



## Dividends Allocated to your Account

Your patronage dividend notice has been mailed! At the regular Board of Directors meeting in March, dividend allocations were set for 2012 margins. Notice of your portion of allocations has been mailed. You will receive a check for this amount. It is a notice stating the amount of dividends that will be allocated to your dividend account for 2012.



### WHAT IS ALLOCATING?

Once a satisfactory level of margins or profits has been determined by the Board, the cooperative **assigns** the rest of the margins to you, the **members** (each of who owns a portion of the cooperative), according to the amount of energy purchases you made that year. Each member has a dividend account at the cooperative, where your dividend allocations accumulate. When the Board allocates margins, your portion is stored in your account.

### HOW MUCH WAS ALLOCATED?

This year Access Energy Cooperative allocated \$1,159,947 and passed through allocations from Northeast Missouri Electric Power Cooperative (NE Power) of \$811,084 for a total allocation of \$1,971,031.

### WHEN DO I GET PAID THESE ALLOCATIONS?

In June, the amount of allocations is reviewed by the Board of Directors, in conjunction with the cooperative's financial position, to determine whether or not to generate a dividend payment for the year. If a payment of dividends is approved by the Board, checks will be distributed at the Annual Meeting on Tuesday, August 7th.

For members unable to **attend** the annual meeting, the remaining checks are mailed out soon after the annual meeting. They are sent to the most current address we have on file at the cooperative. Please keep your address current at the cooperative **even** if you move off of our lines to **ensure** payment of your dividends.

**Access Energy  
Offices Closed  
Memorial Day  
May 27th**

**For after hours  
emergencies call  
800.452.7819  
or 319.385.1580**

**May is National  
Electric Safety Month.  
Learn more about  
safety on our website.**

**Safety**

[www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com)

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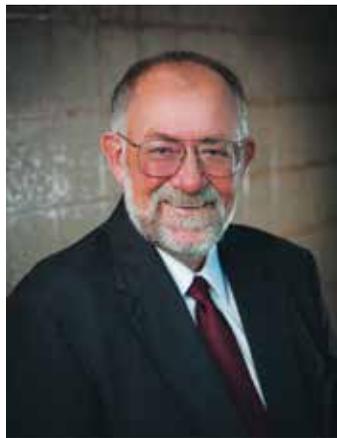
## Win a Truck!!

Join us at the 75th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, August 6th at 5PM, for your chance to win this 2003 Chevy S10. Submit your registration card under the grandstand. Drawing for all prizes will begin after the business meeting. Must be present to win.

- 143,080 miles
- Good condition
- Tool Box included



## Manager's Corner



### General Manager/CEO Robert Swindell

As I am writing this, the Iowa General Assembly is winding down their work for the year; and my hope is that we can escape another legislative session without any new costly **mandates** that ultimately increase your electric bill. Much of our work in the Iowa General Assembly is focused on preventing other entities from spending your **money** on their pet projects. In general, it has been the position of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, which Access Energy Cooperative is a member, that it is better public policy to provide incentives to modify our behaviors as opposed to mandating them.

#### INCENTIVE APPROACH

A couple of examples of the incentive approach are SF 431-Solar Energy System

Income Tax Credits and HF 630/SF 444-Hydroelectricity Sales Tax Exemption. SF 431 provides tax credits for solar energy systems and would allow a taxpayer to claim more than one credit if the additional credit is for solar installations. The bill also directs the department of revenue to establish criteria for what constitutes a solar installation. Likewise, HF 630/SF 444 eliminates sales tax from hydroelectricity conversion properties, such as the proposed hydro facility at the Oakland Mills Dam south of Mount Pleasant. Both are examples of the State using the tax code to encourage the increased **use** of alternate energy throughout the state. If the General Assembly believes that it is in the best interest for all of Iowa to support these types of projects, then the incentive approach is the best way to accomplish this goal. It's important to note that this approach spreads the cost of subsidizing this **type** of projects over everyone in the State of Iowa.

#### MANDATE APPROACH

I can't think of a better example of the mandate approach than the "feed-in tariff". SF 372 (SSB 1234)—feed-in tariff would require that cooperative members would have to pay for their neighbor's customer-owned wind turbines that are connected to their cooperative. The concept behind the feed-in tariff centers on this: because wind turbines are expense to install and maintain, it's hard to get a decent pay back on the investment; so people are reluctant to buy one. With a "feed in tariff" as proposed in SF 372(SSB 1234) the

Iowa Utilities Board would set the rate the cooperative would pay for the electricity coming from the wind turbine so the construction and interest cost would be paid for in a ten-year period. The rate could be as high as 30-50 cents a kWh, which is 6 to 10 times more than the cost of the power we currently purchase to provide to you. While this is a good deal for the company selling the wind turbine and the member installing one, I question how good it is for the remaining members that are footing the bill for the neighbor installing the turbine. Once again, if the Iowa General Assembly believes that additional wind turbines are in the best interest of Iowa, then all Iowans should be shouldering the subsidies, as opposed to just the members of the cooperative where it is installed.

