



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

ElectricNews

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

Efficient lighting choices can cut your energy bill

If yours is an average household, you spend about 5 percent of your energy budget on lighting, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. That may not sound like a lot, but efficient lighting choices can cut usage further.

By now you may know that energy-saving incandescent bulbs, also known as halogens, along with compact fluorescent lamps and light-emitting diodes (LEDs) have replaced the old style incandescent bulbs. Here's a short look at each:

HALOGENS

Halogens can last up to three times longer than traditional incandescent light bulbs and come in a wide range of shapes and colors. They also can be used with dimmers.

CFLs

CFLs last about 10 times longer and use about one-fourth the energy of traditional incandescents. CFLs come in a variety of brightness and color options, and some come in a similar shape to traditional incandescent. They do contain a small amount of mercury and require special handling if broken. Always recycle used CFLs.

LEDs

LEDs are rapidly becoming the light bulb of choice in many applications. Their light quality is similar to traditional incandescents, they last 25 times as long and they use even less energy than CFLs. Plus they don't contain mercury. LEDs can be used for standard screw-in applications, as well as recessed downlights, desk lamps, kitchen undercabinet lighting and outdoor area lights.

Preparation is the key to surviving spring storms

Lightning from thunderstorms kills more people each year than tornadoes or hurricanes, according to the American Red Cross. As spring arrives, make sure you're prepared to handle storms that come with the changing season. Follow these tips from the Red Cross to stay safe:

Stay away from downed power lines. Electricity could still be flowing through them. Report any downed or sagging power lines or downed poles immediately to your local authorities or to West Central Electric Cooperative at 800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942.

Hear thunder? Head inside. If you

can hear it, you could be in danger from lightning. Stay indoors at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder—a recommendation from the National Weather Service. If you're outside and can't seek shelter indoors, avoid high ground, water, tall isolated trees, and

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You make a solid investment in your electric cooperative

As a member of West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., you make an investment in the co-op every time you pay your bill. This collective investment in the co-op benefits you and the community immediately and over time. So what exactly is this monthly investment, and how do you benefit from it?

The service availability charge is a monthly investment that helps your co-op cover the expenses of maintaining the overall electric system. Combatting cyber security threats and maintaining poles, wires, substations and co-op equipment takes strategic planning and significant resources. The service availability charge essentially ensures that all

equipment operates properly and staff is trained and ready so the lights turn on when you need them.

Regardless of how much electricity a particular family uses, the cost of delivering power to that house is the same. As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, we believe the operational costs should be spread fairly and equitably across all of our members, regardless of the level of electricity use. That is why every member pays the service availability charge each month to cover basic operational costs. All members are charged the same amount for the cost of operation since all members benefit from the same service. In essence, this gives each

co-op member an equal share in WCE's operation.

Your monthly investment ensures you have access to safe, reliable and affordable power when you need it. We appreciate and value the investment that you make in the co-op each month, and we strive to use that investment wisely for the benefit of all members of our community.

To learn more about the service availability charge, please contact WCE at 800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942.

Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Board of Directors:

Densil Allen, Jr. President
Clark Bredehoeft, Vice-Pres.
Dale Jarman, Treasurer
Robert Simmons, Secretary
Stan Rhodes, Asst. Sect.
Max Swisegood, Director
Richard Strobel, Director
Sandra Streit, Director
Jeremy Ahmann, Director

Preparation is the key to surviving spring storms

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metal objects like bleachers or fences.

Unplug your electronics. Avoid using electrical items and telephones, which can carry power surges. Keep a battery-powered TV or radio on hand for weather updates.

Delay outdoor activities. If conditions are right for a thunderstorm, postpone the baseball game and stay inside—it doesn't have to be raining for lightning to strike.

Never drive through running water. If the road is covered, even if it looks shallow, follow the advice "turn around, don't drown." It only takes a few inches from an overflowing creek to sweep a

vehicle away.

Assemble an emergency preparedness kit with:

- Water—one gallon per person, per day;
- Non-perishable food;
- Flashlight;
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (preferably NOAA weather radio) and extra batteries;
- First-aid kit;
- Seven-day medicine supply;
- Copies of personal documents;
- Cell phone with chargers;
- Emergency contact information; and
- Cash.

