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Hot Watts

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When buying a new appliance, check the black and yellow EnergyGuide label. This label provides an estimate of the product's energy consumption and efficiency. It also shows the highest and lowest energy efficiency estimates of similar models.

Most major appliances, such as refrigerators, dishwashers, and clothes dryers, are required to have these labels.

Source: U.S. Department
of Energy

Congratulations

Pamala White
is our online survey
winner!

Please look for Annual Meeting photos and prize winners in the November issue of the Hot Watts.

OSMOSE to Begin Pole Inspections

Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative (CHEC) members living in Haskell and Sequoyah Counties may soon notice individuals inspecting poles. CHEC has contracted with OSMOSE Utilities Services to conduct inspections of 3,000 poles. This project will begin in mid October and finish in December 2011. The crews doing the pole inspections will display an OSMOSE or Cookson Hills logo on their vehicles.

Brett Orme, CHEC Director of Engineering stated, "These types of inspections are conducted to ensure safety of employees as well as the public. Cookson Hills wants to prevent poles from rotting at the ground level. We do not want a pole to fail with a lineman on the pole, nor do we want a pole to fall and put the public in danger. These pole inspections also help with the reliability of our system."

The only way to know if the poles are in good condition is to inspect them in the field. CHEC linemen check poles as part of their daily work

routine, but OSMOSE pole inspections are more in-depth.

OSMOSE checks for rot below the ground by digging around the base of the poles, as well as drilling holes to test the center. They also conduct a visual inspection looking for cracks, shell rot, and woodpecker holes.

After the inspections are completed, all condemned poles are replaced and good poles are treated to prevent decay. Pole replacements are prioritized based on the condition of the poles. By maintaining pole integrity Cookson Hills' system is much safer as well as reliable.



Osiose Utilities Services

Cooperative Month, Building a Better World

You might be surprised about the number of co-ops around you. Co-ops have been formed to sell produce and electricity, offer financial and banking services, provide housing and health care, and much more.

So where did the bright idea for co-ops come from? It is a matter of seven principles. The modern movement traces its roots to a store started by weavers in the town of Rochdale (pronounced Rotch-dale) in northern England in 1844. The group was guided

by a set of principles drawn up by one of its members, Charles Howarth. When introduced into the U.S. by the National Grange in 1874, these "Rochdale Principles" fueled a cooperative explosion.

Although stated in many ways, the Rochdale Principles require that a cooperative must be open for anyone to join. Every membership retains one voice, one vote. Electric co-ops hold member business meetings annually, allowing members to elect fellow consumers to guide the

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Hot Watts

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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**

Energy Efficiency

Get the Jump on Drafty Windows

Windows provide our homes with light, warmth and ventilation, but when winter sets in they can have a downside.

Placing your hand against a window pane on a chilly fall morning proves the point: if the window pane feels cold, it is a good bet you can reduce energy costs by either insulating your existing windows or installing new, energy efficient upgrades.

Insulating with draperies is a low-cost quick fix to drafty windows and can reduce heat loss from a room up to 10 percent. In addition, they are just as helpful in the summer months by blocking sunlight. White plastic-backed drapes can reduce heat gain by up to 33 percent.

Interior storm window panels are another low-cost fix (available at most hardware stores), and consist of flexible or rigid plastic installed over or adhered to existing window



Courtesy Photo

panes. Installation is simple, and panels are either taped on or mounted with Velcro, magnetic strips, or snap-in seals. Put them up in autumn and remove them in spring to reduce winter heat loss by up to 50 percent.

Touchstone Energy: Togetherwesave.com

Drought Conditions Cause Right-of-Way Spraying to Halt

Due to the drought conditions throughout the state during the summer months, Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative (CHEC) has postponed the chemical spraying program for 2011. CHEC contractors, Progressive Solutions, made an announcement that they would not offer product support due to the severe drought conditions. Spraying plants that are in a stressed or regressive condition would not justify the expense.

When plants and vegetation get to the drought state, the plants strive to stay alive and are not carrying nutrients or herbicide to the roots. If the herbicide does not reach the roots of the plant, it only burns the exterior of the plant, not permanently killing it. Spraying vegetation is not

cost effective when plants are in this condition. Here at CHEC, we are always looking at operations for the most cost effective way to conduct business.

If you have any questions about CHEC's Right-of-Way program, please call 918-775-2211 or 800-328-2368.



istockphoto

Pay your Bill Automatically

Without even writing a check

Sign up for Automatic Bank Draft. It is a convenient, easy way to pay your electric bill, without writing a check. You can save the cost of a check, postage, your time, and possibly forgetting to pay.

Using Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative's Automatic Bank Draft program is simple; all you have to do is sign up at one of our office locations or on-line at www.cooksonhills.com. You can choose to have your payment made with a bank draft from your checking or savings account. There is no fee for using the Automatic Bank Draft program.

Remember the process is not complete until you see the words "Bank Draft - Do Not Pay" on your bill, so



until that time you will need to continue to pay your electric bill as usual.

For more information, call us at (918) 967-4614 or 800-328-2368.

Don't Let Electrical Hazards Haunt Your Halloween!

