

# WATT'S HAPPENING

SCENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

LANCASTER, DARLINGTON AND GAYS MILLS, WISCONSIN

## Stay safe exploring the great outdoors this summer

Summer is in full swing, and that means it is time for fun in the sun! As you find yourself spending more time outdoors, Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative reminds you to stay safe.

Planning a home improvement project? When working outdoors, you may be using tools, such as ladders, power tools, shovels – or even paintbrushes with extendable arms. These items help you get the job done but have the potential to be dangerous if used improperly.

Pay attention to where you place metal ladders or dig for fence posts. Before you start any project, always look up and avoid overhead power lines. Keep a minimum of 10 feet between you and overhead lines.

If you are planning a project that requires digging, remember to dial “811” first to find out if the area you will be working in is clear of underground power lines. Power tools should be kept away from wet surfaces, and outlets should not be overloaded.

Exploring the great outdoors is a great way to spend time with the family, but keep these safety tips in mind.

Children should never climb trees near power lines – always assume a wire is live. Fly kites and remote controlled-airplanes in large open areas like a park or a field, safely



away from trees and overhead power lines.

Planning to take a dip in the pool? Electrical devices, such as stereos, should be kept at least 10 feet away from water sources, and outdoor electrical outlets should always be covered. If you hear a rumble of thunder, exit the pool right away.

Speaking of thunder, summer storms can be dangerous if you're caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. If you find yourself outdoors during a storm, move toward suitable shelter with covered sides, and stick to low-lying ground if possible.

These are just a few tips to remember when you are spending time outdoors this summer with your family. Have some fun out there, and always keep safety in mind!

*By Abby Berry*

*Abby Berry 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.* ■



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

# Do you know what your water heater is doing while you sleep?

Hot water looms large in the list of household chores. Showers, laundry, dishes – they all require hot water. If you think about it, we use a significant amount of energy to heat water. Now, utilities and manufacturers are teaming up to bring you new water heaters equipped with technology that can make the electric grid smarter and more efficient.

Electric co-ops are on the forefront of research testing new water heater technologies, including ways to improve the use of water heaters to integrate renewable energy onto the electric grid.

Water heaters are unique among electric home appliances. They are omnipresent, use significant amounts of electricity and can store thermal energy for hours at a time.

For decades electric co-ops have partnered with their members on “demand response programs,” which allow the co-op to turn home water heaters on and off in order to reduce how much power the co-op uses during peak periods, when power is more expensive. Members get a break on their bill in exchange for participation. New communications and automation technologies make this process more reliable, predictable and efficient.

More than 250 electric co-ops in 35 states use large capacity electric resistance water heaters that can reduce the co-op’s power cost and store electricity produced by wind and hydropower. For example,

when the wind blows at night – when most of us are sleeping and wholesale power is cheaper – the electricity produced can be used to heat water in our homes. The water will remain hot even if the water heater is turned off for a short period. In other words, collectively, water heaters can act like a battery, storing energy.

For all of these reasons, electric co-ops were dismayed in 2010 when the Department of Energy issued new efficiency standards for electric water heaters that would have made demand response programs using large capacity, electric resistance water heaters difficult.

For the last five years, electric co-ops have been working with efficiency advocates, manufacturers and others to ensure that we can take advantage of new technologies that benefit our members. In April, Congress passed legislation that allows co-ops to continue to run these demand response programs.

Electric co-ops across the country hailed this bipartisan legislation as a win for consumers. Collectively, the current water heater programs can reduce demand by an estimated 500 megawatts, saving consumers hundreds of millions of dollars and avoiding the need for new power plants.

Electric co-ops are now looking ahead and collaborating with partners to make sure the next generation of water heaters can provide more than just hot water. ■

**WATER HEATER DEMAND RESPONSE**

**HOW IT WORKS...**

- 1** Controllable, high-efficiency electric water heaters are installed in homes.
- 2** During times of high demand, co-op cuts power to water heaters.
- 3** When demand drops, water heaters are turned back on to run during the night and provide warm water for the next day.

**FUN FACTS**

Water-heater-control programs let co-ops take full advantage of wind generation, which is most active at night.

➔

**BENEFITS:**

- Co-ops avoid peak pricing.
- Members use power when it's cheaper.
- Helps avert need for new power plants.

About 250 co-ops in 35 states currently have load management programs that include water-heater control.

**NRECA**  
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

## *Invest in efficiency and watch your savings grow*

**I**t is the middle of the summer, temperatures are rising and so are your electric bills. It might be time to make a big investment, an investment in energy efficiency.

Making your home more energy efficient is still one of the safest investments you can make. Try employing these energy saving measures to collect major returns on your investments:

- Install a programmable thermostat
- Install a hot water heater “blanket”
- Change your shower heads
- Upgrade appliances like your clothes washer or your refrigerator
- Replace old windows with energy efficient ones
- Install water efficient toilets

Making all of these changes at once could be difficult – if not impossible – but investing in just one of these measures can yield a significant return on your investment.

For example, installing a new, energy efficient clothes washer can yield around a 24 percent return on investment. Do your research, and make sure you are purchasing the right size appliances. A small, energy efficient washer will save you money, but if you have a larger family, having to do multiple loads could negate your energy savings.

Multiple energy efficient upgrades will help you save no matter where you live or what time of year it is, but upgrading to efficient home cooling systems will help lower energy costs significantly during the hotter months of the year.