Source: American Red Cross



Net Metering & Interconnection Act

Missouri's net metering act requires retail electric suppliers to make net metering available to customers who have their own electric generation units that meet certain criteria, one of which is that the unit is powered by renewable energy resources.

Net metering is where the customer gets credit for the electricity he/she generates in lieu of electricity supplied by the electric utility. Net metering provides the best of both worlds for consumers who choose to invest in renewable energy technology: they have the security of grid connection, but are also compensated for the excess power they produce that's fed into the grid.

West Central Electric Cooperative has a net-metering agreement for interconnection of a distributed generation source. Our policy, agreement and application reflect the standards set by the Net-Metering and Easy Connect Act (ECA).

Net metering is available to customers on a first-come, first-served basis until the total rated generating capacity of the net-metering systems equals 5 percent of the utility's single-hour peak load during the previous year.

Simple interconnection procedures that standardize interconnection for all Missourians are necessary to promote the use of renewable energy in Missouri. The ECA makes it easier and more cost-effective for Missourians to connect small renewable energy systems to the grid.

West Central Electric Cooperative supports sound renewable energy. We just ask that our members do their homework before spending thousands of dollars to add solar, wind or any type of renewable energy source to their home.

For more information, contact our Higginsville office at 800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942.

Questions and tips on lighting

How do you know which bulb to choose?

With all the lighting choices and changes, choosing the right bulb for an application can be frustrating.

The Federal Trade Commission has simplified the process by requiring all light bulb packaging carry a Lighting Facts label to help you compare bulbs. The label includes:

- Brightness, measured in lumens*
- Estimated yearly energy cost (similar to the EnergyGuide label)
- Lifespan
- Light appearance, measured by correlated color temperature (CCT) on the Kelvin (K) scale, from warm to cool.

In the past, we bought bulbs based

on how much energy (watts) they used. Today we buy them based on how much light they provide. When shopping and comparing bulbs, look at the lumens: the higher the number of lumens, the brighter the bulb. If you're replacing an inefficient 100-watt bulb, look for an energy-saving bulb that puts out about 1,600 lumens.

To replace a 60-watt equivalent, look for a bulb with about 800 lumens.

Indoor lighting tips

The U.S. Department of Energy offers these useful guidelines for efficient lighting inside:

- By replacing your home's five most frequently used light fixtures or bulbs with ENERGY STAR models, you can

save up to \$75 a year

- When remodeling, look for recessed light fixtures or "cans" rated for contact with insulation and that are air tight
- When replacing incandescent bulbs in recessed light fixtures, use energy-efficient bulbs rated for that purpose
- ENERGY STAR-qualified fixtures at www.energystar.gov come in many styles, distribute light more efficiently and evenly and some offer features such as dimming
- Controls such as timers and photocells save electricity by turning lights off when not in use; dimmers save electricity when used to lower light levels
- Keep your curtains or shades open to use natural daylight instead of turning on lights; for more privacy, use light-colored, loose-weave curtains to allow

daylight into the room, and decorate with lighter colors that reflect daylight.

Indoor lighting tips

The U.S. Department of Energy offers these useful guidelines for efficient outdoor lighting:

- Use compact fluorescents or light-emitting diodes (LEDs) for outdoor lights left on a long time; be sure to purchase bulbs that are rated for outdoor use
- CFLs and LEDs are available as flood lights and can withstand rain and snow
- Look for ENERGY STAR-qualified fixtures designed for outdoor use and with features like automatic daylight shutoff and motion sensors

Trees can help save energy, but avoid planting near power lines

It'll take a while before trees you plant this spring produce shade, but they are worth the investment. Shade can reduce solar gain by as much as 9 degrees. And because cool air settles near the ground, air temperatures directly under trees can be as much as 25 degrees cooler than air temperatures above a nearby blacktop. And in summer, a tree-shaded neighborhood will be about 6 degrees cooler than an unshaded development.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, strategically placed trees and

shrubs can save up to 25 percent of home energy consumption year round and up to 50 percent on air conditioning costs. Even shading your room unit condenser with an awning, cover or shade from plants/trees can increase its efficiency as much as 10 percent.

Plant trees on the south and southwest corner of your house to provide welcome shade in a few years. In fact, a 6- to 8-foot deciduous tree planted near your home will begin shading windows the first year. Depending on the species

and the home, the tree will shade the roof within 10 years. Trees native to your area will have a better chance of surviving and thriving.

