

POWERLINE

NEWSLETTER FOR CO-OP MEMBERS OF CORN BELT ENERGY



EDITION: JANUARY 2026

Save money with a DIY home energy audit

Want to cut costs and make your home more comfortable? A DIY home energy audit can uncover hidden energy drains, like leaky windows, drafty ducts and inefficient appliances. Identifying trouble spots now can set you up for savings and comfort year-round.

Your step-by-step efficiency guide

Before you dive in, grab a few basic tools: flashlight, dust mask, tape measure and something to take notes (your phone works great!). We'll start with simple, no-cost changes you can do right away, then move on to tasks that take a little more effort.

Step 1: Adjust your thermostat

Revisit your thermostat settings each season. Lowering the temperature at night or when no one is home is a simple way to cut costs.

Use a smart thermostat for even greater savings. It automatically adjusts based on your schedule.

Check with Corn Belt Energy for rebates or discounts on smart thermostat upgrades.

Step 2: Lower water heater temperature

Lower your water heater



temperature to save money and reduce the risk of scalding burns. Some water heaters are factory-set to 140 F, but most households only need 120 F.

Step 3: Find and fix energy vampires

Shut off energy vampires — devices that draw electricity even when turned off. This idle load can account for 23% of your home's energy use.

Unplug appliances when not in use and fully power down devices like computers or gaming consoles.

Use a smart power strip to shut off multiple electronics at once — it's an easy way to stop energy waste at the source.

Step 4: Check your lighting

Swap out older bulbs, like incandescent or CFLs, for LEDs. They use less energy and last longer. Lighting can account for about 10% of your electric bill.

Add dimmers or timers to cut down on wasted electricity.

Don't overlook outdoor fixtures. Choose LEDs with features like daylight shut-off or motion sensors for even more savings.

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Save money with a DIY home energy audit

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Step 5: Review major appliances

Look for the ENERGY STAR label when buying new. If your refrigerator, washer, dryer or heat pump is more than 10 years old, it may be worth replacing rather than repairing. Newer appliances are more energy-efficient and can often pay for themselves in savings within a few years.

Check your heating and cooling systems. Their lifespan can range from 10-30 years depending on the type and maintenance. If yours is older, start planning ahead for an upgrade.

Replace air filters to keep your system running efficiently.

Step 6: Seal leaks

Air leaks can waste 10-20% of your home's energy each year, but they're often simple to fix. Here's where to look and how to seal them.

Check baseboards, floor edges and wall-to-ceiling joints indoors.

Focus on where different materials meet outdoors.

Pay special attention to windows, doors, light fixtures, plumbing and outlets.

Use caulk for gaps around windows, doors and baseboards.

Add weatherstripping to doors and operable windows.

Step 7: Inspect insulation

Check attic insulation:

Grab your dust mask and tape measure to check the depth of the insulation. It should be at least 12 inches deep, but you

may need more depending on the type and your climate. Check EnergyStar.gov for recommended R-values.

Spread insulation evenly. Loose-fill or blown-in insulation should be fluffy with even coverage, while rolled batt insulation should fit snugly with no gaps.

Inspect exterior walls:

Check insulation by turning off the power, removing an outlet cover or switch plate and shining a flashlight into the cavity. Many homes built before the 1960s have little to no insulation, and houses from the 1960s-70s often need more.

Call a professional to blow in insulation (from the outside or inside) if wall insulation is missing.

Don't forget the basement:

Ensure rim joists (the area between the top of the foundation and the underside of

the first floor) are well insulated in unfinished basements. Insulate the underside of the floor between the joists in crawl spaces.

Add insulation to pipes and ductwork for an extra efficiency boost.

Enjoy your energy savings

Congratulations — you've taken important first steps toward lowering your energy bills and boosting comfort.

For more tips on building an efficient home, exploring rebate programs, or questions, please visit cornbeltenergy.com.

Want to go further? A professional home energy audit can provide a complete plan to reduce waste, maximize savings, and make your home more efficient year-round. Contact us at 309-662-5330 to schedule a FREE energy audit.

Four Ways an Energy Audit Can Benefit You

A home energy audit can determine the overall efficiency of your home or business and ways to improve it. Here are the main benefits of conducting an energy audit.



An audit will identify where most of your energy use is going and ways to use energy more efficiently to save money.



