



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# West Central Electric News

August 2011



West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. ~ Serving our members' needs since 1939

As summer ends and we look toward fall, remember ways to stretch your energy dollars...

## Four seasons of energy savings

There are a lot of uncertainties in Missouri — the drivers, the sports teams and certainly the weather — but one thing that is certain is that homes and businesses require a lot of energy to operate. The good news is that there are a number of easy and inexpensive ways you can stretch your energy dollars year-round. Follow these tips and start saving!

### Spring

- Make sure your smaller electronics are completely turned off when you are not using them. When left on and not being used, game consoles continue to use as much energy as a refrigerator. Also, make sure to put your computer monitors into sleep mode and put all of your computer's "peripherals" (speakers, printers, USB hubs, etc.) on a power strip, and turn the strip off when not in use.

- When doing laundry, about 80 to 85 percent of the energy used is to heat

the water. You can reduce the energy required to do a load of laundry by using Energy Star-qualified clothes washers, along with cooler water and cold-water detergents. Also, if you do your wash late in the evening or early in the morning, you're creating less drain on the regional energy grid, which is working hardest during the day, when businesses are up and running at maximum power.

- After you're done saving energy with the clothes washer, continue saving with the dryer. Always keep the lint trap clean — it will help the air circulate and prevent any trapping of moisture, therefore drying the clothes more quickly. Use the moisture sensor to make sure you don't overdry your clothes and to save energy and money.

### Summer

- Replacing your old central air conditioner with a new Energy Star-qualified heat pump will reduce your cooling

costs by 20 percent or more. And if possible, keep your room air conditioner out of direct sunlight. Room air conditioners work best when kept cool.

- In the summer, use a ceiling fan in the counter-clockwise direction. The airflow produced by the ceiling fan creates a wind-chill effect, making you "feel" cooler. Remember to adjust your thermostat when using your ceiling fan — additional energy and dollar savings could be realized with this simple step.

- If you use a dishwasher, skip the drying cycle and air-dry your dishes. Be sure to always do a full load of dishes for less waste. If you choose the "light load" function, rather than "normal wash," you'll also see savings.

### Fall

- Replace standard incandescent bulbs with Energy Star-qualified compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). Replacing just five regular incandescent bulbs with CFLs can save \$60 a year. CFLs also

last up to 10 times longer.

- Insulate hot water pipes and ducts wherever they run through unheated areas. Doing so will prevent the water from cooling down while traveling through the pipes, which will keep your electric or gas water heater from having to use more energy.

- Consider conducting a home energy audit to look for ways to save energy around your home. Utilizing a "house as a system" approach, a home energy assessment would focus on a home's thermal envelope (insulation and air leakage conditions) and mechanical systems to identify cost-effective energy efficiency improvements and/or replacement opportunities. Call your electric co-op to see if this service is available to you free of charge.

### Winter

In the winter, reverse the motor on

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## THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME...

West Central Electric delegates Dakota Ross, Kaylee Herring and Courtney Welch recently spent a week in Washington, D.C. representing the cooperative on the 2011 Rural Electric Youth Tour. (Left) Kaylee (bottom right) makes new friends during her trip to our nation's capital. (Additional coverage on page 2.) For more information on how you can get to D.C. in 2012, contact West Central Electric Cooperative today!



## REMINDER TO OUR MEMBERS...

- 2011 capital credits will appear as credits on your August billing statement.

- If a member has multiple accounts, the credits will be applied based on the largest balance first, then the next until fully applied. If there are no current balances on the account, the credit will be applied to the primary account (that holds the main membership).

- If a member has multiple accounts, and would like the credit applied to a different account than the one determined by the cooperative, members may call the office and request a transfer to the account of their choice.

- Members who purchased electricity from the cooperative between 1993 and 2010, will receive capital credits. If you do not see a credit on your account, and feel you should have, you may contact Sandy Starke at 1-800-491-3803 or 660-584-2131.

# No kidding...YT really IS the 'trip of a lifetime!'

What makes electric cooperatives different from other utilities is that "giving something back to the community" is part of their business plan. Why do electric cooperatives bring high school students to Washington? Because it is important to learn about the political process to interact with your government. Students will walk away from this week as a better leader and with a sense that they can make a difference.

