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"If every household in America switched out one compact fluorescent bulb it would reduce energy consumption as much as taking a million cars off the road."

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Saving energy begins with One Light Bulb

It only takes one light bulb to make a difference.

That's Bradenton resident Jeff Kratsch's philosophy.

The idea of reducing energy consumption and changing your carbon footprint can be overwhelming. Kratsch thought several years ago when he realized he wasn't contributing enough to solving the world's energy problems.

"I looked around one day and saw what was happening and asked, 'What am I doing and how can I help the problem?'" Kratsch said. "You can get overwhelmed, but I asked myself what can I do today to make an impact?"

That's when the light bulb came on — literally.

Kratsch's first step was replacing his standard watt bulbs with compact fluorescents. Compact fluorescent light bulbs use up to 75 percent less energy than

STRICTLY BUSINESS



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traditional light bulbs and they last eight to 10 times longer, he said.

Then he thought, if I could just get my friends and people I know to feel part of solution rather than the problem, it would help.

That's when Kratsch, who runs marketsbeyond.com, a home-based marketing company, formed OneLightBulb.org to promote energy conservation through education. A year into the project, Kratsch is building strategic partnerships with local businesses

like Lakewood Ranch Telecom to make the community more aware of ways to conserve. He's used mainly his own money to build a Web site and begin marketing the idea. The organization sponsored a Live Earth House Party, a fundraising event held in conjunction with the Live Earth concert series on July 7 to raise awareness of energy conservation.

OneLightBulb.org also is partnering with Energy Star, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's voluntary program that offers businesses and consumers energy efficient solutions.

He hopes to eventually have programs to offer local businesses and schools that will educate the public on ways they can conserve energy and make an impact one light bulb at a time.

If you're a business owner, a first step might be contacting Florida Power and Light for a free energy audit.

"They make recommendations, some are simple or others require an investment with a long-term payout," Kratsch said. "All save money." He'd like to see the local chambers of commerce sponsor events themed around energy conservation.

In his own home, Kratsch has gone beyond his light bulb replacement first step. He does extensive recycling and he's put in solar heating for his pool. He talks to his children about turning off lights and taking shorter showers.

As a marketing consultant, Kratsch knows the persuasive power children have on parents' buying habits.

"A lot of people are ignoring the issue but it can be driven by kids," he said. "I tell kids to take a week of your allowance and buy your parents their first fluorescent light bulb."

Check out Kratsch's Web site at OneLightBulb.org for ways you can get involved.