



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

West Central *Electric News*

August 2012



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

Copper theft costs co-op, members money

Copper theft is a growing problem that not only affects property owners, creates blackouts and puts people at risk, it also costs your cooperative, and ultimately our members, money.

"When people steal copper, they are stealing directly from you, our members," General Manager Mike Gray said. "Not to mention the dangers of coming into contact with more than 7,000 volts of electricity."

A recent incident at the cooperative involved vandalism, property damage and copper theft caused more than \$20,000 in damages and resulted in a

very minimal gain for the perpetrators.

The incident has been reported to the local authorities, and is currently being investigated by the Missouri State Highway Patrol's Rural Crime Division.

West Central Electric is asking you, our members, for your help. If you see any suspicious activity or cooperative equipment (lines/poles/transformers) that look like they have been tampered with, you are asked to contact the cooperative at 800-491-3803 or the Theft Reward Hotline at 1-855-COPPER9 (1-855-267-7379).



(Above) A toppled electric pole and transformers sits in shambles after an attempt to steal copper. (Left) Copper thieves used a blow torch to attempt to gain entry into a pad mount transformer. Tampering with electric equipment is not only a felony, but life-threatening. Anyone who comes into contact with a live power line is coming into contact with more than 7,000 volts of electricity. Members are urged to look out for suspicious activity and report it to the cooperative at 800-491-3803 or the Theft Reward Hotline at 1-855-COPPER9 (1-855-267-7379).



THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME...

West Central Electric delegates Hali Mieser, Kayla Goth, Taylor Edwards and Rachelle Engen recently spent a week in Washington, D.C. representing the cooperative on the 2012 Rural Electric Youth Tour. (Left) Hali and Kayla visit the White House. (Additional coverage on page 2.) For more information on how you can get to D.C. in 2013, contact West Central Electric Cooperative today!



Youth Tour 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.

Time and again, delegates both past and present choose the same phrase to describe their experience.

"When you told us that going to Washington, D.C. on the Youth Tour was the trip of a lifetime, it really was!" said 2012 delegate Kayla Goth. "It's hard to describe it any other way."

"This may sound cliché but this trip honestly is 'the trip of a lifetime,'" said 2012 delegate Hali Mieser.

In June, Goth and Meiser, who will be seniors at Crest Ridge High School this fall, joined fellow WCE delegates Taylor Edwards and Rachelle Engen and 85 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. Delegates also return with a new appreciation of America and her history.

"I am not much of a history fanatic but I learned so much

about the history of America and I really enjoyed it too! This is an opportunity of a lifetime," Mieser said.

"I loved Washington, D.C.," Goth said. "Not only did the trip give me a greater appreciation for my country, but it also allowed me to meet some amazing people that I will continue to keep in touch with for years to come."

Goth said the most moving place to visit was The Vietnam Wall Memorial.

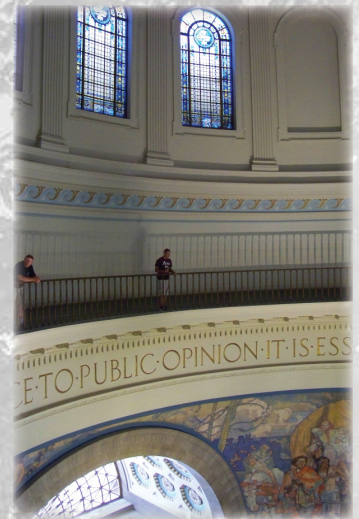
"You hear of how many people were lost, but seeing all the names etched down the wall was truly eye-opening," she said.

WCE has sent 43 area students to our nation's capital since reestablishing the Youth Tour program at WCE in 1992.

"I will certainly be going back to D.C., but this trip will be the most memorable because of everyone I met, and the jokes we made and the just the way it all happened," Mieser said. "Some of the people I met, I can guarantee I will be keeping in touch with for probably the rest of my life. Washington D.C. was a blast! It really was!"

