

POWERLINE

A monthly newsletter for co-op members of Corn Belt Energy

December 2016

Cook up energy savings this holiday season

For many of us, the best holidays involve home-cooked meals and wonderful aromas of turkey, stuffing and baked goods wafting throughout the house. It means a busy kitchen and a bustling house full of family and friends. If this rings true for you, despite the increased kitchen activity, you still have an opportunity to save energy during the holidays.

In addition to being the “heart of your home,” your kitchen could pump savings back into your wallet. According to the Department of Energy, cooking accounts for 4.5 percent of total energy use in U.S. homes. This number, combined with the energy use associated with refrigeration, dishwashing and hot water heating means that as much as 15 percent of the energy in the average American home is used in the kitchen. So, saving energy here can have a significant impact on your household budget.

Small appliances equal big energy savings

When preparing side dishes, baked goods, soups and such, consider using small appliances like a crock pot, toaster oven, microwave or warming plate instead of your conventional oven or stovetop. These small appliances are a smart, energy-saving alternative, typically using about half the energy of a stove.

Don't peek!

Opening the oven door can lower the temperature by as much as 25 degrees and causes your stove to work harder (consuming more energy) to return to the desired cooking temperature. If your recipe calls for baking the dish more than an hour, it is not necessary to preheat the oven. If your oven is electric, you can likely turn the oven off for the last five to ten minutes of cooking and allow the residual heat to complete the job. Clean burners and reflectors increase efficiency and offer better heating, so don't neglect this small but important task.

Just as keeping the oven door closed seals in efficiency and enables the stove to operate more economically, the same rules apply to the refrigerator and freezer. Keep the doors closed as much as possible so cold air doesn't escape. However, leaving the door open for a longer period of time while you load groceries or remove items you need is more efficient than opening and closing it several times.

If you are entertaining a large group, you may be able to give your furnace a brief holiday. When your oven is working hard and you have a house full of guests, the heat from the stove and the guests will keep your house comfortable, enabling you to turn down the thermostat.



Clean up with energy savings

When it's time to clean up, extend fellowship to the kitchen, and wash and dry dirty dishes by hand. This uses less energy than a dishwasher. However, don't leave the water running continuously, or you will waste energy. If you do use the dishwasher and rinse dishes before loading them, use cold water. Run the dishwasher with full loads only, and if possible, use the energy-saving cycle. Note that dishwashers that have overnight or air power dry settings can save up to 10 percent of your dishwashing energy costs.

By adapting these efficient practices in your kitchen, energy savings will be one more thing to be thankful for this holiday season.



Giving back is the co-op way

As some of you might know, cooperatives across the globe adhere to the same Seven Cooperative Principles that guide all of our decisions—from how we run the co-op, to how we engage with our local communities. Concern for community is the seventh principle, and it is one that all employees of Corn Belt Energy value year round. But during the holiday season, concern for community seems especially important.

Electric cooperatives have a proud history of giving back. Each year, Corn Belt Energy employees give back to the community in many ways. In 2016, Corn Belt Energy employees raised over \$7,000 during our United Way Campaign. United Way works to create opportunities that directly impact education, income and health of people within the local community.

Our commitment is also global. We have sent linemen overseas so they can help bring power to thousands of people who have

never experienced the benefits of electricity.

So many families go without on a daily basis and struggle to make ends meet. This struggle can be especially hard during the holiday season.

There are many ways you can give back to the community that go beyond dollar donations. Take some time to go through your closets and find clothes that no longer fit or have lost their use. Bag those items up and take them to your local Salvation Army, Goodwill or church clothing drive. Volunteer for a local food or toy drive, deliver meals to the sick and the elderly or simply make a meal for a neighbor in need.

No matter how great or small the act, every time we give back, we strengthen our community. So take the time to give back this holiday season. You'll be glad you did.

Holiday lighting safety tips

Consider purchasing LED holiday lights; they are cool to the touch and more energy efficient than incandescent bulbs.

Test holiday lights by connecting each strand before hanging them.

Make sure there are no broken bulbs or damaged or frayed cords. Discard any defective strands.

Use holiday lights that include the Underwriter's Laboratories (UL) label.

Do not overload electrical outlets or extension cords.

Turn off all indoor and outdoor holiday lighting before leaving the house or going to bed.

Avoid resting bulbs on tree needles and branches. Try using a clip to keep the bulbs upright.

How to report outages

conveniently from your mobile device!

