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Hot Watts

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

Feel around doors and windows for air flow. Adding weather stripping or caulk around a leaky door or window can lower energy bills by keeping your heating system from working too hard to compensate for air leaving your home.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Congratulations

Gary Hall of Muldrow is our online survey winner!

Happy New Year from everyone at CHEC.



CHEC offices will be closed December 31st in observance of New Years Day.

Electricity Theft: *Not Worth the Risk*

Every year, electric cooperatives across the country cope with individuals who deliberately tamper with their electric meter to steal power. Not only is this practice extremely dangerous, it is a serious crime that comes with hefty fines and/or jail time.

Electricity theft involves cases in which consumers interfere with the operation of a meter or divert power elsewhere to lower or avoid paying electric bills. Not only are these people stealing from their fellow cooperative members they are also risking their lives and those of our workers by tampering with CHEC's electric meters.

According to the Cooperative Research Network, a division of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), power surging through a compromised meter can cause an electrical catastrophe. A short circuit could produce an arc flash bright enough to cause blindness and powerful enough to launch fragments of red hot debris. Serious injury or death from electrocution, explosion, or fire often results from meter tampering. Only trained CHEC personnel, wearing protective clothing, should work on meters. It is

unlawful for anyone other than a CHEC employee to work inside the meter base. If a meter is tampered with, the member will be charged with a tampered service fee and all other corresponding fees.

Electricity theft is not a victimless crime, CHEC loses revenue and expends resources to investigate tampering. These costs are then passed on to the entire membership.

Since everyone pays for lost power, please let us know if you suspect meter tampering. Do not attempt to approach the individual or confront them. Call CHEC at 918-967-4614 or 800-328-2368 to report possible theft of electric service. All information can be given anonymously.




Tampered meter / Photo by: David Bumpers

Affordable. Innovative. Member Focused.

It's hard to predict the future, but one thing seems certain—**new government regulations may increase the cost of electricity.**

We want to work with you to keep your electric bills **AFFORDABLE**. We are controlling costs through **INNOVATION**, and no matter what the future holds we will continue to put you, our members, **FIRST**.

COOKSON HILLS
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Find out how we're *Looking Out for You* at www.ourenergy.coop

Looking Out
for You



Hot Watts

is published monthly by Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc. *Hot Watts* informs members in parts of seven Eastern Oklahoma counties about Cookson Hills' programs and issues. Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative continually strives to provide quality electrical service at a reasonable cost for its members.

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Cookson Hills welcomes members to submit photos, and articles which will be subject to Cookson Hills editing.

Any submissions must be received before the 12th of the month prior to the publication date.

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

Interested in Replacing Your Clunky Old Washer or

▪ *Cookson Hills Electric will still offer its Energy Star appliance rebate*

The Take Control & Save rebate program is offered year round and is designed to increase the production, distribution, purchase and installation of high-efficiency, Energy Star rated appliances in the consumer market. This program has a few changes for 2011. New Energy Star ratings for ground source heat pumps must be a 17.1 EER rating or higher and dual-fuel heat pumps must be 15.5 SEER rating or higher to qualify for these rebates. Additionally, the limit for electric Energy Star water heater rebates went from 1 to 2 per member.

Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative (CHEC) will provide rebates to their residential members who purchase and install qualifying new Energy Star rated appliances. The goal for this program is to increase members' awareness of saving energy with Energy Star appliances. This program offers rebates on Energy Star clothes washers, dishwashers, room air conditioners, water heaters, dual fuel heat pumps and ground source heat pumps.

This program offers rebates to encourage CHEC members to replace older appliances with new Energy Star models, which use less energy than older appliances. Today's appliances are more energy efficient than those purchased ten or more years ago, especially Energy Star appliances.



An appliance receives the Energy Star significantly more energy efficient than the standards, as determined by standard test amount by which an appliance must exceed standards is different for each product rated, available technology. Energy Star rated products are the most efficient available.

For more information on applying for rebates, contact Donna Rhodes at 800-328-2368.

The rebate program includes:

- Clothes Washer.....
- Dishwasher.....
- Room Air Conditioner.....
- Water Heater.....
- Dual Fuel Heat Pump.....
- Ground Source Heat Pump - Call for more information



Youth Tour Presentation at

If you are a high school junior and would like to increase your leadership skills, meet new friends and travel, you can compete in the Annual Youth Tour essay contest through Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative (CHEC).

CHEC participates in this national program that allows rural electric cooperative students an opportunity to earn a trip to Washington, D.C., by writing an essay on a topic determined by the co-op. This year's topic: *My life without electricity.*

Throughout the months of November and December, Kristie Cash, Youth Tour Coordinator, has visited area schools in CHEC's service territory with a presentation about the cooperative and the Youth Tour trip. Youth Tour presentations are done by appointment only. The annual contest usually is administered by local high school teachers who make the essay contest a class project, although students may enter independently if their school does not participate. Once the essays are

Refrigerator

program in 2011



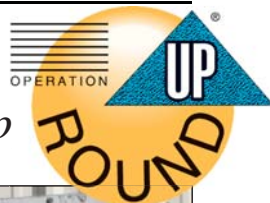
star rating if it is significant improvement over the minimum government efficiency standards. The program is based on the minimum standards and depends on availability. Rebates are usually among

for these CHEC rebates call 918-775-2211.