Please don't take my comments as be critical of alternate energy production. Iowa has become a leader in wind production utilizing incentives, not mandates. Your cooperative has over 600 mega-watts of wind capacity and another 600 mega-watts of hydroelectric capacity in our generation mix. We also own one of the larger photovoltaic arrays in the State of Iowa. We even offer rebates based on a member's energy use for wind and solar, along with purchasing any excess production at our wholesale power cost. These efforts are done for the benefit of the membership as a whole. We will continue to work with our legislators to limit subsidizing activities which just benefit a few members at the expense of the majority of our membership.

## COOPERATIVE INFORMATION

**Access Energy Cooperative**  
1800 West Washington Street  
P.O. Box 440  
Mount Pleasant, Iowa 52641

**Phone:** 319.385.1577  
**Toll free:** 866.242.4232  
**Fax:** 319.385.6873

#### Website:

[www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com)

#### Email:

[contactus@accessenergycoop.com](mailto:contactus@accessenergycoop.com)

#### HOURS:

Monday-Friday  
(closed Saturdays, Sundays,  
& Holidays)  
Office: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Payments can be placed in the  
dropbox under the flag pole.

#### After Hours Emergencies call:

319.385.1580  
or 800.452.7819

Visa and Mastercard accepted.

**General Manager/CEO:** Robert Swindell  
**Editor:** Kimberly Brumbaugh  
**Assistant Editor:** Cheryly Wibben

#### Officers and Directors:

Marvin Holtkamp	District 3	President
Ronald Campbell	District 2	Vice President
Jerry Barker	District 2	Secretary
Larry White	District 2	Treasurer
Donald Atwood	District 1	Director
Joseph Heckethorn	District 1	Director
Fred Hickenbottom	District 1	Director
Marvin Newton	District 3	Director
Victor Pierrot	District 3	Director

## Energy Efficiency Programs Helping Members Save

Since 2008, the members of Access Energy Cooperative have participated in the Take Control & Save® Program, an energy efficiency and energy saving program between Access Energy Cooperative and our power supplier: Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. in Springfield Missouri.

Through this energy efficiency effort, Access Energy Cooperative members can receive rebates on Energy Star® window air conditioning units, electric water heaters and efficient heat pump systems. Members and propane customers can also call us for a free energy audit. Cooperative members can **earn** rebates for weatherization improvements around their homes from recommendations suggested at the audit.

More than 2,666,375 kilowatt-hours were saved by members of the cooperative last year, and they saved nearly \$300,000 in savings from rebates. We are pleased to participate in this program, helping our members save money through energy efficiency improvements. The good news is that everything we do to reduce our energy usage not only helps us manage growth, but also helps

members manage their energy budgets.

Access Energy Cooperative and 50 other cooperatives that participate in the Take Control & Save® Program have voluntarily spent more than 28 million dollars from 2008 through 2012 on energy efficiency measures. This program has generated lifetime kilowatt-hour savings of 952,768,259 for cooperative member-owners, enough energy saved to power nearly 65,000 homes for one year.

For more information visit our website at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com).

# Take Control & Save

**A Cooperative Effort for Energy Efficiency**

# Affordable LED Lights Coming Soon to Stores

Cree and Philips Lighting have new 60 watt-equivalent LED A-lamps on the market at \$15 or less and Cree also offers a 40 watt-equivalent product just under \$10. 2013 should see solid-state lighting (SSL) replacements for 60W incandescent go below \$10.

The Cree LED bulb family offers three product options. The omnidirectional designs all have a CRI of 80 and all support dimming:

- a 6W \$9.97 450-lm 2700K lamp
- a 9W \$13.97 800-lm 5000K lamp
- a 9.5W \$12.97 800-lm 2700K lamp

## CREE OMNI-DIRECTIONAL LED LAMP

The Cree design looks very much like a traditional incandescent bulb, and although it's white, it's not obtrusive in **any** way. The dome of the lamp is made of glass which Cree says offers better light transmission than the plastic globes broadly used in LED-based retrofit lamps. The glass is covered with a thin layer of silicon that presumably is present to protect the glass.

The lamp is undergoing the Energy Star certification process at this time, but it expects approval. Cree expects to be qualified, but is proud to offer the bulb at a price point that makes sense and pays for itself even without rebates.

Initially the lamp will be available at Home Depot with wider distribution planned for later in the year. Cree said that if customers replace the five most-used light bulbs in their home with the new LED lamps, that on average they will save \$61 per year on energy. That makes the payback on the lamps just over a year.

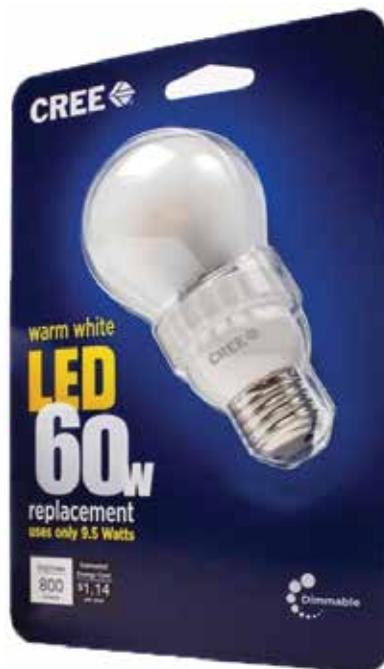
Philips, meanwhile, quietly brought its \$15 lamp to market without any major publicity push. Late last year the company had introduced 60 watt-equivalent lamps that were white in the off state yet were still shaped like the remote-phosphor-based lamps that have been among the market leaders. Those products were priced at \$25. The new Philips 10.5 watt A-lamp is priced at \$14.97 and features a traditional round globe.

