

Spoon River News

President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

LED Lucy

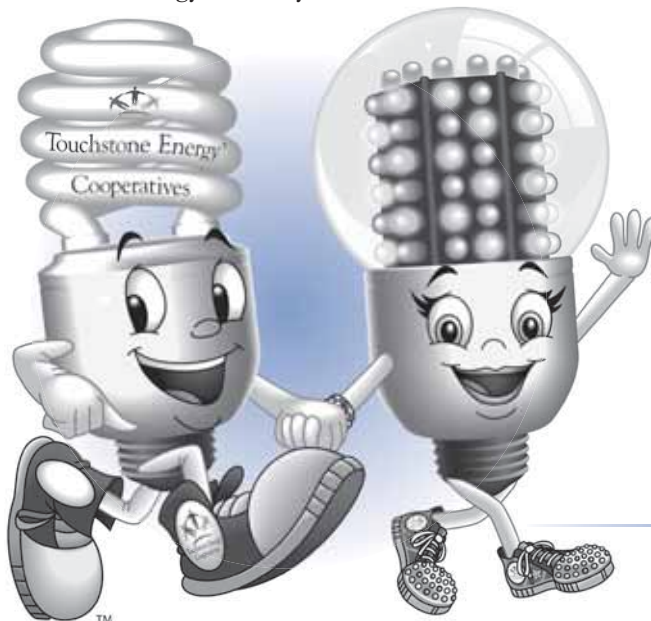
This month I want to use this space to introduce you to Touchstone's new, energy-efficient mascot, Lucy.

There's a new lighting mascot in town. CFL Charlie, a cartoon mascot for Touchstone Energy Cooperatives®, the brand "ID" of the nation's not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, helps families become "Super Savers" by switching to energy efficient lightbulbs. In 2013 he was joined by LED Lucy, a dazzling, spunky mascot lighting the way for even brighter bulb savings.

Lighting standards started shifting away from traditional lightbulbs in 2012. CFL Charlie and LED Lucy want to make sure Spoon River Electric Cooperative members know about all lighting options.

"I'm older than I look," LED Lucy confides. The mascot's light-emitting diodes beam. "The first LED was created in 1927. Since then we've added stylish colors, and costs dropped. I love bargains, and LED prices get lower every year!"

The mascots share a few pointers on their energy efficiency namesakes.



Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs)

CFL Charlie—and other bulbs like him—are the most common and economical efficient lightbulbs on the market. The swirly style is linked to the concept of efficient lighting, but some consumers haven't warmed to the design.

"Not everyone likes to see my swirls," explains Charlie. "That's fine by me—everyone has a different sense of style. Several of my friends are designed to look just like a traditional lightbulb."

CFLs offer 75 percent energy savings over traditional incandescent bulbs and pay for themselves in 9 months, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Light emitting diodes (LEDs)

Light emitting diodes (LEDs) have been used for years in cell phones and other electronics. Most diodes are small—about half the size of a pencil eraser. By banding several small diodes together, a bright and dependable light emerges. As their popularity grows, some companies are making light with a single, bright LED chip. New ways to build LEDs with help drive down costs.

"It's going to be fun to watch LED Lucy gain fans," laughs Charlie. "She uses a little less energy than me, and lasts 25 times longer than traditional incandescent bulbs."

Since lighting adds up to 10 percent of a home's electric bill, every bulb counts. To help children learn more about lighting, visit www.kidsenergyzone.com.

Source: Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, U.S. Department of Energy



Sen. Dave Koehler was awarded the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives Public Service Award for 2013. He accepted the award and was congratulated by the Spoon River Electric Cooperative Board of Directors Nov. 25.

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Spoon River Electric Cooperative – By the Numbers

Miles of line energized: 1,249 • Number of members served: 4,944
 Number of power poles in territory: 29,255

Solid Lighting Solutions

LEDs meet (and exceed) 2014 lighting efficiency standards

By Megan McKoy-Noe and Brian Sloboda

A new year calls for updated lightbulb efficiency guidelines. No need to use bulbs with a twist; light-emitting diodes (LEDs) can help you switch on savings.

