



# “Cash for Clunkers”

*Profiting from the disposal of your worn out relics*

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During the summer of 2009, the federal government’s program to remove gas guzzlers from America’s highways proved that incenting the public in this movement would help bolster sales of new fuel-efficient vehicles; nearly 680,000 of those older “clunkers” went into the scrap yards.

As foodservice operators, wouldn’t it also be nice to have an incentive program for you to replace that old, inefficient and worn out piece of cooking equipment. Actually, those incentives have been here all the while, as today’s improved equipment efficiencies can significantly reduce your monthly energy bill while improving your production and overall bottom line.

Foodservice operators are engaged in a constant battle with the need to strengthen that bottom line. Unfortunately, factors such as food and restaurant supply costs, facility maintenance, energy and water costs, employee wages, and health insurance costs confront the operator and seem to rise almost on a daily basis. So it comes as no surprise that when the necessity of a large restaurant equipment purchase looms, many operators consider stepping up to models with higher efficiencies than the existing equipment they’re replacing. If that equipment is more than ten years old, there have been many improvements which make today’s updated, more efficient models a great reason to replace those “clunkers” now!

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## ENERGY STAR to the Rescue

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According to the Food Service Technology Center, the commercial foodservice industry in the U.S. consumes some \$10 billion annually in energy with

up to an 80% waste factor! These lost energy dollars often come in the form of excess heat generated by inefficient appliances, HVAC and CKV systems, lighting and refrigeration.

Several years ago, the EPA created the ENERGY STAR designation to set higher standards of efficiency that may clearly be a baseline for defining the clunker syndrome.

When buying a new cooking appliance for your foodservice facility, remember that it has two price tags: what you pay for it and what you pay for the energy (and water) it uses. ENERGY STAR qualified appliances incorporate advanced technologies that use 10–50% less energy and water than standard models. The money you save on your utility bills can more than make up for the cost of a more expensive but more efficient ENERGY STAR model.

Let’s look at an industry workhorse found in most foodservice operations today, the fryer, as an example of how the ENERGY STAR designation will help foodservice operators make a more educated and informed decision when it comes to selecting a piece of equipment for improved production and performance. Prior to 2003, these efficiency designations were essentially non-existent, but through comprehensive research, new standards established minimum heavy-load cooking efficiency at 50% or better for gas-fired units with idle energy rates (how much your fryer uses when it’s in the “standby” non-cooking mode) at 9,000 BTU/hour or less. The chart on page 6 illustrates the energy usage differences of various fryer efficiency levels.

The bottom line here is fryers that have earned the ENERGY STAR designation are 25 percent to around 75 percent more energy efficient than

standard efficiency models and have demonstrated energy reductions up to 50 MMBTU annually or an average of \$590/year in gas savings!

So it's no secret that today's new standards for energy efficient foodservice equipment can be a real solution to help reduce your operating costs and very often, increase your production too!

In addition to fryers, there are seven other ENERGY STAR categories for commercial foodservice equipment, including: hot food holding cabinets, commercial refrigerators and freezers, commercial steam cookers, commercial dishwashers, commercial ice makers, commercial griddles, and commercial ovens. Qualified products can save up to as much as 75 percent over their conventional counterparts. For a complete list of current ENERGY STAR appliances for your foodservice facility, visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)

some additional “cash” for your clunker.

## Charities Can Benefit

There are doubtless many charitable organizations within your community that could benefit from your used cooking equipment. Although it may be old and of a lower efficiency than your new replacement appliance, many charitable organizations would welcome an opportunity to use your old but still functioning hand-me-downs. In many cases, lower efficiency will be of less concern as most of these organizations will never put the equipment through the heavy use and demands of a fully functional for-profit foodservice facility or restaurant. Churches and other limited use non-profits will be appreciative and you might even receive some public recognition in the process.

Efficiency Performance	Cooking Efficiency	Idle Rate
Energy Star	>49%	<9,000 btu/hour
High Efficiency	40 – 49%	9 – 12,000 btu/hour
Standard Efficiency	<40%	>12,000 btu/hour

## Equipment Recycling

Many times your used equipment is completely worn out and it must go the way of other clunkers. However, if you have taken reasonable care by having it maintained by professionally trained service agents and have employed routine cleaning practices, your good used equipment can provide some trade-in or resale value.

In addition to being a practical option in certain applications, a quality piece of used equipment can find new life helping those with limited resources stay within their budgets while giving them years of service. And for those environmentally conscious customers, a refurbished piece of equipment reduces the need to consume the raw materials and energy involved in making new items.

These are but a few reasons why recycling your good used restaurant equipment can present a win-win situation for foodservice facilities, especially those trying to save money or pursue alternative “green” business practices. Before buying your replacement appliance, discuss these alternatives with your local suppliers, as they may be just the outlet to help you get

## Other Valuable Resources

The Gas Foodservice Equipment Network (GFEN) and its membership of utilities and manufacturers assists in the education and promotion of innovative and improved efficiency natural gas technologies. This consortium of the Energy Solutions Center reviews virtually each new piece of gas cooking equipment and has awarded many product accolades including the Blue Flame Product of the Year since 2000.

In states where it is allowed, some utilities are able to offer rebates to foodservice operations that purchase new high efficiency ENERGY STAR equipment. The U.S. EPA and the DOE maintain a website that provides commercial foodservice equipment manufacturers, dealers, distributors and purchasers with information about rebates for ENERGY STAR qualified equipment from utilities and other energy-efficiency program sponsors. Visit the U.S. DOE website and follow the link to the CFS Equipment Incentive Finder.

*To learn more about energy-efficient equipment and how natural gas can play a bigger role in your business, log onto the Gas Foodservice Equipment Network at [www.gfen.com](http://www.gfen.com).*