## PHILIPS 10.5W 800-LM \$15 A-LAMP

The Philips lamp outputs 800 lumens at a CCT of 3000K. The lamp looks largely like a traditional incandescent bulb. Philips Lighting CEO Ed Crawford said the goal of the new design was to make the product affordable without utility rebates. Philips cut the cost by not including dimming support.

Philips also has a \$9.97 product coming this year that could be an evolution of the \$15 product or a new architecture.

Both the Cree and Philips lamps should offer consumers long installed life times. Cree rates its lamps for 25,000 hours and is backing the products with a ten-year warranty. Philips' new lamp is rated for 20,000 hours which the company says translates to more than 18 years in a typical usage scenario.



**Take Control & Save**  
A Cooperative Effort for Energy Efficiency

## Energy Efficiency Rebates & Programs

### ENERGY EFFICIENT APPLIANCES

- \* Energy Star® Room Air Conditioner.....\$ 50
- \* Water heater (Electric only; At least 90% efficient) .....\$100

### HEAT PUMPS

- \* Air to Air Source - at least 16.5 SEER (w/Elec. Resist.) .... \$100 per ton
- \* Mini-Split Air Source - at least 16.5 SEER ..... \$250 per ton
- \* Dual Fuel Source - at least 16.5 SEER (gas back up) ..... \$250 per ton
- \* Ground Source - at least 19.1 EER
- \* replacing existing ground source unit..... \$400 per ton
- \* new & replacing other heat source type ..... \$750 per ton

### ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES .....\$250 per KW

- \* Capped at capacity. Access Energy Cooperative owns any carbon credits generated.

### HOME WEATHERIZATION INCENTIVES .....Up to \$500 maximum

- \* Incentives are available to those who choose to make energy saving improvements recommended by Access Energy Cooperative following a FREE energy audit conducted by us.
- \* Improvements must be completed in recommended order by AEC.

### BUSINESS LIGHTING REBATE

- \* Must have at least 10 eligible fixtures at a commercial, industrial or ag business member's account of Access Energy Cooperative.
  - \* Fluorescent T-5 and T-8 lighting systems with electronic ballasts
  - \* LED (light emitting diode) and LED exit signs
  - \* Occupancy Sensors
- \* Bulbs and fixtures must be evaluated by AEC to determine eligibility based on an audit of existing lighting prior to any installation of new equipment. A knowledgeable employee from the business needs to be present to guide AEC through the initial walk-through lighting audit.
- \* Total rebate amount is limited to \$30,000 per member per year and will not exceed 40% of the total equipment cost.

### FREE ENERGY AUDIT & REBATE FOR IMPROVEMENTS

- \* Conducted by a qualified Access Energy Representative
- \* Blower door test to check for air leaks and gaps
- \* Inspect insulation, doors, windows, lighting, appliances, and much more
- \* Weatherization improvements suggested at audit are eligible for incentive up to \$500

### LOW INTEREST LOANS

Access Energy Cooperative has ERC low interest loans available for the cost of materials and labor for energy efficiency home improvements in new or existing structures. For more details see our website.

Specific requirements apply to individual rebates.  
For more information on rebates, low interest loans or to schedule a free energy audit call 385.1577 or 1.866.242.4232 or visit our website at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com).

# REMINDER: New Houses Must Meet Iowa Codes

Iowa residents building a new home or adding on to an existing home are required by the state to follow the energy code and show compliance through a self-certification process. The statewide energy code also gives house buyers piece of mind when making their purchase decisions by requiring contractors to display compliance with the same Energy Efficiency Components Label. This label is required in all new houses certifying that it at least meets the minimum code levels for insulation, window, and heating system efficiencies. The label is to be permanently affixed to the house's electrical breaker box. **Cities**, towns, and counties with building code jurisdictions are required to enforce the state energy code in their jurisdictions. Outside of these building jurisdictions, builders are required to meet the requirements of the energy code and show energy code compliance through a self-certification process that is signed and dated.

## SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE IOWA ENERGY CODE

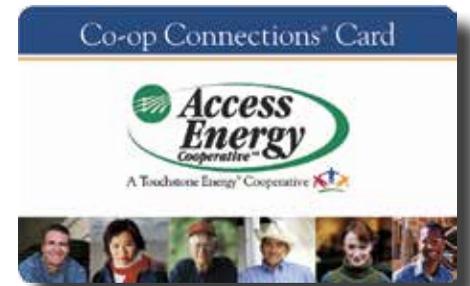
- Basement walls require insulation (finishing not required).
- At least one-half of permanent light fixtures must have high efficiency bulbs such as CFLs.
- Heating system ductwork located outside of the conditioned part of a house must be tested for tightness.
- Air barrier material(s) such as spray in-place foam, sealed in-place sheathing, sealed in-place foam board or sealed poly are required in **rim** band joists, behind tub/shower enclosures on exterior walls and dropped ceilings adjacent to the thermal envelope.
- Programmable/setback thermostats are required in homes with furnaces.