"It's one thing to 'learn' out of a text book from a teacher. It's another thing to learn without knowing you are doing so. That is what I did on the 2011 Youth Tour," delegate Kaylee Herring said. "It was amazing and I had a BLAST. I met so many new people that I already miss dearly, and saw incredible things. The Washington monument, Arlington National Cemetery, and WWII memorial are just a few things I saw that really taught me what our flag stands for. Thank you to everyone who makes this trip possible, it's truly a trip of a lifetime."

In June, Herring, who will be a senior at Kingsville High School this fall, joined Dakota Ross, Courtney Welch and 81 other youth from across Missouri, on the national Rural Electric Youth Tour. The tour brought together more than 1,500 high school seniors from across the nation.

More than 40,000 students from rural areas and small towns across America have participated in this unique program, with participants going on to become doctors, teachers, aircraft designers and even top legislators in the U.S. Senate.

"When people say that this is the trip of a lifetime they

don't even come close to describing how great this trip truly is," Ross said. "I was very fortunate that I got to go on this wonderful trip and have all the great experiences I had. I can't thank my co-op enough for sending me on this one-of-a-kind, super cool, crazy, fun trip!"

WCE has sent 39 area students to our nation's capital since reestablishing the Youth Tour program at WCE in 1992.

"The 2011 Youth Tour was an amazing experience," Welch said. I had so much fun seeing all that Washington, DC had to offer. The monuments and memorials were breath-taking and I can't even begin to tell you how fascinating the Smithsonian Museums are! I met so many new people who have become great friends -- we became so close that we've already planned a reunion! Washington, DC is filled with an extraordinary amount of history. It is hard to believe that I was actually there, and I can not thank West Central Electric Co-op enough for such a wonderful experience!"



*"When people say that this is the trip of a lifetime they don't even come close to describing how great this trip truly is."*

--Dakota Ross  
2011 YT Delegate



(Left) WCE's 2011 Youth Tour delegates Kaylee Herring and Courtney Welch take a seat in the Missouri House of Representatives' chamber during a tour of the Missouri State Capitol Building.

(Above) Courtney, Kaylee and Dakota Ross enjoy the Youth Tour Banquet.

(Right) Courtney, Kaylee and Dakota in the "Crow's Nest" atop the Missouri State Capitol Building dome.

(Background) WCE delegates visit our nation's Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.





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## As summer ends... Four seasons of energy savings

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your ceiling fan and operate it at low speed in the clockwise direction. This produces a gentle updraft forcing warm air near the ceiling down into the occupied space. Remember to adjust your thermostat when using your ceiling fan — additional energy and dollar savings could be realized with this simple step.

- Seal the largest air leaks in your house — the ones that whistle on windy days or feel drafty. Use caulking and weatherstripping to seal openings in your attic and basement and around windows, doors, utility cut-throughs for pipes (plumbing penetrations) and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.

- Be sure to use the locks on your windows. It will make them close more tightly, therefore reducing the chance of any drafts.

## WCE bids farewell to Kenny Iles

### Former line foreman served co-op more than four decades

West Central Electric employees and board members were saddened to learn of the death of recent retiree and former WCE lineman Kenneth “Kenny” Iles, 64, of Higginsville, on May 30, 2011.

Kenny began working at WCE in March 1965 as a groundman. He worked his way through the ranks of apprentice lineman, journeyman lineman and line foreman. He served two years as operations superintendent and a year as line superintendent in Higginsville before returning to foreman in 1985.

Kenny retired on March 1, 2011.

He is survived by his mother, Geneva Iles; his wife, Ann; two sons, Brent (Devon) Iles and Brian (Jamie) Iles; a brother, Michael Iles; a sister, Kathy (Henry) Hudson and four grandchildren, Gabe Iles, Dru Iles, Noah Iles and Luke Iles.



(Above) Kenny Iles in 1993. (Left) Kenny Iles during his early years as a WCE lineman. Iles died May 30, 2011.

## Doug Rye Says...

## A little more on insulation...

The response from last month's column has been amazing. I did not expect so many calls from folks who the walls.

Well, we are thrilled when we learn that the columns are giving you solutions to your energy-efficiency problems.

