



# Harrison Rural Electrification Association, Inc.

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partners



[www.harrisonrea.com](http://www.harrisonrea.com)

## Co-ops and Congress: Working together for our energy future

America has an energy crisis too big to ignore. Experts warn that unless we make more electricity available soon, some regions of the country may face power shortages within the next two years. And because of a number of economic and political factors, electric costs have climbed 40 percent since 2002 and are projected to go even higher.

We need an answer right now to keep electric bills affordable.

During the past year, consumers like you have joined the Our Energy, Our Future™ grass-roots awareness campaign to educate elected officials on the need to craft energy policies that will support a diverse mix of power generation while keeping energy affordable. More than 1.56 million messages have been

sent to Congress through the campaign, asking three simple questions:

\*How will Congress help us meet the rising future demand for electricity?

\*How will Congress support the development of technology needed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions?

\*How will Congress make sure electricity remains affordable?

Today we're continuing our efforts with one key question: Is Congress willing to work with electric cooperatives like Harrison Rural Electric to ensure we have reliable power at a price our consumers can afford? It's a simple question, one that can be answered with a resounding "Yes!" or "No." The answer is critical to our future.

Ask your U.S. representative and senators if they will work with electric cooperatives to develop policies that will keep electricity affordable. Co-ops were created to make safe, reliable and

### Manager's Corner

By  
Gary Jackson,  
CEO/General  
Manager



affordable electricity available for all Americans. We take our role seriously, and we have resources in place to help lawmakers find ways to address our nation's energy crisis without causing costs to rise beyond your means. We can find the right solution together.

Let Congress know where you stand in this critical debate. We thank those of you who already have started a dialogue with your elected officials through the campaign and ask that you keep that conversation going.

Visit [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop) today, and tell your family and friends to do the same. We'll all be impacted by future energy policy changes; now is the time to work together and take a stand for affordability. We simply can't afford not to.

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### Energy Efficiency

### Tip of the Month

When washing clothes, use less water by running full loads. In addition, approximately 80 percent of the energy used by washing machines heats water, so by using cold water and cold-water detergents, you can cut a load's energy use in half.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

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# Shocking? May is National Electrical Safety Month

Electrical problems in older homes account for nearly 55,000 fires every year. These blazes cause more than 500 deaths, injure more than 1,400 and rack up \$1.4 billion in property damage.

The risk of such fires is significant, since half of all homes in the United States were constructed and wired prior to 1973, according to the U.S. Census Bureau — before the advent of garage door openers or home computers. Even more telling, one-third of U.S. homes were built even before hair dryers or electric can openers were invented!

“As each year goes by, Americans consume more energy in their homes,” remarks Brett Brenner, president of Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI). “Many homes and electrical systems are simply being overburdened, which leads to fires, injuries and deaths.”

ESFI has created a checklist that lets consumers

identify electrical dangers commonly found in each room of their home. Owners of older homes can upgrade their electric systems with newer fire prevention technology, such as arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs). These advanced electronic circuit breakers detect dangerous conditions in a home's wiring and cut off power before a fire develops.

Additionally, those living in older homes with children can install tamper-resistant receptacles. These devices look like normal electrical outlets, but they have a built-in shutter system that prevents children from inserting foreign objects into the slots. Use of tamper-resistant receptacles would prevent most of the 2,400 burns suffered by children each year from outlets.

More information and resources relating to National Electrical Safety Month can be found at [www.electricalsafety.org](http://www.electricalsafety.org).

## Outdoor dangers may be lurking near outlets

Think about the exterior environment of your home. What comes to mind? Recreation. Relaxation. Entertainment.

