

# POWERLINE AUGUST 2010

Count on Corn Belt! » Your Local Energy Resource

## How to Keep Your Cool During Outages

Follow these safety tips for prolonged power outages

During the summer season, it's possible for severe summer storms to cause outages that can last days. High winds can topple utility poles and send tree branches into power lines. Follow these safety guidelines if you find yourself in a prolonged summer outage:

Call Corn Belt Energy at 800-879-0339 to report your outage, even if your neighbors have already contacted us. Please call from the phone associated with your account if possible.

Stay clear of downed power lines and assume that all wires you encounter are energized.

During an outage, turn off most lights and appliances to help prevent circuit overloading when your power is restored. Leave a light turned on so you'll know when your power returns.

Dress in loose, lightweight clothing and stay on the coolest, lowest level of your home.

Don't open your refrigerator or freezer. Food can stay fresh in a full refrigerator for 4-6 hours, and in a full deep freezer for 48 hours (24 hours if only half full).

If using a grill to heat food, use it outside to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

Drink plenty of water and avoid heavy meals, caffeinated or alcoholic drinks.

Check on neighbors and relatives, especially children, seniors, those with medical conditions or disabilities, and unattended pets.

Limit phone use for emergencies only. Listening to a portable radio can provide the latest information. Do not call 911 for information – only call to report a life-threatening emergency.

If you use a portable generator, connect the equipment you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator. Do not connect a generator to a home's electrical system.



### PLAN AHEAD

Follow these steps when a severe weather is approaching which could cause an extended outage:

- Charge your cell phone
- Make sure flashlights and emergency radios have fresh batteries
- Get fuel for your car and generator
- Turn your fridge to its coldest setting
- Move vehicles, outdoor furniture and equipment to sheltered areas
- Stock up on necessities like medications and diapers

If you're using a standby generator, make sure you use a transfer safety switch, which will prevent electricity from traveling back through the electric lines which makes the lines very dangerous for crews working to restore power.

# SET IT AND FORGET IT

## Use a programmable thermostat to save on cooling costs

Did you know that properly using a programmable thermostat in your home is one of the easiest ways you can save energy and money?

The average household spends more than \$2,000 a year on energy bills — nearly half of which goes to heating and cooling. Homeowners can save about \$180 a year by properly setting their programmable thermostats and maintaining those settings.

An ENERGY STAR programmable thermostat makes it easy for you to save by offering four pre-programmed settings to regulate your home's temperature in both summer and winter — when you are asleep or away. These pre-programmed settings are intended to deliver savings without sacrificing comfort. Depending on

your family's schedule, you can see significant savings by sticking with those settings or adjust them as appropriate for your family. The key is to reduce heating and cooling in your home when you don't need as much.

Once you find the right thermostat, make sure to install it on an interior wall away from vents and any other sources of heat or drafts. The EPA recommends these temperature guidelines: In the winter, set the temperature to drop by 8 degrees when you're away and when you're sleeping. In the summer, set the temperature to go up by 7 degrees when you're

away and 4 degrees when you're sleeping.

Properly using a programmable thermostat at home is one of the easiest things you can do to lower your energy costs. To learn more, visit [www.energystar.gov/pts](http://www.energystar.gov/pts).



# Trimming Future Problems

## Vegetation management helps ensure system reliability



At Corn Belt, we're committed to providing you with reliable power.

There are some things we can't stop—high winds, ice storms, hurricanes—but we do what we can to prevent other outage culprits.

As you can probably guess, weather-related events cause the majority of power outages—a whopping 19% according to a survey by our national service organization, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. But vegetation—trees, shrubs, brush—growing too close to power lines and

distribution equipment leads to 15% of power interruptions.

To “cut back” on potential tree-related problems Corn Belt operates an aggressive vegetation management program. Our line crews look for foliage growing under lines, overhanging branches, leaning or other types of “danger” trees that could pull down a power line if they fall, and trees that could grow into lines. It's a job that's never done—by the time crews finish trimming activities along our 5,000+ miles of distribution lines, vegetation has started to grow back at the starting point.

In working to keep a safe, reliable, and affordable supply of power flowing to your home or business, we need your

help. Let us know if you notice trees or branches that might pose a risk to our power lines. Even more importantly, before planting trees in your yard, think about how tall they may grow and how wide their branches may spread. As a rule of thumb, 25 feet of ground-to-sky clearance should be available on each side of our utility poles to give power lines plenty of space. Choose tree varieties with care and plant with power lines in mind.

Thanks for your help as we work together to keep electricity reliable. To report trees you think may pose a problem, call us at 1-800-879-0339. To find out more about proper tree planting, visit [www.arboday.org](http://www.arboday.org).

