

living with energy

IN IOWA



NOVEMBER 2016

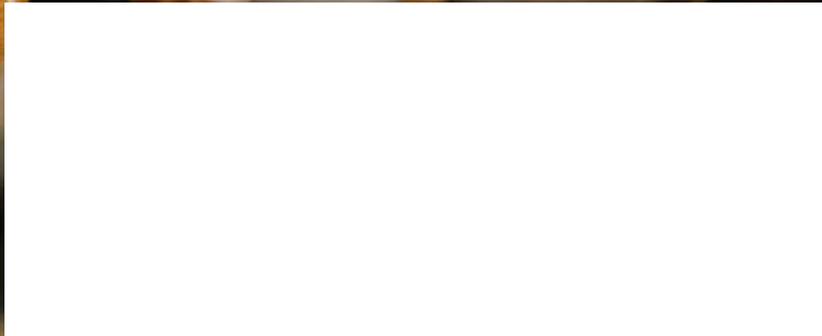
THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION FOR MEMBER-OWNERS OF ACCESS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

Help your family
take a break
from technology

Is nuclear power an
overlooked
energy
source?

Start your day with
a family-favorite
breakfast!

This winter,
make your
energy dollars
work harder



Upcoming Events

The Access Energy Cooperative office will be closed:

Thanksgiving – Nov. 24-25

Christmas – Dec. 23-26

New Year's – Jan. 2

For after-hours and holiday emergencies, Call 866-242-4232 or 800-452-7819

Even when the Access Energy Cooperative office is closed, we're still available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call our office any time for emergencies, power outages, details on your account, bill payments, and information about the cooperative and upcoming events. ⚡



Access Energy Cooperative is dedicated to exceeding members' expectations for safe, reliable and efficient service, while being a good citizen in our communities.

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Mount Pleasant, Iowa 52641
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Facebook: facebook.com/AccessEnergyCoop
Twitter: twitter.com/AccessEnergyC
E-mail: contactus@accessenergycoop.com
Office Hours: Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Friday, 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Closed Saturday, Sunday and holidays
After Hours and Report Outages: 319-385-1580 or 800-452-7819

Payments can be placed in dropbox under flag pole. Visa and MasterCard accepted.

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Local Perspective

Help your family take a break from technology

BY KEVIN WHEELER

I'm not the first – and I certainly won't be the last – to say this, but it's becoming more difficult to escape the pull of technology these days. As a society, we're becoming dependent on our devices for nearly everything we do. In fact, device dependence has become so severe, even leaders in the technology industry have started taking measures to wean themselves from their devices.



Have you ever read a line of a book – or an e-mail or a work document – and a minute later, you can't remember what's in it? Well, device dependence could be to blame. Your brain is like a muscle; after it's used, it needs time to recover. Without that time, it may not be able to soak up and process the information it's receiving. Many of us go from one task to another, only taking a break to respond to a text, check Facebook or send a Tweet. But research has shown that using the time in between tasks to rest your brain can increase your cognitive abilities.

Device dependence isn't only detrimental to our cognitive development; it can also strain our relationships. Here are a few tips you and your family can use to keep device dependence at bay:

- The next time you finish a task, instead of getting online or checking your phone, take a walk in a quiet place, or simply sit back and let your mind wander (some call this day-dreaming, and it's actually a great way to rest your brain throughout the day).
- Set up gadget-free zones throughout

your home. It goes without saying that the dinner table should be one, but try creating a gadget-

free zone in the bedroom or living room as well.

- Many of us use our devices to listen to music, read books or even take notes during meetings. Try putting your device in airplane mode when using it for those purposes. If you need Wi-Fi or a mobile connection to

perform these tasks, disable all of your push notifications so they don't distract you from the task at hand.

