

October 2017

Hot Watts

Published monthly by Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Fall/Winter Energy Tip: When you are asleep or out of the house, turn your thermostat back 10° to 15° for eight hours and save around 10 percent a year on your heating and cooling bills. A programmable thermostat can make it easy to set back your temperature – set it and forget it!

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Congratulations!
Susie Lane
is our online
survey winner.

Go Paperless!

Would you like to receive one less bill in the mail each month?

If so, all you need to do is go to the CHEC website at www.cooksonhills.com and log on to your SmartHub account. Click on "My Profile" > "Update My Printed Bill Settings" and then click on "Turn Off Printed Bills." You will receive notification of your monthly statement and the CHEC monthly newsletter "Hot Watts" electronically to your e-mail.

SmartHub offers many conveniences that you do not receive with a paper bill. You may:

- View your bill and payment history
- Make payment on one or more accounts with a Visa or MasterCard. (A \$3.95 convenience fee will be assessed with each payment transaction.)

- Review your usage and bill comparison
- Update your settings and account information
- Manage notifications

SmartHub also has a mobile app available for your smart phone. The mobile app has many of the same conveniences as your online SmartHub account. Please note: you cannot "Turn Off Printed Bills" from the mobile app.

SmartHub is a secure and convenient method of payment and communication. If you have any questions concerning SmartHub or about going paperless, please contact your local office at 800-328-2368 (Stigler) or at 918-775-2211 (Sallisaw).



Operation Round-Up Update

The CHEC Foundation recently met on September 5 to review applications for requests for charitable assistance grants. At the meeting, the board awarded grants to assist Brent Rural Fire Department and Catholic Charities. The Foundation also approved grants to Hillside Pentecostal Church of God for their meals for kids program and Stigler Health and Wellness Center, Inc. for their countywide Thanksgiving dinner.

The next meeting will be held on December 5 with applications due by November 10. For more information about Operation Round-Up or to obtain an application, please visit CHEC's website at www.cooksonhills.com or call 800-328-2368.



Reminder:

Your Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative's 69th Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 7, 2017. Registration will open at 10:00 a.m. with the business meeting starting at 11:00 a.m.

We hope to see you there!

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Felicia Williams, *Editor*
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Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



If You Find Your Account Number
Hidden in This Issue of the *Hot Watts*,
You'll Receive a \$25 Credit on
Your Electric Bill

CHEC Observing National Co-op Month in October

CHEC is joining 30,000 cooperatives nationwide in October to celebrate National Co-op Month, which recognizes the many ways cooperatives are committed to strengthening the local communities they serve. "Co-ops Commit" is the theme for this year's celebration, spotlighting the countless ways cooperatives meet the needs of their members and communities.

"Our cooperative delivers electricity to 17,850 meters in our seven-county service territory," says Kendall Beck, CHEC General Manager. "Delivering safe, reliable, affordable power is our top priority, but we are also invested in our communities because we are locally owned and operated. Revenue generated by CHEC goes back to Main Street, not Wall Street."


Rural America is served by a network of about 1,000 electric cooperatives, most of which were formed in the 1930s and 40s to bring electricity to farms and rural communities that large, investor-owned power companies had no interest in serving because of the higher costs involved in serving low-population and low-density areas.

In addition to providing the vital power co-op members depend on, CHEC has innovative programs to aid members such as Operation Round-Up. Also, CHEC has several youth 2057300 programs, which include: Youth Power Energy Camp, Youth Tour, and the Herman Driscoll Memorial Scholarship.






Join CHEC in celebrating cooperatives in Oklahoma and across America during National Co-op Month!

Follow #CoopMonth on Facebook and Twitter to see how co-ops across the country are celebrating National Co-op Month.





SMART TIPS

-  Review and follow all manufacturer directions.
-  Place them out of high-traffic areas and on a hard, level floor surface.
-  Keep them at least 3 feet away from flammable items.
-  Plug them directly into outlets. Avoid using an extension cord.
-  Turn them off before you leave the room or go to sleep.

SPACE HEATER SAFETY

Space heaters can be a cost effective option when heating no more than one or two small areas.

Learn more at:

Safe Electricity.org



Electric co-ops concerned with President's budget proposal

By Dan Riedinger

Every year, the President sends Congress a proposal for funding the government during the upcoming fiscal year, which Congress considers as it weighs its own budget priorities. The President's budget request for fiscal year 2018 includes several proposals that threaten to handcuff rural families and businesses. While Congress isn't required to adopt them, electric co-ops have an obligation to stand up for the interests of their members by alerting our elected leaders of our concerns.

That's why CHEC and other co-ops have been vocal in Washington about several areas of the President's budget that would hurt America's electric cooperatives and their 42 million members.

Rural economic development

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development program provides loans, grants and guarantees to support economic development and many essential services in rural communities. But the President's budget proposes to eliminate funding for the Rural Business Service, including the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program (REDLG), Rural Cooperative Development Grant and Rural Energy for America programs.