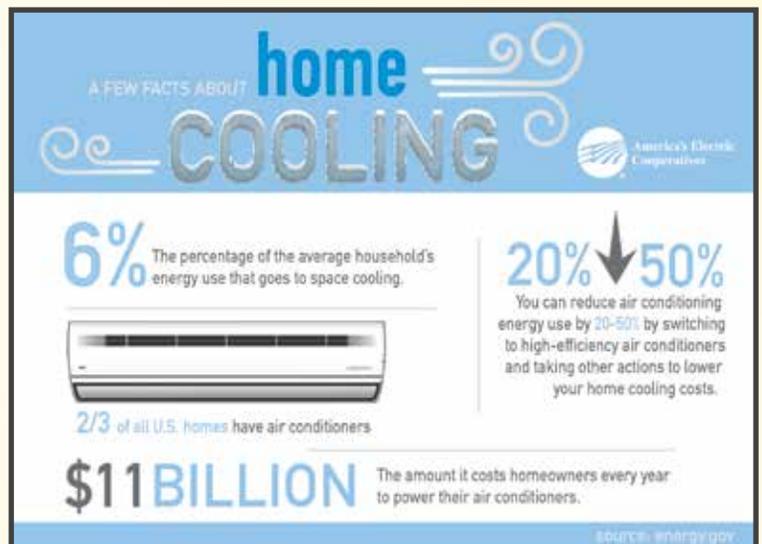
Six percent of American energy consumption goes toward space cooling and it costs \$11 billion per year for homeowners to power their air conditioners. You can reduce your energy use by 20 to 50 percent when you upgrade to energy efficient home cooling unit. One option is to install a split unit air conditioner and heating unit –they can be more expensive, but they are highly efficient, especially in homes without ductwork. Another option is to invest in an ENERGY STAR approved air conditioning unit, which can be 15 percent more efficient than a standard unit.

If buying a new cooling unit isn't in the cards for you this summer, no need to worry! Replacing appliances isn't the only way to lower energy costs, one of the most important energy efficient improvements to make during the hot summer months is air sealing and insulating. By adding insulation in attics, floors over crawl spaces and accessible basement rim joints, you can reduce your heating and cooling costs by an average of 15 percent (and it could lower your overall energy costs by an average of 11 percent!).

You can also lower your air conditioners energy consumption by between 5 and 15 percent by cleaning your air ducts. You can install energy efficient window treatments, which can reduce energy costs by around 10 percent. Or, you can simply turn on a ceiling fan, which will allow you to raise your thermostat temperature by four degrees, without impacting your comfort.

Investing in any of these energy efficient improvements will keep you cool in the summer, warm in the winter and will make significant changes to your energy bills. So do yourself, and your wallet, a favor and invest in a more energy efficient home!

*Sources: Energy.gov, EnergyStar.gov, NRDC.gov*  
*By Meghaan Evans. Meghaan Evans 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. ■*



## Recipes

*With sincere apologies to Rita Kruser and SREC Members, this recipe was in the June issue, but had the wrong recipe name. The recipe is below.*

### Trail Mix Cookies

- 4 Tbsp. Butter, softened
- ½ c. Brown Sugar, light or dark
- ¼ c. Raw Cane Sugar
- ½ c. Honey or Agave Nectar
- 2 Egg Whites
- 1 c. Flour
- ½ tsp. Baking Soda
- ¼ tsp. Salt
- 2 c. Rolled Oats
- ½ c. Mixed Seeds or Nuts (pumpkin seeds, almonds, etc.)
- ½ c. Mixed Dried Fruit (cranberries, cherries, blueberries, etc.)
- ¼ c. Semisweet Mini Chocolate Chips



Preheat oven to 350 and line baking sheet with parchment paper. In a mixer, cream the butter and sugars until smooth. Add the honey, egg whites and mix until blended. Then in a small bowl, whisk together the flour, soda and salt. Add flour mixture and then the oats to the wet ingredients until combined. Then fold in the seeds, nuts, dried fruit and chocolate chips. Bake 8-10 minutes or until lightly browned.

*This recipe comes from Cathy Skaife (Platteville). "This is my grandmother's recipe. She was a very special lady to me who LOVED to cook for her whole family."*

### Rhubarb Custer Pie

- 3 cups rhubarb cut into 1 inch pieces
- 2 eggs beaten
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon butter



Line pie pan with pastry. Place rhubarb in bowl. Combine beaten eggs with milk, sugar, flour, salt and nutmeg. Mix with rhubarb. Pour into unbaked pastry shell. Dot with butter. May be covered with lattice top or crumb topping.

#### **Crumb Topping**

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup flour

Cream butter and brown sugar together. Cut in flour. Drop by teaspoons on top of the rhubarb filling. This topping can also be used for an apple pie. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 to 60 minutes or until top is golden brown.

## Vegetation Management

Zielies Tree Service, Inc. will be trimming on the south and west circuits of the Mt Hope substation in Grant county. They have completed their spraying, but SREC will be spraying the Harrison substation in Grant County.

**It is important for SREC to maintain its rights-of-way for the following reasons:**

- Accessibility for field crews, vehicles and equipment
- Fire prevention
- Reliable electric service
- Quality service with the reduction of outages and blinks
- Safety for workers and the public
- Meeting state and federal code requirements

On a daily basis, SREC employees and contractors are working throughout the area, at times on your property, to operate and maintain the electric system and our rights-of-ways. We appreciate your cooperation. If you have questions, please contact Jay at [jgardner@srec.net](mailto:jgardner@srec.net) or call 800-236-2141, ext. 566.

## WATT'S HAPPENING

*Watt's Happening* is published monthly as an information service to the member-owners of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative.

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