

POWERLINE

A monthly newsletter for co-op members of Corn Belt Energy

December 2012

Smart Ways to Stay Warm

Heating your home uses a lot of energy, so making a few changes can add up to noticeable savings on your energy bills. Your electric cooperative is here to help with these money-saving tips:

Take advantage of the sun's radiant heat energy and open your blinds and shades during sunny days. Let your home make use of those rays!

Program or adjust your thermostat to no higher than 68 degrees during the winter months for maximum cost savings. And make sure to turn down the temperature a few more degrees when you're sleeping and when you leave the house.

Hot air travels upward. If you have high ceilings, use your ceiling fans on a low, clockwise setting to circulate that heat back down.

Close the heat registers and doors of unoccupied rooms during the winter months.

Make sure to close your fireplace damper when not in use; you don't want your warm air leaking out through the chimney!

Check around your windows and doors for drafts. A tube of caulk and some weather stripping can go a long way to seal your home from blustery winds.



Heating your home can account for over 50% of your energy use in the winter. Follow these tips to save money this season.

Have questions about your energy use?

Contact your co-op's Energy Advisor, Justin Stuva, at 1-800-879-0339 x235 or email him at: justin.stuva@cornbeltenergy.com

Space Heaters: What you need to know

Each winter, we receive a lot of calls asking about space heaters. If properly used, they *can* keep your heating costs down. You can save significantly if you use space heaters this way: turn the thermostat down considerably, then place the space heater in a room occupied by your family and close off the rest of the home. Space heaters are intended for zone heating, which may be impractical for most households; they're not meant to replace your whole-house heating system.

Only use a space heater when you are in the room with it; never leave a space heater on with unsupervised children or pets or when you are sleeping.

Don't be fooled by the misleading claims of some brands; all 1,500 watt space heaters use the same amount of electricity.



Sophomores
and Juniors:

Youth to Washington Tour

High school sophomores and juniors with a passion for leadership and government are encouraged to apply for an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington D.C. in June!

Corn Belt Energy cooperative members (*anyone who currently receives electricity from Corn Belt Energy*) are welcome to nominate a child or grandchild to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Up to 10 applicants will be selected by an impartial panel of judges to attend Illinois Cooperative Youth Day in Springfield in the spring of 2013.

From that group, two students will be chosen to represent Corn Belt Energy by attending the Youth to Washington Tour, an all-expense-paid trip to Washington D.C. from June 14 - 21, with other statewide winners.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has been bringing high school students to Washington D.C. for over 50 years. On the tour, students will learn about electric cooperatives, American history and U.S. government, and walk away with a greater understanding of their role as an American citizen. They participate in National Youth Day, visit with their representative and senators, and explore the sights around the nation's capital.

Applications can be found on our website at www.cornbeltenergy.com under "Community." Applications must be received by February 22.

Great opportunities for high school students!



College Scholarships

In spring 2013, eight scholarships of \$1,500 each will be awarded to eligible high school seniors through the Illinois Electric Cooperative (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

Four scholarships will be awarded to students who are children of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative, including Corn Belt Energy members.

A fifth scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, is awarded to a student who is the child of an Illinois electric cooperative employee.

The sixth and seventh scholarships are reserved for students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are children of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors.

An eighth scholarship, the LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship, will be awarded to help pay for costs associated with lineworker's school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield. Relatives of cooperative employees and directors, children of co-op members, and military veterans are eligible to apply.

Candidates are judged on the basis of grade point average, college entrance exam scores, work and volunteer experience, school and civic activities, and a short essay that demonstrates their knowledge of electric cooperatives.

The application is available at www.cornbeltenergy.com under "Community" and must be submitted online by 12/31/12.

Creating a Safe Home for the Holidays

Make safety a priority this season!

38

Few traditions are as unique to the holidays as festooning our homes and yards with twinkling lights and festive decorations. While these displays add to the magic of the season, they also increase our risks for holiday fires and injuries. The good news is that it's not difficult to make your home ready to safely host all of your favorite holiday activities. So follow these steps to ensure that your traditions result in a safe, bright, and happy time for your family.

Smoke Detectors

Take time out from your party preparations to test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms should be installed on every level of the home and outside each sleeping area. Smoke alarms should also be located inside each bedroom. Be sure to share your family fire escape plan with any overnight guests.