My favorite call was from a lady in southcentral Arkansas. She asked who she could call to get the RetroFoam insulation for her house. Well, since I only knew one company in Arkansas that installed RetroFoam, I gave her the phone number of the one who helped us with the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas' home makeover. Because she lives far from the company, I told her that I didn't know if that company would be able to assist her. She said, "They have to because they have the answer to my problem. My walls are wet every winter and have been that way for years."

I asked her several questions about the house, and I am convinced that insulating the walls would solve her problem.

I feel certain that every person reading this column believes that insulation is important, but you may have questions about which kind to use, how much it

costs and how much do you need. So let's take a closer look. First, I want you to know that all insulation does not perform equally when the temperature is hot or cold outside the house. So, you immediately think to yourself, "That is when you need insulation," and you are exactly right.

For many years, I've been extolling the virtues of cellulose insulation, and it remains a favorite of mine. I first learned about cellulose insulation, which is made from recycled newspapers, in the 1970s when I was working for the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), overseeing construction of energy-efficient housing for low- and moderate-income families and senior citizens.

I learned about it from a builder in Mountain Home who was using it to soundproof apartments. I decided to use it to soundproof FmHA-financed apartments, and that's when I found that it was also great for air insulation. By metering many of the apartments and houses we built, I saw that the utility bills were always at least 20 percent less on structures insulated with cellulose. Because it works so well and is afford-

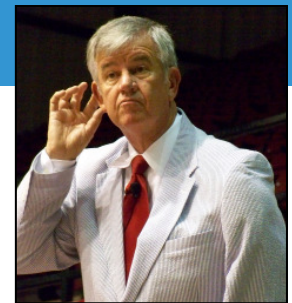
able, the use of cellulose insulation has mushroomed in recent years.

So, how do you use it? For existing homes, it may be feasible to spray dry cellulose in your walls. This can be done by simply drilling 2-inch holes in the walls (sometimes interior, sometimes exterior) and spraying the cellulose through those holes, which can be easily patched when you are done. As for your attic, it is totally feasible in most cases to add cellulose insulation to any existing insulation you may have.

My rule of thumb is that when you are finished, you should have a minimum of 12 inches total of attic insulation. For example, if you have 6 inches now, add 6 more inches.

If your house is pier and beam with a crawl space, you can spray cellulose or foam insulation on the interior of the perimeter foundation wall. This will prevent pipes from freezing, loss of ductwork heat and the floors of your home will stay warmer in the winter.

Insulation is a very important part of energy efficiency. Because it will still be hot when you receive the next Rural Missouri, and cold weather will be just



around the corner, I will complete the Insulation Course 101 in September. In that issue, we will take a greater look at foam insulation.

Until then, stay cool.

*Doug Rye, a licensed architect living in Saline County, Ark., and the popular host of the "Home Remedies" radio show, works as a consultant for the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas to promote energy efficiency to cooperative members statewide. To order Doug's video or ask energy efficiency-related questions, call Doug at 1-501-653-7931. More energy-efficiency tips, as well as Doug's columns, can also be found at [www.ecark.org](http://www.ecark.org)*

Listen to Doug Rye's "Home Remedies" show Saturday mornings from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. on KXXK Radio, 105.7 FM.

**West Central Electric Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, Sept. 5 in observance of Labor Day. Have a safe holiday!**

# Zap the excess humidity in your home

## Water vapor in the air can make a difference in comfort

The amount of humidity — the percentage of water vapor in the air — in your home affects your comfort level. Generally, we talk about relative humidity, which is the amount of water vapor actually present in the air compared to the amount of water vapor the air can hold at that temperature. The optimum relative humidity range is considered to be between 30 percent and 50 percent.

As the Missouri Department of Natural Resources notes, you'll feel cooler in a room at 75 degrees with 25 percent relative humidity than a room at 75 degrees with 40 percent relative humidity. Consequently, in winter, more humidity in the air makes you feel warmer and less likely to raise the thermostat setting.

But higher humidity in summer can be extremely uncomfortable and lead to building damage and health problems. A clue that you have too much moisture in your house is condensation on the inside of windows. You'll find condensation when the relative humidity of the air reaches 100 percent, and the water vapor changes to water. Too much humidity can lead to mold and mildew. Those, in turn, can cause rotting and swelling of wood framing and trigger allergic reactions and asthma attacks.