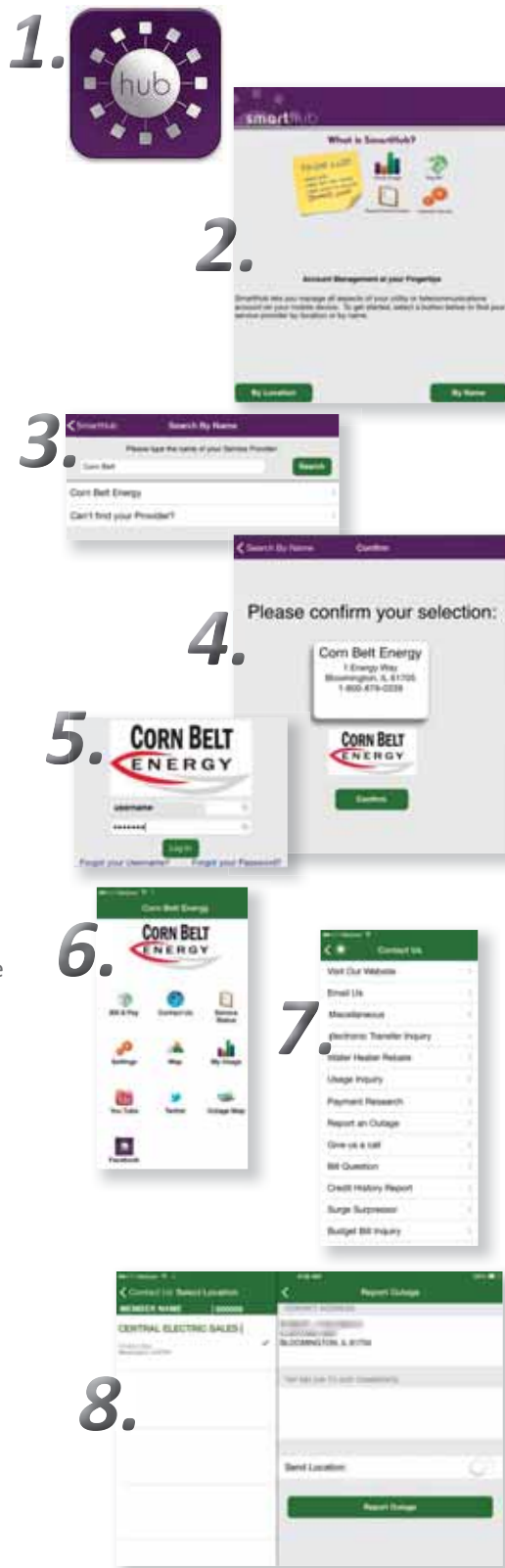


Every day the employees of Corn Belt Energy work hard to prevent and minimize the interruptions in power to our members. Unfortunately, unforeseen events such as storms can often cause power outages. Corn Belt understands how inconvenient it is to be without electricity. We strive to make the process for reporting outages as easy as possible including from your mobile device.

Instructions

1. Download the free mobile app for your Apple or Android device by searching for "SmartHub" in your app store.
2. Select the "By Name" button in the lower right section of the screen.
3. Type in "Corn Belt Energy" and click on the "Search" button, and select "Corn Belt Energy".
4. Make sure that "Corn Belt Energy" appears on the next screen and select "Confirm".
5. Enter your username and password. Then, select the "Login" button.
6. Click on the "Service Status" icon.
7. Click on "Report an Outage".
8. Confirm that the address listed is correct for the outage location, and type a comment (optional). Then, select the "Report Outage" button.

Please note: Steps 1 - 5 will only need to be completed one time. Once you are logged in, you will only need to complete steps 6-8 to report an outage.



More SmartHub Information

In addition to reporting outages from SmartHub, you also have the ability to:

- View hourly, daily and monthly usage data
- Compare usage between hours, days, months or years
- Set usage thresholds and alerts
- Receive bill reminders
- Pay your bill quickly
- View Corn Belt's social media feeds



For more information, check out our short, easy-to-follow SmartHub video tutorial at www.youtube.com/cornbeltenergy.



To access SmartHub from your desktop, simply click "Account Log-in" at www.cornbeltenergy.com and log in with your same email address and password.

Scholarships available for high school seniors

In spring 2017, ten scholarships of \$2,000 each will be awarded to eligible high school seniors through the Illinois Electric Cooperative (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

The fund was designed to financially assist deserving students in the "electric cooperative family," while also providing a means for co-ops and individuals to honor deceased members of the co-op family through memorial gifts.

Five scholarships will be awarded to students who are children of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative, including Corn Belt Energy members. A sixth scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, is awarded to a student who is the child of an Illinois electric cooperative employee. The remaining three scholarships are reserved for students enrolling full-

time at a two-year Illinois community college who are children of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors. The tenth scholarship, the LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship, will be awarded to help pay for costs associated with lineworker's school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield. Military veterans and relatives of cooperative members, employees and directors are eligible to apply.

Candidates are judged on the basis of grade point average, college entrance exam scores, work and volunteer experience, school and civic activities, and a short essay that demonstrates their knowledge of electric cooperatives. Applications are available at cornbeltenergy.com under "Community" and must be submitted online by December 31, 2016.

Education grants available for local schools

Corn Belt Energy is now accepting applications for our 2016 Education Grants Program. Five schools that serve children of Corn Belt electric members will each be awarded a \$1,500 grant and one school will be awarded the \$2,000 Jeff Reeves Memorial Education Grant to fund innovative programs that enrich students' education.

Teachers and administrators of public or private K-12 schools may apply; the facility does not need to receive electricity from Corn Belt Energy, but must serve families within our footprint in Central Illinois. Multiple projects within the same school

can be combined to a total of the awarded grant amount. Applications and further details can be found online at www.cornbeltenergy.com under "Community."

An impartial panel of judges will review the grant applications and preference will be given to projects and programs that enhance learning and are not currently being funded through the school's budget.

The application deadline is December 31, 2016, and the grants will be awarded in February 2016.



Contact Us

1-800-879-0339

Call this number to report an outage and call from a phone associated with your account if possible.

LOCATION

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OFFICE HOURS

8:00 AM - 4:30 PM
Monday - Friday

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