Kiwanis Hears
Energy Advice

The Kiwanis Club heard from economist and consultant with the Cooperative Extension Service of Louisiana, speak on energy conservation at its meeting Thursday.

Mrs. Castillo is an agent for the four-parish area which includes Lafayette, Iberia, Calcasieu and Jeff Davis. She appears weekly on the TV program "Passe Partout" with energy-saving ideas, writes a weekly column for The Advertiser, and she also frequently appears on KXKX TV.

The economist received her bachelor's degree from USL, a master's degree from LSU, and completed advanced studies at Tulane and Florida State University.

"Our utility costs will not go down," Mrs. Castillo stated emphatically. "They will continue to rise. We must all do whatever we can to save money and energy."

She gave the group a breakdown of where energy is spent in the home: 81 percent goes on heating and cooling, 15 percent is for water heating, 12 percent is spent on kitchen appliances, 2 percent is for clothes washing, and 10 percent is classified as "other."

Mrs. Castillo explained the basics of home insulation: one should use R-30 in the ceiling, R-19 in the walls, and R-18 under a raised house. She said that every homeowner should insulate the attic, doors, windows, and ceiling.

She urged that thermostats be set on 78 degrees, and preferably, 80 degrees. She gave an eye-opening example of energy expense: if the thermostat is set even as low as 72 degrees, the cost to the homeowner will increase by a jump of 63 percent.

To help keep heating and cooling costs down, Mrs. Castillo said that filters should be replaced or, at least, cleaned once per month. She said that, contrary to popular belief, a fireplace does not save energy.

According to Mrs. Castillo, windows should always be insulated in some way, in order to preserve heat and cool throughout the year, even if it's only blinds or shutters. However, she said that "the best window insulator on the market, though unattractive, is still, simply, aluminum foil."

Windows and doors should also be checked carefully for drafts and caulking should be applied in these areas.

Proper planning and landscaping, with trees and shrubbery well-placed, can also help. She energy, Mrs. Castillo reported.

The speaker explained that even doing simple things like dusting lightbulbs to get maximum light energy efficiency out of them will help greatly in the home. She said that fluorescent light is the best and least expensive form of lighting. She advised that if you're shopping for light bulbs, the consumer should compare prices, because many times an identical item may be several cents or even dollars more expensive at a different store.

The consultant pointed out that one continuous drip from a faucet adds up to 60 gallons in a week. She also explained that if a person showers for more than 10 minutes, he or she might as well have bathed instead.

It was also advised that an electric water heater be set at 140 degrees, and a gas heater on low or medium. One should wash a maximum of four loads of clothes per day, and never use a cold water wash. "Only extremely dirty things should be washed in hot water," she recommended.

She said that one should try to get maximum efficiency out of a dishwasher by using the best possible detergent and by placing dishes and utensils properly in the machine.

Mrs. Castillo reported that "microwave ovens are excellent;" they use only 25 kilowatt hours per month, as opposed to the regular, self-cleaning oven, which uses 100 per month.

She urged the group to "use small appliances wherever possible," adding that "pressure cookers are also very fast and therefore, less energy and money."

Refrigerators and freezers should be kept full at all times, and be opened as little as possible. Also, one should check to see that the gasket in the door is tight-fitting.