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**WESTERN
COOPERATIVE
ELECTRIC**

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NEWS

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Tip of the Month

If you only want to heat or supplement inadequate heating in one room, small space heaters can be less expensive to use than your central heating system.

Trustee Nominating Committees to Be Announced

The 2016 Western Cooperative Electric Association Annual Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 11, 2016.

Prior to the meeting, the Western trustees will appoint nominating committees. The committees' responsibility is to prepare a list of nominations for trustees in the districts that have terms expiring and present these nominations for election by members at the Annual Meeting. Article IV, Section 4.06 of Western's bylaws states the following concerning nominations:

"At least seventy-five (75) days prior to the annual meeting, the President shall with the approval of the Board of Trustees, appoint a nominating committee of three (3) members from each

of said three (3) trustee districts, and each of said nominating committees shall nominate one or more Members from its respective district for each trustee to be elected from the district, and within fifty (50) days prior to the

nominations in writing over their signatures, in like manner showing clearly which committee-nominated candidate(s) are being opposed, not less than fifty (50) days prior to the meeting, and the Secretary shall post such nomina-

tions at the same place where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted. The Secretary shall mail to the members with the notice of

the meeting, or separately, but no less than thirty (30) days prior to the date of the meeting, a statement of the Trustees to be elected from specific Trustee districts, and the names and addresses of all nominees, showing separately those nominated by the committee and those nominated by petition, if any.

Positions up for election are currently served by:

► **District 1:** Graham, Osborne, Rooks, and Sheridan counties

DONALD L. SCHULTZ

► **District 2:** Ellis, Lincoln, Russell, and Trego counties

FRANK JOY

► **District 3:** Barton, Ellsworth, Gove, Ness and Rush counties

CHARLES LUETTERS

meeting said nominating committees shall report their nominations to the Secretary of the Cooperative who shall cause the list of nominees to be mailed to the members of the cooperative at the time the notice of annual meeting is mailed. Any fifteen (15) or more members of the cooperative, acting together, may make additional

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Will EPA's Clean Power Plan Threaten Electric Reliability?

Since the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its Clean Power Plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in August, several objections have been raised—from its effect on the economy to whether the EPA actually has the authority to regulate emissions.

An especially significant concern came from the organization responsible for making sure our electricity stays on. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), reacting to a 2014 draft of the EPA plan, said in April 2015 that the electric utility industry “needs more time to develop coordinated plans to address shifts in generation and corresponding transmission.”

NERC cited concern about the electric transmission grid, noting that some of the emission reductions would begin in the year 2020, even though, NERC said, “transmission projects require between six and 15 years to engineer, site, permit and construct.”

EPA's final rule released in August responded to that concern by extending the deadline two years, setting a 2022 start date and phasing-in the limits through 2030. Is that enough time? NERC replied in a statement that acknowledged the EPA had changed its deadlines and that NERC will analyze the EPA's final rule and issue a report in mid-2016.

Among those challenging the EPA rules in court is the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), concerned that the Clean Power Plan would hurt electric reliability and raise costs for electric co-op members. “We believe the EPA has overstepped its legal authority with the Clean Power Plan, and, along with many other interveners, have challenged [the] EPA's rules in the courts,” says Paul McCurley, NRECA chief engineer and acting executive director of Energy and Power. “If the legal challenge is successful, then perhaps we can get [the] EPA to write regulations that address more than just environmental concerns—but also consider economic impacts to consumers and do not threaten the reliability of the electric grid.”

Refrigerator Maintenance Increases Efficiency

Timely cleaning of the inside of the refrigerator is necessary, but often we forget to clean the outside of the refrigerator regularly, as well.

Your refrigerator is one of the largest, most-used appliances in your home, but it only requires minimal maintenance to ensure its efficiency—just simple cleaning of the condenser coils, which disperse heat.

If the coils are covered with dust, lint or pet hair, they cannot diffuse the heat properly and will not run efficiently. A bigger problem can result if the compressor burns out from having to run constantly because of the grimy coating. This can be an expensive problem.

Bottom line, a minor investment in time once or twice a year can save you money on your electric bill.

Follow these steps to properly clean the outside of your refrigerator:

- ▶ Locate the refrigerator's coil, a grid-like structure that will likely

have a covering or grate protecting it. The coil is usually concealed behind the front toe kick or in the back. Some newer models have internal coils, so if you don't find them in the front or back, this may

be the case with your fridge.

- ▶ If the coil is in the back, slide the refrigerator away from the wall, removing the plug from the electrical outlet when possible. You may also need to disconnect the line to the water dispenser or ice maker to allow enough room to work.
- ▶ Gently vacuum and clean the coil. Using the brush or crevice attachment, carefully vacuum the dust and dirt. If you have pulled the fridge out, this might be a good time to also clean the sides and back of the fridge to prevent future accumulation on the coils.

