



Scholarship application time!

It is that time of year again when high school seniors start their final semester, decide where they want to attend college, and how to pay for it. Various types of scholarships are one way to help relieve some of that financial burden.

Shelby Electric Cooperative (SEC) will be awarding three academic scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each. Eligible students are sons and daughters of any current SEC member who is receiving electric service from the cooperative at the time the scholarship application is submitted. Students must be high school seniors pursuing a college education in the United States.

These \$1,000 scholarships may be used for educational costs at any two-year or four-year accredited college or university, including vocational/technical schools. Recipients are chosen based on academic and community accomplishments, character, and financial need as demonstrated in the

application and essay process. Friday, March 5 is the deadline for receipt of the completed applications for the 2021 graduates. The three scholarship winners will be notified in June and announced at the cooperative's 83rd Annual Meeting of Members in June.

In 2020, the winners were Caleb Grover of Stonington, Eric Schafer of Owaneco, and Layne Lebschier of Mechanicsburg. "We are pleased to be able to provide these outstanding

students with a scholarship as a way to give back to the communities we serve," said Heidi Hall, who coordinates the program for the cooperative.

Applications and complete guidelines can be found by visiting SEC's website, shelbyelectric.coop, and clicking on the "Community" tab. They are also available from area high school guidance counselors. Please call the cooperative at 217-774-3986 or 1-800-677-2612 if you would like additional information about this scholarship opportunity.

Previous winners provided these tips for filling out scholarship applications: list your accomplishments, always have someone proofread your essay, and make sure you accurately and effectively communicate who you are. For more advice, find the *Scholarship Tips* post on our Facebook page and follow the link provided.

Now is the time to start filling out scholarship applications before it is too late!



2020 Scholarship Recipients



Caleb Grover



Eric Schafer



Layne Lebschier

Five ways to stay cozy this winter

Baby, it's cold outside! When you are feeling chilly at home, there are several budget-friendly ways you can keep comfortable without turning up the thermostat.

Here are five easy ways to stay cozy this winter:

1. Whether you are experiencing the effects of cold winter temps or you are simply cold natured, an electric blanket will warm you up quicker than a regular throw or blanket. Electric blankets can include a variety of features, like timers and dual temperature settings (if your cuddle buddy prefers less heat). This winter, consider an electric blanket instead of turning up the heat, and your energy bill will thank you.



2. One of the easiest ways to stay cozy at home is to keep your feet warm. Our feet play a critical role in regulating body temperature, so when your feet are warm, your body automatically feels warmer. Try a pair of comfortable wool socks or house slippers to stay toasty.

3. On winter days when the sun is shining, take advantage and harness natural warmth from sunlight. Open all curtains, drapes, and blinds in your home to let the sunshine in and you will be able to feel the difference.

4. Another way to make your home cozier is to use a humidifier. Cold air does not hold water vapor like warm air, so by adding humidity inside your home, you can feel a little warmer. A favorable level of humidity inside your home can also help clear sinuses, soften skin, and improve sleep.



5. Beyond adding visual appeal to your home, area rugs can also provide extra insulation and a warm surface for your feet on cold winter days. Use large area rugs in rooms where you spend the most time. You will enjoy the new colors and textures of the rug, and the additional warmth will help keep your home comfortable.

These are just a few ways you can stay cozy this winter without turning up the thermostat. Do not forget the hot chocolate!

SHELBY News

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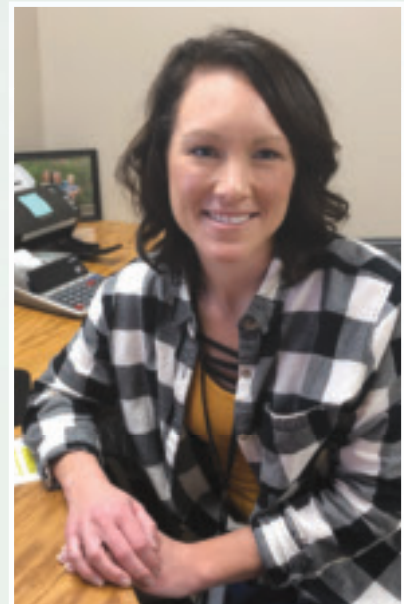


Elizsha Darnell joins the cooperative

The cooperative recently welcomed Elizsha Darnell as the new member coordinator. She will be assisting with member service functions while the co-op works through a software conversion. She will also assist at the front desk, as well as train with multiple departments.

Before coming to the cooperative, Elizsha worked as an insurance account representative for Decatur Memorial Hospital. She is excited about her role at the cooperative and is looking forward to working with and getting to know the members.

She lives in rural Shelbyville with her husband Kevin and their two young children, Malyah and Callaway. Elizsha said her free time is usually spent staying busy with her children and their activities.



