

(This is an excerpt from one of two queries I submitted for Appleseeds Magazine's July 2009 "Energy: Using It and Saving It" themed issue.)

## **Does Daylight Saving Time Really Save Energy?**

### Hook:

Spring forward. Fall back. Each year adults around the world make a big deal about changing the clocks for Daylight Saving Time. Ever wonder if those extra hours of daylight are really saving energy?

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### Description:

#### **What is Daylight Saving Time?**

Every spring Americans "lose" an hour during the night by moving our clocks one hour ahead. Every fall we "gain" an extra hour by moving our clocks back one hour. Basically, we are "making" the sun "set" one hour closer to bedtime. Sound silly? Believe it or not, there's a purpose behind Daylight Saving Time beyond just jumbling our routines.

#### **Why Did We Start "Saving Daylight" Anyway?**

Daylight Saving Time or DST began in 1918, near the end of World War I, when several states attempted to preserve the longer daylight hours between April and October for war production efforts. During World War II (1942-1945), President Franklin Roosevelt mandated year-round DST, called "War Time," for all states. Still, even after the war when DST returned to a spring and fall event only for the next fifteen years, there was no agreement about when to change clocks. Just imagine, driving through seven different states and adjusting your watch seven times! The Time Uniformity Committee was created in the 1960's to solve this dilemma. Then in 1974, President Richard Nixon signed the Emergency Daylight Saving Time Energy Conservation Act, still in use today. Beginning in 2007, Daylight Saving Time was extended one month and begins for most of the United States at 2 a.m. on the second Sunday in March and lasts until 2 a.m. on the first Sunday of November. In the southern hemisphere where summer comes in December, DST is observed from October to March.

- Map Insert of areas around the world that do not observe DST as well as Kyrgyzstan, the only country that observes year-round Daylight Saving Time.

#### **The DST Debate**

Some argue that Daylight Saving Time results in fewer traffic accidents, safer trick-or-treaters, and more time to hang out. Others complain that DST only causes sleep disturbances, confusing schedule changes, and occasional switches in birth order. But perhaps the biggest dispute is over whether DST actually saves energy.

**Supporters:**

DST saves Americans energy--about one percent and 10,000 barrels of oil each day, according to the Department of Transportation. Extra outdoor activities mean fewer hours and less electricity spent indoors. DST saves electricity in all seasons except for the four darkest months of the year (November, December, January and February).

**Opponents:**

DST increases energy consumption of gasoline, cooling, and heating. More time outdoors leads to greater use of gasoline. Also, warmer climate states use more air conditioning in the summer and colder climate states use more heating in the winter, no matter what the time of day.

**You Decide**

Are we conserving valuable daylight energy by springing forward and falling back each year?

For now, Daylight Saving Time is a fact of life. But in the meantime, how will you take greater advantage of your extra evening or morning hour of light?

Sources:*Information*

Aldrich, Bob. "Saving Time, Saving Energy." [www.energy.ca.gov](http://www.energy.ca.gov). 10 March 2008. The California Energy Commission. 1 July 2008. <<http://www.energy.ca.gov/daylightsaving.html>>.

Douma, Michael. "Daylight Saving Time." [Webexhibits.org](http://www.webexhibits.org). 2008. IDEA. 1 July 2008. <<http://www.webexhibits.org/daylightsaving/nodes.html>>.

Rosenberg, Matt. "Daylight Saving Time (Not Daylight "Savings" Time)." [About.com/geography](http://about.com/geography). 6 April 2008. The New York Times Co. 1 July 2008. <<http://geography.about.com/cs/daylightsavings/a/dst.htm>>.

*Images on Spec.*

Eggert, Paul. "World map showing current and past daylight saving usage." Online image. 17 April 2007. [Wikipedia Commons](http://www.wikipedia.commons). 1 July 2008. <<http://www.cyberciti.biz/tips/wp-content/uploads/2007/03/daylight-saving-time-map.html>>.

"All of the areas marked in blue currently use DST, whereas the areas marked in red never have. The areas marked in orange no longer use DST."