Trees, shrubs and groundcover plants also can shade the ground and pavement around your home. This reduces heat radiation and cools the air before it reaches your house. Use a large bush or row of shrubs to shade a patio or driveway. Plant a hedge to shade a sidewalk. Build a trellis for climbing vines to shade a patio area. Plant vines to shade

walls. Plant shrubs near the foundation to shade walls and windows.

However, avoid allowing dense foliage to grow immediately next to the house where wetness and continual humidity could cause problems.

Before planting a tree, (or digging into the ground for

any reason such as putting up a fence or installing a mail box), make sure to call before you dig. Calling 811 will allow all underground utilities to be located before you dig into something dangerous.

Select planting locations that will not interfere with your utility lines or power poles. Tall growing trees with a mature height of greater than 40 feet should be planted 50 feet away to avoid future pruning. A mature height of less than 25 feet is recommended for trees planted near power lines. Keep in mind that trees should never be planted directly under power lines, near poles, or too close to electrical equipment.

"Many times trees and shrubs planted near power lines suffer either in appearance or vitality, but safety is the overriding issue," said Molly Hall, executive director of Safe Electricity. "Trees conduct electricity and can create a safety hazard if limbs grow too close to electric lines. Power outages or momentary interruptions can occur when trees and branches come into contact with overhead lines. Electrical arcing and sparking from a wire to a nearby branch can cause fires."

Another concern is the safety risk when children climb trees near power lines. Accidental contact of electric wires with a tree limb or person playing or trimming around the tree could be fatal.

Trees growing near power lines must be pruned to maintain a safe distance from the wires. If you have trees that appear to be growing into power lines, contact your electric provider. Never try to prune them yourself.

To avoid future electrical hazards, planting tips include:

- Consider mature height of trees. Do not plant near overhead power lines any tree that can grow to 25 feet tall. A mature height of less than 15 feet is recommended

- Do not plant near underground utility services. Tree roots can grow and interfere with underground pipes, cables and wires. Future repairs to these facilities also could damage the health and beauty of nearby plants and trees.

- Keep areas around electric meters, transformers or other electrical equipment free of any vegetation that could limit utility service access.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place

For more tips on smart tree planting in your community, contact your local electric cooperative or visit www.ArborDay.org.

Trees beautify our neighborhoods, and when planted in the right spot, can even help lower energy bills. But the wrong tree in the wrong place can be a hazard... especially to power lines.

LARGE TREES

Height/spread of more than 40 feet, such as:

- Maple
- Birch
- Oak
- Sweetgum
- Spruce
- Linden
- Pine

MEDIUM TREES

Height/spread of 25 to 40 feet, such as:

