

POWERLINE

NEWSLETTER FOR CO-OP MEMBERS OF CORN BELT ENERGY



Corn Belt Energy is your trusted resource for power and information

The energy industry is undergoing rapid change, and technology is paving the way for innovation in the way energy is used, produced, stored and shared. Consumers are interested in more green energy alternatives while smart homes and apps make managing energy use and paying your electric bill more convenient than ever.

While the changing energy market has created more options for consumers, it has also resulted in more utility scams and misleading information.

Utility scams are common because of the vast number of utilities that exist, and consumers are understandably anxious with the threat of disruption to their electric, heating or water service. Second, new products and services in the energy industry provide an opening for scammers and pop-up companies to provide misleading information or sub-standard products and services.

Avoid phone scams

A common phone scam typically begins with a phone number that appears to be from a valid utility company. The scammer will claim you have a past due account and threaten to disconnect service or

take legal action. The scammer will typically demand that you use a prepaid debit card or money order, often within a very short, urgent time frame to pay the “past due” amount.

You can combat this scam by being aware of the status of your account. Never give your banking or personal information over the phone to someone you did not call. If you have a question or concern about your energy bill, call us directly at 800-879-0339 or send us an email at cbec@cornbeltenergy.com. Do not use the phone number given by the scammer.

Avoid solar scams

Another scam we see from time to time is linked to rooftop solar. Homeowners with rooftop solar may receive a sales call offering an accessory, upgrade or extended warranty to their solar array. The calls could be from scammers claiming to represent a solar company, promising to replace faulty parts or improve efficiency.

If you are not expecting the call, don't be fooled. These calls offering misleading information are likely a scam. Call the company that installed the solar array if you think there may be a problem.

Use trusted sources

When considering different renewable energy sources such as wind or solar for your home, make sure you are working with a reputable company. Because this is still an emerging industry with evolving technology, there have been a proliferation of pop-up companies in the market to make a quick buck.

Representatives of these companies may have more sales experience than knowledge of the energy industry, and their primary goal could be making a sale and moving on to the next prospect.

Corn Belt Energy maintains an objective view of how to achieve energy and cost savings for our members.

In this ever-changing environment, it's important to remember you have a trusted energy advisor – your local electric cooperative. We are a community-focused organization that works to efficiently deliver affordable, reliable and safe energy to our members.

Please reach out with any questions about your electric service or bills – we're here to help.

Do ENERGY STAR® certified products actually save you and your household money?



you a collective \$750 - \$4,000 over their lifespan, according to Energy.gov. In addition to appliances, there are many other ENERGY STAR certified products, such as lighting and electronics.

While selecting energy-saving designated products could have a slightly higher price tag, they don't always. Compare prices and don't assume they cost substantially more than less efficient models.

Are you building a new home and looking for appliances or are you in the market for a new water heater or other new appliance to replace your existing product? If so, you might wonder if buying an ENERGY STAR certified version will make a difference in your energy bills.

The short answer is yes, when you compare its estimated energy costs to its less efficient counterpart. In fact, there are really two costs to consider before buying an appliance: the cost itself and the projected monthly energy costs.

The energy-conscious appliances donning the square-shaped ENERGY STAR logo use less energy and water than standard models. For example, ENERGY STAR clothes washers use about 25 percent less energy than conventional clothes washers while also reducing water bills.

And the longer answer is yes, if you consider the appliance's lifespan. ENERGY STAR products used throughout your home can save

The biggest bang for your energy-savings buck might be your water heater, especially if it is 10 years old or older. Water heaters that earn the ENERGY STAR rating come with gas, solar or electric heat pump technology. They heat your water just like standard models but with much less energy – the standard ENERGY STAR-certified water heater will save up to 50% on energy costs for a family of four. By replacing your water heater with a new Energy Star-certified model, you can save more than \$3,500 over a unit's lifetime.

Water heaters account for 12 percent of residential energy consumption, costing a household of four up to \$620 every year in energy costs. Homeowners who invest in a planned replacement of their old water heater with a new ENERGY STAR certified unit can save thousands of dollars in energy costs and avoid potentially costly clean up when their old unit fails.