## Tips On What To Do If You Smell Gas...

- If there are no flames or sparks, immediately put out all smoking materials. Do not operate lights, appliances, telephones, or cell phones. Flames or sparks from these sources can trigger an explosion or a fire.
- Leave the **area** immediately! Get everyone out of the building or area where you suspect there is a leak.
- Shut off the gas. Turn off the main gas supply valve on your propane tank (clockwise) if it is safe to do so.
- Report the leak from a neighbor's home or other nearby building away from the gas leak, call your propane retailer right away. If you can't reach your propane retailer, call 911 or your local fire department.
- Do not return to the building or area until your propane retailer, emergency responder, or qualified service technician determines that it is safe to do so.
- Get your system checked. Before you attempt to use any propane appliances, a propane retailer or qualified service technician must check your entire system to ensure that it is leak-free.

# Members Continue to Save on Prescriptions

In March, thirty-two members saved \$895 on their prescriptions. The most savings **stemmed** from Hy-Vee, Walmart and Walgreens.



Check out our website at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com) to find out more on the discounts offered. We continue visiting with area businesses and adding to the list of local deals.

It's **easy** to save—you just have to show your card to participating merchants.

If you own a business and would like to offer a discount for the card, please contact **Kim** Brumbaugh at [kbrumbaugh@accessenergycoop.com](mailto:kbrumbaugh@accessenergycoop.com) or call our office.

# What Do Heating Degree-days tell us?

Each degree that the mean temperature is below 65°F is one heating degree-day. So if today's average temperature is 55°F, the day accounts for 10 heating **degree-days**. Engineers determined that when the mean outdoor temperature drops below 65°F, most buildings require heating to maintain 70°F indoors. The amount of heat required to maintain a building's temperature is proportional to the accumulated heating degree-days. Heating degree-days are intended to allow weather data to be used to estimate fuel needs. Fuel distributors use this index to schedule home deliveries, and electric and natural gas utilities use it to predict power demands. Heating degree-day totals are usually reported each day, as well as for the season, which allow us to quickly judge whether the season is above, below or near normal.

*Celebrating  
75 Years*



Still providing safe, reliable, efficient service...  
because we care.



Then



Now

# Solar Energy Costs Decline, But Still Not Free

Solar energy has come a long way since 1830, when British astronomer John Herschel famously used a solar thermal collector box (a device that absorbs sunlight to collect heat) to cook food during an expedition to Africa. Today, photovoltaic (PV) materials directly convert light into electrical energy without the need for turbines, generators, or other mechanical assistance. When a PV system absorbs sunlight, energy passes on to electrons. The energized electrons break free and, in the right conditions, join an electric current—which can then power your home.

PV systems for homes are most commonly made up of dark, flat panels placed on roofs. Smaller versions can operate individual lights or remote machines (such as irrigation pumps or traffic signs), while larger applications are able to power buildings or supply electricity to the grid.

## WHAT IT COSTS

Over the past 20 years, the price of PV modules has tumbled, and with it, PV arrays are emerging as an ever-growing part of the nation's renewable energy supply. According to the Solar Electric Power Association, the price of PV modules has plummeted from \$9 per watt in 1992 to \$1.15 per watt in 2012.

NearZero, a non-profit research institute based in Stanford, Calif., recently surveyed 21 experts about solar's outlook. The consensus was that "for the next 15 years at least, PV prices will continue to head down." According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, the total installed costs for residential PV fell substantially in 2011 and through the first half of 2012, by as much as 14 percent.

Commercial and utility-scale solar systems are seeing similar shifts—a setup that once necessitated an outlay of more than \$3,600 per kilowatt just two years ago can now be put in for less than \$2,000 per kilowatt.

As solar has become more affordable, more than a dozen cooperatives across the country, notably in Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Texas, and Utah, are constructing community solar "gardens"—centralized PV systems, segments of which are sold or leased to members—to meet growing consumer calls for solar alternatives. Other co-ops are investing in large PV farms as a way to diversify their generation mix and meet state renewable portfolio standards.

In addition, high-temperature solar thermal energy (concentrating solar power) has begun making some tiny inroads as a round-the-clock power source in the Southwest. The technology uses long troughs of shiny parabolic mirrors that concentrate the sun's rays on receiver tubes filled with synthetic oil (or a

tower containing molten salt). The fluid gets heated to as high as 750 degrees Fahrenheit before being pumped through heat exchangers to create steam that spins a turbine-generator. Concentrating solar power is seen by some as a possible way to stockpile renewable electricity for later use—the heated material can continue to produce power even when the sun doesn't shine.

Access Energy Cooperative is one of those co-ops, harnessing the sun since last year on a small-scale basis. A 100kW solar array on the roof of our warehouse provides approximately 25% of our energy usage for the headquarters facilities.

"Although solar power remains more expensive and less reliable than more traditional forms of power generation, we're excited about its potential," says Bob Swindell, General Manager/CEO. "If you're considering putting in solar panels, or any type of 'backyard' renewable generation at your home, make sure to contact us first to make sure the system meets our interconnection standards."



## THE BOTTOM LINE

Sunlight may look like an easy way to generate electricity, especially in remote areas without easy access to transmission lines. But there are drawbacks. The sun only shines for a set number of hours daily, and cloudy or overcast conditions can wreak havoc on solar power production. However, state and federal rebates for installation and declining equipment costs can make a PV system financially feasible in the right location.

