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(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): **BESORE, John, K.** [US/US]; Appliance Park, Louisville, KY 40225 (US). **BEYERLE, Michael, Thomas** [US/US]; Appliance Park, Louisville, KY 40225 (US).(74) Agent: **NAUMAN, Timothy, E.**; Fay Sharpe LLP, The Halle Building, 5th Floor, 1228 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115 (US).

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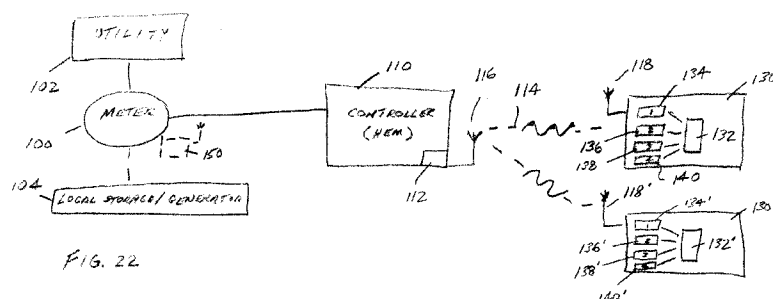


FIG. 22

(57) Abstract: A system and method of communicating between a master and a slave device for managing home energy are provided. A transmitter is operatively associated with one of a meter and a home energy manager for emitting a carrier signal at a selected frequency. A tone is superimposed on the selected carrier frequency and represents an operational energy cost level output from an associated utility. A receiver receives the emitted carrier signal with superimposed tone. A microcontroller associated with the home appliance then controls the home appliance in response to the emitted carrier signal with superimposed tone. Multiple distinct frequencies correlate to specific rates, and decoding or detecting the presence of one or more tones can be used to represent a binary number that allows the meter/controller to communicate "intelligence" with the home appliance.

MANAGEMENT CONTROL OF HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES USING CONTINUOUS TONE-CODED DSM SIGNALLING

BACKGROUND

[0001] This disclosure relates to energy management, and more particularly to energy management of household consumer appliances. The disclosure finds particular application to changing existing appliances via add-on features or modules, and incorporating new energy saving features and functions into new appliances.

[0002] Currently utilities charge a flat rate, but with increasing cost of fuel prices and high energy usage at certain parts of the day, utilities have to buy more energy to supply customers during peak demand. Consequently, utilities are charging higher rates during peak demand. If peak demand can be lowered, then a potential huge cost savings can be achieved and the peak load that the utility has to accommodate is lessened.

[0003] One proposed third party solution is to provide a system where a controller "switches" the actual energy supply to the appliance or control unit on and off. However, there is no active control beyond the mere on/off switching. It is believed that others in the industry cease some operations in a refrigerator during on-peak time.

[0004] For example, in a refrigerator most energy is consumed to keep average freezer compartment temperature at a constant level. Recommended temperature level is based on bacteria multiplication. Normally recommended freezer temperature for long (1-2 month) food storage is 0 degrees F. Research shows that bacteria rise is a linear function of the compartment temperature, i.e., the lower the temperature the lower the bacteria multiplication. Refrigerator designers now use this knowledge to prechill a freezer compartment (and in less degree a refrigerator compartment also) before defrost, thus keeping an average temperature during time interval that includes before, during, and after defrost at approximately the same level (for example, 0 degrees F).

[0005] There are also currently different methods used to determine when variable electricity-pricing schemes go into effect. There are phone lines, schedules, and wireless signals sent by the electrical company. One difficulty is that no peak shaving method for an appliance

such as a refrigerator will provide a maximal benefit. Further, different electrical companies use different methods of communicating periods of high electrical demand to their consumers. Other electrical companies simply have rate schedules for different times of day.

[0006] Electrical utilities moving to an Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system will need to communicate to appliances, HVAC, water heaters, etc. in a home or office building. All electrical utility companies (more than 3,000 in the US) will not be using the same communication method to signal in the AMI system. Similarly, known systems do not communicate directly with the appliance using a variety of communication methods and protocols, nor is a modular and standard method created for communication devices to interface and to communicate operational modes to the main controller of the appliance. Although conventional WiFi/ZigBee/PLC communication solutions are becoming commonplace, this disclosure introduces numerous additional lower cost, reliable solutions to trigger “load shedding” responses in appliances or other users of power. This system may also utilize the commonplace solutions as parts of the communication protocols.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0007] The present disclosure reduces power consumption during on-peak hours by reducing the energy demand on the power generation facility, and also enabling the user/consumer to pay less to operate the appliance on an annual basis.

[0008] This disclosure is a low-cost alternative to using expensive or complicated methods of determining when peak electrical rates apply. For example, when the refrigerator is in peak shaving mode (or it could be programmed to do this constantly), an ambient light sensor determines when it is morning, and then stays in energy-saving mode for a predetermined number of hours. Preferably, the system will need a counter to know that the room has been dark for a predetermined number of hours. When the lights come on for a certain length of time, then the system knows, for example, that it is morning.

[0009] This disclosure provides a peak-shaving appliance such as a refrigerator, including a method to determine when to go into peak-shaving mode without using additional

components, or components that have another purpose, and provides a high percentage of the maximum benefit for negligible cost. The two components needed for this are an ambient light sensor and a timer. The kitchen will be dark for an extended period of time while everyone is sleeping. The light sensor and the timer will be used to determine that it is nighttime and morning can be determined by the light sensor. When the refrigerator determines it is morning, the timer will be used to initiate peak shaving mode after some delay time. For example, peak shaving mode could start three hours after it is determined morning starts. Similarly, the ambient light sensor can also be used for dimming the refrigerator lights. This disclosure advantageously uses ambient light to determine when to start peak shaving.

[0010] An appliance interface can be provided for all appliances leaving the module to communicate with the AMI system. The system provides for appliance sales with a Demand Side Management capable appliance. The Demand Side Management Module (DSMM) is provided to control the energy consumption and control functions of an appliance using a communication method (including but not limited to PLC, FM, AM SSB, WiFi, ZigBee, Radio Broadcast Data System, 802.11, 802.15.4, etc.). The modular approach will enable an appliance to match electrical utility communication requirements. Each electrical utility region may have different communication methods, protocol methods, etc. This modular approach allows an appliance to be adapted to a particular geographical area of a consumer or a particular electrical provider. The module can be added as a follow on feature and applied after the appliance is installed. Typical installations could include an integral mounted module (inside the appliance or unit) or an externally mounted module (at the wall electrical receptacle or anywhere outside the appliance or unit). The module in this disclosure provides for 2 way communications if needed, and will provide for several states of operation - for example, 1) normal operation, 2) operation in low energy mode (but not off), and 3) operation in lowest energy mode.

[0011] This module could be powered from the appliance or via a separate power supply, or with rechargeable batteries. The rechargeable batteries could be set to charge under off-peak conditions. With the module powered from the appliance, the appliance could turn it off until the appliance needed to make a decision about power usage, eliminating the standby power draw of

the module. If powered separately, the appliance could go to a low energy state or completely off, while the module continued to monitor rates.

[0012] Use of RFID tags in one proposed system should offer significant savings since the RFID tags have become very low cost due to the proliferation of these devices in retail and will effectively allow the enabled appliance to effectively communicate with the utility meter (e.g., receive signals from the utility meter). This system makes it very easy for a customer to manage energy usage during peak demand periods and lowers the inconvenience level to the customer by not shutting off appliances in the home by the utility. When local storage and local generation are integrated into the system, then cost savings are seen by the customer. This system also solves the issue of rolling brownouts/blackouts caused by excessive power demand by lowering the overall demand. Also, the system allows the customer to pre-program choices into the system that will ultimately lower utility demand as well as save the customer money in the customer's utility billing. For instance, the customer may choose to disable the defrost cycle of a refrigerator during peak rate timeframes. This disclosure provides for the controller to "communicate" with the internal appliance control board and command the appliance to execute specific actions with no curtailment in the energy supply. This disclosure further provides a method of communicating data between a master device and one or more slave devices using RFID technology. This can be a number of states or signals, either using one or more passive RFID tags that resonate at different frequencies resonated by the master, or one or more active RFID tags that can store data that can be manipulated by the master device and read by the slave device(s). The states in either the passive or active RFID tags can then be read by the microcontroller on the slave device(s) and appropriate functions /actions can be taken based upon these signals.

[0013] Another exemplary embodiment uses continuous coded tones riding on carrier frequencies to transmit intelligence, for example, when one is merely passing rate information such as rate 1, 2, 3, or 4, using the tones to transmit the signals. One could further enhance the details of the messaging by assigning a binary number to a given tone, thus allowing one to "spell out" a message using binary coding with multiple tones. The appliance microcomputer would be programmed to respond to a given number that would arrive in binary format.

[0014] A system and method of communicating between a master and slave device includes transmitting a carrier signal at a preselected frequency from a master device to a slave device. Adding a tone to the carrier signal indicative of a cost of energy level, receiving the carrier signal with tone at the slave device, and providing an option to a controller to control energy usage within the home in response to the received carrier signal with tone.

[0015] The transmitting step includes using a carrier signal which is a RF signal.

[0016] The method includes providing one of multiple distinct tones to represent rates such as "low", "medium", "high", and "critical modes of operation".

[0017] The method includes controlling operation of a home appliance in response to the carrier signal with added tone, and optionally re-transmitting a signal indicative of receipt of the signal with tone.

[0018] One advantage of this approach is that customers have complete control of their power. There have been proposals by utilities to shut off customers if they exceed demand limits or increase the number of rolling brownouts. This method also gives a customer finer granularity in their home in terms of control. A customer does not have to load shed a room just to manage a single device.

[0019] This disclosure also advantageously provides modes of load shedding in the appliance, lighting, or HVAC other than "on/off" to make the situation more acceptable from the perspective of the customer.

[0020] An advantage of the present disclosure is the ability to produce appliances with a common interface and let the module deal with the Demand Side Management.

[0021] Another advantage is the ability to control functions and features within the appliance and/or unit at various energy levels, i.e., as opposed to just an on/off function.

[0022] The system and method is not only low cost, but reliable and proven technology for transmitting and receiving specific messages using simple RF circuits.

[0023] Another advantage is that the consumer can choose the module or choose not to have the module. If the module is chosen, it can be matched to the particular electrical utility service provider communication method of the consumer.

[0024] Another benefit is the increased flexibility with an associated electrical service provider, and the provision of several modes of operation (not simply an on/off mode). The module can be placed or positioned inside or outside the appliance and/or unit to provide demand side management.

[0025] Still other benefits relate to modularity, the ability to handle multiple communication methods and protocols without adversely impacting the cost of the appliance, opening up appliances to a variety of protocols, enabling demand side management or energy management, and/or providing for a standard interface to the appliance (for example, offering prechill and/or temperature set change during on-peak hours).

[0026] Low cost, reliable RF transmissions within the home, rather than using industrial solutions such as PLC or Zigbee solutions which are significantly more costly than the aforementioned system, are yet another benefit.

[0027] Still other features and benefits of the present disclosure will become apparent from reading and understanding the following detailed description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0028] Figures 1-21 illustrate various systems and methods of exemplary embodiments described herein.