A little TLC will not only improve the outside appearance of your fridge but extend its life, improve efficiency and keep your perishable foods crisp, fresh, and tasty.

A minor investment can save you money on your electric bill.

DANGER! Outlet Overload

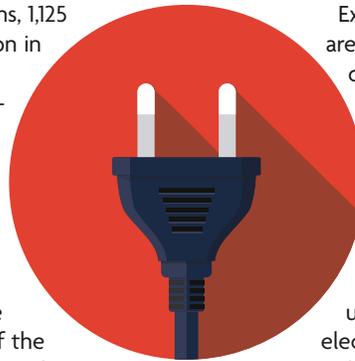
Every year, U.S. fire departments respond to an estimated 25,900 home electrical fires. These fires cause an estimated 280 deaths, 1,125 injuries and \$1.1 billion in property loss.

Thirty-nine percent of home electrical fires involve outlets and receptacles, and other electrical wiring. To ensure safety, you should only use about 80 percent of the available current for each electrical outlet in your home.

Are you overloading outlets?

Use this formula to find out:

$$\text{wattage/volts} = \text{amps}$$



Example: Let's say you are using 2,000 watts of power (for one outlet). Divide the watts by the volts in your home (typically 120), and you come up with 16.6 amps of current being used. With a 20 amp electrical outlet, you are using about 80 percent of the available current.

Finding a Starting Point for Savings

What are the top 5 energy users in your home?

While most homeowners would like to be more energy efficient and save money, often they feel overwhelmed because they don't know where to start. How can the average family use less energy, lower their utility bill and still meet their daily energy needs? To help jumpstart your effort, it is useful to know the top energy users in your home. With this knowledge, you can choose a path that works best for your family.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Agency, the top five energy users in U.S. homes are:

1. Space cooling
2. Space heating
3. Water heating
4. Lighting
5. Refrigeration

Adjust the temperature

Together, home heating and cooling use the most energy and take the biggest bite out of your energy budget. On the bright side, there are ways you can achieve at least a 10 percent savings by taking a few simple low-cost or no-cost steps.

- ▶ Set your thermostat to 68 degrees during cold weather.
- ▶ Maintain a recommended indoor temperature of 78 degrees during warm weather.
- ▶ Clean the filters of your HVAC system to cut costs from 5 to 15 percent.
- ▶ Clean the coils around your elec-

tric baseboard heater to maintain maximum efficiency.

- ▶ Caulk and weather-strip around windows and doors to prevent heat from escaping to the outdoors.

No matter what the climate or time of year, proper use of a programmable thermostat can save you 10 percent on your monthly utility bill.

Shine the light on savings.

Take a fresh look at the lighting in your home. If you still use incandescent lighting, your light bulbs are operating at only 25 percent energy efficiency. Replacing your home's five most frequently used bulbs with Energy Star-certified LEDs can save you \$75 per year. Another easy way to save is to always turn lights off in rooms that are not being used.

Water heating efficiency.

Just as it is energy-wise to insulate your roof, wall or floor, it also pays to wrap your water heater with an insulating blanket. This is all the more critical if you have an older unit. Make sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions. For additional efficiency and savings, insulate exposed hot water lines and drain one to two gallons of water from the bottom of your tank annually to prevent sediment build-up.

Put cold hard cash back in your wallet.

If your refrigerator was purchased before 2001, chances are it uses 40 percent more energy than a new Energy Star model. If you are considering an appliance update, a new Energy Star refrigerator uses at least 15 percent less energy than non-qualified

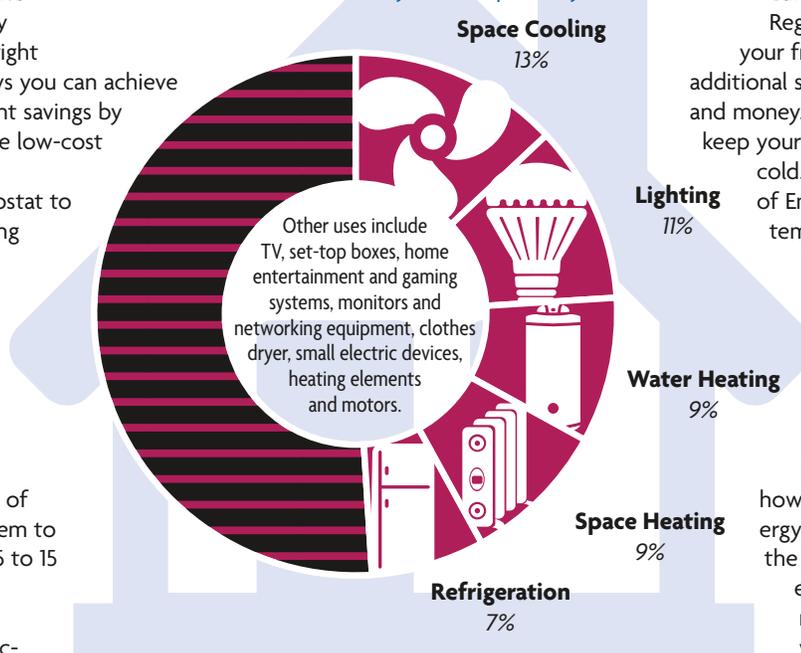
models and 20 percent less energy than required by current federal standards.