Sources: Angela Perez; Solar Energy Industries Association, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, U.S. Department of Energy, Solar Electric Power Association, NearZero

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# Tree Trimming Helps Keep People Safe & the Power on When Storms Come

To protect electric reliability and personal safety it is important that your Access Energy Cooperative crews periodically trim trees near power lines.

Tree limbs and power lines are a bad combination, especially with storms involving high winds, lightning, or ice. Trees are one of the most common causes of an electric service outage.

Tree limbs and branches that extend into power lines also can pose a significant risk to public safety during any kind of weather. Anyone in close contact or trying to trim or climb such trees could be seriously injured.

Professionally trained crews trim trees around our primary transmission and distribution lines, rotating the areas they work in yearly. Franchise and easement agreements allow us to trim affected trees on private property. The goal is to trim no more than is necessary for public safety and electric service reliability. Fast-growing trees may need to be cut back more than slow-growing trees.

Always check for nearby power lines before planting or trimming your own trees. Try to plant trees away from power lines. If a power line is in the vicinity, determine how tall and wide a tree is likely to be when it is fully grown. Placing low-growing trees near power lines will help prevent service problems and limit the need for tree trimming in the future. Trimming a tree near a power line will require

a professional tree trimmer and you should contact your electric utility about this.

Also, remember to contact Iowa One Call (IOC), by dialing 811 or 1-800-331-5666, at least 48 hours in advance of any tree planting to have underground utilities marked. Please contact our office with any questions or concerns about tree trimming or planting. If questions or concerns persist, you may also contact the Iowa Utilities Board toll-free at 1-877-565-4450.



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

# Energy Costs Rise Much Slower Than Other Consumer Goods

Popular demand and short supply drives the cost of everyday necessities higher. Some price tag changes—like the cost to fill your car’s gas tank—are obvious to anyone driving down the road. Other increases at the grocery store are more subtle but still impact your family’s bottom line. Compare the average price increase of a few household expenses to see how the rising cost of electricity stacks up.

The cost for a gallon of unleaded gasoline shot up 11.1 percent on average every year between 2002 and 2012, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The cost for a dozen eggs increased 7.8 percent. Bakers watched the price of flour rise 5.7 percent, and apples jumped of 4.8 percent—every year.

The cost of electricity grew at a slower pace—3.2 percent a year, on average. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) reports homeowners across the nation pay an average of 11.7 cents per kWh. Your rates at Access Energy Cooperative for residential power is .09 cents per kWh.

Unlike eggs or apples, electricity is a 24-hour-a-day commodity. Despite energy efficiency advancements, the average household uses more electronic gadgets—and needs more power to operate them—every year.

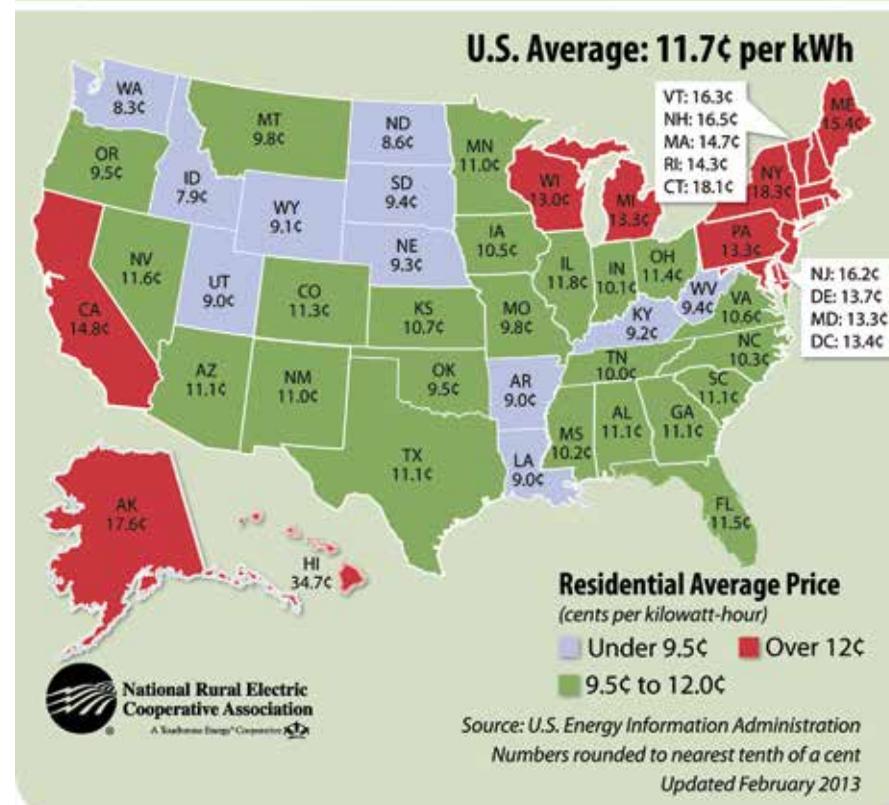
In the past 30 years, the amount of residential electricity used by appliances and electronics has increased from 17 percent to 31 percent according to the Residential Energy Consumption Survey by EIA. More homes than ever have major appliances and central air conditioning. Digital video recorders (DVRs), computers, and multiple televisions are common.