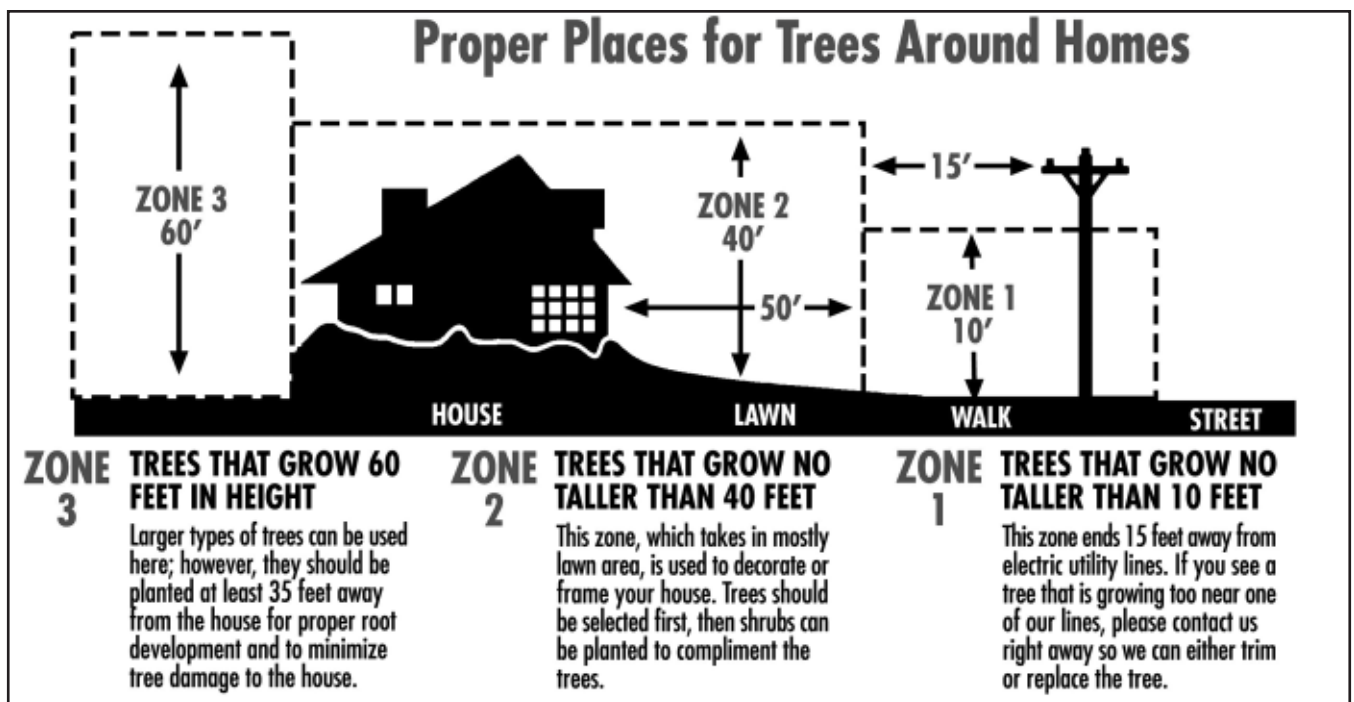
But failure to consider potential electrical hazards could leave you exposed to the possibility of injury — or death.

May is National Electrical Safety Month. As its sponsor, the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) reminds homeowners that hidden dangers can lurk even in the most enjoyable environments. Improperly placed metal ladders that come into contact with overhead power lines can be dead-

ly, as can power cords that accidentally dip into water features or puddles.

To help keep you and your family safe from electrocution and electrical fires, ESFI has free, downloadable electrical safety information available at [www.electrical-safety.org](http://www.electrical-safety.org). The guide offers some simple steps — and suggested solutions — to ensure that you and your family are safe from electrical hazards.

For more information, go to [www.electrical-safety.org](http://www.electrical-safety.org).



# Keep electricity from going down the drain

Water use and electricity go hand in hand. Heating water can account for 14 to 25 percent of the total energy consumed in a typical home. What's more, systems used to clean public water supplies and deliver it to homes require large amounts of electricity. If your home receives water from a well or spring, the pump also draws power. So when we use water, hot or cold, we're also using energy.

Techniques for trimming water use in your home are surprisingly simple. For one, you can significantly reduce hot water consumption by simply repairing leaks in fixtures — faucets and showerheads — or pipes. A leak of one drip per second can cost \$1 per month.

You also can reduce water heating costs in a matter of seconds by lowering the thermostat setting on your water heater. For each 10°F reduction in temperature, you can save between 3 percent and 5 percent in energy costs. Reducing the setting also slows mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.

Although some manufacturers set water heater thermostats at 140°F, most households usually require them set only at 120°F. However, if you have a dishwasher without a booster heater, you may require water temperature within a range of 130°F to 140°F for optimum cleaning.

Adding insulation to your water heater can save around 4 to 9 percent in costs. To determine if you need to insulate your water heater, touch it. A tank that's warm to the touch needs additional insulation.

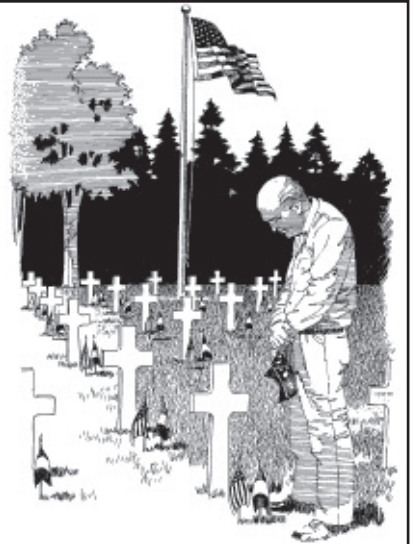
Insulating your water heater tank is fairly simple and inexpensive, and will pay for itself in about a year. You can find precut jackets or blankets available from around \$10 to \$20. Choose one with an insulating value of at least R-8. In addition, don't set the thermostat above 130°F on an electric water heater with an insulating jacket or blanket — the wiring may overheat.

