



Norris Electric *News*

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*Norris offices will be closed December 23 & 24 for
Christmas and Dec. 30 & 31 for New Years*

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Get the most out of energy during the holidays

Holidays are a festive time of year, with gifts, fun decorations, family visits and lots of laughter. But they can also ring in extra energy use for heating, decorative lights, and more. So what steps can you take to make sure the holidays don't leave a surprise "gift" on your next electric bill?

One of the most popular ways to save energy without dimming holiday cheer is switching to light-emitting diode (LED) holiday lights. These long-lasting and energy efficient lights have been used for years in vehicles to let you know when you're low on gas or need an oil change. Over the past few years, prices have dropped low enough to make these bulbs cost-effective for decorative use.

On the plus side, LEDs last longer than traditional incandescent lights. They run cool and colors don't fade over time. Best of all, they use about a tenth of the energy for the same amount of light.

The news isn't all cheery. Decorative LEDs cost much more than strands of typical lights — up to \$40 or more to outfit a tree, according to Consumer Reports, an independent product tester. But over time, the higher investment pays off. When Consumer Reports compared LEDs and incandescent holiday lights in 2007, they found LEDs use between 1 and 3 kWh of energy, compared



to between 12 to 105 kWh for traditional lights. This translates into a savings of up to \$11 every year. Because LEDs are more durable, lasting more than 4,000 hours while incandescent bulbs burn out by the 2000 hour mark, the initial investment pays dividends over the long haul.

Whether or not you fork out extra bucks to switch to LEDs, it's a good idea to turn off your holiday lights before you go to bed. Consider installing timers to reduce the amount of time your holiday lights are on. Just 10 incandescent strands lit for 13 hours a day can easily add more than \$50 to an electric bill. Limit light displays to no more than six hours nightly.

Lights aren't the only holiday addition impacting your electric bill — family guests add to your costs, too. Because everyone wants to stay toasty during colder holiday months, heating usually accounts for the lion's share of cold-weather

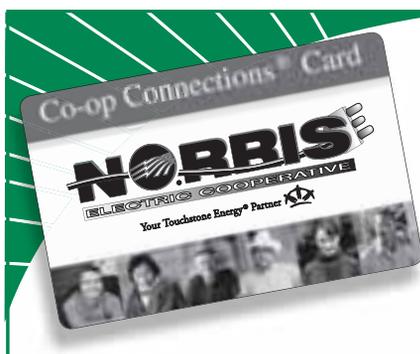
energy costs. Extra guests translate into extra water to heat for showers.

Make sure to set your thermostat as low as comfort permits. Each degree above 68 degrees adds 2 percent to 3 percent to the amount of energy needed to heat your home. Conversely, you'll save by lowering your thermostat (and leaving it there).

You can expect extra guests to strain your electric water heater — folks often take longer showers in colder weather, increasing water-heating costs. Before guests arrive consider installing a lowflow showerhead to reduce the amount of water used, and try to keep showers to six minutes or less.

Finally, in the average home, 75 percent of the electricity used to power electronic gifts and gadgets is used while the products are off. This phantom power use can be avoided by unplugging the items or using a power strip.

To learn more about ways to cut home energy use, visit www.TogetherWeSave.com. Sources: Consumer Reports, U.S. Department of Energy. John Bruce is a freelance writer based in South Carolina. He writes on energy efficiency 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.



Co-op Connections Card Saving Members \$\$\$

Norris Electric Cooperative members saved 40.6 percent on prescriptions in September 2010 using their Co-Op Connections card. There were 267 prescriptions filled at 24 different pharmacies for a total savings of \$5,983.

Power on Demand: How it works

Standby Generator Facts

Surviving a disaster in the form of a hurricane, ice storm, or earthquake is mostly a matter of luck. Surviving the aftermath — when the power lines are down and the roads are impassable — is a longer struggle to keep your food from spoiling, your basement from flooding, or your pipes from freezing as you wait for service to be restored.

With a standby generator parked in the yard, you'll never have those worries. Unlike the portable, gasoline-powered models trotted out by emergency crews, these mini power plants are always "standing by," ready to turn on automatically in the event of an outage, even if you're not home to flip the switch. Standbys are more expensive than their portable cousins but they're also more powerful, quieter and safer. That's why more and more people left in the dark by natural disasters are making the investment in a home standby generator.

The basic standby setup is simple. The brawn — the engine and the alternator that generate the electricity — lives outside, in a weather-shielded, sound-deadening box anchored to an installation pad. The brains, otherwise known as the automatic transfer switch, reside inside a box similar in size to a breaker box and connect the generator to the house's main breaker panel. This switch senses when the power goes down, waits a few seconds to make sure it is not a blink, alerts the generator to turn on, and when the engine is sufficiently warmed up, mechanically transfers the load to the generator. When the power returns, the switch signals the generator to stop and restores the house's connection to the grid. You don't have to do a thing, except perhaps keep an eye on the fuel tank if the engine runs on propane.

Practical Considerations

One of the hardest parts in the process is trying to figure out how

big the generator should be and where to put it. People who want the whole house to run as if nothing were awry will pay for the convenience: A 30-kilowatt unit will set you back over \$13,000 and incur higher fuel and maintenance costs. But if you limit yourself to necessities — the sump pump, air conditioner, heating system, fridge, and a few lights — you can get away with something much smaller. A 20-kilowatt generator, for example, can be had for around \$5,500. Norris Electric can make the selection much easier and help size the unit.

