

POWERLINE

NEWSLETTER FOR CO-OP MEMBERS OF CORN BELT ENERGY



EDITION: NOVEMBER 2020

Save energy in the kitchen

For many of us, the best holidays involve home-cooked meals and wonderful aromas of turkey, stuffing and baked goods wafting throughout the house. It means a busy kitchen. If this rings true, you still have an opportunity to save energy during the holidays.

In addition to being the “heart of your home,” your kitchen could pump savings back into your wallet. According to the Department of Energy, cooking accounts for 4.5 percent of total energy use in U.S. homes. This number, combined with the energy use associated with refrigeration, dishwashing and hot water heating means that as much as 15 percent of the energy in the average American home is used in the kitchen. So, saving energy here can have a significant impact on your household budget.

Small appliances equal energy savings

When preparing side dishes, baked goods, soups and such, consider using small appliances like a crock pot, toaster oven, microwave or warming plate instead of your conventional oven or stovetop. These small appliances are a smart, energy-saving alternative, typically using about half the energy of a stove.

Unplug appliances that draw phantom energy load

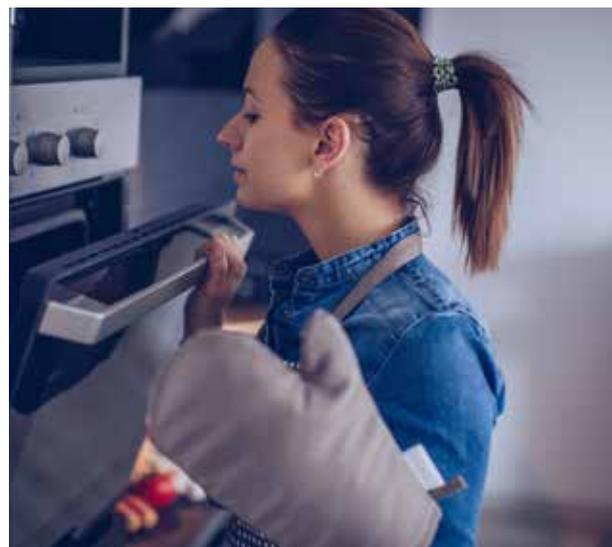
Halloween may be over, but it's possible you have energy vampires

in your kitchen – these are the appliances that draw energy even when they're not in use, like coffee makers, microwaves and toaster ovens. The Department of Energy has estimated that one home's energy vampires left plugged in year-round can add up to \$100-\$200 in wasted energy costs. Unplug them when they're not in use, or better yet, use a power strip for convenient control.

Keep large appliance doors closed

Opening the oven door can lower the temperature by as much as 25 degrees and causes your stove to work harder (consuming more energy) to return to the desired cooking temperature. If your recipe calls for baking the dish more than an hour, it is not necessary to preheat the oven. If your oven is electric, you can likely turn the oven off for the last five to ten minutes of cooking and allow the residual heat to complete the job. Clean burners and reflectors increase efficiency and offer better heating, so don't neglect this small but important task.

Just as keeping the oven door closed seals in efficiency and enables the stove to operate more economically, the same rules apply to the refrigerator and freezer. Keep the doors closed as much as possible so cold air doesn't escape. However, leaving the door open for a longer period of time while you load groceries or remove items you



need is more efficient than opening and closing it several times.

Clean up with energy savings

When it's time to clean up, washing and drying dirty dishes by hand can use less energy than a dishwasher. However, don't leave the water running continuously, or you will waste energy. If you do use the dishwasher and rinse dishes before loading them, use cold water. Run the dishwasher with full loads only, and if possible, use the energy-saving cycle. Note that dishwashers that have overnight or air power dry settings can save up to 10 percent of your dishwashing energy costs.

By adapting these efficient practices in your kitchen, energy savings will be one more thing to be thankful for this holiday season.



2021 Education Grant applications available online

Corn Belt Energy is now accepting applications for our 2021 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, 2020, and grants will be awarded in spring of 2021. The application can be found online at www.cornbeltenergy.com. For more information, please contact Hillary Cherry, Director of Communications & Marketing, at 800-879-0339 x250.

Applications for Illinois Electric Cooperative Memorial Scholarships now available

Twelve \$2,000 scholarships will be awarded in 2021 through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperative (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

- 6** scholarships awarded to high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members.
- 4** scholarships for high school seniors enrolling full time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors.
- 1** Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship awarded to a high school senior who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric co-op employee or director.
- 1** LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship awarded to a student attending lineworker school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, Illinois.

