

POWERLINE

NEWSLETTER FOR CO-OP MEMBERS OF CORN BELT ENERGY



EDITION: DECEMBER 2021

Holiday décor tips for an energy-wise home

Whether you've already decked your halls or you're just getting started, there's still time to incorporate energy savings into your holiday décor planning.

If you haven't strung your twinkle lights, be sure to use LED light strands. LEDs consume far less energy than incandescent lights and they can last 40 holiday seasons. They're also safer because they're made with epoxy lenses, not glass, making them more resistant to breaking—and they're cool to the touch, so no burnt fingers!



If you missed Santa's memo about energy-saving LEDs and your holiday lights are already up, you can still save on lighting costs. All you need is a programmable light timer. Most models cost between \$10 to \$25 and can be purchased at local hardware stores as well as through online retailers. With a light timer, you can easily program when you want your holiday lights turned on and off, which will save you time, money and energy. If you're using a timer for exterior lighting, make sure it's weatherproof and intended for outdoor use.

If Clark Griswold's décor style is a bit much for your taste, consider a more natural approach. Many Christmas tree farms, and even retailers like Lowe's and Home Depot, give away greenery clippings from recently trimmed trees. With a little twine, extra ornaments and sparkly ribbon, you can create beautiful garlands and wreaths to hang over your front door or windows. To add extra twinkle at night, you can install solar-powered spotlights to illuminate your new greenery. Solar spotlights can vary in price, but you should be able to

purchase a quality set of four for about \$30—and because they run on natural energy from the sun, there's no additional cost to your energy bill.

Regardless of how you decorate your home for the holidays, there are plenty of ways to save energy throughout the season. Visit Corn Belt Energy's website at cornbeltenergy.com for additional energy-saving tips.



Are space heaters efficient for my home?

Small space heaters are meant to do exactly as their name says: heat a small space. But unfortunately, many people use portable space heaters to heat their entire home, which can really take a toll on your energy bills. The truth is, whether you should use space heaters really depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

If you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like inadequate insulation, drafty windows and exterior doors, or an inefficient heating system, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home. If you're on a tight budget, caulking and weather stripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy. Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a great next step. Loose fill insulation typically costs \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot. Taking these proactive energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters for supplemental warmth can reduce your heating and cooling bills for years to come.

Perhaps your home is energy efficient but you're cold-natured

and want a specific room to be cozier than the rest. In this case, a space heater may work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling fans; we use ceiling fans in the summer to cool people, not rooms. A space heater can be used in a similar way during winter months. Only use a space heater in small spaces that you're occupying and, if possible, try to shut off other rooms to contain the warmth provided by the space heater. If you decide to use a space heater to heat a small area in your home, make sure the heater is properly sized for the space; most heaters include a general sizing table.

A word about safety: the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates more than 25,000 residential fires are associated with the use of space heaters every year, resulting in more than 300 deaths. If you must use a space heater, purchase a newer model that includes the most current safety features and make sure it carries the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label. Choose a thermostatically controlled heater to avoid energy waste and overheating, and place the heater on a level surface away from foot traffic when in use. Always keep



children and pets away from space heaters.

Consider alternative ways to stay warm like extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors, lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation and maintain warmth.

We know it's cold out there, but remember in addition to safety concerns, space heaters can greatly increase your energy bills if used improperly.

If you're looking for alternative ways to save energy and increase comfort in your home, contact Corn Belt Energy. We're here to help you manage your energy use.

Corn Belt Energy supports education through our Education Grants program

Are you a teacher, school administrator or know of a local school that could use additional funding for educational purposes?

Corn Belt Energy is now accepting applications for our 2022 Education Grants Program. Five schools that serve children of Corn Belt electric members will each be awarded a \$1,500 grant and one school will be awarded the \$2,000 Jeff Reeves Memorial Education Grant to fund innovative programs that enrich students' education.

Teachers and administrators of public or private K-12 schools may apply; the facility does not need to receive electricity from Corn Belt Energy, but must serve families within our footprint in Central Illinois. Multiple projects within the same school can be combined to a total of the awarded grant amount.

The application deadline is December 31, 2021, and grants will be awarded in spring of 2022. The application and further details can be found online at cornbeltenergy.com.



Need a new water heater?

Members replacing a gas water heater with a new hybrid water heater can receive an \$800 rebate from Corn Belt energy, and you may be eligible for a \$300 Federal tax credit.

To learn more, call us at 800-879-0339 or 309-662-5330 or visit [Corn Belt Energy's website at cornbeltenergy.com](http://cornbeltenergy.com).



Gary Hurley
Marketing Manager

How long have you worked at Corn Belt Energy?
4 months

What is your role at Corn Belt Energy?
I develop marketing concepts for various programs and services. Assist members with questions regarding programs and services.

What aspect of your role do you enjoy the most?
I enjoy the variety of work, from helping members find programs and services that can benefit them, to attending trade shows and talking with local contractors.

If there is one piece of advice that you could share with our members, what would it be?
Never let the fear of failure stop you from trying something new. Failure is the prerequisite to success.

Corn Belt Energy puts SAFETY FIRST. What safety tip would you share with our members?
Always be aware of your surroundings and try identify any potential hazards in both work and family life.

What are your hobbies and outside interests?
I enjoy spending time with my wife and three children. We love to spend time outdoors hiking, taking bike rides, and camping.

Who or what inspires you?
I'm inspired the most by my wife and kids and their resiliency to overcome challenges.

If you had to select a hashtag to describe yourself, what would it be?
#outdoorlife



Where to find outage information

Corn Belt Energy makes every effort to prevent power outages. However when outages do occur, we strive to keep our members informed.

Once you have reported your outage by phone or SmartHub, you may be wondering where to find updated information including outage causes and estimated safe restoration times.

Several options exist for members to find additional information. You can check our website, Facebook or Twitter for updates on major outages. We usually post status updates for larger outage events (those affecting 500 co-op members or more). You can also view a live outage map at cornbeltenergy.com to check the extent of the outage.

If you don't have internet access, we also post status updates on our main phone greeting at 800-879-0339 and you can listen for updates on the following local radio stations:

- 1230 WJBC-AM
- 101.5 WBNQ-FM
- 104.1 (B104) WBWN-FM
- 98.9 WJEZ-FM
- 107.7 & 92.1 The Bull WIBL-FM
- Cities 92.9 WRPW-FM
- Magic 99.5 WZIM-FM
- 89.1 / 103.5 WGL-FM

If you experience a power outage, rest assured that we're working to restore power to your home or business as quickly and safely as possible.

Help us keep our records up-to-date

If you have changed your phone number or disconnected your landline phone and are now using a cell phone number, Corn Belt Energy would like for you to help us keep our records updated.

Check your latest bill stub or log in to your online SmartHub account to see which number(s) are currently linked to your account. Phone numbers listed on your account can be found in SmartHub by going to My Account > Notifications > Manage Contacts. You may also add additional phone contacts on this screen.

To update your phone number(s), simply call us at 800-879-0339 or 309-662-5330, email us at

cbec@cornbeltenergy.com, or correct the info on your next bill stub. We can record up to three numbers to associate with your account, including cell phones. We won't sell or share your contact information with anyone else.

By having your current phone number(s) on file, it will also help our automated outage reporting system to work efficiently. When you call in to report an outage, our automated system takes the phone number you are calling from and checks it against phone numbers we have on file in our account management system. If your number is on file, it makes outage reporting faster and more efficient.

CONTACT US

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1 Energy Way, Bloomington IL 61705 | Office hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