[0029] Figure 22 is a schematic representation of a system and method for using continuous tone-coded transmissions for communicating between a meter or controller/home energy manager and one or more home appliances.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0030] In one embodiment, a more advanced system is provided to handle energy management between the utility and the homeowner's appliances. The system can include one or more of the following: a controller, utility meter, communication network, intelligent appliances, local storage, local generator and/or demand server. Less advanced systems may actually allow the appliance to "communicate directly with the utility meter or mesh network through the DSSM (Demand Side Management Module) (Figure 1). The demand server is a computer system that notifies the controller when the utility is in peak demand and what is the utility's current demand limit. A utility meter can also provide the controller the occurrence of peak demand and demand limit. The demand limit can also be set by the home owner. Additionally, the homeowner can choose to force various modes in the appliance control based on the rate the utility is charging at different times of the day. The controller will look at the energy consumption currently used by the home via the utility meter and see if the home is exceeding the demand limit read from the server. If the demand limit is exceeded, the controller will notify the intelligent appliances, lighting and thermostat/HVAC (Figure 2).

[0031] Each intelligent appliance has a communication interface that links itself to the controller (Figure 3). This interface can be power-line carrier, wireless, and/or wired. The controller will interact with the appliance and lighting controls as well as thermostat (for HVAC) to execute the users preferences/settings.

[0032] Enabled appliances receive signals from the utility meter and help lower the peak load on the utility and lower the amount of energy that the consumer uses during high energy cost periods of the day. There are several ways to accomplish this, through wireless communication (ZigBee, WiFi, etc) or through PLC (power line carrier) communication. Alternatively, using passive RFID tags that resonate at different frequencies resonated by the master, or one or more active RFID tags that can store data that can be manipulated by the master device and read by the slave devices(s) is an effective and potentially lower cost communication solution since there is no protocol. Rather, a pulse of energy at a particular frequency will allow a low cost method with an open protocol for transmitting/communicating between a master device and one or more slave devices, and appropriate functions/actions can be taken based upon these signals.

[0033] The interaction between controller and appliances can occur in two ways. For example, in one scenario during a peak demand period, the controller will receive a demand limit from the utility, demand server or user. The controller will then allocate the home's demand based on two factors: priority of the appliance and energy need level (Figure 4). The priority dictates which appliances have higher priority to be in full or partial energy mode than other appliances. Energy need dictates how much energy is required for a certain time period in order for that appliance to function properly. If the appliance's energy need is too low to function properly, the appliance moves to a normal mode or a higher energy need level. The energy saving mode is typically a lower energy usage mode for the appliance such as shutdowns of compressors and motors, delayed cycles, higher operating temperatures in summer or lower operating temperatures in winter until the peak demand period is over. Once the demand limit is reached, the appliances will stay in their energy mode until peak demand is over, or a user overrides, or appliance finishes need cycle or priority changes. The controller constantly receives status updates from the appliances in order to determine which state they are in and in order to determine if priorities need to change to accomplish the system goals.

[0034] In a second scenario, for example, a set point is provided. During a peak demand period, the controller will tell each appliance to go into peak demand mode (Figure 5). The appliance will then go into a lower energy mode. The customer can deactivate the energy savings mode by selecting a feature on the appliance front end controls (i.e. user interface board) before or during the appliance use or at the controller. The controller can also communicate to a local storage or power generation unit. This local unit is connected to the incoming power supply from the utility. The controller notifies the storage unit to charge when it is not in peak demand, if a storage unit is included and available. If the storage unit has enough energy to supply the appliances during peak demand, then the controller will switch the home's energy consumption from the utility to the storage unit. The unit can also be local generator/storage such as solar, hydrogen fuel cell, etc.

[0035] The central controller handles energy management between the utility and home appliances, lighting, thermostat/HVAC, etc. with customer choices incorporated in the decision making process. The controller may include notification of an energy saving mode based on

demand limit read from one or more of a utility meter, utility, demand server or user. An energy savings mode of an appliance can thereby be controlled or regulated based on priority and energy need level sent from the controller and/or the customer (Figure 6). Likewise, consideration to use of local energy storage and use of a local generator to offset peak demand limit can be incorporated into the energy management considerations, or provide the ability to override mode of energy savings through the controller or at the appliance, lighting, or thermostat/HVAC (Figures 7 and 8).

[0036] The present disclosure has the ability for the home to shed loads in pending brown-out or black-out situations, yet have intelligence to prevent an improper action such as shutting down the refrigerator for extended timeframes that might compromise food storage safety.

[0037] How much energy the appliance consumes in peak demand is based on priority of the device and the energy need level. If the appliance's priority is high, then the appliance will most likely not go into a saving mode. The energy need level is based on how little energy the appliance can consume during peak demand and still provide the function setting it is in (i.e. in a refrigerator, ensuring that the temperature is cool enough to prevent spoiling). It will also be appreciated that an appliance may have multiple energy need levels.

[0038] The controller will be the main product with the communication and settings control incorporated within future appliances. Specific meters will be selected so that the controller can read the demand usage. It is intended that the demand server will possibly be purchased or leased to the utility.

[0039] A method is provided for constructing an appliance designed to perform any key function, the appliance comprises of several mechanical and electrical elements controlled by a main controller. This main controller has a port for receiving information regarding the operational state of the appliance. The port also has a user interface or switch which could be used to override the information received by the controller through the port. Two-way or one-way communication devices may be connected to the port. These communication devices will receive signals from a remote controller, process those signals and as a result communicate an

operational state to the main controller of the appliance. This operational state is communicated to the main controller by one or more remote controllers in a specific format determined by the appliance. These signals from the remote controller(s) could be based on a variety of communication methods and associated protocols. On receiving the operational state signal, the appliance main controller causes the appliance to run a predetermined operational mode. These operational modes are designed into the appliance(s) and result in different resource consumption levels or patterns, even delaying use. Resources could include energy, water, air, heat, sunlight, time, etc. In future appliance models, the consumer might be given the authority to modify the appliance responses to a given rate signal. The consumer would be presented a "check box" of potential response modes and allowed to choose within set parameters. For instance, the consumer might be allowed to choose the amount of temperature adjustment a refrigerator will make in response to a high utility rate.

[0040] A method of communicating data between a master device and one or more slave devices may advantageously use continuous tone-coded transmission system. This can be a number of states or signals, either using one or more continuous tones that signify different rate states coming from the home area network (from meter) or the utility. Additionally, one could send a combination of tones to transmit binary messages using a few tones. The slave devices will incorporate a receiver that receives the carrier frequency and then decodes the continuous tone which corresponds to the particular state of the utility rate. Once the "receiver board" detects the tone, then the downstream circuitry will trigger the appropriate response in the appliance. The carrier frequency in this scheme can be numerous spectrums, one being the FM broadcast band or a specific FM band allocated by the FCC for low level power output. The advantage of broadcast band FM is the low cost of such devices and the potential to penetrate walls, etc. within a home with very low levels of power due to the long wavelength of the 89-106Mhz carrier. This process is used today in 2-way radio communications to reduce the annoyance of listening to multiple users on shared 2-way radio frequencies. The process in these radios is referred to as CTCSS (continuous tone-coded squelch system) and would find application in this end use.

[0041] Generally, it is not known to have modular interfaces that can receive signals from a control source. Also, no prior arrangements have functioned by addressing the control board of the appliance with a signal that directs the appliance to respond.

[0042] Thus, by way of example only, the structure and/or operation of a refrigerator (Figure 9, although other appliances are also represented) may be modified or altered by reducing the temperature, especially in the freezer compartment pre on-peak time and further temporarily provide a compartment temperature increase to shave on-peak load. Specifically, defrost operation could be delayed until off-peak time. Alternatively or conjunctively, the freezer and refrigerator temperature setpoints may be set to maintain less compressor on time during on-peak demand times. Similarly, the refrigerator/freezer could be programmed so that lights will not be permitted to come on or the lights must be dimmed lights during on-peak demand times. During on-peak demand times, the fan operating speeds can be reduced, and/or compressor operating speed reduced in order to reduce energy consumption. Still another option is to reduce the delay time for the door alarm to sound during on-peak time. Other power load reducing measures in a refrigerator may include (reducing before on-peak hours) the temperature of the freezer and refrigerator compartments in a refrigerator (prechill) and slightly increase temperature setting during on-peak rates. For example, just before peak rate time, the temperature setting could be decreased by 1-2 degrees (during off-peak rates). Some communication line with the electrical company could be established. Thus, the electrical company may be able to send a signal in advance to prechill the refrigerator (or in the case of an air conditioner, decrease the room temperature during off-peak rates as a pre-chill maneuver) and, in turn, increase the temperature setting during on-peak rates.

[0043] Still other energy consuming practices of the exemplary refrigerator that may be altered include turning the ice-maker off during on-peak demand times, or disabling the crushed ice mode during on-peak demand times. Alternatively, the consumer may be given the ability to select via a user interface which items are incorporated into the on-peak demand via an enable/disable menu, or to provide input selection such as entry of a zip code (Figure 10) in order to select the utility company and time of use schedule (Figure 11), or using a time versus day of the week schedule input method (Figures 12-13).

[0044] The user interface may also incorporate suggested energy saving tips or show energy usage, or provide an indicator during on-peak mode, or provide a counter to illustrate the energy impact of door opening, or showing an energy calculator to the consumer to serve as a reminder of the impact of certain selections/actions on energy use or energy conservation (Figures 14-19).

[0045] One path that is being pursued from the appliance perspective is to allow the onboard CPU (microprocessor) of the appliance to determine how to respond to an incoming signal asking for a load shedding response. For example, the CPU will turn on, turn off, throttle, delay, adjust, or modify specific functions and features in the appliance to provide a turndown in power consumption (Figure 20). Figure 21 defines specifically exemplary modes of what are possible. The main feature here is the enabling of the main board microprocessor or CPU to execute actions in the appliance to deliver load shedding (lowering power consumption at that instant). The actions available in each appliance are only limited to the devices that the CPU has control over, which are nearly all of the electrical consuming devices in an appliance. This may work better where the appliance has an electronic control versus an electromechanical control.

[0046] Of course, the above description focuses on the refrigerator but these concepts are equally applicable to other home appliances such as dishwashers, water heaters, washing machines, clothes dryers, televisions (activate a recording feature rather than turning on the television), etc., and the list is simply representative and not intended to be all encompassing.

[0047] Likewise, although these concepts have been described with respect to appliances, they may find application in areas other than appliances and other than electricity usage. For example, a controller that acts as an intermediary between the utilities meter and the appliance interprets the utility signal, processes it and then submits this signal to the appliance for the prescribed reaction. In a similar fashion, the controller may find application to other household utilities, for example, natural gas and water within the home. One can equip the water and gas meters to measure flow rates and then drive responses to a gas water heater or gas furnace precisely like the electrical case. This would assume that one might experience variable gas and water rates in the future. Secondly, the flow meters being connected to the controller could

provide a consumer with a warning as to broken or leaking water lines by comparing the flow rate when a given appliance or appliances are on to the normal consumption. In cases where safety is a concern, the system could stop the flow of gas or water based on the data analysis.

[0048] Another feature might be the incorporation of "remote subscription" for the utility benefit. In some cases, the utility will be providing customers discounts/rebates for subscribing to DSM in their appliances, hot water heaters, etc. The "remote subscription" feature would allow the utility to send a signal that would "lockout" the consumer from disabling the feature since they were on the "rebate" program.

[0049] Another feature that the controller lends itself to is the inclusion of "Remote diagnostics". This feature would allow the appliance to send a signal or message to the controller indicating that something in the appliance was not up to specifications. The controller could then relay this signal to the utility or to the appliance manufacturer via the various communication avenues included into the controller (i.e., WIFI, WIMAX, Broadband, cell phone, or any other formats that the controller could "speak").