The deadline to apply for the IEC Memorial Scholarship Program is December 31, 2020. The LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker Scholarship deadline is April 30, 2021. For more information, go to: www.cornbeltenergy.com

Electrical safety features to be thankful for

Most days, we go about our lives without thinking about the electrical safety features that allow us to perform simple tasks at work and home. We'd like to take a moment to recognize some of the devices that help make our daily tasks safer and more convenient.

Ground fault circuit interrupters

Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) are inexpensive electrical devices that can be installed in your electrical system or built into a power cord to protect you from severe electrical shocks. GFCIs are generally installed where electrical circuits could potentially come into contact with water, such as kitchens, bathroom, laundry rooms, the garage or outdoors.



Example of GFCI.

GFCIs constantly monitor current flowing through a circuit. If the current flowing into the circuit differs by a small amount (even as small as 4 or 5 milliamps) from the returning current, the GFCI interrupts power to prevent shock or injury. However, GFCIs only do their job when they are in good working order; test them each month to be sure.

Arc fault circuit interrupters

Arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) could prevent more than 50 percent

of electrical fires that occur every year, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. These safety devices are typically found within your electrical panel or receptacles in the wall. An arc fault is a dangerous electrical problem caused by damaged, overheated or stressed electrical wiring or devices.

AFCIs monitor the current flow, and when they sense an unwanted arcing condition, the circuitry trips the internal contacts and interrupts the circuit before a fire can occur. Arc faults can occur when older wires become frayed or cracked, when a nail or screw damages a wire behind a wall, or when outlets or circuits are compromised.

Circuit breakers

Usually found in a garage, basement or laundry room, circuit breaker boxes are an essential safety feature in your home, preventing electrical injuries and fires. Each box is filled with individual circuit breakers designed to "trip" or shut itself off when necessary to stop the flow of electricity. Circuits trip for several reasons, including overloaded circuits (too much draw on one circuit) ground faults (abnormal flow in a circuit), and short circuits (when current travels along an unintended path).

Circuit breakers trip a circuit at predetermined amperage loads on a specific electrical line or circuit. If this limit is reached, the act of the breaker tripping opens the circuit and prevents the flow of current to that electrical line or circuit.

These are just a few items be thankful for this year. For more information about safety around electricity, go www.cornbeltenergy.com or visit SafeElectricity.org.



Jason Cotner
Field Engineer

How long have you worked at Corn Belt Energy?
19 years

What is your role at Corn Belt Energy?
The mechanical design and field layout of our distribution system. Working with our members on various projects from new construction to altering and upgrading services.

What aspect of your role do you enjoy the most?
Collaborating with the team at Corn Belt and our members to solve problems.

If there is one piece of advice that you could share with our members, what would it be?
Always be looking to the future when deciding the best course of action today.

Corn Belt Energy puts SAFETY FIRST. What safety tip would you share with our members?
Be aware of your surroundings no matter where you are. Speak up if things don't seem safe.

What are your hobbies and outside interests?
Cooking, finding new movies/tv shows to watch with family, Minecraft with my daughter, video games, Dungeons & Dragons with friends, board games.

Who or what inspires you?
Family and friends inspire me.

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

Is there anything else that you would like to share with our members?
Don't forget to love each other.



Help keep our crews safe

Orange road signs and cones are not just for highway construction zones; they also apply to utility work zones.

Slowing down before entering work zones helps save lives, including the lives of our crew members, who must

often work roadside to maintain or restore power.

Cars or trucks that go too fast not only endanger workers on the ground. Driving too fast or not moving over can also put a lineworker who is

working high up in a bucket in serious danger by causing it to move or sway into high-voltage lines.

Please, take extra care in work zones. Our crews and their families thank you.

Stay warm in the cooler months with these tips

Heating your home uses a lot of energy, so making a few changes can add up to noticeable savings on your energy bills. Corn Belt Energy is here to help by providing you with these money-saving tips:

Utilize ceiling fans

Hot air travels upward. If you have high ceilings, use your ceiling fans on a low, clockwise setting to circulate that heat back down.

Close off unoccupied rooms

Close the heat registers and doors of unoccupied rooms during the winter months.

Take advantage of sunny days

Take advantage of the sun's radiant heat energy and open your blinds and shades during sunny days. Let your home make use of those rays!

Adjust your thermostat

Program or adjust your thermostat to no higher than 68 degrees during the winter months for maximum cost savings. And make sure to turn down the temperature a few more degrees when you're sleeping and when you leave the house.

Close fireplace damper

Make sure to close your fireplace damper when not in use; you don't want your warm air leaking out through the chimney!

Prevent drafts

Check around your windows and doors for drafts. A tube of caulk and some weather stripping can go a long way to seal your home from blustery winds.

For more energy efficiency tips, visit our website at: www.cornbeltenergy.com

CONTACT US

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