

# Doug Rye *says ...*



## *Cooperatives add Hybrid water heater to offerings*

For years I have been touting the importance of having an efficient water heater. The reason is simple – water heaters use significant amounts of energy, second only to the energy used to heat and cool a home.

Until now, the most efficient water heater on the market was the Marathon and I have sung this product's praises for many years. Arkansas' electric cooperatives have sold the Marathon for years and continue to do so. It is a top-notch product. Now, the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas have teamed up with General Electric to offer yet another excellent water heater – the General Electric Hybrid Water Heater. This revolutionary product uses 62 percent less energy than standard electric units and exceeds Energy Star standards with an incredible Energy Factor of 2.35 or 235 percent efficiency. This unit costs around \$1,000, with rebates (see below), but it will save around \$320 a year based upon a three-person household. Do the math and you will see there isn't a long payback.

The Hybrid uses advanced heat pump technology and onboard intelligence in conjunction with traditional electric elements. The heat pump is the main way the water is heated, but the traditional elements will activate if the water is used up faster than the heat pump mode can replace. Other features include an eHeat mode to maximize savings. Then there is the

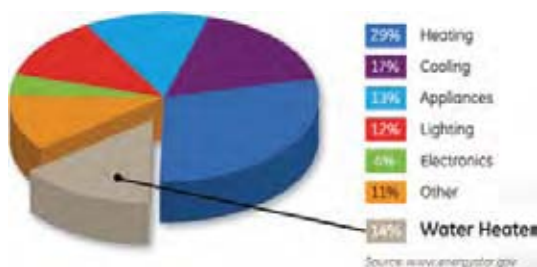
High Demand mode for when you have guests who need lots of hot water. When you leave for vacation, you can set the heater to turn off while you are gone and then turn back on before your return. This is one "smart" water heater.

Although the Hybrid is very different from standard water heaters, it is easy to install. It fits into a similar footprint as a 50-gallon water heater and uses existing water and electrical connections.

I realize this water heater is more costly up-front than the Marathon and certainly more than a standard one. But, the good news is that it qualifies for the federal tax credit of 30 percent on the purchase and installation price. Visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov). In addition, a \$200 rebate for the water heaters and other Energy Star appliances will be available in March 2010 from the Arkansas Energy Office. More details are available at [www.arkansasenergy.org](http://www.arkansasenergy.org).

If you are ready to buy one or think you might be, contact your local electric cooperative or call Arkansas Electric Cooperatives Inc. at 800-451-8061. For more information, you can also visit [www.ecark.org/energy\\_efficiency](http://www.ecark.org/energy_efficiency).

See you next month.



*Doug Rye, a licensed architect living in Saline County and the popular host of the "Home Remedies" radio show, works as a consultant for the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas to promote energy efficiency to cooperative members statewide. To order Doug's video or ask energy efficiency-related questions, call Doug at 1-501-653-7931. More energy-efficiency tips, as well as Doug's columns, can also be found at [www.ecark.org](http://www.ecark.org)*