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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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FROM THE MANAGER

Energy Efficiency Tips for Summer



Bruce Mueller

At the time of writing of this article, Wheatland Electric doesn't know the results of our Self-Regulation vote. With that being said, I'd like to focus on a couple of ways to reduce energy usage in your home this summer. I'll concentrate on air conditioning and lighting as they are two of the major users of energy in our homes.

Beat the Heat

Air conditioning helps most Americans beat the sweltering summer heat. According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), air conditioning accounts for as much as 50 percent of the average household electric bill. Proper maintenance and smart use of your home's cooling system will help reduce the amount of energy needed to cool your home.

First, make sure your air conditioner's external unit is clean and free of debris. Clear away dead leaves, overgrown plants and weeds to enable the unit to perform as it should.

Second, change all of the air filters inside your home quarterly, or more often in homes with allergy sufferers or smokers. Fresh filters not only reduce the

strain on your cooling system, but improve the air quality in your home.

Third, the DOE recommends that you set your home's thermostat as high as possible, while still maintaining a comfortable environment for your family during the summer months.

Adjusting the thermostat up at least two degrees can make a noticeable difference on your power bill. Investing in a programmable thermostat can lead to even greater savings by automatically adjusting the temperature.

Lighting

If you have been gradually making the switch to the new energy efficient lighting choices, you've likely noticed that more changes have come to the light bulb aisle. Remember when the odd looking corkscrew compact fluorescent (CFL) bulb was introduced to consumers a few years ago? It's still available and so are some of the classic pear-shaped incandescent bulbs.

Today's lighting choices have expanded and gotten serious make-overs—their packaging labels and lingo included. There are LEDs, CFLs, halogen, lumens, CRI, and more, and there is a host of

Continued on
page 20-B ▶



Continued from page 20-A ▶

lighting brands. But in recent years, the focus has been on making all light bulbs more energy efficient and cost effective.

End of an Era

We've basked in the golden glow of Thomas Edison's incandescent bulb since the 1800s, but this January marked the end of its run. That's when the federal government finalized its mandated phase-out of selected general-purpose light bulbs and Edison's less energy-efficient incandescent ones.

While you still may find 100- and 75-watt bulbs on store shelves, manufacturers in the U.S. stopped producing them. The old 40- and 60-watt bulbs, which represented over half the market, are following suit.

What brought about the lighting change? In 2007, the U.S. Department of Energy estimated that home and commercial lighting was consuming more electricity annually—about 300 billion kilowatt-hours of lighting or the equivalent of about 100 power plants—but most of the energy used to light them was wasted.

Old-fashioned incandescent bulbs used plenty of energy to produce only 10 percent light, with 90 percent of the energy given off as heat. In comparison, today's more energy-conscious light bulbs use 25 percent less energy to do the job of lighting the same spaces in your home.

Look on the Bright Side

Prime replacements for the traditional incandescent light bulb are the higher-efficiency CFL and LED or light emitting diode bulbs. Be prepared to pay more upfront for some of the bulbs you choose.

Lighting experts say that LEDs are the best choice for energy efficiency—they can last for up to two decades, save you 75 percent or more in energy costs, and offer superior color and brightness.

Lighting the Way

Since lighting accounts for nearly 20 percent of the average home's electricity use, don't stay in the dark when shopping for new bulbs that save on energy and your electric bill.

Things to know before you go:

▶ **Lumens are the new watts.** It's all about the lumens or the amount of light a light bulb emits. Remember this formula: The higher the lumens, the brighter the light—to replace a 100-watt incandescent bulb, choose a bulb that offers about 1,600 lumens. There are handy charts at www.energystar.gov/ that help you compare the old measure of watts to lumens.

▶ **Three-steps to your new bulbs.**

STEP 1: Choose the amount of lumens you need based on how bright you want a room; **STEP 2:** Determine which bulb has the lowest estimated energy cost per year. This will save you the most money; and **STEP 3:** Choose bulbs based on your needs—how long it will last and light appearance.

▶ **Read the label.** Always check the package, making sure that it carries the U.S. Department of Energy's ENERGY STAR® logo. New Lighting Facts labels on the box will also help you understand what you're purchasing—amount of lumens, estimated annual operating cost, and light color.

Until next time, take care.

Wheatland Hosts Public Safety Demonstration in Leoti



Linemen Bruce Loy (left) and Nathan Porter don special rubber gloves and use hot sticks to protect themselves from becoming part of the electric path to ground while removing a branch from a live power line during a safety demonstration.

Wheatland Electric's Leoti Office, in conjunction with Westar Energy, hosted a public safety / hot line demonstration on April 11. The purpose of the demonstration was to provide safety training to those in the public who work around power lines and first responders such as firemen, police, and EMTs.

Attendees learned about the hazards of overhead and underground power lines, the dangers downed power lines present and how to protect oneself from these dangers.

With the help of Westar Energy's "Hot Line Demonstration Trailer," which is energized at 7,200 volts, Wheatland linemen demonstrated several real life situations attendees might encounter.

In addition to the trailer demonstration, the program covered Kansas Statutes and OSHA rules regarding these situations, the effects electricity has on the human body, and suggestions for incorporating this knowledge into activities on and off the job.