[0050] In the case of a remote subscription, the utilities today rely on the honesty of their subscribers to leave the DSM system functional. Some people may receive the discounts/rebate and then disable the feature that drives the load shedding. With this system, the utility can ensure that the feature will be enabled and provide the proper load shedding.

[0051] As briefly noted above, the present disclosure contemplates using continuous tone-coded transmission between a master device and one or more slave devices. Generally in telecommunications, a CTCSS (continuous tone-coded squelch system) refers to a two-way radio system allowing master and slave devices to operate on a predetermined frequency while other master and slave devices are also operating on the same frequency. Because the audio for one of these two-way radio systems is able to receive all transmissions on a particular frequency, this can be particularly problematic where for example one company wants to communicate only with its employees and discriminate/remove other transmissions on the same frequency. CTCSS is often called PL tone or tone, and is available under a wide number of brand names such as Private Line, Channel Guard, Quiet Channel, Quiet Talk, ToneGuard, CallGuard, or ToneLock.

Generally speaking, installation of CTCSS capabilities for radio transceivers enables a receiver to detect a sub-audible tone that is superimposed on a transmitted signal. Thus, the transmitted signal or carrier is at a frequency, e.g., 900 mHz, that communicates with a receiver that likewise is normally responsive to a 900 mHz signal. However, the transmission includes a side band signal, or sub-audible tone, so that the receiver is only responsive to the particular frequency with the particular tone frequency, e.g. a 900 mHz primary signal with a 151.4 Hz tone frequency on the carrier signal.

[0052] With reference to Figure 22, meter 100 at the home is in operative communication with a utility 102 or another device that provides data indicative of energy costs. As noted previously, during high demand, utilities may charge a premium for energy. In some critical situations, the homeowner may opt to use a local storage or a local generator 104 for its energy needs. A controller 110 is provided in the home and may be adjacent the meter, or may be remotely located thereto. The controller is oftentimes referred to as a home energy manager (HEM) and is intended to receive information from the meter including the data regarding operational costs of the energy. Part of the controller is an emitter or transmitter 112 that emits a signal 114 from antenna 116, such as a radio frequency signal, that is detected through a receiver antenna 118 associated with a remotely located home appliance 130. As will be appreciated, although only a pair of home appliances 130, 130' are shown the homeowner may have multiple home appliances adapted to advantageously use the information transmitted from the controller.

[0053] The home appliance includes a microcontroller 132 which monitors one or more tone frequencies represented at 134, 136, 138, 140. Although the home appliance is enabled to receive the carrier signal 114 that is matched to the frequency of the carrier signal via the antenna 118, the microcontroller would not be enabled unless a particular tone on the carrier frequency is also present. If the tone is present, the microcontroller 132 detects the carrier signal with the correct CTCSS tone (i.e., decodes the signal) and thereby prompts the homeowner with regard to particular data, such as the operational costs associated with the energy, a preferred or suggested mode of operation, etc

[0054] . The homeowner may have already preselected a course of action in response to one or more of the tones being received by programming controller 110 as desired. Alternatively, the homeowner can be prompted and the particular home appliance actuated for an alternative mode of operation based on this data.

[0055] It is also contemplated that the tones could be used to transmit signals or combinations of tones to “spell out” a binary signal. By assigning binary digits to four separate tones, for example, “intelligence” can be communicated for numbers up to 99, depending on either the presence or absence of one or more of the four tones. Four tones can be sufficiently separated to provide the desired granularity, for example, level 1 = 131.3 Hz, level 2 = 151.4 Hz, level 3 = 173.8 Hz, and level 4 = 192.8 Hz. If all four tones are absent, the binary digits represent [0000] for example, or if all four tones are present, the binary digits could be [1111], with other permutations and combinations available depending on whether a particular tone or combination of tones is present.

[0056] The particular home appliance could also, in turn, re-transmit a reply signal or a reply carrier signal with superimposed tones to acknowledge receipt of the signal from the controller/HEM. In this manner, controller 110 would be equipped with transceiver 112 to both transmit and receive signals associated with one or more home appliances. The homeowner, and possibly the utility, would have first hand information regarding the operational mode of one or more home appliances based on the data received by the controller/HEM.

[0057] The carrier signal is preferably an RF signal (which is advantageous since the RF signal is able to communicate through walls in a home), and more particularly may be an FM signal, that has multiple distinct tones to represent different energy rates, for example, “low”, “medium”, “high”, and “critical” modes of operation. If desired, the homeowner may preprogram or be prompted to select a desired operation of one or more home appliances based on this information. If no master controller or HEM is employed, the same information may be available adjacent the meter as represented by a transceiver 150 and each appliance 130, 130', etc., prompts the homeowner through a user interface to select the desired operational mode for the appliance.

[0058] In summary, a method of communicating data between a master device and one or more slave devices using continuous tone-coded transmission (CTCSS) is provided. A number of states or signals, either using either one or more continuous tones signifying different rate states, coming from a home energy manager/controller, or alternatively from the utility utility, may be used. Additionally, a combination of tones could be employed to transmit binary messages using a few tones simultaneously. The slave devices incorporate a receiver that receives the carrier frequency and then decodes the continuous tone which corresponds to the particular state of the utility rate. Once the receiver or the microcontroller detects the tone, then downstream circuitry will trigger an appropriate response in the appliance, or prompt the homeowner to select a desired response. The carrier frequency in this scheme can be numerous spectrums, one being RF or FM broadcast band, or a specific FM band allocated by the FCC for low-level power input. The advantage of using FM transmission bands is the low cost of such devices and the potential to penetrate walls within a home with very low levels of power due to the long wavelength of the 89 to 106 mHz carrier signal. Tones riding on these carrier frequencies transmit intelligence and can pass along energy rate information such as level 1, 2, 3, or 4 which may be representative of “low”, “medium”, “high”, and “critical” costs associated with energy consumption.

[0059] The invention has been described with reference to the preferred embodiments. Obviously, modifications and alterations will occur to others upon reading and understanding the preceding detailed description. It is intended that the invention be construed as including all such modifications and alterations.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of communicating between a master and slave device for managing home energy comprising:
 - transmitting a carrier signal at a preselected frequency from a master device to a slave device;
 - adding a tone to the carrier signal indicative of a cost of energy level;
 - receiving the carrier signal with tone at the slave device; and
 - providing an option to a controller to control energy usage within the home in response to the received carrier signal with added tone.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the transmitting step includes using a carrier signal frequency that can penetrate walls of an associated home.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the carrier signal is a RF signal.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the adding step includes providing one of four distinct tones to represent low, medium, high, and critical modes of operation.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein the adding step includes adding multiple tones to the carrier signal.
6. The method of claim 1 further comprising controlling operation of a home appliance in response to the carrier signal with added tone.
7. The method of claim 7 further comprising retransmitting a signal indicative of receipt of the carrier signal with added tone.
8. A system for communicating data relating to home energy comprising:

a transmitter for emitting a carrier signal at a selected frequency with an added tone representative of energy operational costs;

a receiver for receiving the emitted carrier signal with added tone; and

a controller operatively connected to the receiver that provides an option of controlling an operational mode of an associated home appliance in response to the carrier signal with added tone.

9. The system of claim 8 wherein the transmitter is operatively associated with a home meter in communication with an associated utility for providing the carrier signal with tone to the associated home appliance.

10. The system of claim 8 wherein the transmitter is operatively associated with a home energy manager that receives information from an associated utility and provides the carrier signal with added tone to the associated home appliance.

11. The system of claim 10 further comprising a second transmitter operatively associated with the associated home appliance for confirming receipt of the carrier signal with tone.

12. The system of claim 8 wherein the transmitter emits a signal with one of four distinct tones representative of low, medium, high, and critical energy modes.

13. The system of claim 8 wherein the transmitter emits the carrier frequency in the FM band.

14. A system for communicating energy operational cost data to an associated home appliance comprising:

a transmitter operatively associated with one of a meter and a home energy manager for emitting a carrier signal at selected frequency having a tone superimposed thereon representative of an operational energy cost level output from an associated utility;

a receiver for receiving the emitted carrier signal with superimposed tone; and
a controller operatively connected to one of the home energy manager and an associated home appliance for controlling energy use by the associated home appliance in response to the emitted carrier signal with superimposed tone.

15. The system of claim 14 wherein the tones are one of four distinct frequencies that correlate to low, medium, high, and critical operational modes of operation for the associated home appliance.

16. The system of claim 14 further comprising a second transmitter operatively connected to the controller of the associated home appliance for retransmitting from the associated home appliance that the emitted carrier signal with superimposed tone was received thereby.

17. The system of claim 14 wherein the transmitter emits more than one tone superimposed on the carrier signal.

18. A method of communicating between a master and slave device for managing home energy comprising:

transmitting a carrier signal at a preselected frequency from a master device to a slave device;

adding a tone to the carrier signal indicative of a demand state of an energy providing utility;

receiving the carrier signal with tone at the slave device; and

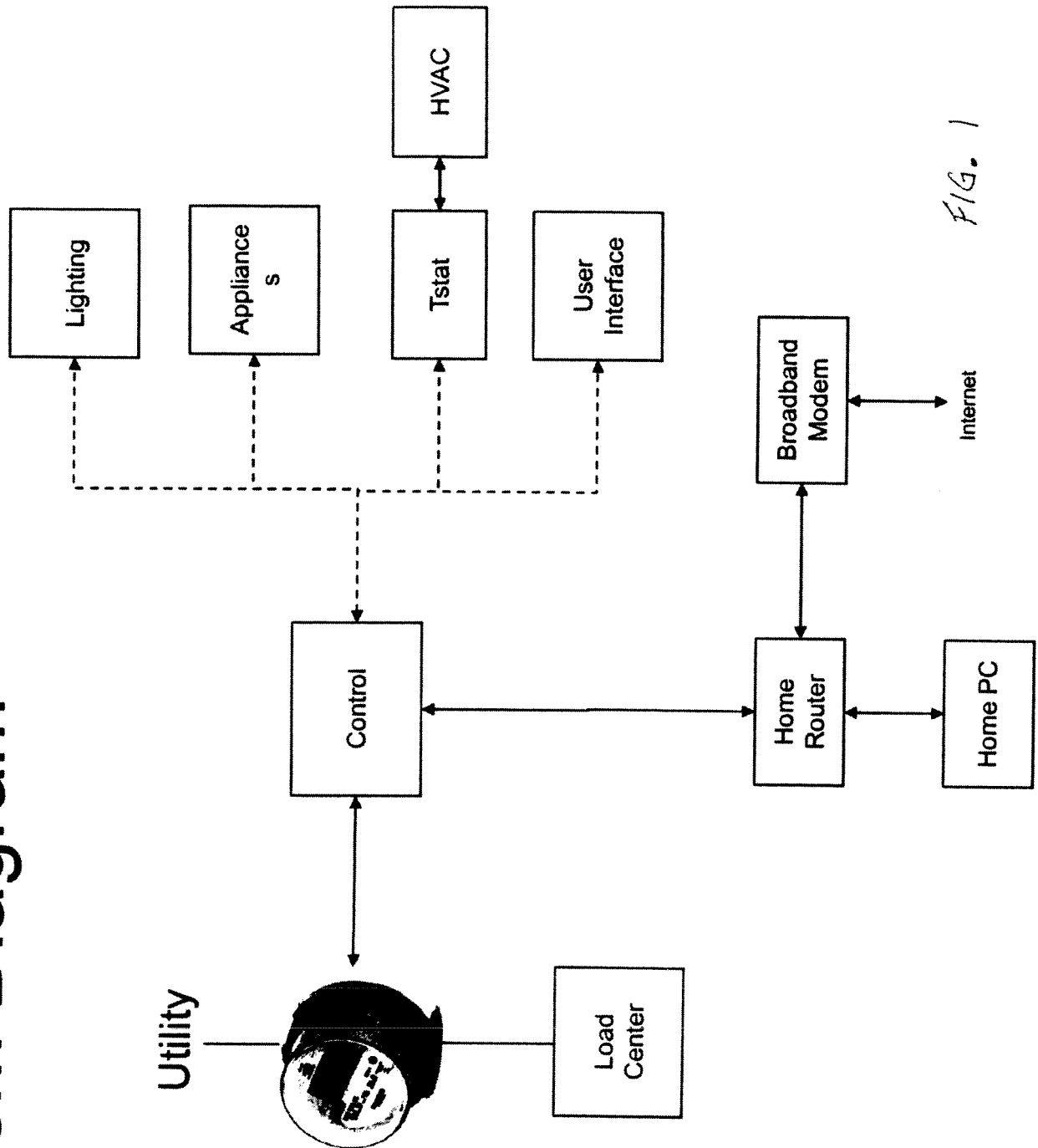
providing an option to a controller to control energy usage within the home in response to the received carrier signal with added tone.

