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”

“ A penny saved is a penny earned”

“Do unto others as you would have them to unto you”

(In other words if you legitimately owe someone money, then pay them when it is due and in full, as you would expect others to pay you if they owed you money).

Three Absolutes to Ponder:

Nothing is constant but change.

There will always be problems (good and bad).

If you are not on top of your life, your finances, your credit, your job....
your relationships and your health, they will be on top of you.

Getting out of serious debt or continuous financial pressures, building a nest egg for emergencies and/or retirement, being on top of things rather than them being on top of you by utilizing prudent spending and savings habits, can bring you a wonderful sense of well being and peace of mind. Isn't it worth the effort?