Congress called for improved energy efficiency standards for traditional incandescent bulbs under the federal Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. By 2014, lightbulbs using between 40-W to 100-W must consume at least 28 percent less energy than classic bulbs. The change will save Americans an estimated \$6 billion to \$10 billion in lighting costs annually.

When the next wave of standards kicks in next month, traditional 40-W and 60-W incandescents will no longer be available. In their place, some consumers are filling the gap with a solid solution: LEDs.

'Solid' lighting

Incandescent bulbs create light using a thin wire (filament) inside a glass bulb—a delicate connection that can easily be broken, as frustrated homeowners can attest. In contrast, LEDs are at the forefront of solid-state lighting—small, packed electronic chip devices. Two conductive materials are placed together on a chip (a diode). Electricity passes through the diode, releasing energy in the form of light.

Invented in 1960 by General Electric, the first LEDs were red—the color depends on materials placed on the diode. Yellow, green, and orange LEDs were created in the 1970s and the recipe for the color blue—the foundation for white LEDs—was unlocked in the mid-1990s. Originally used in remote controls, exit signs, digital watches, alarm clocks, and car signal lights, LEDs quickly gained momentum for large-scale lighting.

Measuring LED potential

The Arlington, Va.-based Cooperative Research Network

has partnered with several electric cooperatives throughout the United States to test LEDs. Researchers are cautiously optimistic; LEDs offer several benefits:

- LEDs could last longer, perhaps for decades
- The energy to use LEDs could be substantially less than that of compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) or other fluorescents
- With no mercury content, LEDs are more environmentally friendly
- The products are rugged and more resistant to breakage
- LEDs perform well in cold climates, especially outdoors
- LEDs can be dimmed and produce a more pleasing light

However, some consumers avoid LEDs because the price tag exceeds normal lightbulb costs. But the true value lies in the lifetime of the bulb. It takes about 50 traditional incandescent bulbs, or eight to 10 CFLs, to last as long as one LED lamp.

Buyer Beware

Poor quality LED products are flooding the marketplace. Some are manufactured outside of the United States with components that produce low light levels, don't boast a long service life, or make exaggerated energy saving claims.

Don't be fooled. Look for the U.S. Department of Energy's ENERGY STAR logo for guaranteed color quality over time, steady light output over the lifetime, high efficiency, and a warranty.

You can also look for an LED Lighting Facts label. The label helps consumers compare products to manufacturer claims and similar products with a quick summary of performance in five areas:

- Lumens: Measures light output. The higher the number, the more

light is emitted.

- Lumens per watt (lm/W): Measures efficiency. The higher the number, the more efficient the product.
- Watts: Measures the energy required to light the product. The lower the wattage, the less energy is used.
- **Correlated Color Temperature (CCT):** Measures light color. "Cool" colors have higher Kelvin temperatures (3,600–5,500 K); "warm" colors have lower color temperatures (2,700–3,000 K). Cool white light is usually better for visual tasks. Warm white light is usually better for living spaces because it casts a warmer light on skin and clothing. Color temperatures of 2,700 to 3,600 K are recommended for most general indoor and task lighting.
- **Color Rendering Index (CRI):** Measures the effect of the lamp's light spectrum on the color appearance of objects. The higher the number, the truer the appearance of the light. Incandescent lighting is 100 on the CRI.

Shedding Light on LEDs

More lighting efficiency changes are coming. Congress' measure mandates lightbulbs become 70 percent more efficient by 2020.

Curious to know if LEDs are right for you? Learn how to show using LED labels at www.lightingfacts.com/content/consumers. Homeowners can visit www.energysavers.gov/lighting to compare LEDs to new energy-efficient incandescent bulbs and CFLs.

Sources: The Association of Electrical Equipment and Medical Imaging Manufacturers, U.S. Department of Energy, Cooperative Research Network



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