19. A system for communicating data relating to home energy comprising:

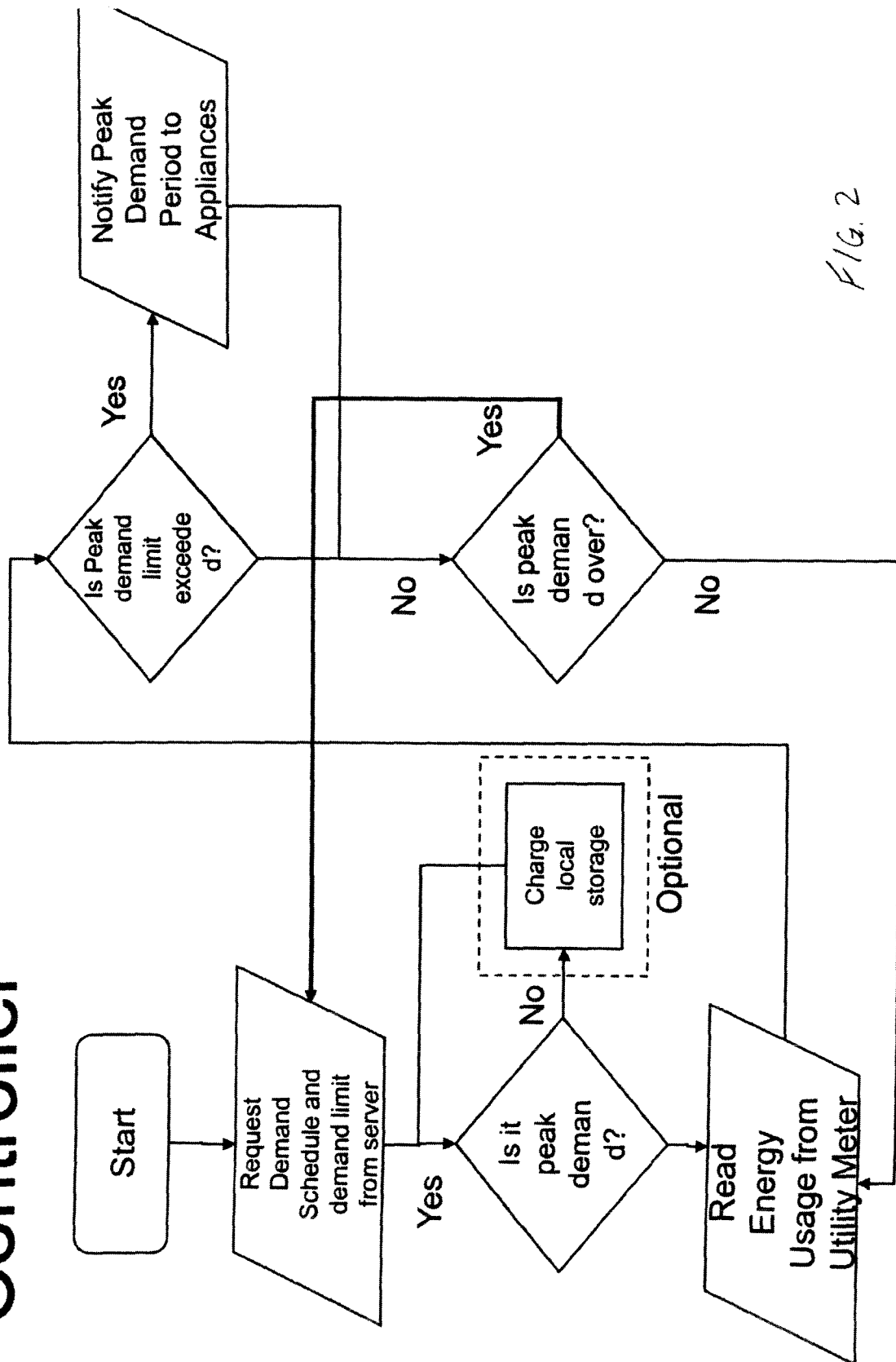
a transmitter for emitting a carrier signal at a selected frequency with an added tone representative of the demand state of an energy providing utility;

a receiver for receiving the emitted carrier signal with added tone; and
a controller operatively connected to the receiver that provides an option of
controlling an operational mode of an associated home appliance in response to the carrier signal
with added tone.