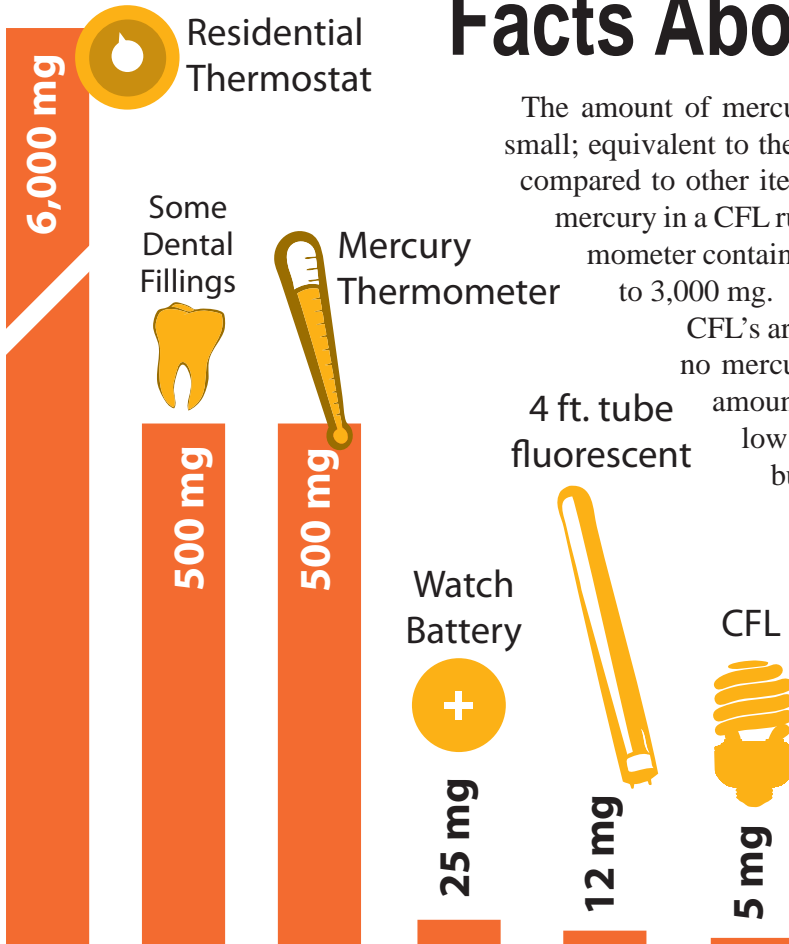
Halloween is the most festively frightening night of the year. Do not mix your Halloween Holiday with danger. Here are some safety reminders:

As you are decorating, make sure you check for cracked sockets, frayed, loose or bare wires, and loose connections.

- Fasten all outdoor lights securely to trees and other firm supports. Do not use nails or tacks that could puncture insulating cords and 189001 damage wires.
- Make sure decorative lighting is well-ventilated, protected from weather, and remains a safe distance from anything flammable like dry leaves and shrubs. Do not coil extension cords while in use or tuck under rugs or drapes.
- Make sure all outdoor electrical lights and decorations are plugged into an outlet protected with a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). If your outlets are not equipped with GFCI's, have an electrician install them or buy a GFCI adapter plug. Don't overload outlets with too many extension cords and strands of lights.
- Keep power cords off walkways and porches that trick-or-treaters may use. You don't want them to trip.
- Leave the porch light on for trick-or-treaters, and be sure to turn out all spooky lights before leaving home or going to bed. This will also save energy. For more tips visit www.SafeElectricity.org.



Facts About Mercury in CFLs



The amount of mercury inside the glass tubes of an average CFL is very small; equivalent to the tip of a ballpoint pen and it is especially small when compared to other items you may have around your home. The amount of mercury in a CFL runs about 4-5 milligrams (mg), while a glass fever thermometer contains 500 mg, and an old style thermostat could contain up to 3,000 mg.

CFL's are safe to handle and use in your home, and they release no mercury when in operation. Even if you break a CFL, the amount of mercury that may become airborne poses a very low risk of exposure, says ENERGY STAR. When CFL's burn out or break, the best course of action is to recycle them. Some hardware stores and other retailers have CFL recycling bins; go to the Earth 911 website at www.earth911.org, or call 1-800-CLEANUP and find a recycling location near you.

CFL's are a great idea. They will help you cut your utility bills and they help reduce the need for electricity production. However, to create the maximum benefit for the environment, recycling burned-out and broken CFL's makes sense.

Source: ENERGY STAR, Natural Resources Defense Council

The Hot Watts Q&A

Question: When I call or come to the office, why can't you look up my bill with my address?

Answer: The address that we have on your account is your mailing address. The mailing and physical addresses are not always the same.

The best way to look up your account is with your account number, meter number, or your name. If you have multiple accounts, it is very important to have the account number or meter number so that any requests or questions are handled properly. We can serve you faster and more efficiently if you have one of these numbers with you. Thank you for your help.

Cooperative Month

Continued from page 1

co-op and have a say in how their utility is run.

Members of electric co-ops often receive money back in the form of capital credits when the co-op is in good financial shape.

Education remains another big focus. Electric co-ops provide safety information in schools, share ideas on how to make your home more energy efficient to keep electric bills affordable, and make sure elected officials and opinion leaders know about the co-op business model. Because there is strength in numbers, co-ops tend to stick together when tackling regional and national issues.

Perhaps most important of all, co-ops are independent and community-focused, not tied to the purse strings of investors. Co-ops help drive local economic development, fund scholarships, support local charities, and work to make life better in the areas they serve, the heart of the cooperative difference.

Learn more about cooperatives and the principles that define them at www.go.coop.