

President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

Three easy DIY projects to save energy

By Abby Berry, NRECA

Winter weather can have a big impact on your energy bills, hitting your pockets a little harder than you would have liked. Now that spring is just around the corner, it's the perfect time to tackle a few DIY efficiency projects for your home. The good news: You don't have to be an energy expert to do this!

There are several easy ways to save energy, but if you're willing to take a hands-on approach, here are three projects you can do now to start saving.

Make the most of your water heater.

Let's start with one of the easiest projects: insulating your water heater. Insulating a water heater that's warm to the touch can save 7 to 16 percent annually on your water heating bills. It should also be noted that if your water heater is new, it is likely already insulated. But if your water heater is warm to the touch, it needs additional insulation.

You can purchase a pre-cut jacket or blanket for about \$20. You'll also need two people for this project. Before you start, turn off the water heater. Wrap the blanket around the water heater and tape it to temporarily keep it in place. If necessary, use a marker to note the areas where the controls are so you can cut them out. Once the blanket is positioned correctly tape it permanently in place, then turn the water heater back on. If you have an electric water heater, do not set the thermostat above 130 degrees, which can cause overheating.

Seal air leaks with caulk.

The average American family spends \$2,000 annually on energy bills, but unfortunately, much of that money is wasted through air leaks in the home. Applying caulk around

windows, doors, electrical wiring and plumbing can save energy and money. There are many different types of caulking compounds available, but the most popular choice is silicone. Silicone caulk is waterproof, flexible and won't shrink or crack.

Before applying new caulk, clean and remove any old caulk or paint with a putty knife, screwdriver, brush or solvent. The area should be dry before you apply the new caulk. Apply the caulk in one continuous stream, and make sure it sticks to both sides of the crack or seam. Afterwards, use a putty knife to smooth out the caulk, then wipe the surface with a dry cloth.

Weather strip exterior doors.

One of the best ways to seal air leaks is to weather strip exterior doors, which can keep out drafts and help you control energy costs. Weather stripping materials vary, but you can ask your local hardware or home store for assistance if you're unsure about the supplies you need.

When choosing weather stripping materials, make sure it can withstand temperature changes, friction and the general "wear and tear" for the location of the door. Keep in mind, you will need separate materials for the door sweep (at the bottom of the door) and the top and sides.

Before applying the new weather stripping, clean the molding with water and soap, then let the area dry completely. Measure each side of the door, then cut the weather stripping to fit each section. Make sure the weather stripping fits snugly against both surfaces so it compresses when the door is closed.

By completing these simple efficiency projects, you can save energy (and money!) while increasing the comfort level of your home. And you can impress your family and friends with your savvy energy-saving skills.



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Spoon River Electric Cooperative – By the Numbers

Miles of line energized: 1,272
Number of members served: 5,022
Number of power poles
in territory: 29,361

ENERGY EFFICIENCY QUIZ

Are you an energy efficiency whiz?
Test your knowledge by taking the quiz below.
Hint: Check your answers at the bottom of the page.



1. Taking a long bath saves more energy than taking a short shower.

A) True B) False

2. LED bulbs typically use _____ less energy than incandescent light bulbs.

A) 75% B) 50% C) 35%

3. Which of the following is an energy vampire? (Hint: Energy vampires consume energy even when they aren't being used.)

A) Dishwasher B) Electric mixer C) TV

4. If you see this logo on a product, it has an excellent energy efficiency rating.

A) ENERGY SMART B) ENERGY STAR C) ENERGY WISE

5. Turning off the tap water while brushing your teeth can save up to four gallons of water per minute.

A) True B) False

ANSWER KEY

ANSWERS: 1.B 2.A 3.C 4.B 5.A

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Spring is nearly here! Now is the perfect time to test your A/C and ensure it's ready for summer. Remember to check the evaporator coil, which should be cleaned annually for optimal efficiency.

Source: energy.gov



Would your home pass an electrical inspection?

If you're getting ready to sell your home or just wondering how electrically sound it is, there are guidelines to help assess the condition of your home's electrical bones. Although it varies depending on where you live, most local codes follow the National Electric Code (NEC).

The NEC is an industry-specific, jargon-filled document that outlines required practices for all aspects of residential and commercial electrical installation. Don't worry, you don't have to google it and read it cover to cover but know your local code could vary. Local code always wins out when there are variances, so check with your qualified electrician or local building department (start with your city or town) for specific code requirements.

Electrical malfunction is dangerous. U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated average of 45,210 reported U.S. home structure fires involving electrical failure or malfunction per year from 2010 to 2014, according to the National Fire Protection Agency. The home fires resulted in 420 deaths, 1,370 injuries and an annual \$1.4 billion in property damage.