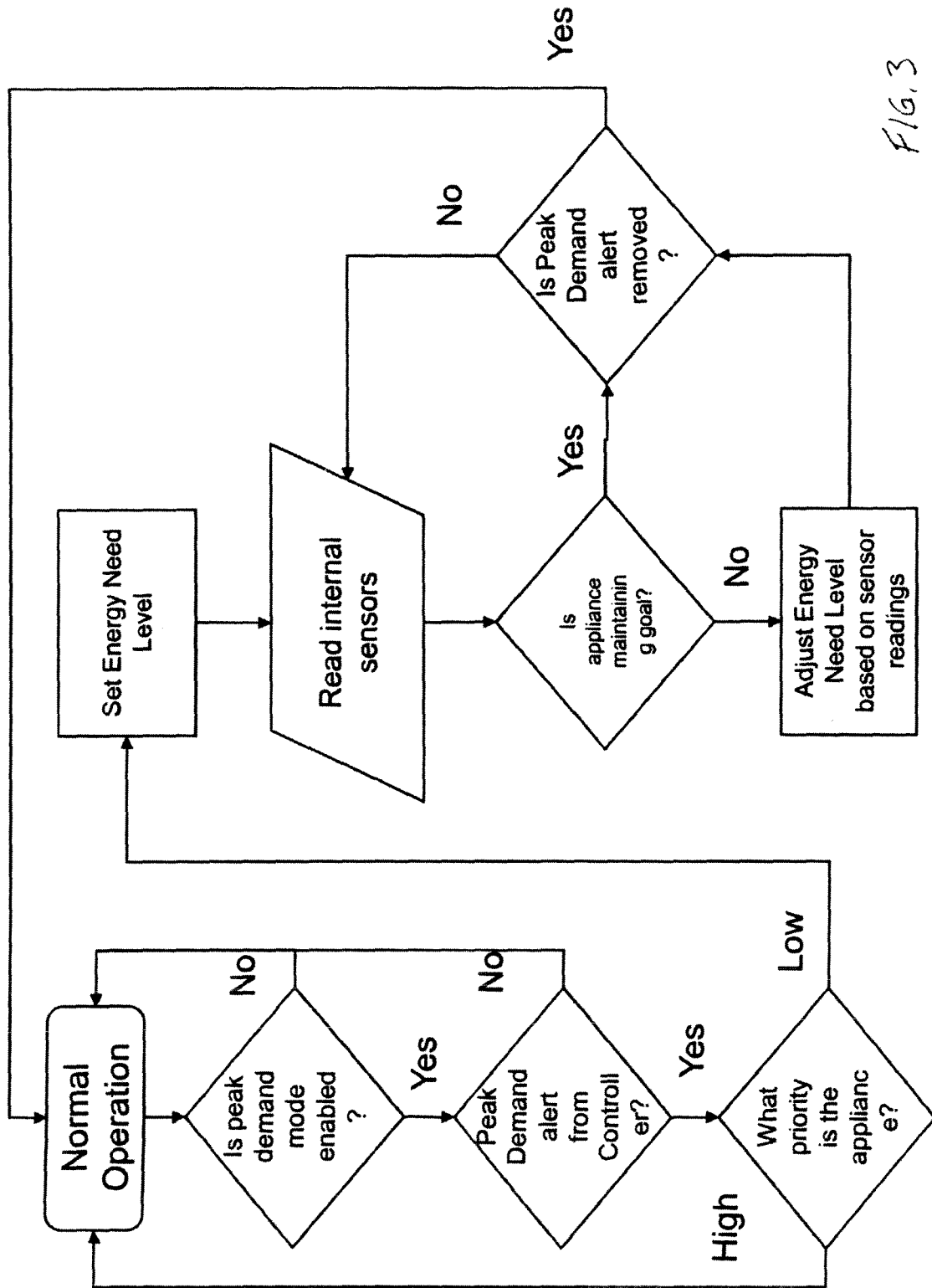
System Diagram

*FIG. 1*

Controller



Intelligent Appliance



Option 1

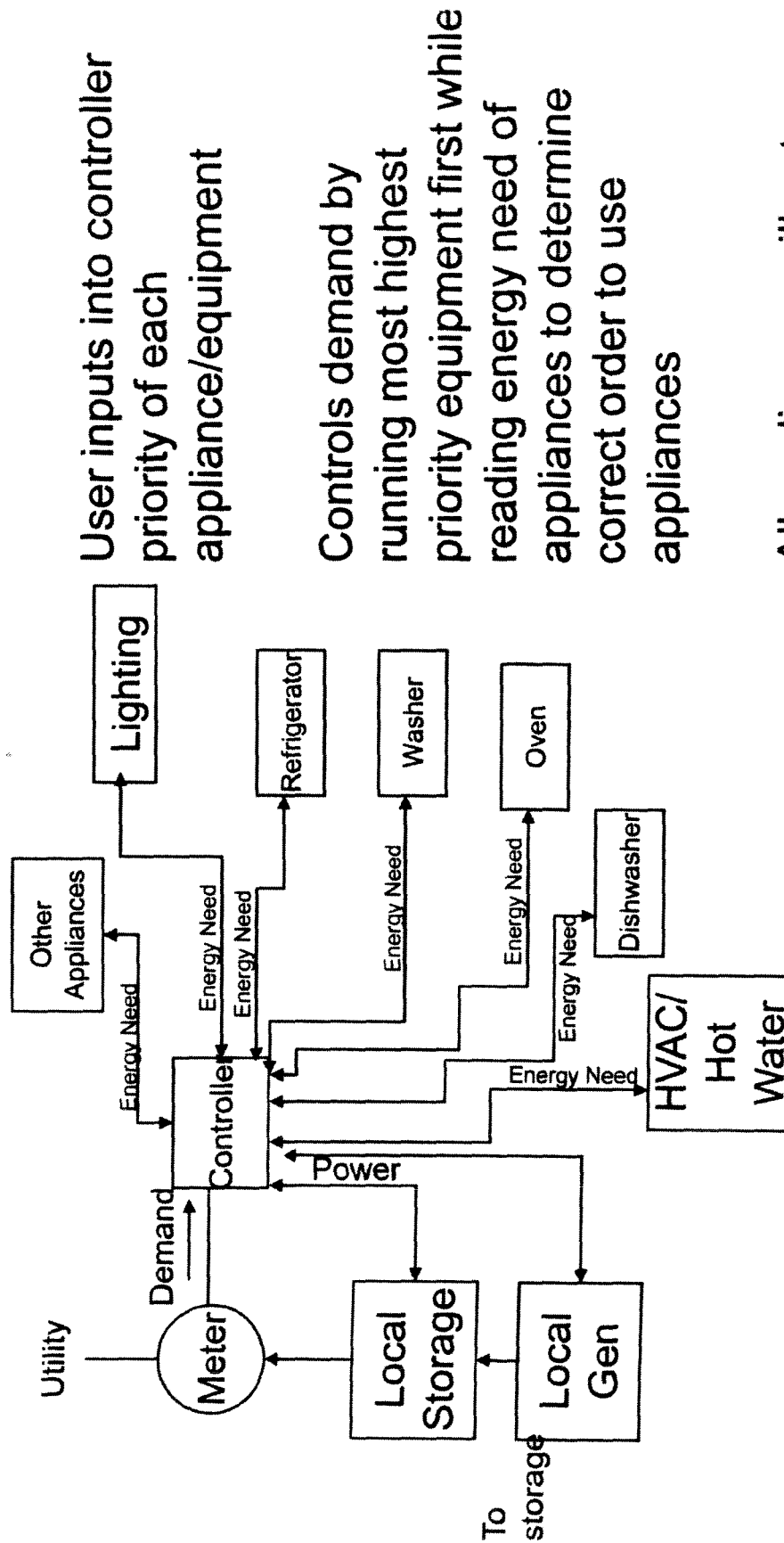


FIG. 4

User inputs into controller
priority of each
appliance/equipment

Controls demand by
running most highest
priority equipment first while
reading energy need of
appliances to determine
correct order to use
appliances

All appliances will enter
normal mode after peak
mode ends

Option 2

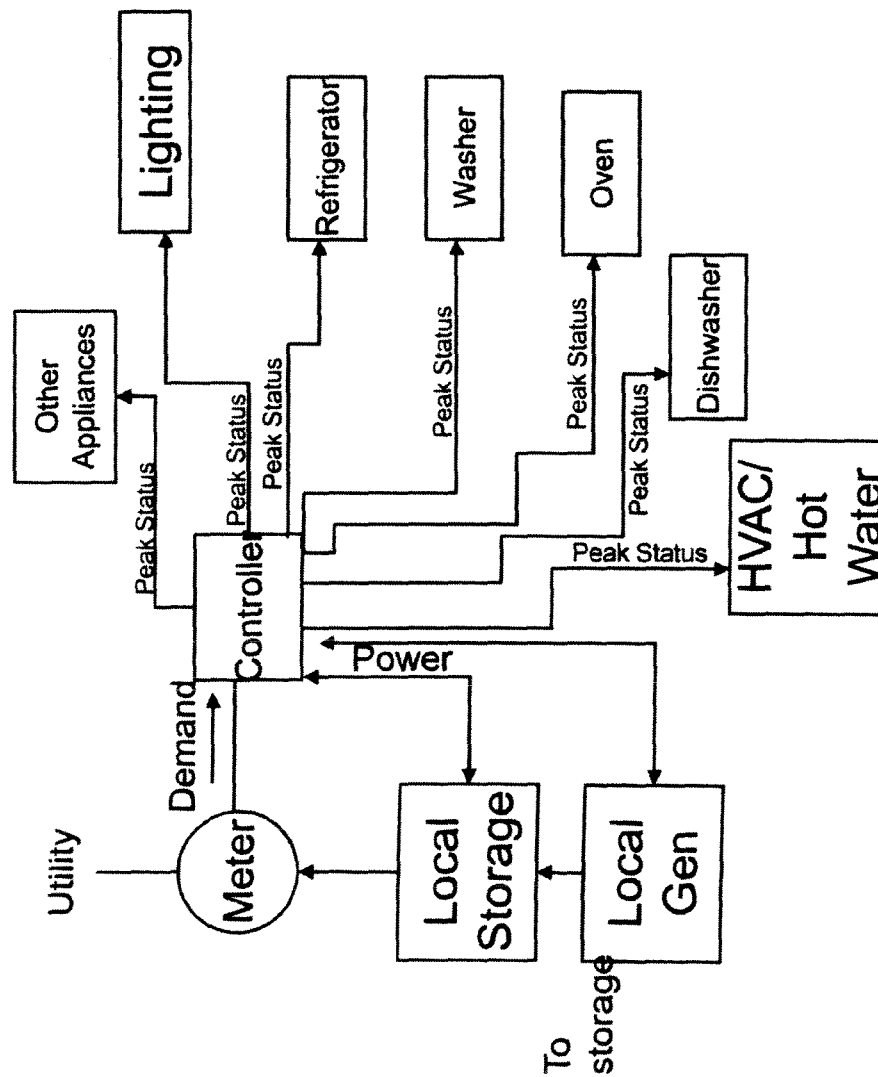


FIG. 5

Controller receives indication of change in billing rate due to peak demand

Broadcasts to all equipment of peak status to set them to low energy modes

All appliances will enter normal mode after peak mode ends

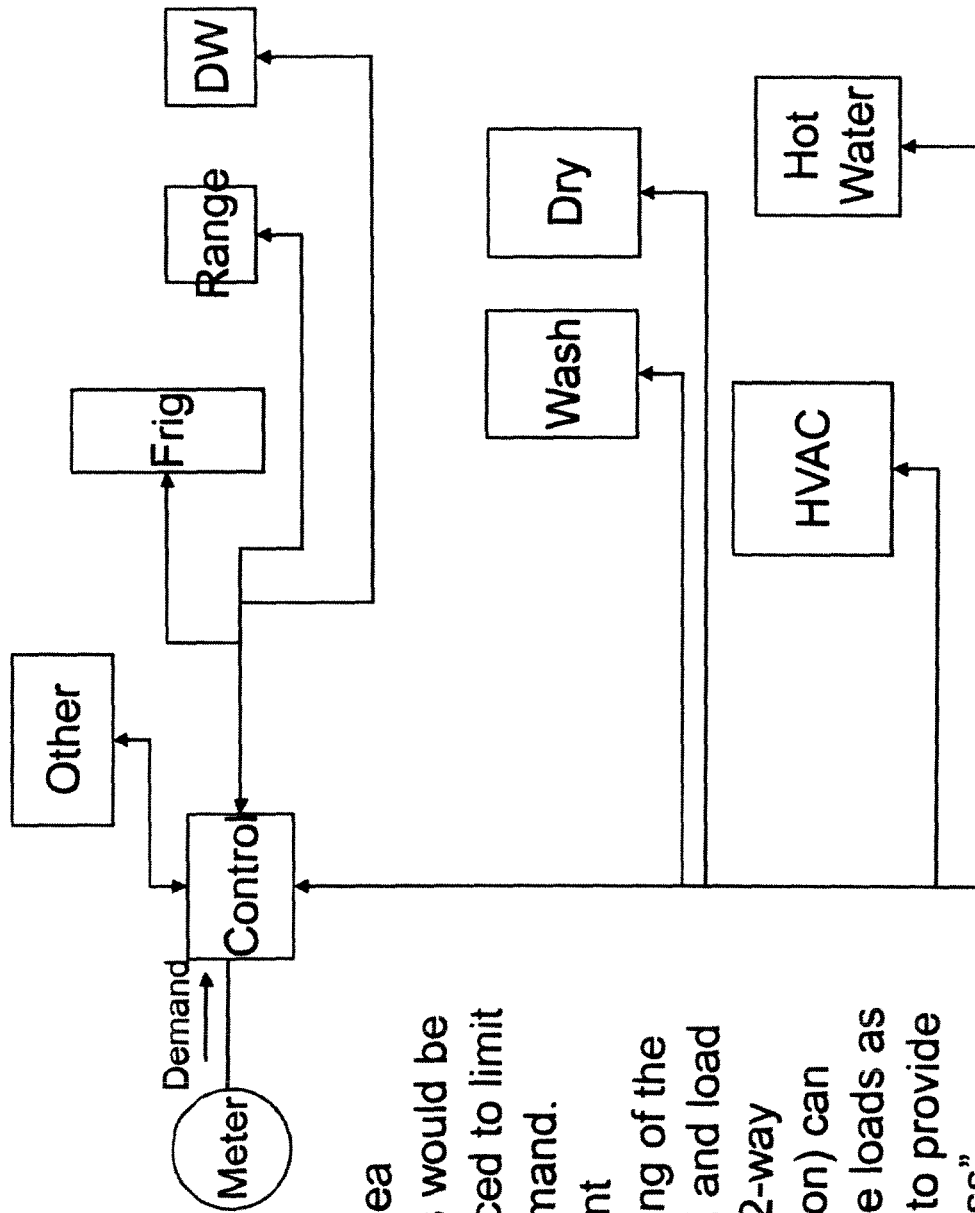


FIG. 6

Basic Idea

- Loads would be sequenced to limit total demand.

Intelligent

monitoring of the

demand and load

needs (2-way

interaction) can

serve the loads as

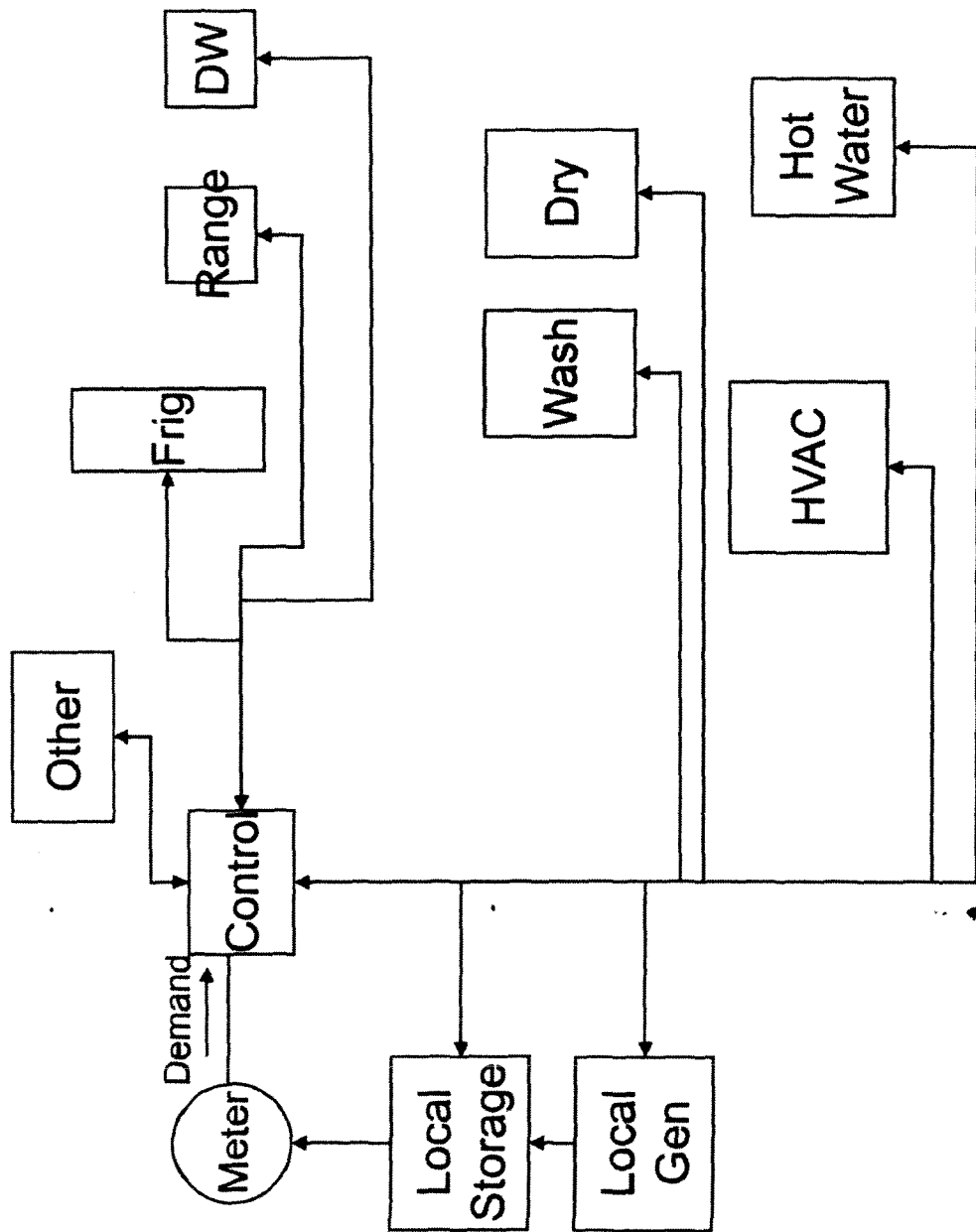
needed to provide

“seamless”

operation as well as

demand control

Larger load could also be run at reduced capacity (Variable speed drives) or set points to limit their demand.



