

# MONROE ELECTRIC NEWS

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 



Alan W. Wattles

## Across The President's Desk

### Cooperative's annual meeting is just around the corner

Mark your calendars now for Monroe County Electric Cooperative's 78th Annual Meeting of Members to be held on Saturday, June 11, 2016. This year's meeting will be combined with our Member Appreciation Day and held at our cooperative headquarters, located two miles south of Waterloo.

Look for your annual meeting notice that will be arriving in the mail next month. The notice will contain information about the cooperative, a meeting agenda and the registration information. Please make sure to bring your registration card from the back of your annual meeting notice. It is bar-coded so that we can scan it to register you. Each registered membership will receive a Pro Glo lighted extension cord as a door prize for attending.

We will have health care vendors set up for information and also blood pressure checks.

Activities from our past Member Appreciation Days will be available again for the children, such as two bounce houses, balloon artists, face painting and a pole display they can have their picture taken on in lineman gear.

Registration will begin at 10:00 a.m. and a smoked pork chop meal will be served between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Music entertainment will again be provided by Duane Grapperhaus on the organ. Attendance prizes will

be announced throughout the morning and early afternoon. The business meeting will be begin at 1:30 p.m. Children's activities will conclude just prior to the beginning of the business meeting.

We hope to see you on Saturday, June 11, 2016 at the cooperative headquarters for our Cooperative's 78th Annual Meeting of Members!



# Cool Roofs: A Hot Idea for Energy Efficiency

By Michael W. Kahn | ECT Staff Writer

**W**hen redoing your roof or buying a new home, consider getting a cool roof.

“For a home, a traditional black or gray roof does a good job of keeping the rain off, but it also does a really good job of absorbing sunlight and heat,” said Brian Sloboda, NRECA Cooperative Research Network senior program manager. That’s why it might pay to go with a “cool roof.”

“A cool roof is going to be a lighter color. And it will reflect the heat back into the atmosphere,” Sloboda explained.

Cool roofs are made of either light colored asphalt shingles or slightly different materials. And depending upon location, “You can get a cool roof installed on your home

for just a few cents more per square foot,” Sloboda said, giving a typical range of 50 cents to \$2 extra per square foot.

But not everyone should rush to buy one.

“If you’re in the more northern parts of the United States, you might not want to go with the cool roof because you spend most of your money heating your home and you want the roof to absorb heat in the winter months. Even though you’ll spend a little bit more on air conditioning in the summer, you’ll save a lot in winter,” Sloboda said.

“If you’re in southern United States, a cool roof is probably going to work for you, because most of your energy dollars are spent cooling

your house,” Sloboda said. Folks in the center of the country could go either way.

“Talk to an energy auditor from your local co-op or a reputable roofing contractor that really understands the way the roof interacts with the home,” Sloboda advised.

And, he adds, as with any technology there are pluses and minuses to consider, including the fact that the light roof will stand out from neighboring homes. Some homeowner associations might have restrictions.

There are also products to paint onto an existing roof, but Sloboda said there are lingering questions about product durability.

## Seal air leaks with caulk

**D**id you know heating and cooling accounts for roughly **HALF OF YOUR HOME’S ENERGY USE?** Caulking cracks around windows, doors and spaces around wires (telephone, electrical, cable and gas lines), water spigots and dryer vents can pay off with **BIG ENERGY SAVINGS.**

**\*Approximate cost: \$5 - \$30 \*Energy Savings: Approx. 5-10 percent – Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy**

### MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

-Caulk -Caulk gun-Knife or tool to cut -Rags -Water

**1. PREP** Clean the area when you will be applying the caulk.

Remove any dirt, loose paint or old, cracked caulk.

**2. LOAD** You will need to pull the plunger all the way back to load the tube of caulk into the barrel of the caulking gun.

**3. APPLY** To figure out the right amount of caulk needed, experiment with an out-of-the-way section. You may find that you need less caulk than you thought.

**4. RELEASE** Once the trigger is fully depressed, allow it to spring back and depress it again. Keep the gun moving while caulk is still coming out of the tip.

**5. CLEAN** Use a damp cloth or rag to clean off most of the excess caulk. Use a dry cloth to clean off the rest.



## Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Inc.