"Writing that essay was one of the best choices I've made thus far in my life... It's living proof that hard work and dedication can take you places you never imagined you could go."

**--Kayla Goth
2012 YT Delegate**



Delegates visit the Whispering Gallery in the Missouri State Capitol Building.



(Left) Hali Mieser and a view from the crow's nest at the top of the Missouri State Capitol Building.

(Above) Rebecca Engen, Taylor Edwards, Kayla Goth and Hali Mieser are ready to take on the Youth Tour.

(Right) Taylor Edwards makes his own copy of the Missouri State seal.

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



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Doug Rye Says...

A little more on insulation...

About 21 years ago, I asked and received an opportunity to host a live radio program about energy efficiency. I knew that the new KBIS talk station in town needed additional programming and I knew that my topic could help a lot of their listeners. It was definitely on my mind, but I didn't really know how to proceed. One evening, perhaps by coincidence, I attended a minor league baseball game that happened to be sponsored by KBIS radio.

It was bingo night and between innings, Mr. Bill Powell was calling bingo numbers and giving KBIS gifts to the winners. I thought that Mr. Powell owned the station since he had a four-hour program every weekday morning. I convinced myself that I should get out of my seat and go down and try to talk to him about a program. I stood beside him and waited until he finished calling the next bingo numbers and gave away another prize. He then looked up at me and reached to shake my hand. I introduced myself and told him that I would like to do a live call-in show about energy efficiency. He thought that I meant health energy.

I told him that I was talking about utility bills. I hurriedly asked him if he had a water heater at his house and he immediately said that he did. I asked him where it was located and he said that it was located in a small hallway closet. I asked him if he had noticed that it was always warm around that closet and he said, "As a matter of fact, I have." I asked him if the air conditioning thermo-

stat was located close to that area and he said it was on the wall right next to that closet. I explained that the heat from the water heater was probably making his air conditioner run more than necessary. The baseball inning was coming to an end and it was time for more bingo as he asked what he should do. I told him to install a water heater blanket. He asked if I had a card. I handed him a card as he announced that this game would be straight-line bingo; the first number is B11, he said. He nodded his head at me and I figured that I might never have another chance. Well, at least I tried.

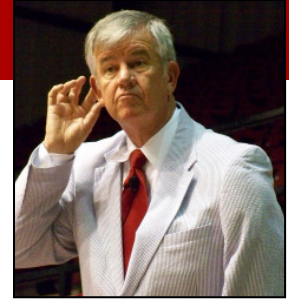
About a week later, I received a call from an employee at KBIS. I was so surprised that I can't remember, even to this day, if it was a man or woman who called. The person said that Mr. Powell had asked them to call me and get more information about our discussion at the game. The caller asked several questions and I gave several examples of things that a person could do to lower their utility bills. The call might have lasted five minutes. The caller didn't seem very impressed and I didn't feel that I had done a very good job in presenting my idea, but again I had tried. On the next Friday, I got a call from a fellow at KBIS asking if I could come to the station the next morning at 8:30. I told him that I would be happy to do so. No details were given, but I was excited. I actually got to the station about a half hour early, entered through an unlocked door and sat down in the small lobby. I felt certain that Mr. Powell would soon

be there to talk.

At about 8:30 a.m., a young man walked by in the hall but didn't acknowledge my presence, so I just waited. He walked by again at 8:45 a.m. and I asked him if he knew what time Mr. Powell might come in. He told me that his name was Russell and that Mr. Powell didn't come to the station on Saturday. I said that I must be mixed up because I thought that I was supposed to meet him or someone at 8:45 a.m. He asked, "Are you the energy guy?" I told him that I was and he said, "Follow me and I will show you how to do the show." I still remember how my heart skipped a beat or two as I headed into the studio 15 minutes before show time. I was informed that the program would be an hour long and that we could receive calls if we wanted. It was now about 9 a.m. and I was sweating and trying to get a plan together.

At 9:05 a.m., Russell introduced me. There was no music or any big build up. Just, here is Mr. Doug Rye. It went something like this: "Good morning, my name is Doug Rye. How many of you have a water heater in your house?" And, as the saying goes, the rest is history.