Regardless of the age of your fridge, you can take additional steps to save energy and money. For example, don't keep your refrigerator too cold. The Department of Energy recommends temperatures of 35 to 38 degrees for the fresh food compartment and zero degrees for separate freezers (used for long-term storage).

By understanding how your home uses energy, you can determine the best ways to modify energy use and keep more money in your wallet.

Top 5 Energy Users in U.S. Homes

*Estimated residential electricity consumption by end use, 2014**



Get to Know Your
Western Co-op Electric Staff
Tyler Renard
Journeyman Lineman

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.



Tyler Renard

My wife, Lindsey, and I were married on July 26, 2013. We have an 18 month old son, Willie, and two dogs, Kenny and Macho Man.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED AT WESTERN?

I started with Aquila in Dec. 2002. Since the acquisition in 2007, I have worked for Western.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

Socializing with my friends in my shop.

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Passing the journeyman lineman test and being able to work in my hometown.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION?

My wife and I went to Utah, and we stayed up in the mountains in a cabin, with no cell coverage. It was great!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MOVIE OR BOOK AND WHY?

The Blues Brothers—it's the funniest movie of all time!

WHAT IS SOMETHING PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I am an Eagle Scout.

IF YOU COULD BE ANY ANIMAL, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

A dog with good owners. I would have free food and water, and not a care in the world.

WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY?

My son. He has inspired me to be a better person.

Knowing What to Do Could Save Your Life

When a vehicle accident occurs involving electric power lines and/or poles, electricity is usually the last thing on the victim's minds. Many are usually more concerned about whether anyone is injured or the extent of the damages.

If in an accident, your first instinct will likely be to exit the vehicle, but by doing this, you run the risk of being exposed to thousands of volts of electricity from possible downed power lines.

If you are involved in an accident involving an electric utility pole, loose wires and other equipment may be in contact with your vehicle, causing your vehicle to become energized with electricity. If this is the case and you step out of the vehicle, you will become the electricity's path to the ground and possibly be electrocuted.

Downed electrical lines can sometimes reveal they are live by arcing and sparking with electricity, but this is not always the case. While electric power lines do not always show signs that they are energized, they can be just as lethal.

After an accident, stay in the vehicle, and tell others to do the same. If you come upon an accident involving electric lines, do not approach

the accident scene. If you witness someone approaching, warn them to stay away. Immediately call 911. Do not leave your vehicle until the accident scene has been declared safe by emergency personnel.

The safest place to be is almost always inside the vehicle. The only circumstance when you should exit is if it is on fire. If you must exit the vehicle, jump clear of it with your feet together and without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Continue to "bunnyhop" with your feet together to safety. Doing this will ensure that you have only one point of contact and will reduce the potential of an electric current running from one foot to another, which can be deadly.

To help in understanding this scenario and other dangerous electric exposure, Western Cooperative Electric offers free electric safety demonstrations to help educate if this should unfortunately happen. These demonstrations range from high voltage safety to recognizing hazardous situations within the home. For information regarding these safety demonstrations contact Western Cooperative Electric at 800-456-6720 or 785-743-5561.

Mylar Balloon Safety

Having red and silver heart-shaped Mylar balloons delivered to a loved one on Valentine's Day is a sweet gesture. These shiny and colorful balloons brighten any loved one's day, but they must be handled and disposed of properly to avoid safety hazards and damage to electrical systems.

Mylar balloons are filled with helium and are made of nylon with a thin external metal coating. The metal coating has the ability to conduct electricity. If released, Mylar balloons can come into contact with overhead power lines or electrical substations and can cause power outages and fires.

Always secure Mylar balloons if taken outside, and be aware of these warnings and dangers. If you see a Mylar balloon in contact with a power line, never attempt to disconnect it yourself. Call your electric utility immediately to have them removed safely and possibly prevent an electrical outage.