Your local electric cooperative works hard to keep your electricity safe, reliable, and affordable. But you play a role in the price of your power. Just as you might cut back on eggs if your budget is tight, we can work with you to cut your monthly electric bill. See how little changes add up at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com).

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Energy Information Administration

## Average Prices for Residential Electricity

2011 figures, in cents per kWh



# What Uses the Most Energy in the Summer?

Summer vacation can be a recipe for high electric bills if kids are home all day. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) estimates that 9 percent of Americans’ household energy costs are dedicated to air conditioning alone, so try these tips to keep costs down when the temperature rises.

## AVOID ‘PHANTOM’ LOAD

Get your family in the habit of turning electronics on and off via power strips as they move from one activity to the next. As electronics and appliances become more technologically savvy, they often draw power even while turned off. A good indicator of this—called “phantom load”—is to check the device for a light that stays on all the time.

Phantom load will add a few watt-hours to energy consumption, but a few watt-hours on each of

your many electronic devices adds up. To avoid this silent power draw, unplug the device or invest in a “smart” power strip, which allows certain electronics—like a cable box, which takes time to reboot after it’s been unplugged—to continue using electricity while others can be completely shut down.

## AIR-CONDITIONING UNITS

More people in the house + doors hanging open from the last trip to play outside + high temperatures = an air-conditioning unit that has to work harder to keep the house cool. Be sure to adjust settings to maximize efficiency, such as using the “auto” function instead of keeping the fan running all the time.

Regular maintenance to keep your air conditioner or heat pump in good working order is a good idea, as is checking and changing the air filter

every few months or if it’s dirty.

Also, set your thermostat as high as you can while maintaining your comfort level—the smaller the difference between indoor air and the great outdoors, the lower your cooling costs will be. And make sure to rearrange your furniture so that appliances that put out a lot of heat aren’t near the thermostat.

## KEEP THE POOL COVERED

About 70 percent of the heat lost from swimming pools results from evaporation, caused by both wind and water. That means tap water goes to refilling the pool, which means higher electric bills to reheat the water.

To save energy, cover a pool when it’s not in use. Pool size and shape factor into choosing the right cover. The most expensive pool covers are incorporated into the pool structure and can come with an automatic

retraction and storage system. Manual covers may be cheaper, but removing them can be a dirty job. You can also choose solar covers resembling bubble wrap.

## YOUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS A RESOURCE

As you work this summer to stop energy drains, don’t forget about Access Energy Cooperative’s free energy audit program. Our energy efficiency experts can help you determine the right steps for your home, including whether an energy audit will help find more savings. You can also visit [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com) to find out how little measures around the house add up to big energy savings.

Sources: Megan Howard; U.S. Department of Energy; Cooperative Research Network

# Electrical Safety Measures for Older Adults

Statistics show that home fires result in a significant number of deaths and injuries each year. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), U.S. fire departments respond to an estimated average of 371,700 home structure fires per year. These fires cause an estimated average of 2,590 civilian deaths and 12,910 civilian injuries.

Although electrical hazards plague the public at large, older adults are burdened with the gravest risk. Adults over the age of 65 are more than twice as likely to die from a house fire as the general population, and this risk increases with age.

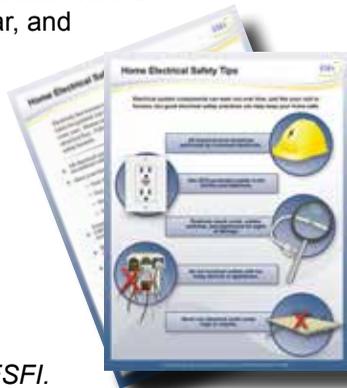
Electrical failures are a leading cause of home fires every year, and electrical distribution and lighting equipment fires have been shown to increase in frequency with increasing dwelling age. Homes with aging electrical systems are at a heightened risk for electrical fires, posing a serious risk for older adults who have remained in the same home for an extended period of time. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, half of the homes in use in the United States were built before 1973, which is long before many of the electronics and appliances we use today were even invented. Unfortunately, our increased demands for energy can overburden an older home's electrical system causing fires or electrocutions.

Many home electrical fires can be prevented by using more up-to-date technology and by recognizing warning signs your home may be showing. Follow these easy safety tips to identify and prevent electrical hazards in your home:

- Regularly check all cords, outlets, switches, and appliances for signs of damage or wear.
- Use extension cords only temporarily.
- Be sure that outlets that are not overloaded with too many devices. They can overheat and start a fire.
- Look and listen for warning signs of an electrical problem such as outlets and switches that are warm, or make crackling, sizzling or buzzing sounds.
- Always replace fuses or circuit breakers with the correct size and amperage. And make sure all circuits are labeled correctly.
- Consider having your breakers upgraded to state-of-the-art AFCI circuit breakers. Keep the electrical panel accessible so you can quickly shut off power in an emergency.
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home. Place alarms inside each bedroom and outside each sleeping area. Test them once a month, change the batteries at least once a year, and replace the alarm itself every ten years.