Where does all that interior moisture come from? According to DNR, it typically comes from bathing (or showering), cleaning, cooking and water

evaporation and emission. It also may come from outside your home, entering through leaks in your home's shell. To get rid of excess moisture above 40 percent relative humidity:

- Use ventilation fans in bathrooms and laundry rooms about 10 minutes after showering to remove excess moisture
- Use your air conditioner in particularly humid conditions or a dehumidifier
- Look for and repair stopped-up drains and leaky plumbing, hoses, shower tile grout and water heaters
- Look for outdoor air coming in through windows, doors, outlets and air-conditioning units
- Cover exposed earth in a crawl space with a vapor barrier
- Install downspouts that flow away from the foundation
- Slope the grade away from the house
- Reduce the number of house plants and pilot lights
- Properly vent attic spaces — make sure soffit and fascia vents are clear and not covered by insulation
- If you have single-pane windows, install storm windows or add plastic sheeting or upgrade to more efficient windows
- Use natural ventilation, such as opening windows, only when the forecasted nighttime low is 55 degrees or below

You can measure the relative humidity with a humidistat, hygrometer or humidity meter, available at hardware stores or through your heating, ventilation and air-conditioning technician. An indoor humidity meter and thermometer combination costs as little as \$10 at your local hardware store.

## Moisture Migration Priorities

Significantly more water vapor travels through a wall by air leakage than by diffusion

Vapor diffusion-  
2/3 pint of water per  
heating season

Air leakage (1/2 inch hole)-  
50 pints of water per  
heating season

# Dehumidifier basics from EnergyStar

If the relative humidity inside your home this summer is above 50 percent, you may need to purchase a dehumidifier, ideally an Energy Star-qualified one. An Energy Star-qualified dehumidifier will be at least 15 percent more efficient than other models and will save you about \$20 a year or \$220 over its life.

Capacity is usually measured in pints per 24 hours and is determined by the size of the space that needs to be dehumidified and the conditions that exist in the space before dehumidification. Use the chart below to estimate capacity or use the dehumidifier calculator at [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).

The energy efficiency of dehumidifiers is measured by its energy factor, in liters of water removed from the air per kilowatt-hour of energy consumed or L/kWh. In general, a higher energy factor means a more efficient dehumidifier. The higher the rating, the more efficient the dehumidifier.

To improve the efficiency of the dehu-

midifier:

- Be sure air can circulate freely around the dehumidifier
- Shut doors and windows of the space

devices, make sure the dehumidifier is connected to a properly grounded outlet and keep drain hoses away from electrical cords and connections

and hang it near the dehumidifier.

When using the dehumidifier, the air temperature directly around the unit may be warmer than in surrounding areas. That's normal, according to Energy Star. A dehumidifier removes moisture from the air, it slightly warms the space around it.

If the space being dehumidified has temperatures falling below 65 degrees, such as in a basement or crawl space, you may want to buy a product specifically for lower temperatures. Frost can form on the condensing coils if the air temperature drops below 65 degrees and may negatively affect performance by causing the compressor to cycle on and off repeatedly without removing moisture from the air. If this happens, switch off

the unit and allow it to defrost before it is turned back on. Some dehumidifiers come with an antifrost sensor, which will automatically turn the unit off if the air temperature drops below a certain point.

Condition without Dehumidification	Area (Sq. Feet)				
	500	1,000	1,500	2,000	2,500
<b>Moderately Damp</b> (space feels damp and has musty odor only in humid weather)	10	14	18	22	26
<b>Very Damp</b> (space always feels damp and has musty odor. Damp spots show on walls and floor.)	12	17	22	27	32
<b>Wet</b> (space feels and smells wet. Walls or floor sweat, or seepage is present.)	14	20	26	32	38
<b>Extremely Wet</b> (laundry drying, wet floor, high load conditions.)	16	23	30	37	44

Source: Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM)

being dehumidified while the unit is running

- Locate away from dust and dirt that could clog coils and grills
- Be safe — never set up water drainage or disposal near electrical circuits or

Many dehumidifiers have built-in humidistats that allow you to set the desired relative humidity level you want. If your unit doesn't have a humidistat, you can purchase a hygrometer (a gauge for measuring relative humidity)

