VOLTEX™ HYBRID UNIT GENERATES IMMEDIATE SAVINGS
Hybrid Electric Technology Slashes Energy Use in Suburban Home

Whether homeowners are looking to help the environment or simply save money on their monthly energy bill, they have a strong incentive to explore the latest “green” technologies from A. O. Smith. This is especially true for homeowners who must choose an electric water heater because they do not have access to natural gas or propane in their home.

Electricity is typically the costliest way to heat water. As an A. O. Smith employee, Jeff Storie knew this fact all too well. His own home in Sango, Tenn., was equipped with a conventional 50-gallon electric water heater that was more than five years old.

Storie also knew that A. O. Smith was ready to introduce a brand new hybrid electric model into the market that could significantly reduce his monthly power bill. He jumped at the chance to install one in his own home.

The new Voltex™ hybrid electric water heater brings together the proven reliability of a standard A. O. Smith electric water heater with advanced heat pump technology. The heat pump makes the Voltex more than twice as energy efficient as an ordinary electric unit.

“When you see an opportunity to slash the monthly cost of operating your water heater by more than 50 percent, it’s a no-brainer,” said Storie, who serves as national manager of contractor marketing. “I couldn’t wait to bring the Voltex into my own home to see the impact firsthand.”

The A. O. Smith Voltex operates at 2.3 EF, making it the only type of electric water heater that is ENERGY STAR® rated. The heat pump allows it to pull heat out of the surrounding air, like an air conditioner in reverse. That heat is then transferred to the water in the tank. This is a very efficient way to heat water, and the byproduct is cooler and dehumidified ambient air.

There are four people living in the Storie home, which measures 2,750 sq. ft. and contains three full bathrooms. Their Voltex has an 80-gallon tank, providing more than ample hot water for their family size.

“Our master bathroom has a large garden tub,
and my nine-year-old daughter fills it almost every night,” said Storie. “The larger 80-gallon capacity with our Voltex does a great job of filling the tub and recovering quickly after the bath.”

The energy savings are easy to see on the family’s monthly power bill. In September 2009, the first full month of operation, the family’s overall use of electricity dropped 481 kilowatt hours compared with the previous September. That amounts to $51 off the bill for one month alone.

The savings continued to rack up in October with 355 kilowatt hours less electricity use compared with the previous year, 483 kilowatt hours less in November, and 522 kilowatt hours less in December. (See chart.)

If this trend continues, the Storie family can expect to save over $500 annually in the cost of operation for their water heating.

“Today’s homeowners are smart about energy savings. They understand how quickly an energy-efficient appliance can pay for itself,” said Storie. “When you show homeowners the math, they’re going to make the best economic and environmental decision for their family.”

To make life easy for the contractor, the Voltex installs similarly to conventional electric models with a condensate drain. There is no additional time or tools required.

The Voltex is also eligible for a federal tax credit up to $1,500, or 30 percent of its total installed cost, as well as many other state and local rebates. For more information, go to www.hotwater.com.