I received five calls, which I learned was very good for a first show. And by the way, that advice I gave Mr. Powell is still good — many of you would still benefit by installing a blanket on your water heater. Another of the callers to the first show wanted to know why his upstairs was much hotter than the



downstairs. I answered his question. Well, just two nights ago my wife and I were dining in a nice restaurant when we overheard one fellow say to another across the table that his thermostat was set on 74 degrees but the upstairs was 82 degrees.

Well, a lot has changed but many energy problems remain the same. In the next several issues, I plan to list the typical energy problems found in houses and tell you how to solve them. In some cases, I will give you new changes for solving those same old problems.

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

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
Monday, Sept. 3 in observance of Labor Day. Have a safe holiday!**

REMINDER TO OUR MEMBERS...

- 2012 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 1992 and 2010, may 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.

Energy efficiency tips for renters

As a renter, you may feel powerless to control energy use in your rental. After all, you can't put in new windows or appliances. Those are the responsibility of the landlord or property management company.

But there's actually a good deal you can do to reduce your power usage. Here are a few ideas that may cost a little on the front end but will save on your utility bill:

Change the light bulbs – The easiest and probably most cost-effective change is simply to switch from incandescent bulbs to compact fluorescent or even LED bulbs. CFLs today produce a qual-

ity light in different colors, sizes and shapes. They can replace incandescents that have up to four times the wattage; for example, 13-watt CFLs replace 60-watt incandescent bulbs.

Both CFLs and LEDs cost more, but they use 75 percent less energy and last 10 to 25 times longer than incandescents.

Fix the windows – No, you can't replace windows in a rental, but you can caulk and seal them on the inside – or point out the need to do so to your landlord. Your landlord may allow you to add window films that can block summer heat gain; they perform best in

climates with a long cooling season. For winter, ask if you can add plastic sheeting to exterior windows, if they don't have storm window additions. Finally, add blinds and curtains and drapes. In summer, pull them down during the day to block unwanted sun rays. Open them during winter days to invite the sunshine in for a passive solar effect.

Install a programmable thermostat – For under \$35, this handy device will allow you to automatically regulate the temperature in your home or apartment. You can save about 10 percent on your electricity bill by reducing temperatures

10 to 15 degrees for at least eight hours, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. That's about the time you're at work.

Caulk and seal – With your landlord's permission, caulk and weather strip around those old windows and doors and fix other obvious leaks in the exterior shell. Add gaskets behind outlets and switches.

Clean refrigerator coils – Changing the refrigerator with a more efficient one is probably your landlord's responsibility. But simply cleaning the coils can help your refrigerator run more efficiently.

No-cost tips for renters to save

You don't have to spend even a penny on these simple, no-cost ways to reduce your utilities as a renter. And the money saved will help with the rent!

•Kitchen efficiency – That means using the right size pot or skillet on the stovetop. Don't open the oven door repeatedly to check on food — the heat from the oven will show up on your next month's bill. Cut your cooking time by thawing foods beforehand in the refrigerator. Set your refrigerator's temperature at 37 degrees and freezer at 3 degrees, as recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency; colder is a waste of energy. Pull the refrigerator a few inches away from the wall to keep moving parts from overheating. Wash only full loads of dishes. Unplug small appliances when not in use to avoid phantom draws. Use your microwave or grill out during hotter months.

•Heating & cooling efficiency – Block cold drafts and prevent conditioned air from escaping by placing a rolled-up rug, towels or even newspapers at the bottom of outside doors. Arrange furniture so it doesn't block vents, radiators and baseboard heaters. In summer, draw blinds and drapes shut to block sun rays; in winter, open them up during the day to create a passive solar benefit. In summer, set the thermostat at 78 degrees or higher when you're home. In winter, set it at 68 degrees or lower. Each degree of change can make a 1 percent difference in your bill, according to Energy Savers. Use a fan to cool down.