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Office hours: Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. • 800-757-7433

# Plug into our SmartHub App

## Make Informed Choices

Log in to your online Monroe County Electric Co-Operative account and you'll notice a more powerful, efficient, and streamlined experience designed to help you make smarter energy choices. Utilizing SmartHub technology, co-op members can now utilize these great benefits:

- View your electric usage down to the hour
- See how temperature affects heating & cooling use
- Compare usage between months with temp. data
- Set usage markers, thresholds and alerts
- Receive bill reminders
- Report outages



## Log On Today!

To access SmartHub from your desktop, simply click the "smarthub" logo on the upper right side at [www.mcec.org](http://www.mcec.org) and log in with your same email address and password. Setting up a new online account is quick and simple, too.

## Free Mobile Apps

To download the free mobile apps for Apple or Android devices, search for "smarthub" in your app store.

# MCEC line outages - March 2016

Date	Duration	# Out	Location	Cause	Substation
03/02/16	1:52	21	Kidd Lake Area	Conductor Sag	Fults
03/03/16	0:12	6	Old Red Bud Rd	Small Animals Or Birds	Poe
03/05/16	1:40	82	Fults	Large Animals	Fults
03/06/16	0:05	10	Il Rt 159	Vehicles Or Machinery	Poe
03/15/16	0:15	47	Bushy Prairie Rd	Maintenance	Waterloo
03/22/16	1:14	59	Deer Hill Rd	Vehicles Or Machinery	Waterloo
03/23/16	1:51	2	Country Side Ln	Trees, Other	Smithton

## Products to avoid

By Tom Tate

When it comes to saving energy, caveat emptor is alive and well. We are all bombarded by claims that border on outright falsehoods, so it pays to view savings claims from third parties cautiously. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it generally is.

**Electric space heaters** drain energy savings from your home if used incorrectly. Companies make elaborate claims about the amount of money you can save and charge exorbitant sums for their products. The advertisements frequently target those on a fixed income, presenting false hope while extracting precious dollars from their customers. I have seen a number of these space heaters and admit they appear to be well made, but they typically offer no better economy than any other 1,500-watt electric heater. Bottom line, electric space heaters should only be used to heat small spaces – not your entire home.

**Black boxes** that claim to clean up power, protect appliances and reduce energy use come and go. These often require an electrician to install and claim to improve power quality, smooth out power fluctuations and store energy so you can reduce your bills. Save your money. The concepts they present are already in use by Monroe County Electric Co-Operative (MCEC) and require utility-size equipment to deliver them. Something that can fit in a shoebox is not going to deliver any value, at least not in the



areas promised. If you are concerned about protecting your sensitive appliances and electronics, talk to Allan Masterson, Director of Member Services, about surge protection.

**When you see the ad that reads, “The power companies don’t want you to know,”** skip it. These are generally claims around building your own renewable energy source from parts easily obtained at the local hardware store or a motor that produces limitless “free” electricity. I would equate these with the emails I get from foreign countries telling me I can receive millions of dollars by simply sending all my banking information. At least in the case of the homemade renewables and limitless motor you get some cool plans and parts lists. You decide if it’s worth \$50 – \$200. I’d give it a pass.

There is a product that claims it will **replace basement dehumidifiers** and save tons of money. It basically is a fan system that vents all the basement air outside. Yes, dehumidifiers can be expensive to run and are a nuisance when you have to empty the water. Knowing that, I asked the Cooperative Research Network (an arm of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association) a few years ago if these products delivered on their savings claims. They said no. The problem is that when you blow

all the basement air outside, it is replaced with conditioned air from other parts of the house. Now your HVAC system works harder and dramatically reduces the promised savings. Here’s my solution: I set my dehumidifier to 60 percent and run a hose to my floor drain. This resolves the water emptying hassle and really reduces the power use while keeping my basement acceptably dry.

I will close with a **non-technology warning**. Scammers love to call or stop by claiming they represent the local power company. Never give anyone personal or financial information who claims to be an MCEC employee without confirming their identity. Ask for a call back number from the caller, then check with MCEC. Ask the door-to-door person for a valid MCEC ID. If they really are a co-op employee, they’ll be able to prove it.

Most of us want to save energy and keep our bills manageable. Technology can help do this, but be careful. Call MCEC at 939-7171 or 1-800-757-7433 before making any investments in technology that seem too good to be true. You’ll be glad you did.

*Tom Tate writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation’s 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*