



Heat Up Your Summer Energy Savings



Sometimes keeping up with the Joneses is about keeping your electric bills down.

With temperatures on the rise, now is a perfect time to make your home more energy-efficient. ENERGY STAR® offers suggestions for how to reduce your annual electricity costs by up to a third—that adds up to about \$700 savings per year! Listed below are six of the biggest energy wasters in your home. Following these quick tips will help you save both energy and money. These and other money-saving tips can be found at TogetherWeSave.org.

1. HVAC Systems

HVAC systems account for 46 percent of your overall electric bill.

Change filters regularly. Furnace and air conditioner filters need to be changed monthly, especially during the summer and winter months when the HVAC unit has a heavy workload.

Install a thermostat. To save even more, you can install a programmable thermostat, letting you regulate your home's temperature throughout the year.

Seal the cracks and gaps. Seal your heating and cooling ducts, especially those running through the attic, crawlspace, basement or garage. This can improve the efficiency of your HVAC unit by as much as 20 percent!

2. Water Heater

Lower standby losses. The average household spends \$400-\$600 per year on water heating. Eliminate standby losses by lowering the heater's thermostat to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

3. Lighting

Out with the old and in with the new. Lighting accounts for about 12 percent of your bill. Simply replace five of your standard incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs to save \$70 a year.

4. Refrigerator

Clean the refrigerator inside and out. Check the temperature settings on your refrigerator. Ideally, a refrigerator's temperature should be between 37 and 40 degrees for maximum operating efficiency.

Replacing a refrigerator that is 10 to 15 years old may help you save in the long run. Energy-efficient appliances can save you as much as \$100 a year.

5. Energy Vampires

Unplug and save. Energy vampires consume 75 percent of the electricity used to power home electronics and appliances. Any appliance or device that sucks up energy when it's plugged in, despite being turned off, is draining your bill.

Don't just turn energy vampires off—unplug them. ENERGY STAR® suggests plugging your television and/or DVD player into a power strip and then turning that off when your television is in standby mode; putting your computers on sleep mode; unplugging a battery charger or adapter.

6. Entertainment

Unplug to save more for fun. It costs you about \$120 to leave your Xbox plugged in for an entire year. Unplug video game consoles when you are not playing and limit the use of standby mode.

Military Service Personnel Rule

CHAPTER 111— H.F. No. 532 An act relating to consumer protection; regulating certain contracts entered into by military service personnel; authorizing cancellations; requiring utilities to establish payment arrangements for military service personnel; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapters 325E; 325G.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. [325E.027] UTILITY PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR MILITARY SERVICE PERSONNEL.

Subdivision 1. **Restriction on disconnection; payment schedules.** (a) A municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility must not disconnect the utility service of a residential customer if a member of the household has been issued orders into active duty, for deployment, or for a permanent change in duty station during the period of active duty, deployment, or change in duty station if such a residential customer:

(1) has a household income below the state median household income or is receiving energy assistance and enters into an agreement with the municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility under which the residential customer pays ten percent of the customer's gross monthly income toward the customer's bill and the residential customer remains reasonably current with those payments; or (2) has a household income above the state median household income and enters into an agreement with the municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility establishing a reasonable payment schedule that considers the financial resources of the household and the residential customer remains reasonably current with payments under the payment schedule.

(b) For purposes of this subdivision, "household income" means household income measured after the date of the orders specified in paragraph (a).

Subd. 2. **Annual notice to all customers; inability to pay forms.** (a) A municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility must notify all residential customers annually of the provisions of this section.

(b) A municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility must provide a form to a residential customer to request the protections of this section upon the residential customer's request.

Subd. 3. **Application to service limiters.** For the purposes of this section, "disconnection" includes a service or load limiter or any device that limits or interrupts electric service in any way.

Subd. 4. **Income verification.** Verification of income may be conducted by the local energy assistance provider or the municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility unless the customer is automatically eligible for protection against disconnection as a recipient of any form of public assistance, including energy assistance that uses income eligibility in an amount at or below the income eligibility in subdivision 1, clause (1).

Subd. 5. **Appeal process.** (a) The municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility shall provide the residential customer with a commission-approved written notice of the right to appeal to the commission or other appropriate governing body when the utility and residential customer are unable to agree on the establishment, reasonableness, or modification of a payment schedule, or on the reasonable timeliness of the payments under a payment schedule, provided for by this section. Any appeal must be made within seven working days after the residential customer's receipt of personally served notice, or within ten working days after the utility has deposited first class mail notice in the United States mail. (b) The utility shall not disconnect service while a payment schedule is pending appeal, or until any appeal involving payment schedules has been determined by the commission.

Subd. 6. **Enforcement.** This section may be enforced pursuant to chapter 216B.

BENCO ELECTRIC

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Office Hours: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

Phone: 387-7963 or 1-888-79BENCO

Outages/After Hours: 387-7963 or 1-888-792-3626

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- John C. (Chuck) Peterson - *Attorney*

Board Meetings: The last Thursday of each month - members are welcome to contact directors with items of interest or concerns in advance of the meetings.

From the Board

Thursday, June 30, 2011
Blake Meshke Presided

The board reviewed and approved:

- The minutes of the May 26 board meeting.
- Capital Credits to estates totaling \$6,848.08.