If you are considering electric, an

According to EnergyStar.gov, if every appliance purchased in the United States this year earned the ENERGY STAR rating, Americans would:

- Prevent 19 billion pounds of greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to the emissions from 1.8 million vehicles.
- Save \$3.3 billion in annual energy costs.
- Save more than 28 billion gallons of water per year.*

**Includes ENERGY STAR certified clothes washer, dishwasher and refrigerator. Dollars savings reflect savings generated from the reduction of energy and water usage.*

ENERGY STAR certified heat pump water heater uses half the energy of a standard model and can save a family of four up to \$3,750 over its lifetime by heating water using highly efficient heat pump technology.

Tip: EnergyStar.gov offers a "Water Heater Replacement Guide" to estimate savings and installation considerations to determine if a heat pump water heater is right for you.

The typical U.S. family spends around \$2,200 a year on home utility bills and switching to ENERGY STAR certified products can help lower these costs over time.

Sources: <https://www.energystar.gov>

Did you know? Water heaters are the second highest source of energy usage in the home. A new ENERGY STAR certified heat pump water heater can save a home up to \$3,500 in energy costs over its lifetime. And you can save even more with tax incentives and rebates offered by Corn Belt Energy.

Simplify your life with auto pay

Want to take one thing off your monthly to-do list? Sign up for your monthly payments to be automatically deducted each month.

Auto pay is the easiest method to pay your monthly electric bill. Similar to a bank draft, auto pay allows you to enter your credit card, debit card, or banking information one time and then your payment is pulled from your account each month.

When signed up for auto pay, you will still receive a monthly bill stating the amount being deducted from the specified account. In addition, you can view your bill as soon as it is available with SmartHub. **Plus, when you enroll in auto pay, you will receive a \$10 bill credit.**

Contact us at 800-879-0339 to sign up for auto pay.

Spread out your energy costs

Corn Belt Energy understands that it can be challenging to pay a bill that was not anticipated, and we remind our members about a billing program designed to help our members spread the cost of energy consumption over a 12-month period with consistent monthly payments.

Budget Billing will help keep your monthly payment consistent and allow members to budget an amount that spread the actual costs over seasonal usage highs and lows.

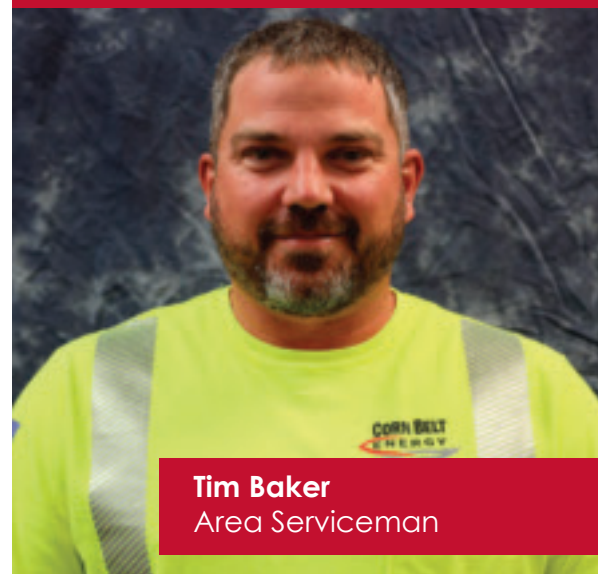
Variable energy consumption during seasonal peaks can create energy bills that are higher, or lower than expected. The unexpected increase in a monthly bill can be overwhelming, and Budget Billing is designed to help keep billing consistent, and monthly payments manageable. Budget Billing gives you a way to help your bill be

more predictable each month. Budget Billing guards against large fluctuations in your monthly electric bill, without ever having to play “catch-up” at the end of the year.

With Budget Billing, your monthly electric bill becomes a “rolling average” of your electric usage for the most recent 12 months. By averaging your changes in usage over a 12-month period, your bill will remain fairly consistent every month, even in very hot or cold months when usage may be significantly higher.

Our Budget Billing program is completely free for members with accounts in good standing and with at least 12 months of service history.

