

Don't Cook Up a Stormy Electric Bill for the Holiday

While you're busy in the kitchen preparing your family's holiday feast, Safe Electricity wants to help keep your family safe and your energy bills low.

According to the National Fire Protection Agency, cooking equipment is the cause of approximately 40 percent of home structure fires. As you prepare to show off your cooking and baking skills this holiday season, remember the following tips to avoid shocks or fires:

- Inspect all small appliances and electric cords to make sure they are in good condition before using. Don't use appliances if cords are cracked or frayed.
- Read the operating instructions of any appliance before use.
- When purchasing new kitchen appliances, look for UL-Listed appliances with automatic shut-off features.
- Never plug more than one high-wattage appliance, such as a blow dryer, microwave or toaster oven, into a single outlet.
- Stay focused and attentive to baking, brewing, and simmering foods.
- Make sure outlets near sinks are equipped with properly-tested ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI's) to prevent shocks.
- Always know the location of a working fire extinguisher, and know how to operate it.

Cooking is also a great area to save energy. Keep these energy efficient tips in mind while preparing your holiday meals this year:

- Think small – opt for a smaller appliance, such as a toaster oven or microwave, whenever possible. Efficient microwave ovens use around 50% less energy than conventional ovens.
- Turn the oven or stove burners off a few minutes before your food is ready – they will remain hot enough to finish cooking the food.

- Don't preheat the oven unless you are baking or a recipe requires it.
- Bake with ceramic or glass pots and pans – this will allow you to lower the oven temperature by about 25 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Self-cleaning ovens use less energy for normal cooking because of the higher insulation levels built into them. If you own one, plan to clean it right after you've finished baking something so it doesn't have to heat up a second time.
- Don't peek – opening the oven door can lower the internal temperature as much as 25 percent.
- Don't cover oven racks with foil – this reduces heat flow and increases cooking time.
- Make sure your pan covers the coil of your range – if you can see coil peeping out from the sides of your pan, you need a bigger pan (or a smaller burner).
- Put a lid on it – cover pans while cooking to prevent heat loss.
- Plan ahead – defrosting food in a microwave may be convenient, but defrosting it at room temperature is free.
- In warmer months, try to use a grill to keep the heat outdoors – remember that the less energy wasted in heating food, the less work your air conditioner will have to do to keep your home cool.

These steps are easy to follow and come at no extra cost. Making a habit out of them will save you both energy in the kitchen and money on your electric bill.

For more information and access to educational material, please visit www.SafeElectricity.org. Safe Electricity is an electrical safety public awareness program created and supported by a coalition of hundreds of organizations, including electric utilities, educators and other entities committed to promoting electrical safety.



The Orient Pumpkin Day Committee would like you to please accept our heartfelt thanks for your donation. Our celebration was a huge success, in part due to your help. Thank you for your generosity, and we look forward to working with you next year!

— The 2009 Orient Pumpkin Day Committee

OPEN LINES

by Stan Crees, Member Service Director



The weather is starting to turn chilly and old man winter will be heading our way very soon! This is the time to make sure that those of you with standby generators change oil in them and run them to make sure they are going to operate correctly in case of a power outage. Also weatherize your house and seal any drafts around doors and windows.

The 2009 Farmers Electric Rebate Program requires that all equipment is installed by the end of the year, which is just around the corner. The rebate application form must be filed as soon as possible. All rebate applications after January 1, 2010 will need to meet the 2010 rebate criteria and will be subject to the 2010 rebate amounts. For a complete list of our 2009 rebates, and the necessary rebate application forms, please contact us at 1-800-397-4821, or get the information from the website at farmersrec.com.

Remember, many home energy efficiency projects are eligible for tax credits through the federal ARRA stimulus bill. Your project/equipment must meet the federal guidelines listed below and you must submit the correct IRS Form(s) with your 2009 taxes.

- Energy Efficiency Tax Credit – claim up to \$1,500 in tax credit on your 2009 tax filing for windows and doors; insulation; HVAC; water heaters and biomass stoves
 - Renewable Energy Tax Credit – claim tax credit for geothermal heat pumps; solar panels and solar water heaters that meet the criteria
- For more information and a list of criteria go to the ENERGY STAR website at www.energystar.gov/taxcredits

The rebate program for 2010 will be expanded offering a variety of incentives that will allow even more of our members to benefit from using energy wisely. When we get the final advice on moving forward on the 2010 programs, additional support will be provided to communicate the details to you.

