

Daylight Saving Time springs forward to March 11 this year

by Howard Miller

ZEELAND, Mich. - For Americans who dread the onset of Daylight Saving Time (DST), which steals an hour of precious sleep every year -- unfortunately, time is not on your side. This year for the first time, DST will last from the second Sunday in March to the first Sunday in November -- four weeks longer than usual.

The change was mandated by the Energy Policy Act of 2005, with the idea that longer daylight hours will lead to the use of less electricity. This is now a commonly appreciated fact, but what is the story behind the law? Time expert Mark Siciliano, Director of Marketing for Howard Miller -- the world's largest clock company -- offers the following facts about the history of DST:

Who started it all? Benjamin Franklin proposed DST as a way to curb the use of lamps in his humorous essay *Journal de Paris*. The system has been widely used since World War I, when it was adopted by U.S. law to conserve fuel. During World War II it was mandatory but did not become law in peacetime until 1966.

Who is in charge of DST? The U.S. Department of Transportation, which also has jurisdiction over time zones. Standard time in time zones was first instituted in 1883 by the railroads.

What are the advantages of DST? The extra hour of afternoon daylight trims the country's electricity usage by about 1 percent each day. There are also reductions in traffic injuries and crime.

Until now, why has DST begun the first Sunday in April? Mindful that barbecuing is best begun in daylight, the Barbeque Industry Association spearheaded legislation passed in 1986 that moved DST up from the last weekend of April.

Why will manual clock setting soon be a thing of the past? Timepieces can now be equipped with a powerful radio signal transmitted from the National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST) in Fort Collins, Colo., which sets the time automatically. The clocks are linked to the institute's cesium atomic clock, the most accurate clock in the world. Howard Miller has the first collection of these clocks ever available called Accuwave DS.

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