Electric Cords

Arrange your holiday decorations to avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many lights, cords, or appliances. Inspect all decorations, cords, and outlets for damage before use. Keep electrical cords out of doorways and high traffic areas where they pose a tripping hazard. Do not damage cords by pinching them or attaching them with staples or nails.

Child Proofing

Keep young visitors safe by preparing your home before they arrive. If your home is not already "child proof," install tamper resistant receptacles or use safety covers on all unused electrical outlets. Store breakables, candles, matches, and other potentially dangerous items in inaccessible or locked areas. Don't

forget to put away small items, like buttons, coins, and jewelry, which are a choking hazard. Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairways to keep babies and toddlers safe. Make sure children are supervised at all times in the kitchen and anywhere space heaters, candles, or fireplaces are being used. Never leave the kitchen when something is cooking.

Christmas Lights

Carefully inspect each electrical decoration and extension cord before use, and discard any damaged items. Cracked sockets, bare or frayed wires, and loose connections may cause a serious shock or fire. Avoid overloading outlets, which can overheat and also cause a fire. The Electrical Safety Foundation International recommends never connecting more than three strands of incandescent lights together. Do not pinch cords in windows or doors or under heavy furniture.

Always unplug Christmas lights before you leave the house or go to bed. Use a timer to make it even easier to save on your energy use.

When decorating outside, make sure outdoor outlets are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Check that all items and extension cords are marked for outdoor use and exercise extreme caution when decorating near overhead power lines. Use a wooden or fiberglass ladder instead of metal. Keep yourself and all of your equipment at least 10 feet from power lines.



Christmas Trees

Take special care with Christmas trees. If purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. Heated rooms dry out live trees—even fresh ones—rapidly. Place the tree at least 3 feet away from all heat sources, including fireplaces and space heaters. Be sure to keep the stand filled with water. For artificial trees, look for the label "fire resistant." Decorate your tree, live or artificial, with non-combustible or flame-resistant materials. Never use burning candles on or near your tree. Keep decorations, gifts, and other combustibles at least 3 feet from heat sources or open flame. Turn off and unplug all decorations before leaving home or turning in for the night.

It's easy to get caught up in the hectic pace of holiday entertaining—cookies to bake, decorations to hang, presents to wrap... but don't overlook safety during the rush. The winter holiday period marks peak time for home fires and preventable injuries.

Whether your house is the most festive on the block or you prefer a more low-key style, make safety an important part of your holiday preparations.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International. Learn more at holidaysafety.org



Contact Us

1-800-879-0339

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

LOCATION

1 Energy Way
Bloomington, IL 61705

OFFICE HOURS

8:00 AM - 4:30 PM
Monday - Friday

cbec@cornbeltenergy.com
www.cornbeltenergy.com



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

SURVEY OF MEMBERS

Through January, Corn Belt will be conducting a survey of residential cooperative members. This telephone survey is conducted every two years and helps our power supplier determine how much power we'll need in the near future.

Co-op members will be randomly selected and the survey will be conducted by Oppenheim Research, a Florida firm with experience in a wide variety of research methods. The phone survey is designed to last approximately 10-12 minutes, and will primarily focus on the appliances and items in and around your home that consume electricity.

If you are called and don't wish to participate, you will not be pressured to do so. We greatly appreciate those who do take the time to help us plan better for the future. If you have any questions about the process, please call us at 1-800-879-0339.

ELECTRIC HEAT RATE

If your home utilizes an electric heat source - including geothermal - you can take advantage of Corn Belt's Electric Heat Rate of 4.45 cents/ kWh *(plus any additional current cost of power as indicated by the Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment on your monthly statement).*

All electric heat is sub-metered through equipment supplied by Corn Belt Energy and the Electric Heat Rate is applied to your sub-metered usage from Oct. 1 through April 30.

This rate is applicable when a home is heated electrically from a hardwired 240 volt electric heat source.

To see if you're already receiving this rate, check for a Rate 10 or Rate 19 line item charge on your monthly statement. For more information contact Justin Stuva, Energy Advisor, at 1-800-879-0339 x235 or email justin.stuva@cornbeltenergy.com.

Connect with your Co-op!

Keep in touch with your electric cooperative throughout the year for safety information, energy efficiency tips, outage updates and more! If you have a Quick Response Code app on your smartphone, simply scan these QR codes to connect with us online.



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