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NEWS



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Tips for Tenants and Renters

Today, whether you rent or own, almost everyone is searching for ways to reduce their energy costs. Although the landlord or management company is ultimately responsible for a building's energy efficiency and safety, there are many simple safety and energy conservation measures that anyone can take.

According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, more than 33 million properties are occupied by renters in the US. Flint Hills Electric encourages tenants to take simple steps to make their housing both safe and efficient.

In today's world of growing technology usage, power for electronics is an increasingly larger portion of the electric bill. These include computers, audio equipment, televisions, DVD players and VCRs. Consider plugging all your entertainment equipment into a power strip which, when switched off, will eliminate any standby draw from these devices. This also has the added benefit of protecting your equipment from possible power surges.

For computers, keep them in "sleep" mode when not in use or turn off completely. Contrary to popular beliefs, turning a computer on and off is not harmful. Depending on how you use these electronics, they could add up to about 20 percent of your energy bill.

Using new lighting technologies can reduce lighting energy use in homes by 50 to 75 percent. Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) are the most common energy efficient bulbs on the market. They only use

Energy Conservation Tips

- ▶ Set refrigerator temperature to 36-39°F (2-3°C).
- ▶ Set freezer to 0-5°F (-18 to -15°C).
- ▶ Turn off water while shaving and brushing teeth.
- ▶ Do not preheat your oven except for baking.
- ▶ Cover pots/pans when cooking.
- ▶ In the summer, open windows and use a fan for air circulation instead of air conditioning.
- ▶ In the winter, turn down the thermostat 10 degrees at night and keep curtains open on the sunny side of your apartment during the day.
- ▶ Maximize day lighting.

Continued on page 16-C ▶

CO-OP Connections Update		Have you taken advantage of your Connections Card yet?	
	Prescriptions Filled	Savings to Flint Hills' Members	
June	23	\$472.40	
2009 Total	182	\$2,580.30	

Satisfying our Energy Appetite Requires a Diverse Menu

We're in the middle of a green revolution in America, with towering wind turbines and bright solar arrays dominating headlines as the future of electric generation. No doubt, those technologies will certainly take on a bigger role in "keeping the lights on." But despite media hype, they won't totally replace "conventional" sources for producing

electricity, such as coal, natural gas and nuclear power, any time soon.

To meet growing demand for electricity, electric co-ops will continue to mix and match generation resources, finding the best way to balance environmental concerns while ensuring delivery of affordable and reliable power.

Federal climate change legislation will likely boost the price for every kilowatt generated by fuels that emit carbon dioxide—notably coal and natural gas—making nuclear power an attractive option once again.

Nuclear power doesn't release carbon dioxide in the air. It's also reliable (available 24/7), unlike other renewable energy options that are dependent on breezes or daylight. In the past, nuclear power has faced opposition because of waste and safety concerns. However, commercial nuclear reactors have been operating since the 1950s, and most problems have been resolved. In addition, other countries have jumped on the nuclear bandwagon in a big way, and perfected the technology. Over the past 40 years, France has replaced all of its coal-fired power plants with nuclear power stations and in the process recycled the radioactive waste created—using it over and over again as fuel.

In the United States, largely because of added construction costs imposed on nuclear plants following the Three Mile Island accident in 1979, no new nuclear facilities have been built since 1973. That's a long drought. However, utilities are ready to break ground on 26 nuclear reactors in 16 states, with another 11 reactors in the planning stages. These new reactors, if built, will run much more efficiently, generate more power and boast new safety features.

Even with a nuclear renaissance, coal will remain a keystone of electric power in the U.S. More than half of the nation's electricity is generated by coal; the goal is to burn it as cleanly as possible. One of the most promising options involves carbon capture and storage (CCS), where carbon dioxide emissions are pulled out before they're released up a power plant smokestack. The collected gas is then pumped thousands of feet down into geological formations where it will be entombed forever.

Large-scale CCS technology is just now being tested, and won't be commercially viable for at least a decade, if not longer. But CCS may become a cost-effective option as co-ops focus on research and development to lower costs.

So the next time you hear someone talk about nuclear power or clean coal, remember both of these fuels are key to keeping power affordable and reliable. We will have to mix and match our resources if we want to find a balanced, sustainable solution for our energy future.