The biggest change in the rebate program as I see it will be with our new water heater program for 2010. Farmers Electric has designed our energy-efficiency programs to best meet the needs of our members. Last year the Iowa legislators and regulators became involved in telling cooperatives how they want programs designed for our members. Senate File 2386, that was passed in May 2008, outlines a specific procedure for energy efficiency programs starting in 2010. Using this required criteria to calculate the benefits of our programs is resulting in some changes that will start in 2010.

Farmers Electric Cooperative will continue to reward our members for making wise choices in selecting the most energy efficient equipment possible. We will continue to install the highly efficient Marathon water heaters that have been installed by your Cooperative for many years. We will still install the 50-gallon Marathon water heater until the end of 2009 for \$250, plus tax and electrical parts needed. The amount of rebate we receive for installing the water heater in 2009 is \$250. The amount we receive in 2010 will be reduced to \$100, a \$150 reduction. This reduction will be enforced to meet the new guidelines for 2010.

Following these guidelines the prices for the Marathon water heater will be higher. Using the new criteria for 2010, the recommended cost for the 50-gallon water heater in 2010 could be as much as \$640 plus tax.

Anyone needing a water heater before the end of the year should notify

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Farmers Open Lines

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**Farmers Electric
Cooperative, Inc.**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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7:30a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Monday through Friday

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*To report a power outage call
any of the above numbers.*



We hope all of our
members will have a
Happy Thanksgiving.
We will be closed in
observance of
Thanksgiving on
November 26 &
27, 2009.

Manager's Comments by Clarence Moshier Jr., General Manager



As a cost saving measure, we are looking at discontinuing the mass mailing of the *Living With Energy In Iowa* monthly magazine to everyone. Now, for those of you who want to continue to receive the magazine, please call or put a note on your bill that you would like to continue to receive the magazine. This will get the magazines in the hands of the members who want the magazine and eliminate unnecessary expense for those of you who do not read or want the publication. We appreciate your taking the time to respond to this request.



In the past we have talked about some of our members installing large wind turbines near some of our substations. I am happy to report that our local community-based wind group, Bulldog Wind Energy LLC and Wolverine Wind Energy LLC, have received their USDA Grant and Loan Guarantees and are moving forward with construction. Road work to the Wolverine site began on October 13th, foundations should be completed in early

November and the turbines will be erected before the end of the year. The units going up are 1.5 MW GE turbines on 80 meter towers; there will be one (1) turbine connected to our Orient and Greenfield Substations.

Farmers Electric will buy nearly all of the output and resell it to the membership. All the money from these projects stays within our service area which benefits everyone. Total cost of the two (2) projects will be approximately \$6,500,000.



October was cooperative month, and as we look at closing out another year, it is always good to reflect back on our cooperative heritage. Cooperatives were founded with the philosophy of being operated solely for the benefit of the owner/members. Any profits are returned to members. Thank you for your continued support. May your harvest be bountiful and safe and have a Happy Thanksgiving.

Farmers Electric puts safety first!

So Look Up, Look Down, And Look Out!



- For a safe harvest, be extra careful and stay alert for hazards.
- Keep an eye out for overhead power lines and electrical equipment on and under the ground.
- Be especially careful with tall equipment such as combines and grain augers.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

If you have a complaint concerning your electric service received from Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc., you can contact us at 102 SE 6th Street, Greenfield, Iowa 50849. Or you can call us at 641-743-6146 or toll free 1-800-397-4821.

If your complaint is related to the Farmers Electric Cooperative service rather than its rate, and Farmers Electric Cooperative does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Utilities Division at the following address/numbers:

IOWA UTILITIES BOARD
Toll Free 1-877-565-4450 or 515-281-3839
Fax 515-281-5329
E-mail: iub@max.state.ia.us
(in "subject" area note: "Consumer Service")

REGULAR MAIL
Customer Service, Iowa Utilities Board
350 Maple St.
Des Moines, IA 50319-0069

Thank you for a very nice evening at your 70th Anniversary. We really appreciate the delicious meal and the prizes which we both received. They will come in handy.