Power Marketing Administrations

The federal government provides clean, low-cost electricity to more than 600 co-ops from federal hydropower projects operated by four Power Marketing Administrations (PMAs). But the administration proposed selling off the transmission assets of three PMAs. This would jeopardize affordable, reliable power for more than 100 million people and have a devastating impact on rural economies. Both Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill have joined co-ops in speaking out against this proposal.

Low-income energy assistance

The Department of Health and Human Services proposes eliminating the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

(LIHEAP), a valuable tool that electric cooperative consumers use to help pay their energy bills in times of severe weather or economic crises. Co-ops have joined others in the power sector each year in asking Congress for robust LIHEAP funding to help those in need pay their home heating and cooling bills. The program has had a strong track record of success since 1981.

Jim Matheson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), summed the budget proposal up this way: "A healthy rural America can be the rising tide that lifts the nation's economy and the standard of living in countless communities. Rather than shifting funds away from critical programs that have a record of success, the administration should be working with co-ops and other stakeholders to jump start rural America's economic engines."

That's the message NRECA and its member co-ops, including CHEC, are delivering to federal policymakers.

Dan Riedinger writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.



Powering Up After an Outage

When the power goes out, we expect it to be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm or natural disaster causes widespread damage, extended outages may result. Our line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark:



1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines:

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

2. Distribution Substation:

A substation can serve hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself or if problems exist further down the line.

3. Main Distribution Lines:

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

4. Tap Lines:

If local outages persist, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes.

5. Individual Homes:

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issue.

Your flickering lights are trying to tell you something...

Be aware of the signs of electrical wiring problems: dimming or flickering lights, burning or smoky odors, discolored outlets or switch plates that are warm to the touch. Watch for frayed wires and sparks. Take note of breakers that trip or blow frequently, and signs of potential rodent damage that may affect insulation on wires.

If you suspect a problem, shut the outlet or switch off at the circuit breaker, and contact an electrician to make repairs.

Learn more at:



The Dreaded Vampire Loads By Tom Tate

Perhaps you are familiar with an undesirable aspect of the electronic and IOT (Internet of Things) revolution: vampire loads. Vampire loads come from devices that use electricity even when they appear to be off. The primary culprits are chargers, set-top television boxes, instant-on televisions and gaming systems. There are others, but these four represent the major offenders.

Let's look at how these vampire loads occur and why they are approaching 10 percent of average household electric use according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Chargers take the 120 VAC (volts alternating current) power at the outlet and reduce it down to the voltage required by the connected device, usually 5 to 12 VDC (volts direct current). Obviously, when your device is charging, the charger is using electricity, but you might be surprised to learn that chargers are still using small amounts of energy even when they're not connected to a device.

Television set-top boxes also consume energy when they appear to be inactive. Anytime the set-top box's lights are on, it is using power. Like chargers, they use more when the television is on, but they are always working – even when the TV is off. This is especially true for those devices with a DVR function that records your favorite TV shows.

The instant-on television is another culprit. The intention of the "instant-on" feature is instant gratification for the viewer, meaning no waiting for the TV to turn on and warm up. Unfortunately, for that convenience, the TV must be on at nearly full power. So, in this mode, it can be a real energy drain.

The typical gaming console can use as much energy as a regular refrigerator even when it's not being used. Make sure to check the console settings and disable automatic updates, which is where the energy drain comes from.

Games on the console are frequently updated, which requires a lot of electricity.

So how does the average family combat these dreaded vampire loads? Garlic garlands? Silver bullets?

Fortunately, none of the remedies of fable are necessary. You just need to change how you handle these energy-sucking electronics. Here are a few suggestions.

- Unplug chargers when not in use.
- Invest in smart power strips. These look like normal power strips but have a twist; one of the outlets is the "master" that receives power all the time. The others are off. When the device connected to the master outlet turns on, the rest of the outlets receive power too. Ingenious and perfect for entertainment set ups. Have the television in the master outlet and when you turn it on, the set-top box, speakers, streaming devices, etc. will turn on too. They are also ideal for PCs and their peripherals.
- Turn off the instant-on function on your TV. Turn off set-top boxes that do not contain the DVR functionality or use a smart power strip.
- Disable automatic updates in gaming consoles and turn the console completely off when you finish using it.
- When replacing any device or appliance, look for an EnergyStar rated product.

Vampire loads are a real problem that will only continue to grow as the digital age advances. But you can fight the vampires with vigilance and application of the recommendations above. Check with CHEC for additional suggestions and energy-saving advice.

Tom Tate writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.



Watt's Cooking?



Seven Layer Dip

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 16 ounces refried beans | 1 cup lettuce |
| 1 (1 ¼ ounce) package taco seasoning | 1 cup Mexican blend cheese |
| 1 cup sour cream | 4 ounces sliced olives |
| 1 cup guacamole | 1 cup tomatoes |
| 1 cup salsa | |

Layer ingredients, in this order, in a casserole dish: refried beans mixed with taco seasoning, sour cream, guacamole, salsa, lettuce, cheese, olives, and tomatoes. Serve with tortilla chips.

Submitted by Haley Boren