Four Generations of Nuclear Power

Nuclear power has been evolving since the first atom was split in 1934. Four waves of technology mark its development:

1940

Dec. 2, 1942
The world's first nuclear reactor is constructed and tested on a squash court at the University of Chicago
Capacity: No electricity produced

FIRST GENERATION

1950s and '60s
The initial wave of prototype reactors is built for demonstration and research, with limited capacity
- Capacity: Around 50 MW
- Example: Dairyland Power Cooperative's La Crosse Boiling Water Reactor (1967 - '87)

1950

1960

SECOND GENERATION

Late 1960s - Early 1980s
The majority of reactors in the U.S. are built, using a wide variety of designs
- Capacity: Limited to 1,300 MW for safety reasons
- Example: North Anna Nuclear Power Station, co-owned by Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (1978 - present)

1970

1980

THIRD GENERATION

1990s - 2030
The next wave of U.S. reactors, already operating in some countries, will utilize three primary designs
- Capacity: Up to 1,500 MW
- Enhanced safety and plant efficiency

1990

2000s

FOURTH GENERATION

2030 - ?
Advanced reactors will feature additional safety measures and compact, economical designs
- Produce minimal radioactive waste
- Large reactors can be scaled down for use as small, local sources of power

Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
Image Sources: U.S. Department of Energy; Dairyland Power Cooperative; Old Dominion Electric Cooperative; CANDU; Hyperion

Tips for Tenants and Renters Continued from page 16-A ▶

about one-quarter of the electricity compared to standard incandescent bulbs. During daylight hours, take advantage of natural light instead of artificial light. You will feel better and you will save money too. You can also save money by installing timers to reduce the amount of time your lights are on.

Leaky or dripping hot water faucets can waste as much as 48 gallons of hot water a week! Have them fixed quickly. You can also reduce hot water use by asking your landlord to install a low-flow showerhead if your current one uses more than three gallons per minute.

When living on your own, you are ultimately responsible for your own safety. It's important to know and follow electricity safety measures.

Never use extension cords as permanent wiring. They should only

be used with portable appliances and plugged directly into an approved receptacle, power tap or multi-plug adapter. Remember that all extension cords need to be in good condition without splices, deterioration or damage. Use three-pronged extension cords and outlets for appliances with three-pronged plugs.

Older wiring in apartments and homes may not be able to handle the increased electrical demand of modern day appliances and electronics. If use of an appliance frequently causes power to trip off, or if its power cord or the outlet feels hot, the appliance should be disconnected immediately. Make sure that this condition is reported to your landlord as soon as possible so that it may be properly repaired.

Keep these simple safety tips in mind—they will be a benefit to you

and your landlord:

- ▶ Pull electrical plugs out of the wall socket only by the plug and never by the cord.
- ▶ Make sure cords are in good condition, that they are not frayed or cracked.
- ▶ If an outlet has loose-fitting plugs, contact the landlord/superintendent to have it replaced. Outlets with bad contact can overheat leading to fires.
- ▶ Have broken wall plates replaced.
- ▶ Never cut the third prong (safety/ground connection) off of electric plugs. That third prong is to protect you if the outlets are properly grounded.
- ▶ Use light bulbs with the correct wattage for lamps. If no indication is on the product, do not use a bulb with more than 60 watts.
- ▶ Make sure outlets around sinks and tubs are GFCI equipped before use.

Preparation Key for Home Fire Safety BY CHRIS GRAMMES

Each year nearly 4,000 Americans die in house fires and another 20,000 are injured, according to the U.S. Fire Administration.

Most residential fires occur between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m., with the majority of deaths occurring between midnight and 4 a.m.—when most people are asleep. Below are some tips to keep you and your family safe.

- ▶ Installing smoke alarms on every level of a home helps prevent such tragedies. Place them in each room of the house. Smoke alarm batteries should be tested every month and changed with new ones at least once a year. Also, replace the entire smoke alarm every 10 years.
- ▶ Unless a small fire can be easily controlled, leave fire fighting to professionals and vacate your residence. A home fire can become deadly in as little as three minutes. Every second counts when escaping from fire.
- ▶ Develop a fire escape plan and practice it with all members of the family at least twice a year.
- ▶ Create a floor plan and mark regular and secondary evacuation routes. The backup route could be out a window that leads onto an adjacent roof or down a collapsible ladder. Only purchase ladders evaluated by a nationally recognized expert.
- ▶ Make sure windows can be opened, screens removed quickly and security bars equipped with quick-release devices. Have all members of the family practice opening windows.
- ▶ In the event of fire, immediately leave your home and do not waste time saving property. If you must escape through smoke, remember to crawl low on the ground and keep your mouth covered.
- ▶ Fire experts recommend sleeping with doors closed. Studies show that it takes 10 to 15 minutes to burn through a wooden door, which gives you more time to escape.
- ▶ When arriving at a closed door during a fire, use the back of your hand to feel the door—especially around cracks and the knob—to see if it is hot. If it feels hot, use another exit. Even if the door feels cool, open it carefully, bracing yourself to close it to avoid smoke and fire entering.
- ▶ If you are trapped in a room, keep doors closed between you and the smoke or blaze. Stuff blankets in cracks around the door and cover vents to keep smoke out. If there's a phone in the room, call 911 to notify the fire department of your exact location. Wait by the window and signal with a sheet or flashlight.
- ▶ Families should designate a meeting place—such as a specific tree or the end of the driveway—to make sure all members have gotten outside safely. Assign one person to go to a neighbor's house to phone the fire department. Remember to escape first and then dial 911.

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