Local storage could also be used for demand control
 Local gen could be used for local consumption, storage, or
 sale based on needs and time of day for most effective
 return on \$

Internet connection to passive utility demand server to set demand limit

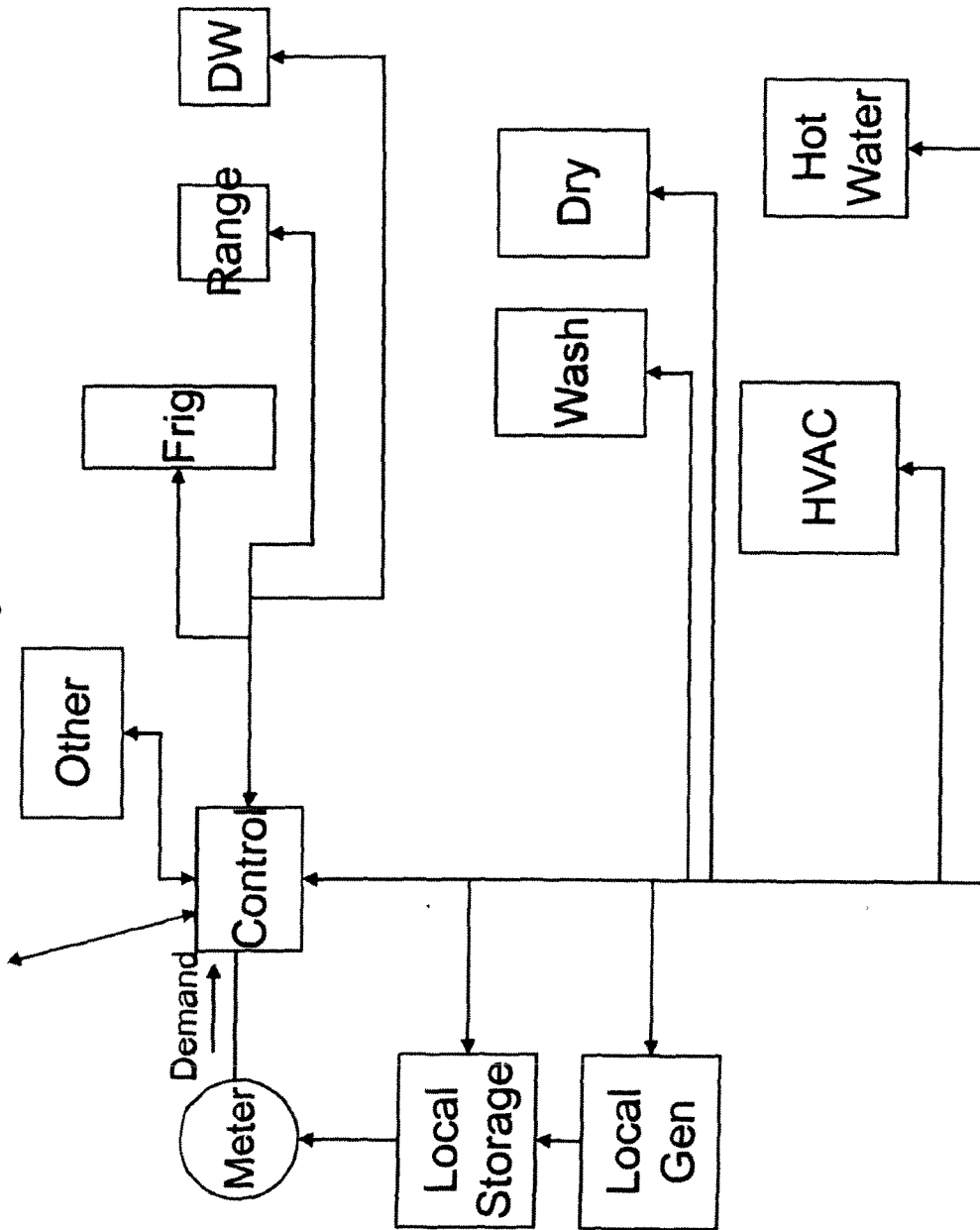


FIG. 8

Local storage could also be used for demand control
 Local gen could be used for local consumption, storage, or
 sale based on needs and time of day for most effective
 return on \$

MEDIUM					
	Refr UI Response (DSM disabled)	During Operation	Normal display	Normal display	Normal display
Refr	Refr UI Response (DSM Enabled)	During Operation	Display "Eco Rate Low - Normal Operation"	Display "Eco Rate High - Features Delayed"	Display "Eco Rate Critical - Features Delayed"
	Dryer UI Response (DSM disabled)	Prior to Operation	Normal display	Normal display	Normal display
Washer	Dryer UI Response (DSM disabled)	During Operation	Normal display	Normal display	Normal display
	Washer UI Response (DSM enabled)	Prior to Operation	Normal display	Display "Delay Eco"	Display "Delay Eco"
	Washer UI Response (DSM Enabled)	During Operation	Normal display	Display "Eco"	Display "Eco"
	Dryer UI Response (DSM disabled)	Prior to Operation	Normal display	Normal display	Normal display
Dryer	Dryer UI Response (DSM disabled)	During Operation	Normal display	Normal display	Normal display
	Dryer UI Response (DSM enabled)	Prior to Operation	Normal display	Display "Delay Eco"	Display "Delay Eco"
	Dryer UI Response (DSM Enabled)	During Operation	Normal display	Display "Eco"	Display "Eco"
	Range UI Response (DSM disabled or normal)	Prior to Operation	Normal display	Normal display	Normal display
Range	Range UI Response (DSM Enabled)	During Operation	Normal display	Normal display	Normal display
	Dishwasher UI Response (DSM disabled or normal)	Prior to Operation	Normal display	Display "Eco"	Display "Eco"
Dish	Dishwasher UI Response (DSM Enabled)	During Operation	Normal display	Display "Eco"	Display "Eco"
	Dishwasher UI Response (DSM disabled or normal)	Prior to Operation	Normal display	Normal display	Normal display
	Dishwasher UI Response (DSM Enabled)	During Operation	Normal display	Normal display	Normal display
	Dishwasher UI Response (DSM disabled or normal)	Prior to Operation	Normal display	Display "Eco"	Display "Eco"
MWO	Dishwasher UI Response (DSM Enabled)	During Operation	Normal display	Display "Eco"	Display "Eco"
	Dishwasher UI Response (DSM disabled or normal)	Prior to Operation	Normal display	Normal display	Normal display
	Dishwasher UI Response (DSM Enabled)	During Operation	Normal display	Normal display	Normal display
	Dishwasher UI Response (DSM disabled or normal)	Prior to Operation	Normal display	Display "Eco"	Display "Eco"
	Dishwasher UI Response (DSM Enabled)	During Operation	Normal display	Display "Eco"	Display "Eco"
	Dishwasher UI Response (DSM disabled or normal)	Prior to Operation	Normal display	Normal display	Normal display

FIG. 9

Method of Inputting the Time-of-Use Schedule

- ☐ Zip Code to power utility that defines TOU – Refer LCD screen on dispenser

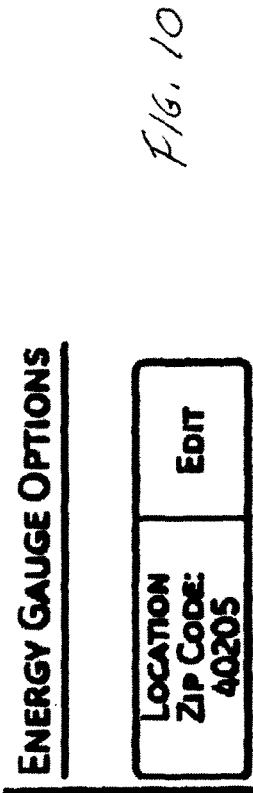


Fig. 10

- ☐ Time vs. Day of the Week Peak Demand Schedule(s)

The image shows a screen for selecting peak times and days. It features a grid with columns for days of the week (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday) and rows for times of day (8 a.m., 10 a.m., 12 a.m., 2 p.m., 4 p.m., 6 p.m., 8 p.m.). A black rectangular area highlights the cells for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Below the grid are two input fields: "ON-PEAK: Highest Energy Rate" and "OFF-PEAK: Lower Energy Rate".

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8 a.m.							
10 a.m.							
12 a.m.							
2 p.m.							
4 p.m.							
6 p.m.							
8 p.m.							

ON-PEAK: Highest Energy Rate OFF-PEAK: Lower Energy Rate

USER SELECTS ON PEAK SCHEDULE WITH STYLUS – TOUCHING THE SCREEN CHANGES COLOR TO DEFINE PEAK

Fig. 13

Electric Power Utility - Time of Use - As applied to Refrigeration

Background

Time-of-Use is a voluntary electric utility program which allows a consumer to purchase lower priced electric power by using power when the "Grid" electric demand is less. The Time-of-Use schedule is generally worked out with the regional power company and legislators and the schedule is well known and easily obtained by the consumer.

Parts of the system

System implementation has 3 unique categories and are listed below:

- (1) Method of inputting the Time-of-Use schedule
 - (A) Consumer Zip Code entry – requires a database managed by GE and upgradeable
 - (B) Time vs. Day of the Week Peak Demand schedule with user input – requires initial input by consumer and database managed by user when changes happen
- (2) Electronic circuit changes required – circuitry that keeps time will be required and software to interact with the Time-of-Use schedule input and actions would be required
 - (A) One method would be a zero cross
 - (B) Another method would be a clock calendar IC with capacitor or battery backup
- (3) A list of actions that could be performed at times when the electric rates are off peak
 - (A) Delay defrost until off peak
 - (B) Prechill when nearing peak demand to keep the compressor usage at a minimum during peak demand
 - (C) Alert user when peak demand is on when the doors are opened (light electric draw) or when the ice dispenser is used during peak demand

Fig. 11

SCE TOU

Time of Use - Domestic Pricing - Rate 1
TOU-D-1 Pricing
Meter Charge \$2.00 Monthly

RATES UNDER 600KW/month as of 11/29/2007

SUMMER WINTER

ON PEAK (10-6) \$0.3591 \$0.2140

OFF PEAK \$0.1866 \$0.1783

RATES OVER 600KW/month as of 11/29/2007

ON PEAK (10-6) \$0.2970 \$0.1846

OFF PEAK \$0.1634 \$0.1570



FOR MORE INFORMATION

SCE offers other programs to help you better manage your electricity costs, such as rebates, incentives, energy surveys and payment options. If you have questions about this rate schedule or other programs, please contact your SCE account representative, call (800) 684-8123, or visit us at www.sce.com.