Installing insulation on gas- and oil-fired water heaters is more difficult. For these appliances, it's best to have a qualified plumbing and heating contractor perform the work.

For more tips on trimming water use in your home, including pipe and water heater insulation techniques, visit [www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov).

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy, H2OConserve.org

Harrison  
Rural  
Electric will  
be closed  
Monday,  
May 25, in  
observance  
of  
Memorial  
Day.



*To all the moms on their special day,  
Harrison Rural Electric wishes you  
a happy Mother's Day  
Sunday, May 10!*



# New windows offer additional savings

Recent legislation in Washington, D.C., has given homeowners a chance to save even more by improving the energy efficiency of their house.

Along with the cost-cutting experienced through reduced energy use of items such as energy-efficient replacement windows, a federal tax credit is available through the end of next year for qualifying windows.

The folks at Simonton Windows® have supplied the following list of typical questions from homeowners and have provided the needed answers:

**Q: What are the details of the new consumer tax credit for qualified energy-efficient home improvements related to windows?**

A: Under the new law, when taxpayers purchase replacement windows that meet specific energy efficiency requirements, they are eligible for 30 percent of the amount turned in as a tax credit. This credit is capped at \$1,500 for the years of 2009 and 2010.

**Q: What are the restrictions of this tax credit?**

A: This law has some very specific restrictions. It's important to note the following:

1. Windows purchased must be equal to or below a U Factor of 0.30 and a Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) of 0.30.

(Note: These are NOT the same factors as ENERGY STAR® qualifications, so homeowners will need to specifically check on the U Factor and SHGC ratings of the windows ordered.)

2. The purchase of the qualified windows must be made during the taxable year for which the credit is being claimed.

3. The credit is allowed only on the price of the qualified windows themselves, not on installation costs, on-site preparation, assembly or sales tax.

4. The tax credit is allowable only for qualified window units placed in service in 2009 and 2010.

**Q: What is the time frame for this program?**

A: The credit is provided for all qualified windows purchased and installed in 2009 and 2010.

**Q: What exactly is a tax credit?**

A: Unlike a tax deduction that only reduces the amount of your taxable income, a tax credit reduces the amount of tax you owe.

**Q: What kind of windows must I purchase to be eligible for this tax credit?**

A: Energy-efficient windows that have a glass package equal to or below a U Factor of 0.30 and a Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) of 0.30.

**Q: What is a U Factor?**

A: This is the amount of heat transferred through a material. The lower the U-value, the slower the rate of heat flow and the better the insulating quality of the window.

**Q: What is Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC)?**

A: SHGC is the percentage of heat gained from both direct sunlight and absorbed heat. The smaller the number, the greater the ability to reduce solar heat gain into the home.

**Q: Do I have to purchase ENERGY STAR-qualified windows to get the tax credit?**

A: No. You should specifically ask for a U Factor of 0.30 (or below) and a SHGC of 0.30 (or better) when purchasing a window that qualifies for the tax credit. These are different energy efficiency specifications than ENERGY STAR-qualified windows have.

**Q: Who must I purchase these windows through?**

A: As long as the windows meet the qualifications set forth by the U.S. government for energy efficiency, you may purchase the windows from any source. Simonton recommends you select a window product backed by a strong warranty

from a company with a solid history and track record for exceptional service.

**Q: Once I purchase the windows, what do I need to save in order to request the tax credit?**

A: You should save your receipt for the window purchase, along with all window labels that come on every window.

**Q: When will I get my tax credit?**

A: If you purchase your qualified windows in 2009, you can submit to receive your tax credit on your 2009 taxes. If you purchase your qualified windows in 2010, you can submit to receive your tax credit on your 2010 taxes.

**Q: Is there an advantage to purchasing energy-efficient windows for my home over other energy-efficient products, such as increased insulation or a heat pump?**

A: Yes. Along with immediately helping to reduce your heating and cooling bills from the day they are installed, energy-efficient windows add to the beauty and curb appeal of your home. Vinyl windows also allow for low maintenance to make your life easier. Energy-efficient window replacements provide immediate added value to your home, your energy bills and your lifestyle.



Replacement windows can improve the look of a home as well as reduce its energy use.

(Courtesy Simonton Windows)