•Electronics efficiency – Turn off monitors and shut down hard drives when not in use, or put them in the sleep mode. Plug TVs and other electronics into a power strip that you can switch off when not using.

•Water efficiency – If you have a water heater in your rental, set the temperature to 120 degrees. That should be adequate for household use and also reduce mineral buildup in the heater.

•Lighting efficiency – Turn off the lights! Simply turning them off will save, particularly if you use incan-

*Home sweet
energy-efficient
home*

*Wherever you choose to call home,
make it as efficient as possible*

Save energy in your mobile home

Some 336,000 Missourians live in mobile homes, according to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Heating, cooling and heating water are the three largest consumers of energy in these homes, especially in older ones.

The U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Savers points out that mobile homes built before 1976 suffer from air leakage through the walls, little or no insulation, no vapor retarder in the roof, un-insulated heating ducts and un-insulated doors. In 1976, new U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines improved the efficiency of mobile units, but they still can be energy hogs compared to other types of homes.

So what can you do to improve efficiency in your mobile home? The following ideas from Energy Savers, DNR and other sources may cost a bit but could save as much as 30 percent on your heating and cooling bills.

Install efficient windows and doors – At a minimum, install double-glazed windows or storm windows and insulated doors. Efficient windows can reduce energy leaks by as much as 25 percent and storm windows by 25 to 50 percent, according to Energy Savers. Look for new windows with a U-value of .35 or

below.

Add insulation – Insulation will soon pay for itself by reducing utility bills. The link at www.ornl.gov/sci/roofs%2bwalls/insulation/ins_16.html will help you calculate how much insulation you need for walls, ceiling and floor. In general, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources recommends R-30 to R-38 for ceilings, R-19 for walls and R-19 to R-22 for floors.

In general DNR says insulating floors and skirting in manufactured homes is relatively inexpensive, but ceilings and walls can be more costly because cavity space is so tight and difficult to access. For walls, the easiest way to add insulation is to remove the exterior siding.

Caulk and seal – If you can't afford new windows and doors, then seal around existing ones. Poor caulking between window and door frames and sheathing also can lead to water damage. Also repair leaks in ducts. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that simply weatherizing structures can save 20 percent on heating and cooling.

Install insulated skirting – Framing in around the bottom of your mobile home keeps unwanted critters out, reduces conditioned air loss, protects the under-

belly and improves the appearance of your home.

Install or repair a belly wrap – A belly wrap or underbelly is the bottom side of a manufactured home that protects insulation and keeps out moisture and critters. Typically, it's a black polyethylene tarp-like material. If your home predates 1976, it may not have an underbelly at all. Patching, replacing or installing belly wraps isn't easy but can improve the efficiency and comfort of your home. Remember that air needs to move inside the belly so pipes don't freeze and moisture isn't trapped.

Add insulation to roof or install roof cap – Roof caps avoid disturbing the existing roof and can insulate to R-19. If all leaks in the old roof covering are sealed, the old roof acts as a vapor retarder, eliminating moisture problems and the need for ventilation. Rolling back the roof to add insulation can be difficult because there's not much space in the wall and roof cavities. Also, a rollback may require a mechanical ventilation system to remove moisture.

Ideally, roof caps and new roofs will have a reflective surface to avoid absorbing and trapping heat inside the metal frame of the home.

Talk with your landlord about saving energy

Landlords typically don't have a lot of incentives for making their apartments and rentals more energy efficient unless they are paying for the utilities themselves. But new apartments are being built and marketed as energy efficient, and the number of renters asking for energy-efficient features is growing.

So, a conversation with your landlord about investing in efficiency might produce results. Here are some points to make:

- Retrofitted rentals or new, efficient rentals increase in value and can command higher rental fees and leases
- The market for efficient rentals is growing; just check out the ads, particularly in urban areas
- Improvements can be phased in; as tenants change, use that opportunity to replace old appliances and windows and to caulk and seal
- Landlords may qualify for discounts on energy-efficient appliances and materials, particularly in volume