

4. MONEY SAVERS

Spend now, save later

As the TVA rate hike hits electricity bills, most homeowners are including “save money” in their plans.

Architect Ryan Thewes finds creative ways to save money for his clients and use environmentally friendly building practices.

First, install tankless hot water heaters, he says.

“You take a 20-minute shower each day — but your water heater keeps that water hot 24 hours a day. Tankless systems work as you need them.”

If you don't replace the existing heater, wrap the tank with an insulating blanket.

Thewes uses a simple system to reduce his water bill. “I bought a 30-gallon drum and retrofitted it so my gutter drains into it,” he says. “I connect my hose to a spigot at the bottom and use the water for my garden.”

Although Thewes designs homes with green and money-saving ideas from the start, he says every homeowner can make choices that significantly impact the environment and budget.

“Switch your existing thermostat to a programmable one. Replace faucets and showerheads with low-flow versions. Replace old leaky windows with energy-efficient double-paned ones.

“Every choice makes a difference.”