Here are some all-house guidelines that an inspector would look for. If your home has any of the following defects, it may not pass an electrical safety inspection:

- Old knob-and-tube, along with BX cable wiring, common in the U.S. from about 1880 to 1930
- New lights and receptacles installed into old wiring
- Overcrowded wires – too many wires bundled together producing excess heat
- Spliced wires that were illegally installed (they must be installed by an approved method)
- Broken or missing carbon monoxide detectors or smoke alarms (whether smoke alarms must be hard wired depends on the age of the home and in most cases,

whether any home improvement projects required a permit)

- Non-insulated/non-contact-rated recessed lights that touch attic insulation, which is a fire hazard
- Improper overcurrent protection, which means the breaker or fuse is too large for the wire rating

Improper grounding and bonding of electrical panels and devices

- Some other room-specific things to look for include:

Kitchen

- Does your electric range, cooktop or oven have a dedicated 240-volt circuit?
- Is the breaker for the range, cooktop or oven sized correctly?
- Does your island have its own outlet? (The NEC has outlet requirements for kitchen islands, peninsulas and countertops.)
- Does your microwave, refrigerator, microwave and garbage disposal each have its own circuit?

Bathroom

- Are outlets GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupters)? GFCIs are designed to protect from electric shock around water.
- Do your combination fan/lights have their own 20-amp circuit?
- Do the light fixtures in the shower or tub area have a "lens" cover? Are they moisture resistant?

Other rooms

- Does each room have a wall switch installed beside the entry door?
- Are outlets installed no farther than 12 feet apart?
- Are ceiling fixtures controlled by a wall switch and not just a pull chain?

There are also hallway, staircase and garage code requirements, as

well as those for the electrical service panel and wiring. Check with your qualified electrician or the city or town where you live for specific code requirements in all areas of your home. For more about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Home Electrical Inspection:

Pass or Fail?

Would your home pass an electrical inspection? Local electrical codes vary, so check with your qualified electrician, but here are **five things** your home should have:

1. Wiring should be sound (not overcrowded or knob-and-tube wiring used in old homes).
2. Ceiling fixtures should be controlled by a wall switch and not just a pull chain.
3. Outlets near water should have GFCIs (ground fault circuit interrupters).
4. Your refrigerator, microwave and garbage disposal should each have its own circuit.
5. Your island should have its own outlet.

Learn more at SafeElectricity.org



ATTENTION 2018-2019 SENIORS!

Spoon River Electric Cooperative Is Awarding Three \$1,000 Scholarships to High School Seniors

High school students who are seniors during the 2018-2019 school year and are the son or daughter of a Spoon River Electric member are eligible to apply for a \$1,000 Scholastic Scholarship, a \$1,000 Honorary Scholarship, and the \$1,000 Scott Parrish Memorial Scholarship, which will be awarded at this year's Annual Meeting on June 6, 2019.

Please fill out the form at the bottom of the page and return it to the Cooperative to participate. Applications must be turned in by **May 10, 2019** to be considered. Please see official rules and descriptions of scholarships below.

OFFICIAL RULES

- **Applying students and their parent/legal guardian must be present at the Annual Meeting June 6, 2019 to win.**
- Students must be a son or daughter of a Spoon River Electric Cooperative Member.
- Students must be a high school senior during the 2018-2019 school year and begin college undergraduate studies in the 2019-2020 school year. Students must plan on attending a two-year or four-year accredited college or university, including vocational/technical schools.
- Scholarship winners must be full-time students (at least 12 hours) during the 2019-2020 academic year.
- Scholarships are for one year and are non-renewable.
- Past Spoon River Electric Cooperative scholarship winners are not eligible to receive another one.

SCHOLASTIC AND SCOTT PARRISH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

- The Scholastic and Scott Parrish Memorial Scholarships will be awarded based on an application detailing GPA, college entrance test scores, work and volunteer experience, participation in school and community activities, and a biographical statement.
- Semi-finalists will be notified by mail with a time and place for a personal interview.
- Those not chosen as semi-finalists for the Scholastic and Parrish Scholarships will be automatically placed in the Honorary Scholarship drawing.

HONORARY SCHOLARSHIP

- The Honorary Scholarship will be awarded by a drawing as students are recognized at the Annual Meeting.
- All applicants are eligible for the Honorary Scholarship drawing except the Scholastic and Parrish Scholarship winners.



Scholarship Participation Request

Name of Student _____

Address of Student _____

Name of Parent/Guardian _____

Telephone Number _____

Return To: Taryn Mellert
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