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# HEAT PUMP REBATES

Now through November 15, Corn Belt is offering an upgrade incentive through our power supplier, Wabash Valley Power Association.

Residential members can receive \$125/ton (up to 10 tons) for installing a new air source heat pump, and those who install a ground source heat pump can receive \$150 per ton (up to 10 tons).

For more information, contact Justin Stuva, Energy Advisor, at 800-879-0339. Find eligibility requirements and the rebate form online at [www.cornbeltenergy.com](http://www.cornbeltenergy.com) > Programs & Services > Energy Efficiency Programs.



# Clothes Washer REBATES

Corn Belt Energy members with electric water heaters may qualify for a \$50 rebate if they purchase an ENERGY STAR clothes washer after April 15.

Call Justin Stuva, Energy Advisor, at 800-879-0339 or find the rebate form online at [www.cornbeltenergy.com](http://www.cornbeltenergy.com) > Programs & Services > Energy Efficiency Programs.

# CAPITAL CREDITS CHECKS <sup>38</sup>

If you received electric service from Corn Belt Energy at any point in 2009, you should have received a capital credits refund check in early July. Over 38,800 members should receive 48% of their 2009 capital credit allocation in the form of a check this summer. (Refer to your June 2010 account statement for information regarding your 2009 capital credit allocation.)

If you have additional capital credits to be retired/disbursed in the future and your current retirement is less than \$15, that amount will remain in your capital credit account until the total is \$15 or greater. If you have no future capital credits to retire, you will receive a refund check in the mail regardless of the total.

If you deducted your electric bill as an expense on your tax return in the year(s) we are refunding, then your capital credits check may be taxable. Check with your tax advisor.

Call us at 1-800-879-0339 or visit our website at [www.cornbeltenergy.com](http://www.cornbeltenergy.com) for more information.

# FACT OR FICTION?

*Using a dishwasher is more expensive than washing by hand*

**This is fiction.** It's a commonly held belief that dishwashers are convenient, but use more water and energy than hand washing. In fact, dishwashers can help you conserve water and save on energy bills when compared to hand washing.

An average load of dishes cleaned in a dishwasher uses 37% less water than washing by hand. This can save a typical household nearly 5,000 gallons of water per year. Newer dishwashers are designed to clean without rinsing, so you can really conserve on your water use.

According to the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers, about 80% of the electricity used to wash dishes goes toward heating the water. Cut down on this cost by turning your water heater thermostat to 120°.

To save even more on operating costs, only wash full loads and allow the dishes to air dry instead of using the heat dry option.



So go ahead and use that dishwasher... it's the cheaper and more convenient option!

# Freeze Your Cooling Costs

Heating and cooling your home uses more energy than any other system in your home. Typically, 50% or more of your utility bill can be attributed to heating and cooling. Now that we're in the midst of the summer season, here are a few things you can do to lower your cooling costs:

Program your thermostat and set a higher temperature when you'll be away from your home. (Refer to article on page 16b.)

Whole-house fans help cool your home by pulling cool air through the house and exhausting warm air through the attic, which is useful in the early morning and after sundown. Run your whole-house fan only when the AC is not running and put it in AUTO mode.

Avoid setting your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner. It will not cool your home any faster and could result in excessive cooling and unnecessary expense.



Use ceiling fans and make sure they're blowing air down for maximum comfort; turn them off when you leave the room or house.

Have your HVAC system serviced annually by a certified technician for optimal performance and change your air filter frequently.

Draw the shades to prevent solar gain during the day.

Plug air leaks: make sure windows and doors are properly weather-stripped.

Grill outside whenever possible to reduce the load on your air conditioner; use the microwave instead of the oven.

Make sure your water heater thermostat is turned down to 120 degrees, which will also help prevent scalding.

Turn off your pool pump and/or heater when not in use.

Use the air-dry option instead of heat-dry when using your dishwasher.

Wash clothes in cold water; use hot water for very dirty loads only.

# THE KING OF CAULK & TALK

Get valuable home efficiency advice from nationally renowned architect and home energy expert, Doug Rye. Tune in for an hour of energy saving ideas every Saturday from 7:00 to 8:00 AM in the Bloomington-Normal area.



## Contact Us

**800-879-0339**

Call this number to report an outage and call from the phone associated with your account if possible.

### Main Office:

1 Energy Way  
Bloomington IL 61705

Office Hours: 8:00am - 4:30pm  
Monday - Friday

[cbec@cornbeltenergy.com](mailto:cbec@cornbeltenergy.com)  
[www.cornbeltenergy.com](http://www.cornbeltenergy.com)



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## Blue Ribbon Fun

McLean County Fair | August 4-8  
Interstate Center, Bloomington  
The largest 4-H fair in the country!  
[www.mcleancountyfair.org](http://www.mcleancountyfair.org)