For more information, contact us at 800-879-0339.



Tim Baker
Area Serviceman

How long have you worked at Corn Belt Energy?
20 years

What is your role at Corn Belt Energy?
Service calls in the northern area of the central region. Calls include outages, temporary disconnects for member equipment upgrades, and other maintenance issues.

What aspect of your role do you enjoy the most?
Consistently meeting new people and members. Hopefully with each connection our members and other businesses can see the cooperative difference.

If there is one piece of advice that you could share with our members, what would it be?
When the power is out, we have employees that are working hard to restore it. Members may not see us working many miles away to repair the issue

Corn Belt Energy puts SAFETY FIRST. What safety tip would you share with our members?
Power lines look so innocent but can be very dangerous. Take the time to become aware of any downed lines after a storm or accident and always stay clear of them.

What are your hobbies and outside interests?
I enjoy hunting and fishing.

Who or what inspires you?
I have had so many people inspire me from family, co-workers, Lexington Community Church, and teachers. Striving to be Christlike every day is important to me.

If you had to select a hashtag to describe yourself, what would it be?
#worktoomuch

Is there anything else that you would like to share with our members?
I am very thankful to be serving our members as a Corn Belt Energy employee.

Building a new home or thinking about purchasing an electric vehicle (EV) consider installing an EV charger and receive a rebate from Corn Belt Energy.

- **New construction (\$100)**
- **Retrofit* (\$200)**

***Must participate in Corn Belt Energy's EV time of use rate.**



Prevent deadly shocks — check your boats and docks

By *SafeElectricity.org*

If you own a boat and/or a dock, take steps now to help prevent a tragedy. The Energy Education Council's Safe Electricity program advises, "Prevent deadly shocks. Check your boats and docks."

July 2012 saw horrific fatal accidents near boats and boat docks. A 26-year-old woman was swimming with family in the Lake of the Ozarks was electrocuted when she touched an energized dock ladder. Also at Lake of the Ozarks, a 13-year-old girl and her 8-year-old brother received fatal electrical shocks while swimming near a private dock; officials cited an improperly grounded circuit as the cause. In Tennessee, two boys, ages 10 and 11, lost their lives as they were shocked while swimming between houseboats on Cherokee Lake, a result of electricity entering the water apparently through frayed wires beneath the boat.

An important step in helping prevent such tragedies is to ensure proper installation and maintenance of electrical equipment on docks and on boats. Take the time to inspect all electrical systems on or near the water.

Safe Electricity, with the American Boat and Yacht Council and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers/National Electrical

Contractors Association, recommends adhering to these steps to improve water recreation safety and accident prevention:

- All electrical installations should be performed by a professional electrical contractor familiar with marine codes and standards, and inspected at least once a year.
- Docks should have ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) breakers on the circuits feeding electricity to the dock.
- The metal frame of docks should be bonded to connect all metal parts to the alternating current (AC) safety ground at the power source. That will ensure any part of the metal dock that becomes energized because of electrical malfunction will trip the circuit breaker.
- Neighboring docks can also present a shock hazard. Make your neighbors aware of the need for safety inspections and maintenance. Marinas should comply with NFPA and NEC codes.

Here are a few additional tips to remember for your boat's electrical system, particularly those with AC systems:

- Regardless of the size of boat, maintenance of the electrical

system should be done by a professional familiar with marine electrical codes.

- Have your boat's electrical system checked at least once a year. Boats should also be checked when something is added to or removed from their systems.
- Boats with AC systems should have isolation transformers or equipment leakage circuit interrupter (ELCI) protection, comply with ABYC standards, and be serviced by an ABYC Certified® Technician.



If you are in the water and feel electric current:

- Shout to let others know.
- Tuck your legs up to make yourself smaller.
- Try to go away from anything that could be energized.
- Do not head to boat or dock ladders to get out.

If you are on the dock or shore when a swimmer feels electrical current:

- Do not jump in.
- Throw them a flotation device.
- Unplug or turn off the source of electricity as quickly as possible.
- Then, call for help.

CONTACT US

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