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President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

Clearing the air

Replace air filters regularly for efficient heating and cooling

Clogged air filters could add \$82 to your electric bill every year. Checking, changing, or cleaning your filter once a month saves money and extends the life of your home's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system.

More than half of your monthly energy bill goes toward keeping your home comfortable. While air filters prevent pesky dust and annoying allergens from clogging your HVAC system, dirt, like aging arteries, builds up over time. If left unchecked, a dirty filter strains a home's heart and forces the HVAC system to work harder to push conditioned air through tight spaces. This results in higher energy bills and—potentially—system failure.

Air filters protect HVAC systems and perform double-duty by collecting some loose dirt from the air. These handy sieves live in duct system slots or in return grilles of central air conditioners, furnaces, and heat pumps.

Successful filters have a short lifespan—the better a filter catches dirt, the faster it gets clogged and must be cleaned or replaced. Leaving a dirty air filter in place cuts a home's air quality and reduces HVAC system airflow.

While removing a clogged filter altogether relieves pressure on the system, the system can't perform well without one. Unfiltered dust



and grime accumulate on critical parts like the evaporator coil, causing unnecessary wear and tear.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) advises checking an air filter once a month and replacing it at least every three months. It's critical to inspect and replace filters before seasons of heavy use like summer and winter.



Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

Your heat pump can use 10 percent to 25 percent more energy if it's not properly maintained, which includes regularly checking and replacing the air filter when it's dirty to keep parts from working too hard or even becoming damaged. Keep brush and plants tidy around the outdoor unit, and dust the return registers inside. For more details on heat pump maintenance, visit EnergySavers.gov.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Find out how your local electric cooperative can help you lead by example at TogetherWeSave.com.



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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

Seal, insulate and equip

Doing these steps properly can keep your heating bills down this winter

As the long winter nights set in, it is definitely time to think about staying warm and cozy over the winter months. Here are some tips to help maintain your comfort without blowing your budget:

Air sealing

High impact areas to seal against leaks are found up high on your home such as:

- Plumbing, wiring, light fixtures and ductwork penetrations from your attic into your home — use caulk to seal these areas.
- The tops of wall headers — gently push back the insulation on the attic floor to locate these areas and use caulk or spray foam to seal the cracks.
- Attic access hatch located inside your home — if you have a simple flat board blocking the access hole, attach 3 inches of foam board insulation to the backside of the hatch. Apply weatherstripping to the lip that holds the board in place. Apply latches from the home side that will keep the board fitting snugly against the weather stripping.
- It may not seem like a lot of air could escape through those places, but added together, they can create significant losses. In some cases, it is the equivalent of leaving a window open all winter!

Insulation

- We recommend R42 ceiling insulation to new homes built in our service territory. If you don't have that, adding more may help keep you warmer this winter.
- What does R42 look like?
 - Fiberglass batts — 13.5 inches
 - Blown-in fiberglass — 19 inches
 - Blown-in cellulose — 13.5 inches

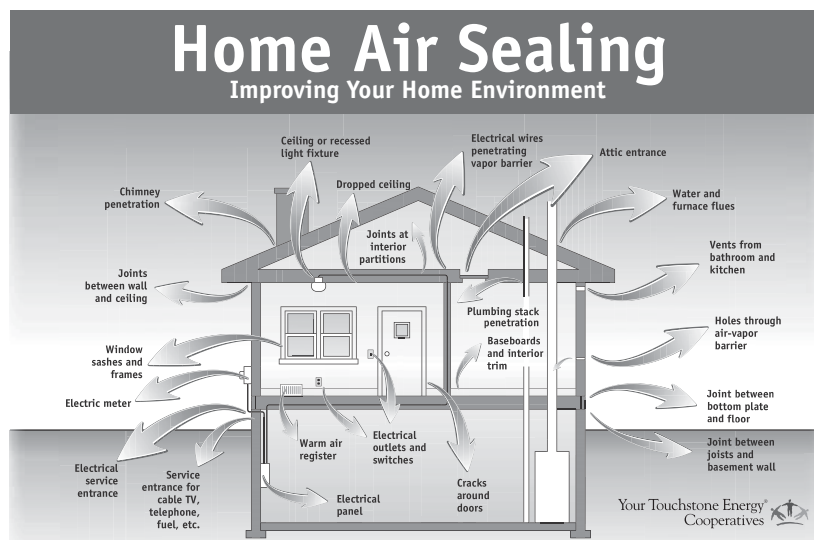
Equipment

- Check your filters monthly and keep them clean.
- Don't turn off your central heating system and use space heaters thinking you'll save money on your heating bills. One little 1,500-watt electric space heater running eight hours a day for a month will use 360 kWh. At 12 cents per kWh, that will cost you \$43. If you use it 16 hours a day, double your cost to \$86 per month. Have more than one space heater? Multiply that number by \$86. It adds up quickly.
- Don't "flip the switch" to emergency heat with your electric air-source heat pump.

It knows when to switch automatically between the heat pump and the backup, or emergency heat. If your heating technician told you to do that — find a new heating technician. If your house is not staying warm enough, call a technician to diagnose and fix the problem. Even if your air-source heat pump is "running all the time" it is far more efficient (250 percent) than your electric backup (100 percent) and costs you less to keep your house warm.

- Don't be fooled by commercials or ads that claim the heater in the fancy hand-crafted wooden box is any more efficient than a \$20 "ugly" space heater from the discount store. They both use 1,500 watts. And, 1,500 watts is 1,500 watts no matter how it's dressed up.

It's usually not as expensive as you might think to fix problem areas. You will be more comfortable in your robe and slippers while the cold winds howl this winter, and you will save on your heating bill!



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