

The High Cost of Living and Economic Times

by Michael Batz and Morris Coolidge

In today's tough economic times, we have all had to tighten our belts both at work and at home. We are not quite seeing the light at the end of the tunnel and we are hopeful the economy will improve in the near future however, it currently looks bleak. All of us that are currently employed feel blessed since the unemployment rate is continuing to increase in New York. Most employers around the country have resorted to changes to the employee benefits so the businesses can survive. Even though we may not all agree with these strategies, it is the only way business can survive, and yes municipal government is a business. Some of the strategies are health insurance contributions, mandatory furloughs, cut back in hours, some places are even going to 10 or 12 hour work days. In most cases, we are expected to do more for less, or even worse, layoffs! I sympathize with anyone looking to retire soon, as all of our investments have taken a dive and are slow to recover.

We would like to share a few tips that might help with saving money both at home and at work.

- Look at eliminating unnecessary spending; ask yourself do I really need this?

- Shop around; look for the best price. Use the internet for pricing, clip coupons, use discount cards. Yes these are all marketing ploys, however for items you need, why not take advantage.
- Lower your heat in the Winter, use clock thermostats. Why maintain a higher heat when the facility or home is not occupied, or at night when sleeping.
- Turn off lights when not in use, use lower wattage light bulbs or switch to energy efficient bulbs.
- Turn off unused appliances, even better, unplug.
- VFD motors in facilities, let motors run longer. Every time a motor starts, it is a peak electric demand, which is costly.
- Insulate; seal windows and doors to stop air flow.
- Shut off vehicles when not in use to limit warm up time.
- Alternative fuel for heating wood, coal.

Remember every little bit helps, like the old saying "a penny saved, is a penny earned." And yes, it is almost impossible to save a penny today, and even if you can, it won't buy you much. ♠