



Harrison Rural Electrification Association, Inc.

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partners



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We deliver information, as well as, your electricity

By reading this column and the other information in these pages, you are helping Harrison Rural Electrification fulfill one of the Seven Principles all cooperatives strive to follow: Principle No. 5: Education, training and information.

You are holding one of this cooperative's primary conduits of education and information, *Country Living* magazine. Through these pages, we are able to communicate directly with you, the member/owner, on important co-op business such as bylaw changes and director elections. In addition, we can pass along energy-saving tips that could save you money and safety information that might even save your life.

In addition to the information

in the magazine, we also sponsor programs to educate young people in our service territories. HREA supports the education of our young people by sending representatives to Washington, D.C. on the annual government-in-action Youth Tour.

On the Youth Tour, students receive an all-expense-paid trip to the nation's capital to tour historic sites, see important government buildings, meet lawmakers and learn more about how our system of government works. This year's applications will include students who will be juniors or seniors in the fall of 2009. Application deadlines for this year's trip must be received by April 15. If interested, contact the HREA office for details.

Our directors also undergo an extensive series of courses designed to teach them the basics of electric system management and keep them informed of the latest developments to help them make the best decisions possible about your electric service.

Manager's Corner

By
Gary Jackson,
CEO/General
Manager



Our education efforts also extend to our employees. We support them in taking courses through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association that improve their on-the-job skills, because the better-trained employees become, the more valuable they are to the co-op. The investment in time and money is well worth it.

We also sponsor safety seminars that our linemen and other field workers attend. This education is vital to keeping our work force safe and reducing the costs involved with lost-time accidents. Our focus on education is part of the overall effort this co-op takes to improve the communities that we serve.

Harrison Rural Electrification is proud of our record and efforts in this area.

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Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

This season, decorate with LED holiday lights, which consume 90 percent less energy than traditional miniature lights, operate 30 times longer, and stay cooler (meaning increased safety when used on wreaths and trees).

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Electric co-ops know what works

There's no sugarcoating the power crisis we face as Americans. During the last five years, electric bills have shot up 30 percent on average, largely because of sharply rising costs for coal, natural gas and basic construction materials such as steel, concrete and copper.

At the same time, electricity consumption continues to increase. In some regions — the West in particular — demand soon will outstrip supply, according to the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, which oversees reliability of the U.S. power grid.

Electric cooperatives, growing much faster than other sectors of the electric utility industry, face a double-whammy in all of this. A report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture finds we will need to double existing generation capacity by 2020 to keep the lights on. This means adding power plants that will be the most expensive in history thanks to escalating prices, inflation, international competition for raw resources, labor and expertise, as well as impending federal climate change mandates.

But if we expect electricity to continue being a safe, affordable, and reliable resource, not a luxury for the well-to-do, we must convince policymakers to work for energy solutions that are economically, technically, and politically sustainable over the long term.

Electric cooperatives have been bringing electricity to the farthest reaches of our country for more than 70 years — we know what works. What we need

now is strong leadership on the part of our elected officials, who will listen to our needs and address the tough questions we've been asking for close to a year:

What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future?

What are you doing to speed the development of new technology, which will allow me to have the electric power I need while meeting national climate policy goals?

What will you do to keep my electric bill affordable?

The answers aren't simple, but they're out there. For one, energy efficiency must become a national priority. Federal assistance must be made available to the poorest 20 percent of households, allowing them to make their homes as efficient as possible. Adequate insulation, upgraded doors and windows, Energy Star appliances, and efficient HVAC systems all trim electric demand, and, more importantly, lower painfully high monthly bills and curb growing demand.

New transmission facilities must be fast-tracked, connecting rural regions — where sources of renewable energy like wind exists — to the population centers where power is needed. Renewable generation can provide an excellent supplement to conventional fuels such as natural gas and coal, but not without adequate transmission lines.

Technology remains the true key to our energy crisis, and it must be treated as such. During the next decade, \$2 billion a year must be devoted to research and development of technologies, such as carbon capture and storage, that will significantly reduce power plant emissions of gases, like carbon dioxide, blamed for contributing to climate change. Only a sustained commitment like this will deliver the solutions our nation needs.

Nuclear power must also be made a priority, with a national initiative to accelerate the construction of new plants. Nuclear power is a proven, low-emissions producer of base load generation, and is a valuable tool in meeting growing demand.

Electric cooperatives across the country are currently engaged in a grassroots campaign called "Our Energy, Our Future: A Dialogue With America" to ensure that these important policy considerations are made a priority. Please visit www.ourenergy.coop to join this crucial conversation. For those of you who already have joined in, thank you.

Let's keep letting lawmakers know that actions they take regarding our energy challenges carry enormous consequences for the folks back home. It's time to make our voices heard.



Decorate safely for the holidays

by CHRIS GRAMMES

Colorful, twinkling lights. Brightly lit plastic candy canes and snowmen on the front lawn.

Such decorations help make the holidays a magical time of year, but they must be handled with care. Each year, fires occurring during the holiday season injure 2,600 individuals and cause more than \$930 million in damage, according to the United States Fire Administration, largely due to the misuse of electrical products and decorations.

Here are some tips for using electrical products safely during the holidays:

Before decorating, read and follow the manufacturers' instructions concerning installation and



maintenance of all decorative electrical products.

Indoors and out, use lights and other electrical decorations certified by a recognized, independent testing firms such as Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. (UL).

Use lights certified for outdoor use only for outdoor use. The same goes for indoor lights.

Carefully inspect each light before plugging it into a socket. Cracked, frayed, loose or bare wires may cause a serious electric shock or start a fire.

Do not mount or support light strings in any way that might damage the cord's insulation. Never nail or staple light strings or extension cords.

Always unplug an electrical decoration before replacing light bulbs or fuses.

Do not connect more than three light string sets together. Light strings with screw-in bulbs should have no more than 50 bulbs connected together.

Do not overload extension cords.

Keep all extension cords and light strings clear of snow and standing water.

Use caution when decorating near power lines.

Never use electric lights on a metallic tree.

Do not allow children or pets to play with electrical decorations.

Always turn off decorations before leaving home or going to bed.

Plug outdoor lights and decorations into circuits protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Portable GFCIs for outdoor use can be purchased wherever electrical supplies are sold.

Sources: *Electrical Safety Foundation International; United States Fire Administration*

Give the gift of energy efficiency

When it comes to shopping for and comparing appliances and home electronics, look for the EnergyGuide and ENERGY STAR® labels to ensure the energy efficiency credentials of what's in the box.

The Federal Trade Commission requires yellow EnergyGuide labels on most home appliances (except for ranges and ovens). These labels provide an estimate of the product's energy consumption or energy efficiency, and compare it to the highest and lowest energy consumption or efficiency estimates of similar appliance models.

You won't find EnergyGuide labels on home electronics such as computers, televisions and home audio equipment. Instead, look for blue ENERGY STAR labels on these products, indicating they've met strict energy efficiency criteria established by the U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Ensuring that what you take home is energy efficient can make a big difference in the long run. The average home boasts two TVs, three telephones and a DVD player. If these items were replaced with ENERGY STAR-qualified models, it would save more than 25 billion pounds of greenhouse gas emissions a year, equivalent to removing more than 2 million cars from the road.

Using less energy preserves energy resources while saving money on energy bills. An energy-efficient gift is truly a gift that keeps on giving!

For more information, visit www.eere.energy.gov or www.energystar.gov.

Sources: *ENERGY STAR, U.S. Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy*

**As we say goodbye to 2008,
Harrison Electrification
Association will be closed
on New Year's
Day. We look
forward
to serving
you in 2009.**



