

the Messenger

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RUS: A Great Bargain

Since their creation electric cooperatives have invested more than \$150 billion to build critical infrastructure spanning 75 percent of the United States. This network includes 66,500 miles of transmission lines and 2.5 million miles of distribution lines — 42 percent of the nation's total. Cooperatives also own all or part of 200 power plants with a combined generation capacity of more than 50,000 MW. Electric cooperatives generate roughly 5 percent of U.S. electricity capacity, distribute 10 percent of all kilowatt-hours sold, employ more than 70,000 people, and pay more than \$1.4 billion annually in state and local taxes.

The key to helping electric cooperatives provide electric service in some of the most sparsely populated regions of America for more than seven decades, has been financial support through the federal Rural Utilities Service (RUS).

Based on current interest rates, RUS loans (with an average interest rate of 4.57 percent, compared to the government's cost of borrowing at 3.91 percent) actually make money for the U.S. Treasury—\$163 million combined from 2009 to 2011, more than \$274 million during fiscal year 2012, and a projected \$369 million in 2013.

Coupled with strong and innovative management and local, consumer governance, electric cooperatives rely on RUS financing to build and maintain electrical networks capable of serving members. More importantly, RUS loans have allowed electric cooperatives to keep rates affordable—a significant consideration because household incomes in cooperative service territories are 11 percent lower than the national average, and one person in six served by cooperatives lives in poverty.

It has been estimated that electric cooperatives will need about \$6 billion annually over the next five years to upgrade aging infrastructure, connect new members and ensure reliable supplies of wholesale power. The unique, long-standing relationship between electric cooperatives and RUS is crucial to ensure that Americans, no matter where they live, have access to affordable, reliable and safe electric service.

DIY Electrical Safety

The current economic downturn has inspired more homeowners to tackle do-it-yourself projects than ever before. Faced with declining home values and aging properties, homeowners in some cases may choose not to pay for the services of a licensed electrician.

However, most of us don't have the training or experience needed to safely perform electrical work, which increases the risk of injury and electrocution and potentially introduces new dangers. Working with electricity requires thorough planning and extreme care—cutting corners can be a costly mistake.

For example, electrical outlets cause nearly 4,000 injuries every year. And each year, more than 19,700 people are hurt by ceiling fans that are improperly mounted or incorrectly sized.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International strongly recommends hiring a qualified, licensed electrician to perform electrical work in your home. However, if you decide to do it yourself, consider the following important safety tips:

- Make an effort to learn about your home electrical system so that you can safely navigate and maintain it.
- Never attempt a project that is beyond your skill level. Knowing when to call a professional may help prevent electrical fires, injuries, and fatalities.
- Always turn off the power to the circuit that you plan to work on by switching off the circuit breaker in the main service panel.
- Be sure to unplug any lamp or appliance before working on it.
- Test the wires before you touch them to make sure that the power has been turned off.
- Never touch plumbing or gas pipes when performing a do-it-yourself electrical project.

For more tips on treating electricity with care in the home and workplace, visit www.esfi.org.

NAEC will be closed Monday, September 2nd for Labor Day

24 emergency assistance available

Auditing Energy: Small Measures, Real Savings

No matter the age of your home, it could benefit from an energy audit. North Arkansas Electric Cooperative offers free home energy audits conducted by our energy advisors. But you can get started on your own in finding low-cost solutions that could save money on your monthly electric bill.

First, ask yourself a simple question: Does my home feel drafty and cold in the winter, or stuffy and hot in the summer? If yes, then it probably experiences air leakage.