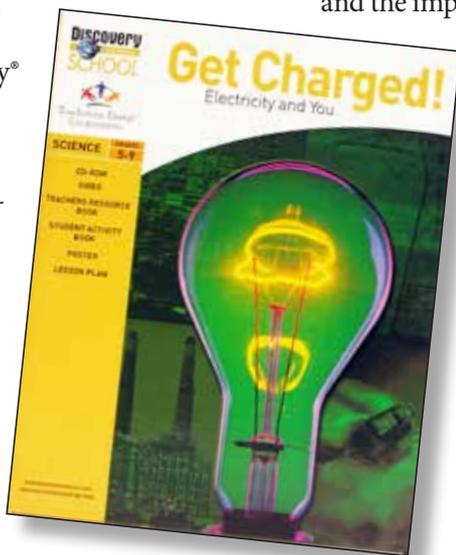
- You might be thinking there's no way you'll be able to coax your kids to put down their devices. Here's a solution: Start a contest in your family to see who can go the longest without checking their phone or playing a video game. Make the prize a fun treat to incentivize them to win!
- When you're spending time with friends and family, put your device in another room so you're not tempted to check it if there's a lull in the conversation.
- On family vacations, make it a rule that devices only can be used to check in with those who need to know how things are going. Stare up at the stars, not at your screens. We all need time to unplug and give our brains a break. By unplugging, you may even save on your electric bill. And don't worry; Facebook will still be there when you return. ⚡

Kevin Wheeler is the general manager/CEO of Access Energy Cooperative.

In the Community

Home schoolers: Kit is available to learn about energy

Get Charged! – the electricity curriculum kit developed by Discovery Channel School in partnership with Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives – is available to home schools in the Access Energy Cooperative service area. In support of its ongoing commitment to community service, the cooperative launched the Get Charged! program to give middle school



students a real-world understanding of power, the purpose of electricity and the important role of electric cooperatives.

Each kit contains a lesson plan; teacher's resource book; two videos, Understanding Electricity and Our Story; an interactive CD; and a student workbook. Two curriculum kits are available for use by home schools. To borrow a copy, call 319-385-1577 or stop by our office. ⚡

Editor's Choice Contest

Win a boxful of assorted LED lightbulbs and figure out which kind you like best!



If you've been waiting for LED prices to come down before you replace your old-style, energy-sapping incandescent lightbulbs, the time for action is now. You can buy 60-watt equivalent LEDs in multipacks for around \$2 each.

This month's prize package includes a variety of 60-watt equivalent bulbs, including soft white (which we like for living areas and bedrooms), daylight (best for work areas like the kitchen, garage and basement) and ones you can adjust for your color preference. And, because the holidays are just around the corner, we're including a bonus: two 66-foot-long strings of decorative outdoor LED lights and a 24-hour weatherproof timer. ⚡

Visit this website, and win!

To enter this month's contest for the LEDs and bonus Christmas lights and timer, complete the entry form at the *Living with Energy in Iowa* website (www.livingwithenergyiniowa.com) by Nov. 30, 2016. You must be a member of one of Iowa's electric cooperatives to win. There's no obligation associated with entering, we don't share entrant information with anyone and multiple entries from the same account will be disqualified.

Safety Matters

Items on utility poles are a safety hazard – and illegal

Although it may seem like a good idea, putting signs, satellite dishes, deer stands and other items on utility poles creates serious safety hazards. Staples, nails, and tacks used to hang things – as well as the items themselves – pose dangers to Access Energy Cooperative line workers who must climb poles to restore power or to perform routine maintenance.

Dishes, deer stands or other objects – even birdhouses, balloons, flags or a basketball net – can create dangerous obstacles. Even if these items are taken down, the nails, tacks and screws left behind can snag utility workers' boots or puncture safety clothing, making line workers vulnerable to slipping or even electrocution.

In addition to being hazardous, tampering with utility poles can be costly. Posting signs or attaching other objects to utility poles is in violation of Access

Energy Cooperative's electric tariff, section 19. Individuals are subject to disconnection and possible legal action can be taken.

Access Energy Cooperative encourages members to contact local zoning officers to inquire about where signage can be posted legally. ⚡



Let's bust the myths about smart meters!

BY TOM TATE

By now, most Americans likely have heard of “the smart grid.” This phrase is being used to describe the computerization of America’s electrical infrastructure. The purpose of this computerization is to improve the reliability, efficiency, resiliency and security of the electric grid.