Annual 570kw refrigerator operating cost

~\$103 w/o TOU (24/7 constant load)

~\$ 91 w TOU (only TOU power (not realistic))

Savings could be ~\$12

Summer First Sunday in June to First Sunday in October

On-Peak and Off-Peak Hours

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
8 a.m.							
10 a.m.							
6 p.m.							
8 a.m.							

On-Peak: Highest Energy Rate Off-Peak: Lower Energy Rate

FIG. 12

Energy Gauge Structure

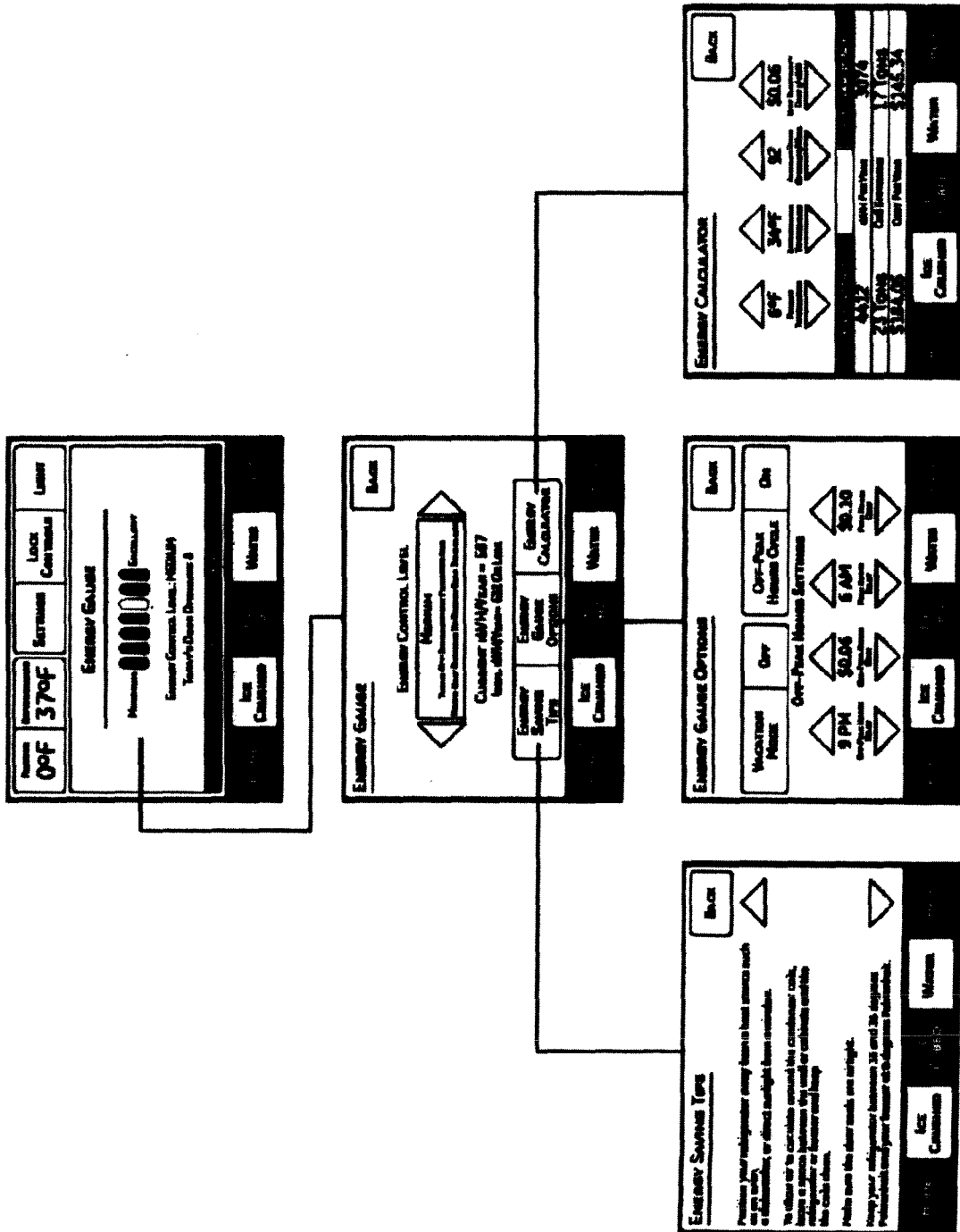


Fig. 14

Home Screen

ENERGY GAUGE BAR

- Shows overall energy performance.
- Min/Max levels can be based off energy-guide lowest/highest ratings.

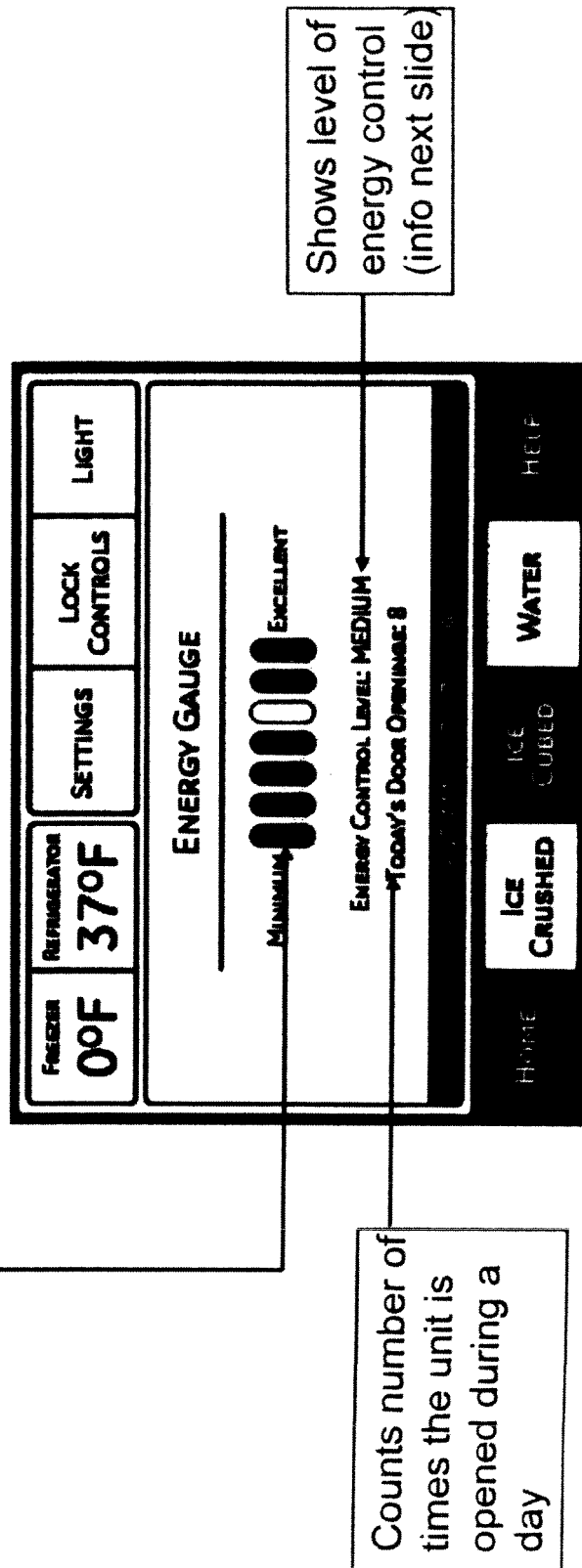
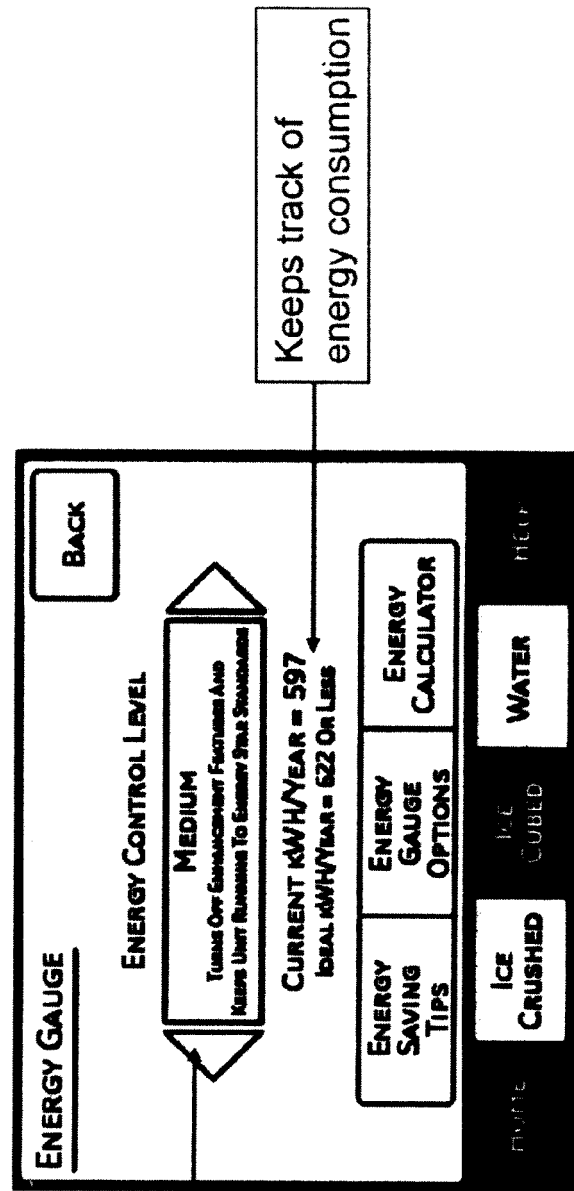


FIG. 14

Energy Gauge



Has defined settings for each level.

Examples:

HIGH: turns off extra features like TurboCool, Quick Ice, etc., dims lights and controls backlight, and raises temps to maximum acceptable.

MEDIUM: turns off extra features and dims lights and controls backlight.

LOW: dims lights and controls backlight.

