

THE GRID



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or **Toll-Free:**
888-661-CMEC (2632)
Office hours:
Monday-Friday
7:30a.m. - 4:30p.m.

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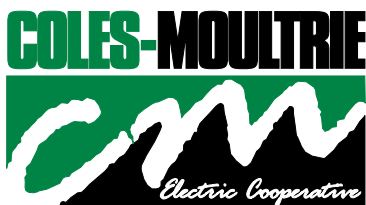
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**To Report an Outage
call 888-661-2632**

**Send your current email
to info@cmec.coop
for a chance to win a
\$50 bill credit**



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Beat the Peak This Summer

As temperatures begin to spike, there are steps you can take to save money on energy bills this summer.

According to the Department of Energy, a typical home uses 48 percent of energy costs just on the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system. Although most of that is spent on heating expenses, Americans still spend \$29 billion every year to power their air conditioners.

Aside from replacing your central air conditioner with a newer, higher-efficiency model, there are things you can do to increase efficiency and help reduce energy bills.

Besides weather stripping and caulking around windows and doors, Safe Electricity offers the following:

- ☀ Close curtains and blinds during the hottest part of the day. Not only is one-third of a home's energy lost around windows, but 76 percent of sunlight that falls on standard double-pane windows enters the home to become heat, according to Energy.gov.
- ☀ If you don't have one, install a programmable or smart thermostat and save up to 10 percent a year on heating and cooling by adjusting it 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting for 8 hours a day, according to Energy.gov.
- ☀ Clean the filter and get your unit inspected by a HVAC professional.
- ☀ Consider changes to your landscaping. Greenery that includes shade trees and those that insulate the foundation can reduce energy costs.

- ☀ Ventilate the attic and check insulation. Adequately sized vents and an attic fan can stop hot air from building. If your attic has less than 6 inches of insulation, add more. By adding insulation, homeowners can save 10 percent annually on energy bills, according to energystar.gov.

- ☀ Get a pre-season checkup by a professional HVAC technician, to help your air conditioner run more efficiently.



- ☀ Make sure your outdoor condenser unit is clean and free from debris.
- ☀ Use your clothes dryer and oven during the cooler parts of the day.
- ☀ Consider a professional energy audit to reveal where your home is inefficient, including air leaks and exposed duct work.

Increased summer electric demand not only affects the monthly budget, but it can also strain your home's electrical system, which can create dangerous fire hazards. Flickering or dimming lights or frequent circuit breaker trips are signs of an overloaded electrical system or faulty wiring that should be checked immediately by a qualified electrician.

For more information on electrical safety, go to SafeElectricity.org.

Rebate\$

CMEC still has Rebate Funds available for Electric Water Heaters and Energy, Efficiency & Conservation Projects. Request a form by emailing info@cmeccoop.com.



Member Celebration & Annual Meeting

Our Member Celebration and Annual Meeting will be Friday, October 7, 2022, at Peterson Park, Mattoon. Registration will open at 10 a.m. with the meeting at 1 p.m. Mark your calendar, and we look forward to seeing you.

Reminder

If your service is interrupted, check your fuses or circuit breakers. Next, check to see if your neighbor has power. Report outages by calling 217-235-0341 or toll free 888-661-2632.

Find Your Name and Win \$50

Find your name hidden inside this issue of The Grid and receive a **\$50 bill credit**. Credit must be claimed by the end of each month in which this newsletter is published.



**STAY BACK.
STAY SAFE.**

Always assume a downed power line is energized. Downed lines can energize the ground around them.



Know the Signs of a Scam

It's no secret that consumers with a water, gas or electricity connection have long been targets for utility scams, but fraudsters have changed their tactics since the COVID-19 pandemic. As consumers became more reliant on technology for work, school and commerce, scammers noted these shifts and adapted their tactics to this changed environment.

Imposter scams are the number one type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission. While scam artists may come to your door posing as a utility worker who works for the "power company," in today's more connected world, attempts are more likely to come through an electronic device, via email, phone or text.



Common types of scams

A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in-person, by phone, text or email, the scammers want to scare you into immediate payment, so you don't have time to think clearly. **Glen Peddy**

If this happens over the phone, simply hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, call us at 888-661-2632. Our phone

number can also be found on your monthly bill and on our website, cmec.coop. If the scam is by email or text, delete it before taking any action. If you're unsure, you can always contact us at CMEC or login to Smarthub at cmec.coop to check the status of your account.

Some scammers may falsely claim you have been overcharged on your bill and say they want to give a refund. It sounds easy. All you have to do is click or press a button to initiate the process. If you proceed, you will be prompted to provide banking or other personal information. Instead of money going into your bank account, the scammers can drain your account and use personal information such as a social security number for identity theft.

If this "refund" scam happens over the phone, just hang up and block the phone number to prevent future robocalls. If this scam attempt occurs via email (known as a "phishing" attempt) or by text ("smishing"), do not click any links. Instead, delete it, and if possible, block the sender. If you do overpay on your energy bill, CMEC will apply the credit to your next bill. When in doubt, contact us.

Defend yourself against scams

Be wary of call or texts from unknown numbers. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a utility worker who requests banking or other personal information.

Never let anyone into your home that you don't know unless you have a scheduled appointment or reported a problem.

We want to help protect our community against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense. Please report any potential scams to us so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know the combined use of large appliances like dishwashers, clothes dryers and washing machines account for the largest percentage of electricity use in the average U.S. home? Take small steps to save energy when using these appliances.

Only run full loads in the dishwasher, and thoroughly scrape food from dishes before loading. Dry towels and heavier cottons separate from lighter-weight clothing, and clean the lint screen after every use. Wash clothing in cold water to save energy used to heat water.

Source: EIA and DOE



Last Call

Nominating Petitions for directors in Districts One and Seven are due August 8, 2022. Interested members from those districts should provide a Request for Nominating Petitions and Statement of Qualifications in accordance with our bylaws. We encourage interested members to contact us by emailing info@cmeccoop.

Win Win

Save time and money with CMEC's Budget Billing and Auto Pay. Your bill can be "budgeted" or averaged to be the same amount each month and come directly out of your checking account or charged to a credit card. This helps you plan finances and never pay a late penalty. Sign up today!

(Note: A member must have service with us for one year before requesting to go on Budget.)



Meter Infrastructure Upgrade

CMEC will be replacing meters to upgrade our infrastructure to ensure consistent reliable service. The benefits include increasing system efficiency, improving outage notification/restoration, replacing aging equipment, and more energy information for our members. We plan to install some as early as August and continue into 2023. Watch for updates as we move forward with this project.

10 EASY WAYS TO \$AVE

Here are 10 habits you can tweak to save energy:

1. Use cold water to wash your clothes.
2. Unplug battery chargers when not in use.
3. Skip the heat-dry setting on your dishwasher.
4. Unplug appliances and electronics not in use.
5. Run full loads of laundry instead of several smaller ones.
6. When drying clothes, include a dry towel for the first 20 minutes.
7. Keep your refrigerator at 35° to 38°F and your freezer at 0°F.
8. Reduce the setting on your hot water heater.
9. Use smart power strips that shut off power to items not in use.
10. When buying new appliances, consider ENERGY STAR versions.



Learn more at:

 Safe Electricity.org®

Monthly Board Meeting Minutes can be viewed on our website: cmeccoop