A full range of resources for older adults, including detailed fact and tip sheets as well as public service announcements, can be found by visiting [www.esfi.org](http://www.esfi.org). This effort is part of ESFI's National Electrical Safety Month initiative, "Electrical Safety for All Ages," which takes a multigenerational approach to electrical safety by encouraging family members of all ages to work together to identify and correct potential home fire hazards.

Source: Brett Brenner, ESFI.



# Powering Safely During an Outage

One of the great things about the modern American electric grid is that power almost always flows when we need it. Given our dependence on electricity, it's understandable why portable generators are popular when the power goes out and stays out for a while.

But generators can cause more harm than good if not used properly. In honor of Electrical Safety Month, recognized each May, we want to give you a few safety tips to protect yourself and our linemen who are working to restore your power.

First, never plug a portable generator directly into one of your home's outlets—unless you have had a licensed electrician install a "transfer switch" in your home. If you don't have a transfer switch, power provided by the generator can "backfeed" along power lines, which can electrocute a lineman working on those lines.

In addition, portable generators create carbon monoxide, the odorless, colorless gas that can quickly become deadly if the generator isn't exhausted outside. Attached garages with an open door don't count—the carbon monoxide can still seep indoors and poison inhabitants. Generators must go outside in a dry area, which might mean you'll need to rig a canopy to protect it from precipitation at a safe distance from your home's windows, doors, and vents. How far is a safe distance? Even 15 feet can be too close.

Other things to keep in mind: Plug appliances directly into the generator using heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords, but don't overload it. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for maximum load. Shut off the generator before refueling, or a fire could start—and it's a good idea to have a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby, just in case.

Safety is a top priority at Access Energy Cooperative, for our employees and members alike. Contact us at [contactus@accessenergycoop.com](mailto:contactus@accessenergycoop.com) or by calling 866-242-4232 if you'd like to learn more about how to properly install and use a portable generator.

For more tips on how to stay safe during a power outage, visit our website at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com).

# Listen for Peak Alerts

The hot days of summer place a lot of stress on America's utility network. For many electric utilities, the hottest days create greater "peak loads" than at any other time of the year. These times of greatest demand could potentially lead to limited power supply disruptions; and on rare occasions, an outage or blackout may occur. A utility's peak load affects its electricity cost and this cost is ultimately passed along to its customers. During these times we may alert you to conserve on energy use.

The greatest peak loads often occur in the late afternoon on summer days, when the air conditioning systems in most buildings are running, and when families first arrive home and start using household appliances. You can help reduce summer peak loads by adjusting your daily routine in a few small ways:

- Avoid doing laundry in the afternoon—choose the morning or late evening instead. If you must run your washing machine instead of using a clothes dryer during these times, use cold water instead of hot. If you must dry your clothes during this time, use a clothesline or indoor drying rack. Avoid running your dishwasher during these times, too. These appliances tend to heat up your home, too, so you'll be more comfortable if you don't run them during the day.
- Close your windows and draw the shades during the day to keep the sun from overheating your home. Better yet, install exterior window shades, sun screens, or awnings to block summer sun before it enters your home.
- If you have central air conditioning, hire a serviceman to perform periodic service. This should include changing the filters, checking the refrigerant charge, cleaning the coils, and sealing leaky ducts. You can change the filters yourself, too, once you learn where they are located. If you have window air conditioners, remove them periodically and clean their coils with hot soapy water and a stiff brush.



## Energy Efficiency

### Tip of the Month

Properly installed shades can be one of the most effective ways to improve windows' energy efficiency. Lower them during summer; in winter, raise during the day and lower at night on south-facing windows. Dual shades, with reflective white coating on one side and a heat-absorbing dark color on the other, can be reversed with the seasons and save even more energy. Learn more at [EnergySavers.gov](http://EnergySavers.gov).