Like any insurance policy, a generator is something you buy hoping it won't be needed. Indeed, if there's one thing that mitigates the cost, it's this: Generators last 15 years or more. "Running a standby generator 100 hours a year — and that's a lot — is roughly equivalent to about 5,000 miles of driving," says a spokesman for a standby generator manufacturer. "So it's not likely you'll be wearing out the engine."

Standby Generator Engine

Just like an automobile, most standby generators have an internal combustion engine, complete with pistons and spark plugs. But instead of propelling a pair of axles, the engine's sole purpose is to spin the alternator's rotor at 3,600 revolutions per minute, making a stream of appliance- and light-friendly electricity in the process. Smaller units (those producing less than 20 kilowatts) generally have air-cooled engines.

Just like a car, a generator has maintenance such as oil to change and filters to replace. These tasks should be done every year, even if you never use the unit in an emergency, or every 50 hours of running time if you do. There is also a battery to maintain just as in a vehicle. If you'd rather not mess around under the hood, so to speak, contact Norris Electric and they will put you in

contact with a serviceman in your area for a maintenance contract.

How Big Should It Be?

A generator's output, measured in kilowatts, needs to be enough to supply all the electrical devices you want to keep running in an emergency, plus a 20 percent cushion. That extra power means the engine doesn't have to operate at top speed to meet the expected demand. It also assures there's enough reserve power for the extra surge that electric motors, such as those in air conditioners and refrigerators, need to get started.

You can get a sense of your household's power needs from the list of common appliances below.

Running Watts		Start-up Watts
700	Refrigerator	2,800
750	Lights (10 at 75 Watts)	0
800	Television (large)	0
500	Gas furnace (with 1/2-hp fan)	1,250
5,000	Central air conditioner (3 ton)	12,500

To figure out how big your generator should be, make a list of all the appliances you want to supply with emergency power and contact Norris Electric at 877-783-8765.

What is a Standby Generator

A miniature power station, fueled by natural gas or propane that automatically turns on in the event of a power outage. Operates continually until electricity is restored (or fuel runs out), then shuts itself off.

Why you'd want one

It continues to power house systems even when you're not there, preventing frozen pipes, a flooded basement, spoiled food, and mold infestations.

How it works

When the power fails, the automatic transfer switch instantly shuts off the main supply, fires up the generator, and directs its electrical output to the house. When the power returns, the switch shuts down the generator and restores the house's connection to the power grid.

Board Director Elections

We are nearing our annual meeting on Feb. 12, 2011. At that meeting we announce the results of the director election. This year there are three director seats up for election. The counties and the incumbents are:

County	Incumbent
Richland	Dean Dietrich
Wabash	Larry Seals
Lawrence	Ron Viehman

All the incumbents plan to run for re-election. They must submit a petition signed by at least 25 members to be placed upon the ballot. Any other members that reside and take ser-

vice in any of the above counties may also submit a petition and be placed on the ballot. Petitions are available now and members may stop in the office to obtain a petition or call the office and one will be mailed to the member. Completed petitions must be in the cooperative office by noon on December 15, 2010.

Petitioners with qualified petitions will be placed on the ballots. The ballots will be mailed to all members in January with instructions for voting. Votes may be cast by return mail or by Internet. The results will be announced at our annual meeting on Feb. 12, 2011.

Norris Electric has historically been very successful in managing costs in the past and currently continues that trend. Norris Electric Cooperative enjoys the lowest electric rate in the state for a typical residential consumer and enjoys about an 87 percent equity position. There tends to be a trend across the nation of voting against an incumbent no matter what kind of job they are doing. We hope that is not the case at Norris Electric and hope that you vote for who you think is the most qualified person for the position whether that is an incumbent or a new candidate. That being said, we welcome all petitions.

Eight 2011 IEC Memorial Scholarships available

Norris Electric Cooperative Manager Keith McKinney has announced that the Illinois electric cooperatives will again in 2011 award seven academic scholarships to high school seniors through a memorial scholarship fund designed to financially assist deserving students in the "electric cooperative family." In addition, a new eighth scholarship – to assist with costs in attending an electric lineworker school – will be offered for the first time.

The eight scholarships of \$1,250 each will be awarded in 2011 through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

Four scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative. A fifth scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, will be awarded to a student who is the son or daughter 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 the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors.

A new eighth annual scholarship, the "LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship," will be awarded for the first time in 2011. This \$1,250 scholarship will help pay for costs to attend the lineworker's school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, Ill. LaVern McEntire served as a lineman for McDonough Power Electric Cooperative from 1949 until 1991. He and his wife, Nola, helped to endow and establish the new scholarship to financially assist deserving individuals in becoming trained lineworkers. Relatives of co-op employees or directors are eligible for the lineworker's scholarship, as are individuals who have served or are serving in the

armed forces or National Guard.

"We hope to assist electric cooperative youth while honoring past rural electric leaders with these scholarships," says McKinney. "Norris Electric and the other Illinois electric cooperatives are always seeking ways to make a difference in our communities. One of the best ways we can do that is by helping our youth through programs like this one. In addition, we are very pleased to offer the new electric lineworker's scholarship. It will benefit not only electric cooperative youth but also those fine men and women who have served their country through their military service and may now be wanting to become a trained lineworker."

For more information regarding the scholarships, contact Norris Electric at 618-783-8765. All necessary paperwork has also been sent to area high school guidance counselors and is also available for download at the cooperative's website at www.norriselectric.com.

Norris Electric Cooperative • 8543 N. State Highway 130 • Newton, Illinois 62448 • 618-783-8765
Office hours: 8 a.m. — 4:30 p.m