Includes:

-\$100
 -\$50
 -\$50
 -\$50
 -\$150 per ton
- For more information on rebate.

Your Donations Help Local Fire Department



▪ *The new year is better thanks to Operation Round-Up*

Change is good. This is especially true about the small change Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative (CHEC) members donate each month to help fund worthwhile projects and organizations.

The Operation Round-Up program helps in the local communities where the members of CHEC live and work. The money collected through Operation Round-Up stays where it does the most good, in our local communities.

This innovative program may seem like small change, averaging around \$6 annually per contributor. The voluntary contributions are made by rounding up participating members' electric bills to the next dollar.

The Cookson Hills Electric Foundation, an independent volunteer board that oversees the distribution of funds for the Operation Round-Up grant, recently approved funds to help repair the Lona Valley Volunteer Fire Department pump truck. A new pump system is being purchased with this grant and the fire department also plans on upgrading to larger hoses and nozzles to help fight larger fires.

Rural volunteer fire departments are vital when fire or other emergency services are needed in rural areas. These fire departments cover vast areas and require trucks and equipment to be properly working and ready in case of fire to ensure help gets where it is needed as quickly as possible. This \$1,000 grant provided through Operation Round-Up will help improve the Lona Valley's Volunteer Fire Department.



Left to right: Margaret Johnson, CHEC Foundation Board Member, presents grant to Suset Gibson, Lona Valley Safety and Training officer.

Photo by: Larry Mattes

The Operation Round-Up program is intended to benefit communities throughout the Haskell, Sequoyah, Muskogee, Cherokee, Adair, Pittsburg and LeFlore counties which are serviced by CHEC.

To apply for a Operation Round-Up grant, application forms are available at the CHEC offices and can also be found on CHEC's website at www.cooksonhills.com.

Area High Schools

turned in, they are reviewed anonymously. Top-ranked entrants then are notified they are among the finalists.

The four finalists present their essays to the CHEC Board of Directors and other special guests at the annual Youth Tour Banquet held in Stigler. This is where they are presented with a plaque and the trip of a lifetime.

During the Youth Tour trip on June 10-16, 2011, students will join 1,500 youth from across the nation in Washington, D.C. Participants will visit the monuments and other attractions, as well as visit Capitol Hill to learn more about how our government works.



The following students of Warner High School attended a Youth Tour Presentation. (Coach Justin Kana's class) left to right: Colby Johnson, Jake Coffman, Colton Yarbrough, Jandi Duggan, Cassidy McKinney, James Collins and Dalton Brewer.

Photo by: Larry Mattes

Calling CHEC to report an outage

Before calling to report an outage, please check your breakers.

If you check your breakers and your power remains off, contact your neighbor to see if their power is also out. This can help determine if the outage is widespread or specific to your residence.

Please be patient if the lines are busy.

During major outages, our telephone lines are overloaded with members calling to report their situation. We never take the phones off of the hook, and answer calls 24 hours a day. All calls are answered in the order they are received. Once we 89000 receive your report, your location is logged into our computer system and crews are then dispatched for repairs.

If you have special needs that require electricity for your well being, for example life support systems, please notify us of your circumstance by calling Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative at 918-967-4614 or 800-328-2368.



Simple things you can do to reduce your energy bill.

During the cooler months, making the simplest changes while heating your home can save energy and money. Consider these low-energy, low cost tips for the chilly months ahead.

1. Keep the fireplace damper closed when not in use.
2. Check your home's insulation. Insulation is measured in R-Value, the higher the R-Value, the better your insulation will resist the flow of heat.
3. Seal leaks; air leaks significantly raise your energy bill and make your home uncomfortable. Leaky ducts can reduce heating and cooling system efficiency by as much as 20 percent.
4. Turn down your thermostat to 68 degrees when heating your home. For every degree you lower your heat, you will save up to 5 percent on heating costs.
5. Are you using your curtains to capture heat? Make sure drapes and shades are open to catch free solar heat during the day. Close them at night to keep the heat inside.
6. Run ceiling paddle fans on low and reverse the rotation to blow air up in winter. This keeps warm air circulating without cooling you.
7. Don't make your fridge work too hard. Clean coils every year, and set the temperature between 34°-37° F; leave the freezer between 0°-5° F. Keep the freezer full, frozen food helps your freezer stay cool. When cooking keep lids on pots, and let hot food cool off before placing it in the refrigerator.

The Hot Watts Q&A

Question: What are the benefits of being on Cookson Hills Electric auto bank draft or credit/debit card draft, and what is the process to sign up?

Answer: Auto bank draft and credit/debit card draft are the easiest, most convenient ways to pay your electric bill. No more checks, no more stamps. With the auto draft programs, your payments are transferred to CHEC directly from your bank account or credit card account around the same time each month. Not only is this service free of charge it saves you time and money. CHEC's auto draft programs are designed for customers who would prefer to spend their time on something other than writing checks each month.

Call your local office today to sign up for auto draft. Members may also sign up online at CHEC's website www.cooksonhills.com.