The Board reviewed policy 104 and suggested changes to be presented at future board meeting.

Wade reviewed policies 209-211 with no recommended changes.

A financial comparison of Great River Energy (GRE) Coops was presented.

Chuck reviewed current legal work for the cooperative.

Directors' reports were as follows:

Brad reported on GRE and they reviewed the scenario planning process to be used by GRE.

CTV directors reported on the IRS review of the 2008 Form 990.

Harvey reviewed MREA activities.

Harlan reported on Cooperative Network activities.

Directors attending reported on the CFC Finance Forum.

Directors attending reviewed the GRE Annual Meeting.

PCA Update

Actual PCA for July
\$0.0421

Estimated PCA for August
\$0.0385

Estimated PCA for September
\$0.0298

The Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) is due to changes in the monthly wholesale rate from our power supplier, Great River Energy (GRE).

BENCO Electric Youth Delegate Brian Klein Returns from Washington, D.C.

Brian Klein, son of Tim and Bev Klein of Wells, was among the nearly 1,500 high school students from across the country—35 of them from Minnesota—who participated in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour held June 11–16, 2011, in Washington, D.C.

Brian attends school at United South Central High School and he is active in band, choir, cross country, track, musicals and plays and knowledge bowl. Brian was chosen to represent BENCO after his essay on “Why I Want to go to Washington, D.C.” was chosen as the winning entry.

Each year in June, an action-filled week provides high school students opportunities to learn firsthand what it is like to be involved in politics, community service and today’s pressing issues in the energy industry. Highlights included meeting with their elected representatives in the U.S. House and Senate to discuss the process of government and issues of the day, and increasing their knowledge about electric cooperatives and American history.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has been a joint effort of local electric co-ops, such as BENCO Electric, their statewide co-op associations, and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Arlington, Virginia, for more than 45 years.

Brian said he had the experience of a lifetime working with peers from other states and the NRECA staff during the Washington stay. “The youth tour was so amazing,” he said. “It was great to meet my senator and representative, and learn about politics up close. Plus, I made friends from nearly every state and experienced history firsthand. It really made me think about what it means to be an American, and showed me that people my age do care about this country,” he said.

In addition to taking in the sights and sounds of the nation’s capital, all the state groups convened for National Youth Day on June 15 to learn from public figures and other inspirational speakers. This year’s Youth Day agenda included

Mike Schlappi, a four-time Paralympic Medalist and two-time world champion Wheelchair Basketball Champion. Mr. Schlappi shares his inspiring message for every American, young or old: “Just because you can’t stand up, doesn’t mean you can’t stand out.” The students were also treated to an amazing portrayal of a very influential United States Senator who authored the laws creating the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and Rural Electrification Act (REA) in the early 1930s. Current Nebraska State Senator David Landis tells the story of the late U.S. Senator George W. Norris (R-NE), in character, explaining the formation of and the politics surrounding the creation of electric cooperatives and the Rural Electrification Act.

Since 1964, the nation’s cooperative electric utilities have sponsored more than 40,000 high school juniors and seniors for visits to their U.S. congressional delegations, energy and grassroots government education sessions, and sightseeing in Washington. NRECA is the national service organization representing the nation’s more than 900 private, not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, which provide electric service to 42 million people in 47 states. For more information, please go to <http://www.youthtour.coop>.



Brian Klein
Parents: Tim & Bev





What's Cookin': Swedish Apple Pie
From the Kitchen of: Was this from you?

5 - 6 medium apples, cored & sliced, not peeled	1 T sugar	1 T cinnamon
3/4 c butter or margarine, melted	pinch of salt	
1 egg	1/4 tsp vanilla	
1 c flour	1/2 c chopped nuts	
1 c sugar		

Fill a 10" pie tin with apple slices. Sprinkle with T sugar and cinnamon. Combine remaining ingredients to make batter and spoon over apples. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes. Best served warm with ice cream.

Where, Oh Where?

The following is a list of former BENCO Electric members whose capital credit checks were returned by the post office as undeliverable. Any information you can give us regarding the current whereabouts of these individuals or their relatives would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Jill at 387-7963 or 1-888-79BENCO.

C
Dean Cafourek, North Mankato
Kim Cairney, Mankato
Camp Fire USA MN Council, St. Paul
David Caraccio, Morgan Hills CA
Steven L. Carlstrom, Mankato
Anthony Cataldo, Rochester
John Cedarholm, Mankato
David Chiabotti, Gilbert
Patricia A. Chicos-Becker, Albert Lea
Kendall Christenson, Mankato
Ervin Clark, Albert Lea
Shawn Clow, Mankato
Tim Collins, Nicollet
Computoservice Inc, Mankato
Christopher M. Conlon, St. Peter
Steve Connelly, Mankato
Raymond C. & Barbara Cory, Wells
Sheila Coy, Owatonna
Danial G. Crawford, Moorhead

Lewis H. Croce, Mankato
Cummiskey Enterprises Inc, Mankato
Don Cunningham, Mankato
William J. Curtis, Onamia
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John J. Davidow, Mankato
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Jed G. Depuydt, Henderson
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David Enfield, Mankato
Donna Engebretson, Merrill WI
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