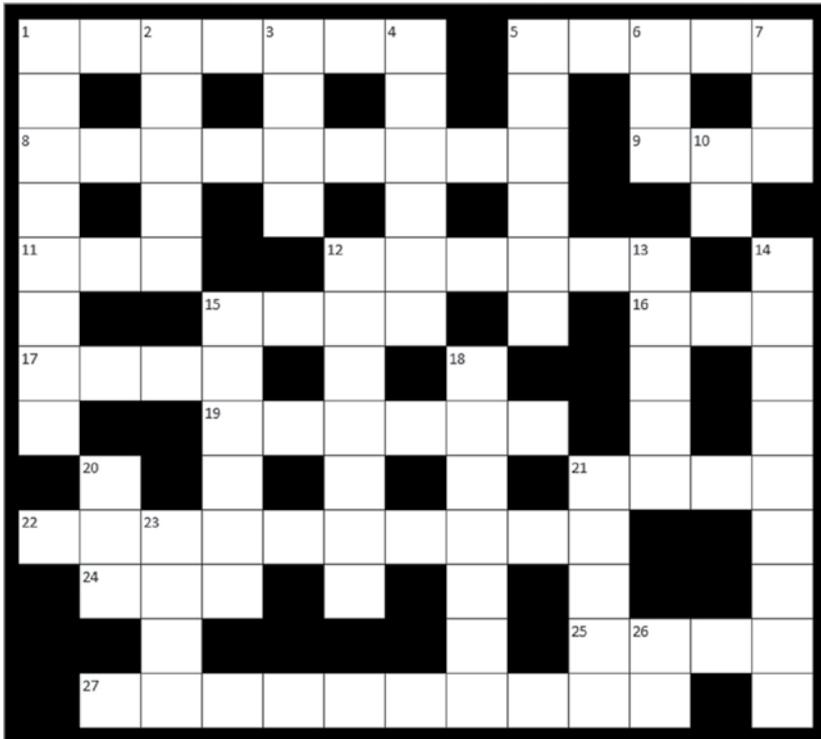
Source: U.S. Department of Energy

# Win \$25 By Learning About Your Cooperative!

Access Energy Cooperative members can win \$25 by completing the crossword below correctly. Members may clip out their answers and send them by May 31, 2013, to: Access Energy Cooperative, Attn: Crossword Puzzle, P.O. Box 440, Mount Pleasant, IA 52641. Most of the answers are bold and highlighted elsewhere in this issue of the Highline Headlines. If more than one person answers all of the questions correctly by the deadline, a drawing will be held to determine the winner. Only one prize will be given for the crossword puzzle.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_



Watch for winners from last month's coloring contest.

## ACROSS

- 1 Once the annual margins are determined, your board allocates them back to these people (you!)
- 5 Do this to our website to find discounts for the coop connections card
- 8 NearZero is this type of organization, just like Access Energy Cooperative
- 9 To comply with new housing codes, air barriers are required here
- 11 The new Cree LED Lamp is not obtrusive in this way
- 12 If you can't do this at the annual meeting we will send yours
- 15 Saving money with the coop connections card is this
- 16 To protect your generator, you may need to do this to a canopy
- 17 Keep you address up to date \_\_\_\_if you move off our lines
- 19 Commercial solar systems are seeing this in costs to install systems
- 21 If you smell gas, leave this immediately
- 22 Solar energy was first used in 1830 by this type of professional
- 24 Organ we use to see
- 25 Opposite of uncle
- 27 These help our propane delivery guys estimate fuel needs for delivery dates

## DOWN

- 1 The Iowa GA is winding down their session hopefully without any new of these costly things
- 2 Much of our work with the Iowa General Assembly is focused on preventing other entities from spending this of yours on their pet projects
- 3 Members can do this to weatherization rebates following a free energy audit
- 4 Dead tree limbs can pose risk to this for everyone
- 5 These are required to enforce the new Iowa codes for new houses
- 6 For a rebate on a ground source heat pump, this must be 19.1
- 7 If you are a business wanting to offer a discount in our coop connections card program, contact this person at our office
- 10 Opposite of out
- 12 Once annual margins are determined, the board does this to them to you!
- 13 Try not to use this during a peak alert
- 14 Irritate
- 15 Keep your address up to date to do this about getting your dividend check
- 18 Most of the savings on our coop connections card have done this from Walmart and Hyvee
- 20 SF 431 is an example of the State using tax code to encourage this to increase for renewable energy
- 21 We have a 100 KW one of these installed on the roof of our warehouse
- 23 If the GA believes Iowa's best interest is to support this \_\_\_\_ of project (like the dam) then incentive approach is best
- 26 United States

## Rates for Services

The Cooperative is responsible for servicing and maintaining all facilities up to the point of delivery, including the meter. All wiring and equipment on the load side of the meter belongs to the member-consumer and is the member-consumer's responsibility to maintain. If the member-consumer calls the cooperative's personnel to correct an interruption to service and the cause is found to be in the member-consumer's wiring or equipment, or for any other work that is done by the cooperative on the load side of the meter, the following is a schedule of rates for services:

### VEHICLE RATES

Pickup.....	\$1.25/mile
Trencher .....	\$50.00/hour
Digger Derrick.....	\$40.00/hour plus \$3.50/mile
Fork Lift.....	\$3.50/hour
Uni-Loader.....	\$25.00/hour
Basket Truck.....	\$30.00/hour plus \$3.00/mile
Skid Steer.....	\$35.00/hour
Maintenance Truck ...	\$20.00/hour plus \$2.00/mile
Chipper.....	\$50.00/hour
Excavator.....	\$50.00/hour
Dump Truck.....	\$2.00/mile

### LABOR RATES (MIN. LABOR CHARGE \$75.00)

Hourly rate.....	\$70.00/person/hour
Overtime Rate .....	\$105.00/person/hour
Double time Rate.....	\$140.00/person/hour

The featured recipe winner who submitted this recipe will receive a \$10 electric bill credit. Check out our recipe section at [www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com) for a new recipe or to submit your favorite recipe. Or mail us your recipe and we will post it for you.



## Rhubarb Cake

From the Kitchen of Charolette Fleig

- 2¼ c brown sugar
- ¾ c shortening
- 2 eggs
- 1½ t vanilla
- 1½ t baking soda
- 1½ c buttermilk or sour milk
- 3 c flour
- 3 c fresh rhubarb (cut into ½' pieces)
- ¾ c sugar
- 1½ t cinnamon

Cream brown sugar and shortening. Stir in eggs and vanilla. Stir in baking soda, buttermilk or sour milk and flour. Fold in rhubarb. Spread evenly in a 9x13 pan. Combine sugar and cinnamon then sprinkle over top of cake batter. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes or until done.

[www.accessenergycoop.com](http://www.accessenergycoop.com)