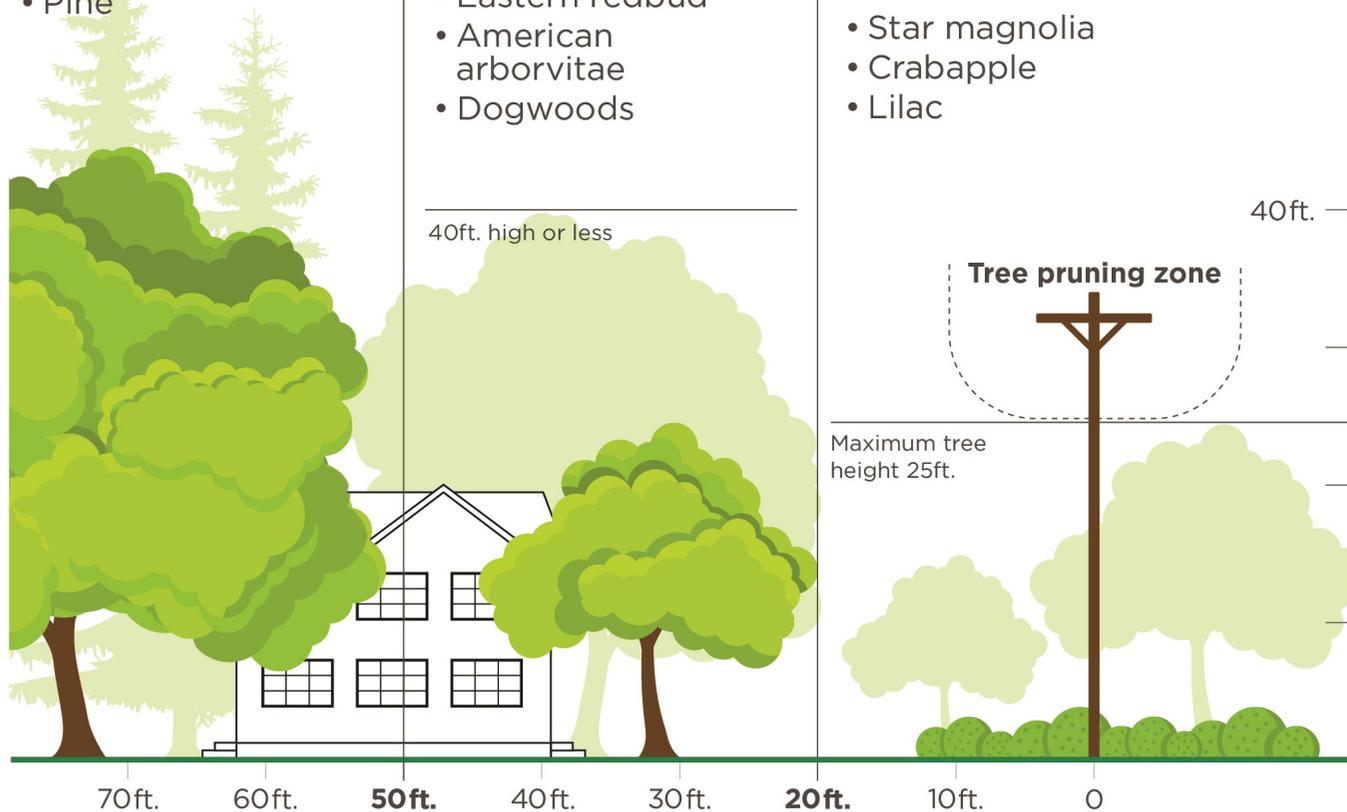
- Washington hawthorn
- Goldenraintree
- Eastern redbud
- American arborvitae
- Dogwoods

SMALL TREES

Avoid planting within 20 feet of power lines. When planting within 20 feet is unavoidable, use only shrubs and small trees.

Height/spread of no more than 25 feet such as:

- Star magnolia
- Crabapple
- Lilac



Be safe! Always call 811 before you dig to locate any buried utility lines.

From the Boardroom...

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held December 22, 2016

The meeting was called to order by President Densil Allen Jr. Robert Simmons, Secretary of the Cooperative, caused the minutes of the meeting to be kept. The following directors were present: Max Swisegood, Clark Bredehoeft, Dale Jarman, Richard Strobel, Sandra Streit, Jeremy Ahmann and Stan Rhodes. Also present were General Manager Mike Gray and general counsel Shawn Battagler and Administrative Assistant Kim Lewis.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

After discussion, the agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

The board approved its consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of Nov. 21, 2016; expenditures for the month of November 2016; new membership applications; membership terminations and the treasurer's report.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following November 2016 reports were approved: Operating Report (RUS Form 7) and Comparative Operating Statement including the Financial Statistical Report with month and budget comparisons and statistical data pertaining to operating revenue, expenses, margins, assets, liabilities, and KWH sales; Treasurer's Report and the written monthly Construction, Retirement, Maintenance and Operations Report.

SAFETY REPORT

Gray gave the safety report for the month of November.

AMEC REPORT

Bredehoeft reported on his attendance and reported highlights including AECEI update, FEMA issues, 2018 annual meeting, directors' conference plans and campaign finance legislation.

N.W. ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE, INC. REPORT

Gray and Swisegood reported their attendance at the NW board meeting and reported highlights including an AECEI update, financials, clean line energy status, employee charitable activities, airplane crash investigation results, substation maintenance issues and tower replacement.

CFC VOTING DELEGATE

The board appointed Bredehoeft as the CFC voting delegate and Jeremy Ahmann as the alternate.

NRECA ANNUAL MEETING

The board approved attendance to the NRECA Annual Meeting for all directors wishing to attend.

NRTC VOTING DELEGATE

The board appointed Robert Simmons as the NRTC voting delegate and Richard Strobel as the alternate.