A key component of the smart grid is *advanced metering infrastructure*, also known as AMI in the utility world. AMI systems utilize digital meters as well as computer technology to measure electric use at homes and businesses more precisely than was possible with analog meters. The digital meters communicate via radio or the existing power lines and have been loosely termed as “smart meters.” AMI benefits electric co-op members with greater accuracy in billing, faster outage restoration, operational savings versus manual meter reading and detailed data that you and your co-op can use to manage electric use much more accurately.

Unfortunately, a number of myths have developed over the years concerning smart meters. These myths can be classified into three categories: privacy concerns, security and health effects. Let’s take a look at each, starting with privacy.

Access Energy Cooperative takes great pains to keep your information private – and that information includes the details of your electric use. The only people who see that data are co-op employees and you. Your co-op will not release this information to anyone else without your specific permission. The myths are that the

data collected can tell when you’re home or away and exactly what you’re doing when you’re there and that this data is being given to the government. Naturally, the data will show when you’re home because for most families, energy consumption is higher then. But having said that, the current smart meter cannot identify what activities are taking place, including a

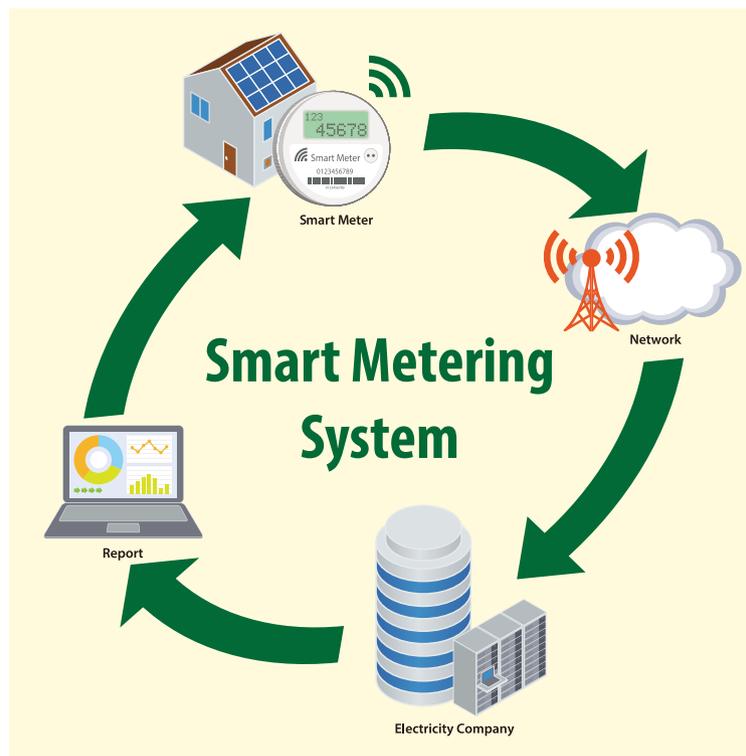
Radio-based smart meters require the hacker to be nearby to catch the weak communication signal, break the proprietary communication protocol and to be there for extended periods of time to collect the short burst of data sent. Therefore, smart meters are an unlikely and unprofitable target for hackers.

Finally, there are the myths surrounding smart meters and ill effects on health. These concerns state that having the radio-based smart meter is the equivalent to having a cell tower attached to the side of your home. Again, this is unfounded. Let’s look at why.

No. 1 is that they communicate intermittently for as few as 5 minutes a day. The Federal Communications Commission regulates these devices, and their output is well below the levels this agency sets. As one doctor observed, the radio waves emitted are more like those of a cordless phone or wireless router. Radio waves emitted by smart meters

are much weaker and less frequent than other sources most people use on a daily basis.