Wheatland Electric would like to thank Westar Energy for the use of the trailer, and Westar employee Tim Boswell for helping with the training. Wheatland is in the process of acquiring our own demonstration trailer for use throughout our territory.

Sunflower ElectroRally Draws 16 Teams from Across Kansas

Sixteen teams and 32 cars from high schools across Kansas competed at this year's Sunflower ElectroRally held at Scott City Airport on April 23.

Battling winds gusting in excess of 30 mph, teams and drivers competed to see who could complete the most laps on the newly redesigned course on the airport grounds.

Kansas ElectroRally is a unique and innovative program that allows teams of high school students to design, build and race electric vehicles. These vehicles are single-driver, lightweight, aerodynamic, high efficiency, electric race cars with three or four wheels. These vehicles can reach speeds in excess of 30 mph.

Most Kansas teams build their cars from the ground up using lightweight components such as aluminum frames and bicycle wheels. With a few simple rules and guidelines, teams are given a great deal of flexibility in the design and engineering of their vehicles.

The day featured two heat races where drivers battled not each other, but the clock. With each heat race lasting an hour, the drivers must decide on a strategy of going as fast as they can and using up all the battery life of the car or conserving the battery and still be completing laps at the end of the hour. Many of the teams field multiple cars with multiple drivers who employ a combination of both strategies.

The final results after the two heats featured winners in both the standard class and solar class. Top three teams in each category were:



The Sunflower ElectroRally overall winner was Car #357 from Beloit.

Standard Class

- ▶ **BELOIT**—Car #357-102 laps
- ▶ **HAYS HIGH**—Car #20-101 laps
- ▶ **GREAT BEND**—Car #388-96 laps

Solar Class-

- ▶ **HAYS HIGH**—Car # 320x-82 laps
- ▶ **DIGHTON**—Car #27x-81 laps, Car# 83x-79 laps
- ▶ **WHEATLAND**—Car #384 x-77 laps, Car #284x-61 laps

Wheatland Electric is a proud supporter of the annual Sunflower ElectroRally and of the Kansas ElectroRally. Each year, Wheatland helps to sponsor ElectroRally programs from high schools in both Scott City and Great Bend.

Additionally, Wheatland helps by sending a number of volunteers to help put on the Sunflower ElectroRally held in Scott City. Wheatland



Scott City team members (from left) Josh Yeager, Andrew Brown, Jamie Dyer, and Sponsor Chuck Ellis were just one team of racers on April 23.

volunteers help with course setup, takedown, cooking hamburgers and hotdogs for all the race participants and spectators and a number of other duties.

Additional sponsors of the Sunflower ElectroRally include the City of Scott City, Lane-Scott Electric, Pioneer Electric, Prairie Land Electric, Scott County, Sunflower Electric, Victory Electric and Western Cooperative Electric.



Car #388 represented Great Bend High School.



Also sponsored by Wheatland was driver Jamie Dyer in Car #23 from Scott City.

SHARING SUCCESS

Wheatland Awards Greeley County Library \$500 Grant

Wheatland Electric recently announced that its Sharing Success Fund, managed by the Scott Community Foundation, has awarded a \$500 grant to the Greeley County Library in Tribune.

The library submitted a request to help start a Lego club for children. The funds will be used to purchase multiple sets of Legos, building accessories and storage containers.

Lego clubs give participating children the opportunity to engage their creative side and learn how to build Lego models. Lego clubs also provide a stress free environment for children to engage with their peers.

The library plans to offer theme-based challenges in which children will create based on a provided model. Additionally, the library plans to display the finished projects for other children and library patrons to observe.

Greeley County Library hopes that by providing this new program it will attract attendance from children and parents who might not otherwise take advantage of their more traditional programs. Once children become familiar



From left: Wheatland Representatives Shawn Powelson, Member Services and Roe Johnson, Trustee; present Erin Wells, Greeley County Library Director, Malloy Waldren, Greeley County Library Board Member; and Alli Conine, Scott Community Foundation; with a \$500 Sharing Success grant.

with the library and its programs, the library hopes it will inspire the children to read and become more involved with the other programs the library has to offer.

Reading and attending programs can help to improve both literacy and social skills, thereby achieving the library's ultimate goal of creating lifelong learners and readers.

The Scott Community Foundation began formally accepting applications for grants from the Wheatland Electric Sharing Success Fund from non-profit organizations on December 1, 2012. Wheatland Electric and CoBank each contributed an additional \$5,000 to the fund in September of 2013.

To date, the program has made 16 grants totaling nearly \$14,000 to qualifying non-profits, throughout Wheatland's service territory. The program will continue to run until the funds are exhausted. Non-profit groups interested in receiving funding from the Wheatland Electric Sharing Success Fund should contact the Scott Community Foundation at 620-872-3790 for further details.

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You may have noticed the broadband bill now is printed with the name, Wheatland Broadband on the top. Even though the bills are printed separately, they may still be paid in the same manner as before. If you paid with one check, please feel free to mail them together and use only one check. The Wheatland Electric and Wheatland Broadband bills do not need to be paid separately.