NRECA VOTING DELEGATE

The board appointed Stan Rhodes as the NRECA voting delegate and Jeremy Ahmann as the alternate.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Gray provided his Manager's Report for the month. Items of interest included mowing services, scholarships, employee recognition banquet planning, Federated coverage, payment kiosk information and discussion regarding the retreat. The board resolved to purchase insurance through Federated Insurance to cover the defense of capital credit lawsuits.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Directors adjourned into executive session and then returned to the regular meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Easy steps to greater efficiency

Do you want to save money and electricity but have limited time, money and patience? According to the Department of Energy, a "typical American family" spends nearly \$2,000 per year on their home energy bills. Much of that money, however, is wasted through leaky windows or ducts, old appliances or inefficient heating and cooling systems.

Luckily, there are several relatively easy ways to save energy without a substantial commitment of time and money. These efforts will help you save whether you own or rent an older or newly constructed home. And, you won't have to hire a specialist or call in a favor from someone who is handy with tools to help you.

WHERE TO START

According to Money Magazine, "improving the envelope" of your home is a good place to start. Sunlight, seasonal temperature changes and wind vibrations can loosen up even a tight home, increasing air leakage. Doors and windows may not close tightly, and duct work can spring leaks, wasting cooled and heated air. By placing weather stripping and caulk around windows and doors, you can keep cool air inside during warm months and prevent chilly air from penetrating the indoors during colder months. Sealing gaps around piping, dryer vents, fans and outlets also helps to seal the envelope and creates greater efficiency. Apply weather stripping around overlooked spaces like your attic hatch or pull-down stairs.

Replacing incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs can make a big difference in home efficiency and is one of the fastest ways to cut your energy bill. Known for their longevity and efficiency, LED bulbs have an estimated operational life span of typically 10,000 to 20,000 hours compared to 1,000 hours of a typical incandescent. According to the Dept. of Energy, by replacing your home's five most frequently used light fixtures or bulbs with models that have earned the ENERGY STAR rating, you can save \$75 each year.

WRAPPING UP SAVINGS

Installing a blanket around your water heater could reduce standby heat losses by 25 to 45 percent and save you about 7 to 16 percent in water heating costs, according to the Dept. of Energy. For a small investment of about \$30, you can purchase pre-cut jackets or blankets and install them in about one hour. On a safety note, the Dept. of Energy recommends that you not set the thermostat above 130 degrees Fahrenheit on an electric water heater with an insulating jacket or blanket; the higher temperature setting could cause the wiring to overheat.

Given that a large portion of your monthly energy bill goes toward heating and cooling your home, it makes sense to ensure your home's heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system is performing at an optimal level. Checking, changing or cleaning your filter extends the life of your HVAC system and saves you money.

Air filters prevent dust and allergens from clogging your HVAC system. Otherwise, dust and dirt trapped in a system's air filter leads to several problems, including: reduced air flow in the home and up to 15 percent higher operating costs; lowered system efficiency; and costly duct cleaning or replacement. Many HVAC professionals recommend cleaning the system filters monthly. A simple task like changing the filters on your HVAC system makes your unit run more efficiently, keeping your house cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

Remember, there are easy steps you can take now to improve the energy efficiency of your home. To learn about additional ways to save, contact West Central Electric Cooperative at 800-491-3803 or 816-565-4942.

Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Reminder to our members...

West Central Electric would like to remind members that there is no mail service to our Oak Grove Office. Any correspondence or payments must be mailed to WCE headquarters in Higginsville to the following address:

**West Central Electric Cooperative,
P.O. Box 452, Higginsville, MO 64037**

(Walk-in and night-drop box services available at both locations.)

FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • November 2016

	This month	YTD 2016	YTD 2015
Revenue	1,953,463	23,926,775	23,088,374
Power Bill Expense	1,269,485	14,966,376	14,824,712
Operation & Maint. Expense	161,211	2,461,158	2,659,504
Depreciation Expense	169,441	1,832,784	1,756,030
Interest Expense	116,510	1,103,701	1,062,310
Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense)	1,716,647	20,364,019	20,302,556
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	(49,116)	624,166	(23,237)
Other Margins	11,986	196,087	153,279
TOTAL MARGINS	(37,130)	820,253	130,042