

November 2014

# WATT'S HAPPENING

SCENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

LANCASTER, DARLINGTON AND GAYS MILLS, WISCONSIN

## *Photos from our October Member Appreciation Celebrations*



## Unwrap winter energy savings

The holidays are upon us! It's that special time of year when we spend a great deal of time with friends and family, either in the kitchen or out and about shopping for the perfect gift. As you find yourself wrapped up in the holiday excitement, Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative reminds you of a few ways to be energy efficient during this busy time of year.

### Cooking efficiently

- **Be kind to your oven.** Every time you open the oven door to check on that dish, the temperature inside is reduced by as much as 25 degrees. This forces the oven to use more energy in order to get back to the proper cooking tempera-



### Holiday cooking efficiency tip:

Every time you open the oven door to check that dish, the temperature inside decreases by up to 25 percent! Hold off on peeking inside so that your oven doesn't have to work harder than necessary to heat holiday treats.

ture. Try keeping the door closed as much as possible. Also, remember to take advantage of residual heat for the last five to 10 minutes of baking time – this is another way to save energy use. If you're using a ceramic or glass dish, you can typically set your oven 25 degrees lower than stated, since these items hold more heat than metal pans.

- **Give your burners some relief.** The metal reflectors under your stovetop burners should always be clean. If not, this will prevent your stove from working as effectively as it should.
- **Utilize small appliances.** During the holidays, the main appliances used are the oven and stovetop. Try using your slow cooker, microwave, toaster oven or warming plate more often. This will result in substantial energy savings.

### Home efficiency

- **Take advantage of heat from the sun.** Open your curtains during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat your home, and close them at night to reduce the chill from cold windows.
- **Find and seal all air leaks.** Check areas near pipes, gaps around chimneys, cracks near doors and windows and any unfinished places.
- **Maintain your heating system.** Schedule services for your heating system before it gets too cold to find out what maintenance you may need to keep your system operating efficiently.
- **Eliminate “vampire energy” waste.** When you are not using an appliance or an electronic, unplug it to save energy. Power strips are definitely a good investment for your home.

### Efficient shopping

- **Purchase LED holiday lights.** A string of traditional lights uses 36 watts of power and a string of LED lights only uses 5 watts. They can even last up to 10 times longer!
- **Ask for Energy Star-rated TVs and appliances.** This will save you a lot of power use because the standby-mode is lower and the device will use less energy overall.
- **Combine errands to reduce the number of small trips.** To-do lists seem to pile up around this time of the year. Believe it or not, several short trips in the winter can use twice as much fuel as one longer trip covering the same distance as all of the shorter ones.

Being energy efficient is usually not top priority when celebrating the holidays, and most of us don't realize the lack of efficiency until the next bill comes in. Prevent your post-holiday shock this year by thinking creatively and remembering all of these tips!

*Amber Bentley writes on energy efficiency issues 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.* ■

## Holiday cooking safety tips

The kitchen is the heart of the home. Sadly, it's also where two out of every five home fires start. Many home fires occur during what's supposed to be the happiest time of the year – the holidays. Thanksgiving, Christmas and Christmas Eve hold a tradition of cooking, and safety should always be considered in the kitchen. As we embark on the holiday season, Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative and the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) urge you to use these simple safety tips to identify and correct potential kitchen hazards:

- Never leave cooking equipment unattended, and always remember to turn off burners if you have to leave the room.
- Supervise the little ones closely in the kitchen. Make sure children stay at least three feet away from all cooking appliances.

- Prevent potential fires by making sure your stovetop and oven are clean and free of grease, dust and spilled food.
- Remember to clean the exhaust hood and duct over your stove on a regular basis.
- Keep the cooking area around the stove and oven clear of combustibles, such as towels, napkins and potholders.
- Always wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can catch fire.
- To protect from spills and burns, use the back burners and turn the pot handles in, away from reaching hands.
- Locate all appliances away from the sink.
- Plug countertop appliances into ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI)-protected outlets.
- Keep appliance cords away from hot surfaces like the range or toaster.

- Unplug the toaster and other countertop appliances when not in use.
- Be sure to turn off all appliances when cooking is completed.

For more important safety tips to keep you and your family safe this holiday season and throughout the year, visit [www.esfi.org](http://www.esfi.org).

*The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is a 501(c) (3) organization dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety in the home, school, and workplace. ESFI proudly engages in public education campaigns throughout the year to prevent electrical fires, injuries and fatalities.* ■

**ESFI Prevent Common Kitchen Hazards**

**COOKING HAZARDS** are the #1 cause of home fires.

**OLDER ADULTS** account for more than **30%** of fire-related deaths annually.

**Kitchen Safety Practices**

- STAY IN the kitchen at all times when you're cooking.
- KEEP flammable items away from the stovetop and other hot surfaces.
- UNPLUG countertop appliances when not in use.
- NEVER USE an oven for anything but cooking your food.

**Four Kitchen Safety Tips to Live By**

- 1 NEVER COOK** if you are sleepy, have been drinking alcohol or have taken medications that make you drowsy.
- 2 USE A TIMER** to remind you to check on food that is simmering or in the oven.
- 3 DOUBLE CHECK** that oven burners and appliances are off when you are done.
- 4 USE GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTER (GFCI)**-protected outlets for countertop appliances. Found mostly in areas where electrical products might come in contact with water, GFCIs protect against shock and electrocution.

[www.esfi.org](http://www.esfi.org) | [facebook.com/ESFI.org](https://facebook.com/ESFI.org) | [twitter.com/ESFI.org](https://twitter.com/ESFI.org)

# Recipes

*This fall recipe comes from Rita Kruser (Cuba City). She shared that “one squash that isn’t talked about as readily as other common varieties is the Delicata Squash. It is also known as the peanut squash or the bohemian squash. This squash is completely edible, skin and all! This squash works well stuffed and eaten similar to a stuffed pepper.”*

## Stuffed Delicata Squash with Apples and Sausage

- 2 Delicata Squash
- 1 pkg. Sweet Italian Sausage (5 links)
- 1 medium Apple
- 2 Ribs Celery
- 1 small/medium Onion
- 3-4 tbsp Unsweetened Dry Coconut (optional)
- Pinch of Nutmeg
- Olive Oil
- Salt and Pepper

Prick the entire squash all over with sharp knife. Put the whole squash in the microwave and cook on high for 6 minutes or until they are tender enough to slice easily in half with a knife. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Meanwhile, dice the onion, celery, and apple.



Remove the sausage from its casings. Sauté the onion and celery for 3-4 minutes in some olive oil until softened. Stir in the apple and sauté for another 3 minutes. Add the crumbled sausage that we removed from casings and sauté until the sausage is browned and cooked through. Add a pinch of nutmeg and salt and pepper to taste.

Now remove the strings and seeds from the squash that we microwaved and cut in half. Scoop this all out and discard. Pack the centers of the squash with the sausage filling and sprinkle with dried coconut over each squash half. Bake for 20 minutes until coconut is browned and filling is sizzling.



### Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

To save energy this month, try lowering your water heating costs. Water heating accounts for 14 to 25 percent of the energy you consume. Turn the water heaters temperature to the warm setting, which is around 120 degrees Fahrenheit. This will save energy *and* help you save on your monthly bill.

- Source: U.S. Department of Energy



## Vegetation Management

Zielies Tree Service, Inc. is done for the year and will start back up in January.

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

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