FIG. 18

Energy Saving Tips

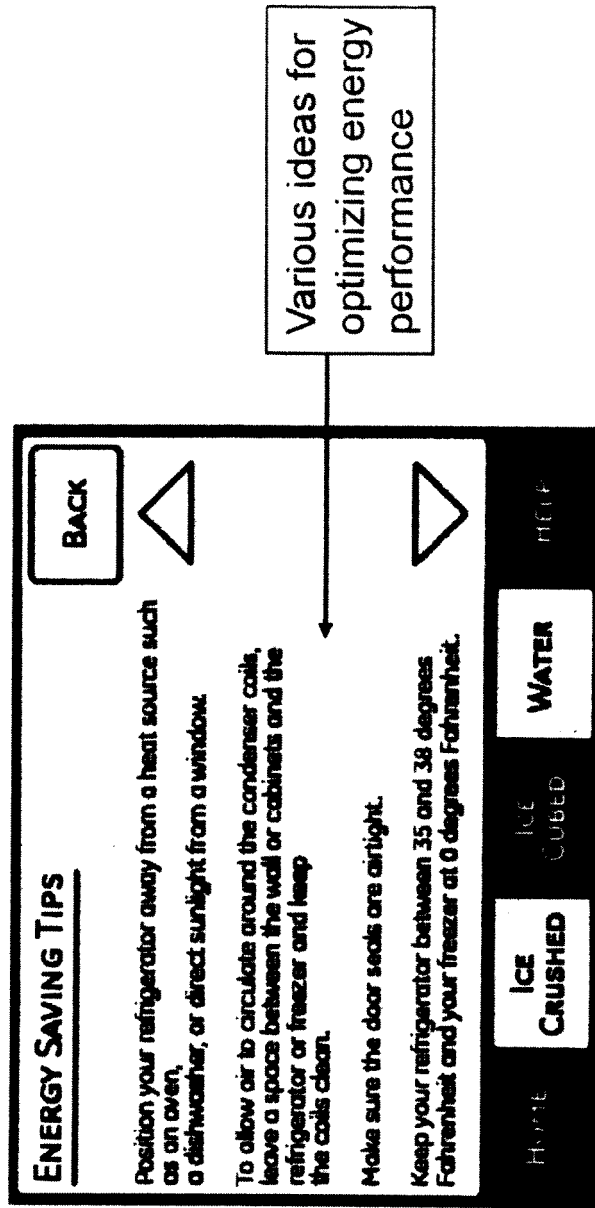


Fig. 17

Energy Gauge Options

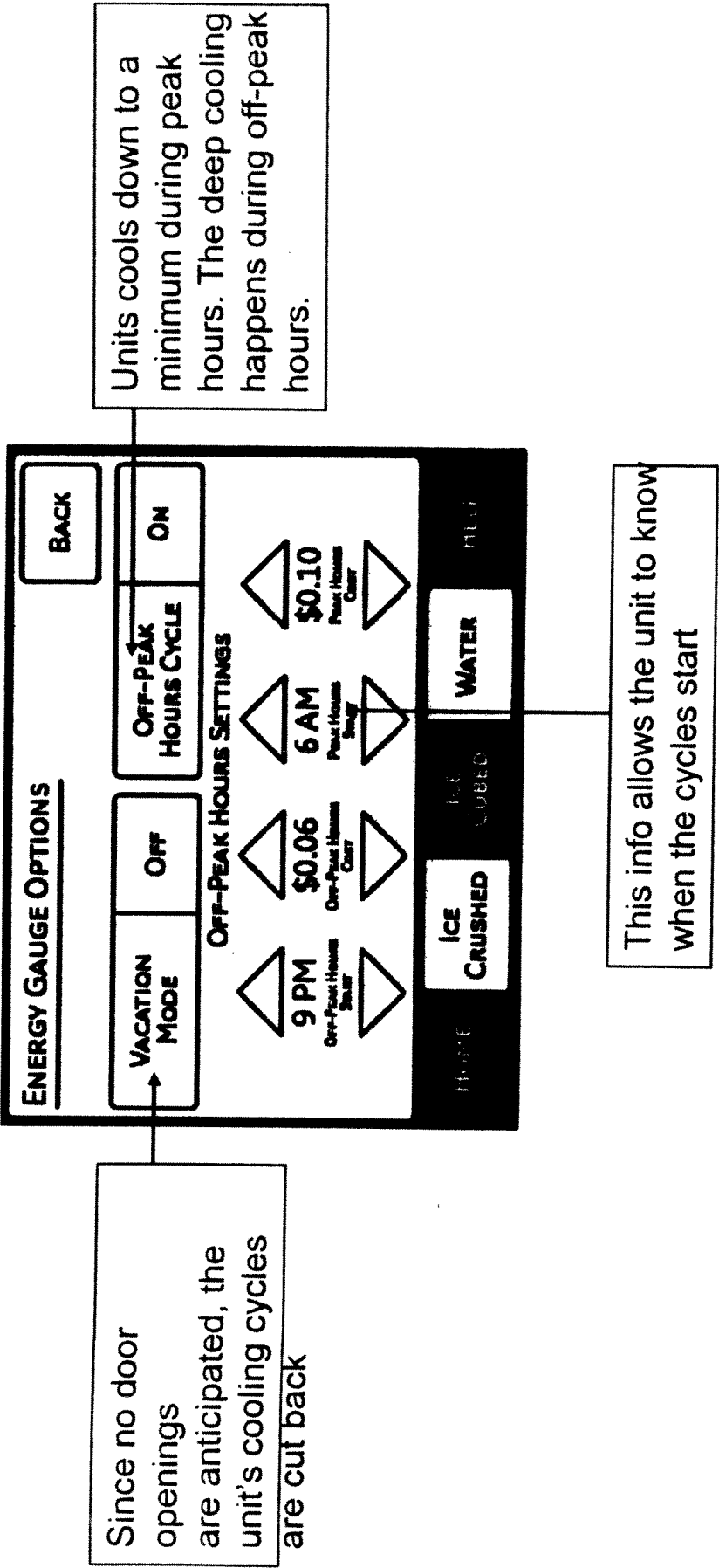


FIG. 18

Energy Calculator

- Indicates how much savings can be obtained by changing elements like temperature, door openings or electricity costs.
- Showing calculations over long periods of time (i.e. yearly) are important to illustrate more substantial savings.

ENERGY CALCULATOR

BACK

60F

Freezer Temperature

340F

Refrigerator Temperature

92

Average Door Opening/Week

\$0.06

Unit Electricity Cost (\$/kWh)

HOME

ICE CRUSHED

ICE CUBED

WATER

HELP

4412	kWh Per Year	3074
23 TONS	CO2 EMISSIONS	17 TONS
\$184.05	COST PER YEAR	\$145.34

Fig. 19

A list of actions that could be performed at times when the electric rates are off peak

- ✓ Delay defrost until off peak
- ✓ Prechill when nearing peak demand to keep the compressor usage at a minimum during peak demand
- ✓ Alert user when peak demand is on - Occurs when the door was opened or ice crusher used, etc.

FIG. 20

Title: Appliance Actions and Response - Demand Side Management for Home Appliances

Abstract: The invention(s) are the appliance actions and responses to electric utility signals provided in conjunction with a Demand Side Management (DSM) system. This is part of the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) initiative which provide remote metering functions such as remote meter reading, demand signaling /load control, etc. etc. The attached document describes in brief detail actions and responses to DSM signaling.

Upon receiving a high price energy signal the user may set the unit to:

- a. Delay all special modes until the low priced energy signal is received, mode examples are:

- i. Ice Maker,
- ii. Beverage Center
- iii. Turbo Cool
- iv. Custom Cool
- v. Quick Ice

- b. Override the high priced energy signal, always or based on a certain \$/Kwh level
 - c. Delay defrost until performance is would be affected
 - d. Announce or audible alert of the "high priced energy signal" during a cycle,
 - e. Visually alert user of the "high priced energy" signal
 - f. Display the cost of running the unit in the selected mode of operation
 - g. Display the cost of energy at the present time
 - h. Disable lighting
- Turn off sweat heaters

Fig. 21

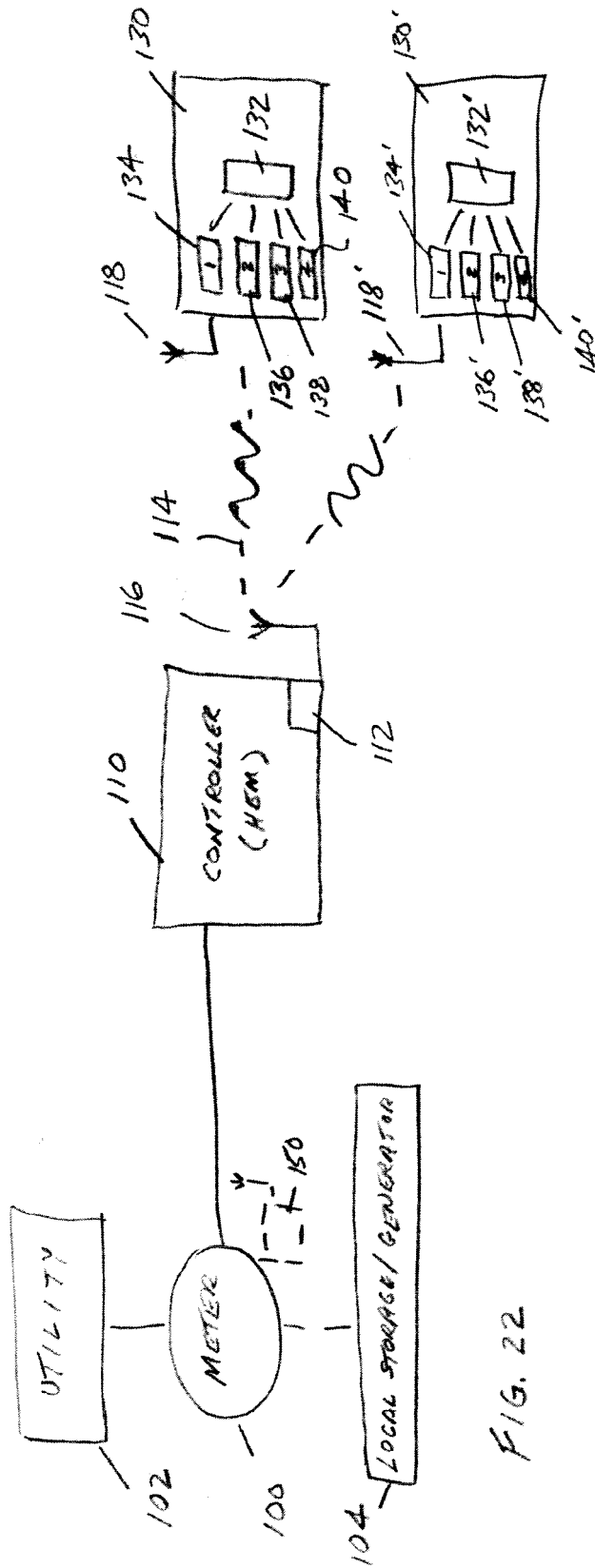


FIG. 22

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US 09/56883

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(8) - G05D 3/12 (2009.01)

USPC - 700/286

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
USPC 700/286Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched
USPC 700/286,291,295; 702/61-62; 705/7,63 (text search--see below)Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
PubWest (PGPB,USPT,EPAB,JPAB); Google Scholar
Search terms: energy, mode, saving, appliance, utility, RF, tone, command, state, management, meter, home, signal, FM

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US 4,454,509 A (BUENNAGEL et al.) 12 June 1984 (12.06.1984) FIGs. 1 and 3, and col. 2, ln 60 to col. 3, ln 65, and col. 4, ln 37-57	1-19
Y	US 3,683,343 A (FELDMAN et al.) 08 August 1972 (08.08.1972) FIG. 1 and col. 4, ln 8-20	1-19
Y	US 2008/0167756 A1 (GOLDEN et al.) 10 July 2008 (10.07.2008) FIGs. 1-2, and para [0034]-[0041]	6-17, 19

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.
 ☐

* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

16 October 2009 (16.10.2009)

Date of mailing of the international search report

26 OCT 2009

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US

Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US, Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

Facsimile No. 571-273-3201

Authorized officer:

Lee W. Young

PCT Helpdesk: 571-272-4300
PCT OSP: 571-272-7774