Elizsha Darnell was recently hired as the new member coordinator.

Feeling chilled? HEAT your SPACE safely

Before you dust off your space heater and plug it in, consider that most home heating fire deaths (86%) involve space heaters, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). In fact, heating equipment is the second-leading cause of U.S. home fires right behind cooking equipment.

NFPA facts state that more than half of the heating-related home fires start when flammable items are too close to the heat source. Those items include upholstered furniture, clothing, a mattress, or bedding item. Nearly half of all home-heating fires occur in December, January, and February.



Here are some space heater safety tips:

- Only use them as the manufacturer recommends
- Do not leave them unattended
- Give them space: remove any flammable items within 3 feet
- Plug them directly into outlets; do not use an extension cord
- Use a dedicated circuit to avoid overload
- Keep children and pets away from space heaters at all times
- Turn them off before you leave the room or go to sleep.

Learn more at:  **Safe Electricity.org**

Stay warm and safe during the winter months!

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips to save energy. Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features that are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they are not in use (also known as phantom load).

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) estimates that the average home loses \$200 annually to energy wasted by phantom load.

Source:
www.nrel.gov



How to read your propane gauge

Shelby Energy Company, the cooperative's LP gas subsidiary, recommends that you learn how to read your tank gauge and develop a habit of checking it on a regular basis.

Look at the gauge attached to the tank with numbers from 5 to 95. Numbers indicate the percentage of gas remaining in the tank. If your tank gauge reads 25 percent or less, call Shelby Energy for a refill at 217-774-2311.

IF GAUGE READS	NUMBER OF GALLONS REMAINING			
	120 Gal. Tank	250 Gal. Tank	500 Gal. Tank	1000 Gal. Tank
80%	96	200	400	800
70%	84	175	350	700
60%	72	150	300	600
50%	60	125	250	500
40%	48	100	200	400
30%	36	75	150	300
IF GAUGE READS LESS THAN 25% ORDER GAS NOW!				
20%	24	50	100	200



Shelby Energy Company
Serving your LP gas needs since 1994

REAL LIFE  REAL POWER

Getting Real with Marla and Home Gyms

One of the top wish-list items for home renovations is a home gym. People have been converting basements, garages, and other spaces into a place to exercise and de-stress. Considering that over half of all New Year’s resolutions include plans to exercise more, and COVID-19 restrictions are still in place, this trend is likely to continue.

According to a survey by the National Association of Realtors, the top three home renovations that homeowners hoped to complete in 2020 were bathrooms, kitchens, and fencing in their yards. The survey also showed that many homeowners anticipate renovation projects such as a home office or gym will offer the greatest return on their investment.

If your New Year’s resolutions include the purchase of new exercise equipment and/or the renovating of space for a home gym, be sure to consider the power needed and location of outlets. To protect your elliptical, treadmill, or other cardio equipment, check the manufacturer’s requirements before installation. Power requirements may vary among brands and models. Most exercise equipment for personal use requires a standard 120-volt, grounded, and dedicated outlet. Manufacturers also recommend the use of a surge suppressor.

Plug your equipment into a grounded outlet. This protects you from shock if the equipment malfunctions. Three-prong grounded outlets have a grounding wire. These outlets are less likely to cause short circuits compared to ungrounded outlets. Do not modify the equipment’s plug to fit your outlet if it is not grounded. Hire an electrician to install a properly grounded outlet.

A surge suppressor will help protect the equipment if there is a sudden surge of power in your home. Plug the surge suppressor into the grounded outlet, then plug the



treadmill into the surge suppressor.

A dedicated circuit may be recommended for home exercise equipment. This means that no other appliances are plugged into the same circuit. Do not plug the equipment into an extension cord.

Smart fitness is also on the rise. Smart home gym equipment requires an internet connection. Most of the machines have a screen on which you can stream workouts. Smart fitness devices are interactive, and tend to be more expensive than traditional, non-connected equipment.

Now, let’s talk about energy efficiency. A search on energystar.gov did not provide any data on certified home gym equipment. However, the machines tend to not use a lot

of electricity. One hour a day of use for a month may add about \$2 to the electric bill. One of the best ways to save energy due to exercising is to turn down the thermostat. Your body will quickly warm up while exercising. The rest of the family will also need to exercise or dress warmer. Considering that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found that only 25 percent of U.S. adults and 20 percent of high school students get the recommended levels of physical activity, family exercise is not a bad idea.

The second way to save energy with home exercise equipment is to not use the clothes dryer and use the equipment as a laundry rack—you know it happens. At least it does at my house. 😊



~Marla Foor, Communication Specialist • Sources: treadmillrun.com, pcmag.com