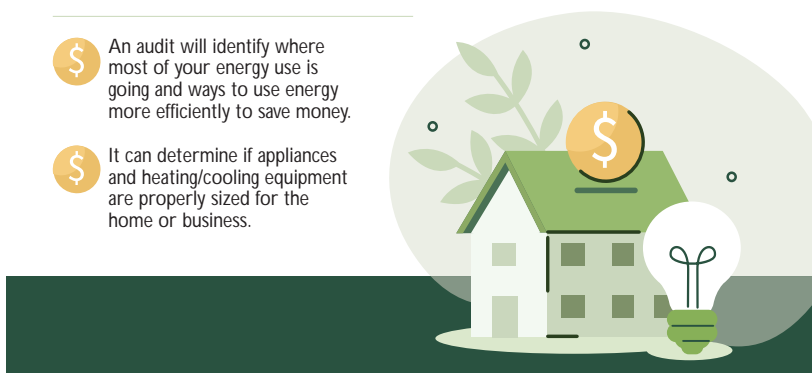
It can determine if appliances and heating/cooling equipment are properly sized for the home or business.



An audit can identify potential safety issues with home wiring and ventilation.



Making changes based on the audit recommendations will raise your property value.



HOW WILL YOU MAKE YOUR **MARK?**



**A WEEK OF BUILDING MEMORIES, SKILLS, LEADERSHIP
AND FRIENDSHIPS THAT WILL LAST A LIFETIME!**

EXPERIENCE THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME WITH YOUTH TOUR!

- Explore Washington, D.C. through historic monuments, world-class museums, and visits with elected officials.
- Build leadership skills and discover how you can make your mark on the future.
- Connect with students from across the country and form friendships that last a lifetime, all sponsored by your local electric cooperative.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT APPLYING AT
[ELECTRIC.COOP/YOUTHPROGRAMS](https://electric.coop/youthprograms)**



MAKE YOUR MARK

2026 Nominating Committee meeting scheduled

The Nominating Committee will meet at the Corn Belt Energy office, in Bloomington, at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, January 14, 2026.

Any cooperative member who is interested in being nominated to the Board of Directors should contact a committee member prior to the meeting. The committee can nominate no more than two individuals for each expired Directorship.

As an alternative, any active cooperative member may also be nominated for election by petition. Any fifty active members of the Cooperative, by their petition, may propose the name of any qualified member as an additional nominee.

The nominated person must have

active service in the Board district of the vacancy, and no other Directors can live in the same township.

Petitions to nominate Directors must be filed at Corn Belt Energy's office no later than Monday, April 6, 2026. The election to fill the Director seats will occur at the Annual Meeting, scheduled for Friday, June 5, 2026, at Normal Community High School in Normal.

The Board of Directors is comprised of 11 active members who represent the membership in the operation of the Cooperative. The detailed procedure for choosing a Director is stated in our cooperative bylaws, which can be found at www.cornbeltenergy.com.

Now accepting Director nominations

The terms of the following Corn Belt Energy Directors will expire at the 2026 Annual Meeting on June 5:

- Rae F. Payne- District 1
- Jerry Starkey- District 1
- Dennis Fredrickson- District 5
- Frank Kobilsek- District 7

The Board of Directors has appointed the following persons to the Nominating Committee. If you are interested in a district seat currently up for re-election, contact one of these persons or an existing Director with your credentials by December 31:

- Bruce Thomas, 3011 Clearwater Ave. Bloomington, IL 61704
- Todd West, 2273 Knox Rd 2250 E Victoria, IL 61485
- Albert Hagenbuch, 3438 E. 11th Rd. Utica, IL 61373
- Darrin Schertz, 485 County Rd 2570 E. El Paso, IL 61738
- Tyler Fritzen, 20905 E 650 W Rd. Downs, IL 61736
- Lora Warren, 17303 Backbone Rd West, Princeton, IL 61356
- Bart Bittner, 19754 E 1300 North Rd. Bloomington, IL 61705
- Stanley Otto, 6938 E 1700 North Rd. Danvers, IL 61732
- Debbie Birkey, 27993 Townline Road Mackinaw, IL 61755
- Gary Golden, 8306 Medinah Dr. Bloomington, IL 61705
- Rachel Torbert, 13325 Autumn Rd. Wapella, IL 61777



CONTACT US

309-662-5330 | cbec@cornbeltenergy.com | www.cornbeltenergy.com | [f](#) [i](#) [x](#)
1 Energy Way, Bloomington, IL 61705 | Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