– Bob & Barbara Queck

Common Energy Myths Exposed

Energy efficiency and energy conservation are the same thing.

Efficiency refers to using less to perform a specific task. Examples include replacing traditional lighting with energy-saving fluorescent or LED technology, or installing ENERGY STAR®-rated equipment. Conservation refers to reducing your need for energy through changes in behavior, such as turning off office computers or riding a bike to work.

Leaving lights, computers, and equipment on uses less energy than turning them on and off.

Many employees leave office lights on when they leave for lunch, thinking that it will use more energy to turn it back on than to just leave it on. In most cases, the small surge of power needed to start a device is much less than the power that is wasted by leaving it on when it is not needed.

A heating and cooling system “works harder” to reach a comfortable temperature after setback or set forward.

Thermostats are often not adjusted at night or on weekends while the facility is unoccupied because of the common misconception that the heating or cooling systems must “work harder” or use more energy to reheat or re-cool the house. This is not how a thermostat works. The system turns on to reach a set level and then shuts off when that level is reached. It can be likened more to a switch that shuts on and off, rather than a gas pedal that accelerates faster the more you step on it.

When a device is turned off, it is off.

Many appliances and electronic devices in the office—such as coffee makers and fax machines, continue to use power after they have been switched off. Sometimes as much as if they were on! This is known as standby power or phantom load. The only way to stop the drain of power from these devices is by unplugging them.

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the Cooperative and have it installed before the end of the year at the current price of \$250 plus tax for the 50-gallon and \$350 plus tax for the 85-gallon. Any electrical parts will be extra, such as breaker and wire.

In addition to the legislative component of the change, the members will benefit from knowing the economic benefits of the periodic evaluation and adjustment of the energy efficiency programs. The investment you make in energy-efficient equipment helps reduce the demand for electricity on our system. Making wise energy efficiency investments can help Farmers Electric avoid peak power purchases, helping keep rates stable. By using less energy, the efficient equipment you install helps keep your bills affordable.

Another bit of information that should be addressed is the fact that nationwide the sales of CFLs have declined 25% from their peak in 2007. Sales in some regions such as Vermont and parts of Massachusetts have declined 35-50% from their peak. Shipments of CFLs are down 49% in 2009 over 2007 levels. The 2008 End Use Study that Farmers Electric members responding said that 59% have more than 3 CFLs in use, 29% indicated they had 0 CFLs in use, and 11% had 1 or 2 CFLs in use. In these tough economic times, CFL programs are especially important in getting consumers past the first cost barrier that often prevents adoption of energy-efficient products. Although the incandescent lamps will not be banned, their efficiency will improve slightly, but will use two to three times the energy of a CFL. Consumers will still have a choice between more efficient incandescents, CFLs, and eventually LED replacement lamps.

When you switch to compact fluorescent light-bulbs (CFLs), you're changing a whole lot more than just a bulb. You are actually changing the way you use electricity, or the way you will use less of it. Switching to CFLs can reduce your lighting costs by up to 70%. To learn more about saving energy, visit touchstoneenergysavers.com.

Involve The Family In Thanksgiving Preparation

National Family Week is the same week as Thanksgiving – so you have two good reasons to let your kids help prepare the Turkey Day feast.

Of course, you have to keep your youngsters away from the hot stove and sharp knives. Still, there is a lot of fun, safe ways to get everyone involved:

- 1) Very young children can take the crusts off bread for the stuffing.
- 2) Children ages 3 to 5 can help pour in ingredients, and they can help stir or whisk. Have them stand at the kitchen sink to wash vegetables or let them

use a hand-masher to make the mashed potatoes.

- 3) Older children can follow directions for a recipe and use cooking utensils with supervision. Let them cut, chop or peel vegetables. These older kids also are strong enough to knead dough, so let them shape and divide the rolls or biscuits.
- 4) Cooking can be a great way to get kids interested in science, math and physics, as well as the history of the holiday. Talk about the food you are making, the measurements of the ingredients and the steps involved in getting food from the farm to the table.