

Seeing Green

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A turn of the wrist may be all it takes to make a major change in the way New Orleans homes impact the environment thanks to a rapidly expanding, hands-on energy efficiency group called Green Light New Orleans.

Conceived and led by local roots rock musician Andi Hoffman, Green Light sends volunteers into homes across New Orleans to replace standard incandescent bulbs with Compact Fluorescent Lights – spiral-shaped bulbs that produce the same amount of light but use only a fraction of the energy. CFLs can last for five to seven years, saving residents serious money along the way and drastically reducing the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere by electric plants as a result.

Multiply that effect by thousands of homes and Hoffman believes Green Light can make New Orleans a more environmentally friendly city. The CFLs and installation are free through Green Light, and anyone in the area can sign up for the service.

The nonprofit got its start during a European tour Hoffman staged with his band, the B-Goes, not long after Hurricane Katrina.

“I knew I had to do something for the city, and I wanted it to be about the environment and global warming,” he says.

Hoffman calculated the carbon emissions his tour generated and he asked audiences to make donations to pay for CFLs to install in New Orleans to offset that impact. Back home, he kept the drumbeat going, obtaining sponsorships and donations to pay for more CFLs and recruiting volunteers to work more and more homes.

In its first nine months in existence, Green Light installed 3,700 CFLs. In the next five months, Hoffman and his volunteers installed more than 24,000. In January 2008 alone, they installed close to 13,000. With more volunteers and funding, Hoffman believes, Green Light can install up to 400,000 CFLs a year and eventually cover every household in New Orleans.

During one recent visit to a Broadmoor home, Hoffman calculated the 34 CFLs he and a volunteer installed will save an estimated 13,396 kilowatt hours over five years. The resident will save more than \$1,500 in electric bills and the CFLs will spare the atmosphere some 15,198 pounds of carbon emissions.

“The people are happy to get free bulbs. The volunteers can feel like they’ve accomplished something meaningful. And of course, there’s the effect we’re having on the environment, which is the whole point,” says Hoffman.

To sign up for the service, to volunteer or to make a donation, visit [www.greenlightneworleans.com](http://www.greenlightneworleans.com), write P.O. Box 13564, New Orleans, LA 70185, or call 324-2429.