We all will benefit from the continued development of America’s smart grid and can rest easy with the knowledge that the rumors surrounding radio-based smart meters don’t hold water. ⚡



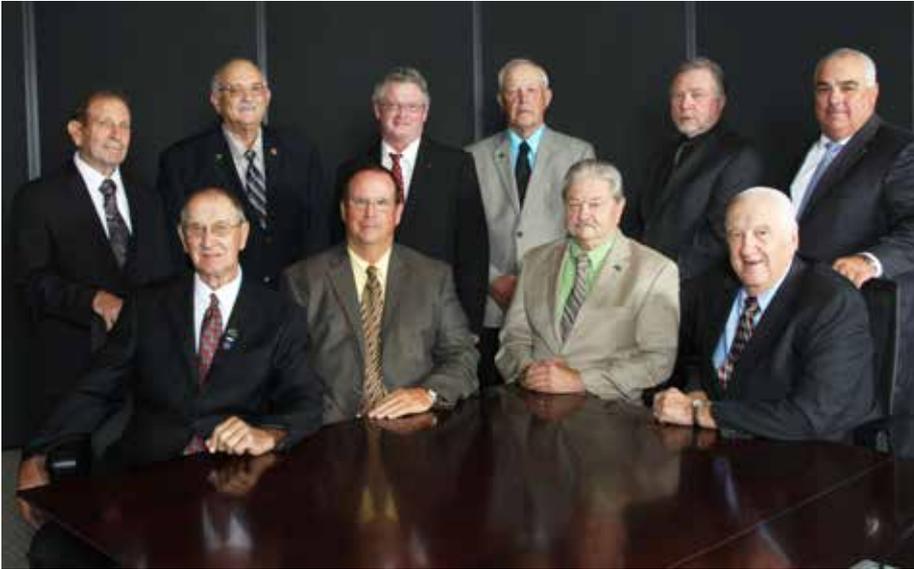
specific appliance in use. This myth is simply unfounded.

And what about the myth that these meters actually make the electric grid less secure by providing an avenue for hackers to break into systems through the smart meter and wreak havoc? While hackers continually attempt to break into electric systems, their focus is at higher levels in the operation. Hacking a meter is unlikely for a variety of reasons. Hackers like to work remotely via the Internet, and smart meters don’t offer that option.

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.

From the Board

Here's your 2016 Board of Directors and General Manager/CEO



Back row, from left: Victor Pierrot, Larry White, Robert P. Smith, Marvin Holtkamp, Joe Heckethorn and Kevin Wheeler – general manager/CEO. Front row, from left: Marvin Newton, David Hollingsworth, Jerry Barker and Fred Hickenbottom.

How Your Co-op Works

Access Energy Cooperative helps fund university energy and environmental research centers

Each year, Access Energy Cooperative contributes a portion of its gross revenues to the Iowa Energy Center at Iowa State University, which helps promote, develop and advance energy efficiency programs and renewable energy research. In addition, the center is available to answer questions on a variety of energy issues for the citizens of Iowa.



Access Energy Cooperative also supports the Center for Global and Regional Environmental Research (CGRER) at the University of Iowa.

In 2015, Access Energy was assessed one-tenth of one percent of its gross operating revenue for electric service of \$25,961,698, so the cooperative paid a total of \$25,962. Eighty-five percent of that will go to the Iowa Energy Center and 15 percent will go to the University of Iowa for the CGRER. All Iowa electric and gas utilities are required by the state legislature to help fund the two centers. ⚡

Note of Thanks

Gary - Just wanted to thank you for such a thorough energy audit! Wow! I especially appreciated your tidiness! As you said... The Ball is in our court now. I feel like you gave us areas to focus on which helps so much in this journey of restoring this old house
Thanks again

This message was received by Access Energy Cooperative member service representative Gary Stevens, who performed an Energy Audit at a member's home. To schedule a free energy audit of your home, contact Access Energy Cooperative at 319-385-1577 or 866-242-4232 – or e-mail us at mktg@accessenergycoop.com.



NOVEMBER ENERGY SAVER

Water heating accounts for about 18 percent of the energy consumed in your home. Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the "warm" setting (120°F). You'll not only save energy, you'll be safer and avoid scalding your hands. ⚡

Source: energy.gov