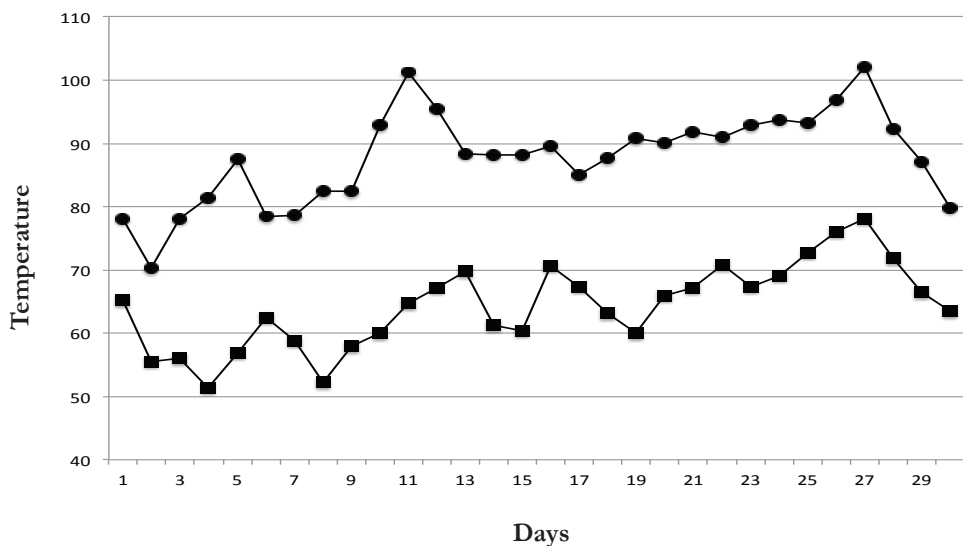
To track down where those spots are, start with the usual suspects—like damaged seals around doors and windows. If you see daylight or feel air, then apply caulk and weather stripping to keep outdoor air where it's supposed to be. But don't forget spots you might not immediately think of, like recessed canister lights and electrical outlets. Outlet insulation kits can be purchased for as little as \$2, and you can fix up your canister lights with some caulk around the edges. Also look where walls meet the ceiling. Cobwebs mean you've got drafts.

Next, peek into the attic and inspect the crawl space or basement for sufficient insulation—how much you need depends on your climate. Check out the insula-

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Daily Highs & Lows

June 2013



Average Daily High: 87.84 compared to 91.33 in 2012
Average Daily Low: 64.34 compared to 61.27 in 2012
Total Rainfall Amount: 1.98" compared to .56" in 2012
Warmest Day: June 11th, 101.20 degrees at 5:00 p.m.
Coolest Day: June 4th, 51.3 degrees at 6:00 a.m.

August Means Back To School

As kids make their way back to school, please be sure to watch for children getting off school buses. It is a violation of the law to not stop for school buses dropping off children.

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tion calculator from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory at www.ornl.gov/~roofs/Zip/ZipHome.html. Keep in mind insulation won't do its job well if you don't have a proper air barrier working in tandem. That means all joints and cracks must be sealed between your living space and insulation.

Finally, look to your light fixtures. Compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) are up to 75 percent more efficient than traditional incandescent bulbs, and they've come a long way in light quality, design, and affordability. You can purchase CFLs in a variety of shapes and hues. They cost more upfront, but you'll make your money back in less than nine months and, after that, they start saving money. Make sure to purchase a CFL that's rated by ENERGY STAR, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's program that denotes products meeting specific energy efficiency criteria. ENERGY STAR-rated CFLs will typically last 10 times longer than a traditional incandescent bulb producing the same amount of light.

LEDs—light-emitting diodes—are the next wave of residential lighting. An ENERGY STAR-rated model is estimated to use only a quarter of the electricity consumed by traditional bulbs and can last for 25 years. As with many new technologies, the up-front cost for an LED bulb is still much more than even a CFL, but prices are expected to drop as new products are developed.

To learn more about ways to reduce your electric bill, visit EnergySavers.gov OR TogetherWeSave.com or call North Arkansas Electric Cooperative at 870.895.3221 and ask about our home energy audit program.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When shopping for a new appliance, consider lifetime operation costs as well as the up-front purchase price. Refrigerators last an average of 12 years, clothes washers about 11, and dishwashers about 10. Check the Energy Guide label for the appliance's estimated yearly operating cost, and look for ENERGY STAR units, which usually exceed minimum federal standards for efficiency and quality. To learn more, visit EnergySavers.gov.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Right-of-Way Locations

Asplundh Tree Trim Crews:
Ozark Acres & Ravenden areas

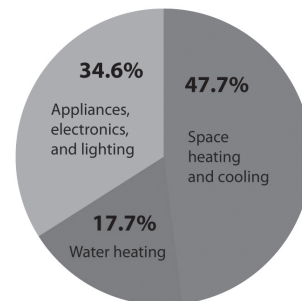
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How Americans Use Energy

New data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows that heating and cooling still accounts for the largest amount of electricity consumption in American homes. But as we use more and more electronic gadgets, that segment is closing the gap.



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

We Want Your Response

North Arkansas Electric Cooperative abides by seven cooperative principles. The first principle of voluntary and open membership describes how cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

As a member-owned cooperative, we want your input. If you have questions, comments or concerns regarding the operation of North Arkansas Electric Cooperative, please send them to Messenger, P.O. Box 1000, Salem, AR 72576, or e-mail us at info@naeci.com. Names will be withheld upon request, but all letters should be signed. All letters will be considered for publication in the Messenger or Rural Arkansas Magazine.

We appreciate your support these past 73 years and look forward to serving you in the future.