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## Financial Help For Going Green

In the last column here in Going Green I mentioned that the rebate for solar electric systems for existing homes from PG&E will be dropping soon by about 30%. At this point it looks like we might have about a week, maybe two at the most, before this happens so it's time to call us – and your other local solar companies – to get your place checked out (we all offer free site evaluations and proposals).

There are a number of other very cost-effective energy solutions that qualify for rebates as well. The word to the wise is don't wait to take advantage of them, as they could be gone the next time you look! These rebates are there to encourage people to make smart energy choices. Smart choices are for smart people. If you're sick and tired of wasting money on your energy bill it's time to get going. Here's a list of what's currently available -

### Solar Water Heating Rebates

<http://www.gosolarcalifornia.org/solarwater/>

Solar water heating can be just as cost-effective as solar power these days, and the systems we install today are reliable, unlike most of the ones installed in the area 20 or 30 years ago. We even have one that has been manufactured locally since 1984 that comes with a lifetime warranty! Because these rebates come from PG&E they apply to systems with natural gas or electric backup heaters (they don't apply to propane).

### Energy Efficiency Rebates

<http://pge.com/myhome/saveenergymoney/rebates/>

PG&E is offering rebates for a wide variety of energy efficiency measures including:

- Appliances (Clothes washers, dish washers, room air conditioners and water heaters)
- Insulation for your attic and/or walls
- Cool roofs (great solution if you're ready for new roofing)
- Heating and cooling equipment
- Whole house fans
- Duct sealing
- Pool pumps and motors
- Lighting

I can't recommend whole house fans enough. By ventilating your home with cool night air and keeping the sun out the following day, many of us in Nevada County (myself included) don't need to use any cooling during most hot summer days.

There are a number of local heating and air conditioning companies offering duct sealing services. I can't recommend this enough either. It's essential and in many cases makes a tremendous difference, not just with dollars saved but with comfort, health and safety. Having done hundreds of energy audits in Nevada County over the years I've found about 25% to 30% of homes have disconnected or partially disconnected ducts. Most people are completely unaware that their central heating and cooling system is forcing foul air into their home from their attic and/or crawlspace. There are plenty of examples of people with terrible allergies or respiratory problems who were completely cured after having their ducts sealed!

### Federal Tax Credit

[www.dsireusa.org](http://www.dsireusa.org)

The Federal Tax Credit is good through 2016 and covers up to 30% of the cost of a number of solar and energy efficiency options.

So if you're one of the many who is tired of sending a huge chunk of your monthly income off to utility companies every month just know that there's financial help available. And it won't last forever!

*Ray Darby is President of Sustainable Energy Group Inc., a Grass Valley company offering energy efficiency and solar services for residential and commercial buildings, from comparing the alternatives through installation and servicing of energy systems of all types. You can reach him at 530-273-4422, via email [RayDarby@SustainableEnergyGroup.com](mailto:RayDarby@SustainableEnergyGroup.com), or visit their web site at [www.SustainableEnergyGroup.com](http://www.SustainableEnergyGroup.com).*