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April 2011

# Hot Watts

Published by Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



### Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

Check your HVAC system's air filter monthly. If it looks dirty, change it. A dirty filter makes your system work harder.

Source: U.S.  
Department of  
Energy

### Congratulations

Carmella Murry is our online survey winner!

Complete our online member survey and you will be automatically entered for a chance to win a \$10.00 electric credit!



## Tree Trimming Improves Safety and Reliability

At Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative, we are committed to providing our customers with safe reliable power. In an effort to deliver the service you de-

serve, contract crews from Wolf Tree Company will be clearing trees in and around all circuits of the Muldrow substation during the next 12 months. Approximately 250 miles of right of way

will be cleared in the areas near Gans, Roland and Muldrow. Crews will be utilizing aerial lifts and mechanical trimming equipment to prune and remove trees that are near our conductors.

Managing vegetation around electric power lines is critical to the safe and reliable delivery of your service. Trees are a leading cause of electric power outages. When trees and

power lines come into contact, it can become a dangerous and potentially deadly situation for anyone in close proximity. Wolf Tree 169002 crews will be clearing foliage growing under lines, overhanging branches, leaning or other types of trees that could pull down a power line if they fall, and trees that could grow into lines.

Before planting trees on your property, think about how tall they can grow and how wide the branches will spread at maturity. As a general guideline, a minimum of 20 feet on either side of our poles and lines should be kept clear of trees. To find out more about proper tree planting near power lines visit [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org).

Thanks for your help as we work together to keep electric service safe and reliable.

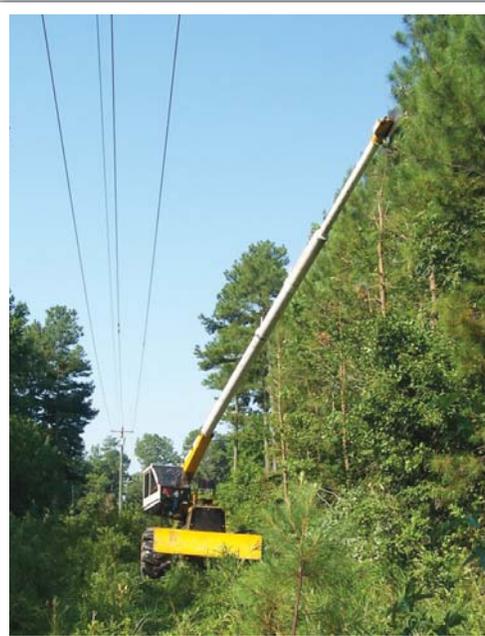


Photo Courtesy of Wolf Tree Company

## Last chance to apply for a scholarship!

April 8th is your last chance to turn in applications for the Herman Driscoll Memorial Scholarship. This year we will award four \$500 scholarships.

To be considered you must have a GPA of 2.0 or better and an ambition to continue your education at a state accredited college or technical school that offers an associate's degree or bachelor's degree. Other criteria needed is good character, good citizenship and financial need. Applications can be obtained at [www.cooksonhills.com](http://www.cooksonhills.com) or from one of our offices in Stigler or Sallisaw.



### Hot Watts

is published monthly by Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc. *Hot Watts* informs members in parts of seven Eastern Oklahoma counties about Cookson Hills' programs and issues. Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative continually strives to provide quality electrical service at a reasonable cost for its members.

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**Cookson Hills welcomes members to submit photos, and articles which will be subject to Cookson Hills editing.**

**Any submissions must be received before the 12th of the month prior to the publication date.**

**If You Find Your  
Account Number Hidden  
in this Issue of the *Hot Watts*  
You'll Receive a \$25 Credit  
on Your Electric Bill.**

# Five Ways to Spring into Energy Efficiency

Spring marks a perfect time of year to make your home more energy efficient. Here are five quick tips that will save both energy and money:

**1.** Seal cracks and gaps around your home. Consider adding weather stripping around leaky doors and caulking around window frames. **TogetherWeSave.com**, a website sponsored by Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives, the branding program of the nation's not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, shows how easy it is to use a caulking gun to seal up leaks around vents, ductwork, and windows.

**2.** Change filters regularly. Change furnace and air conditioner filters monthly. Dirty filters restrict air flow and reduce the overall efficiency of your heating and cooling system by making it work harder, using more electricity.

**3.** Clean the refrigerator inside and out. Now is a good time to not only throw out leftovers, but check the temperature settings on your refrigerator. Ideally, a refrigerator's temperature should be between 37 and 40 degrees for maximum operating efficiency.

When it is time to replace that old refrigerator, be sure to buy one that is Energy Star rated. These energy-efficient appliances will save you money in the long run.

**4.** Think sun block. The website **TogetherWeSave.com** points out that by pulling down the shades on your windows this spring and summer, you



*Touchstone Energy/TogetherWeSave.com*

could save on your energy cost of cooling your home. Some area stores likely carry inexpensive window coverings. Best of all, by blocking the sun, your house will stay cool and comfortable year-round.

**5.** Enjoy spring breezes. Use a clothesline during warmer months and let sunlight and breezes dry clothes naturally. This will reduce your electric bill by not running a dryer, and add a genuine clean scent to your family's laundry.

To view the possible savings for these energy saving tips listed, be sure to log onto **TogetherWeSave.com**.

As always if you have any questions please call CHEC at 918-967-4614 or toll free at 800-328-2368.

# How Your Home Uses Electricity

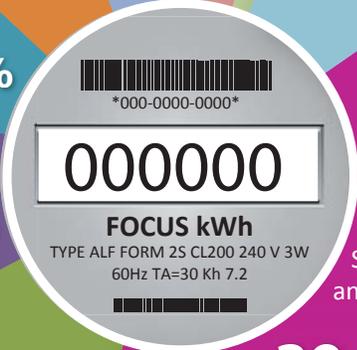
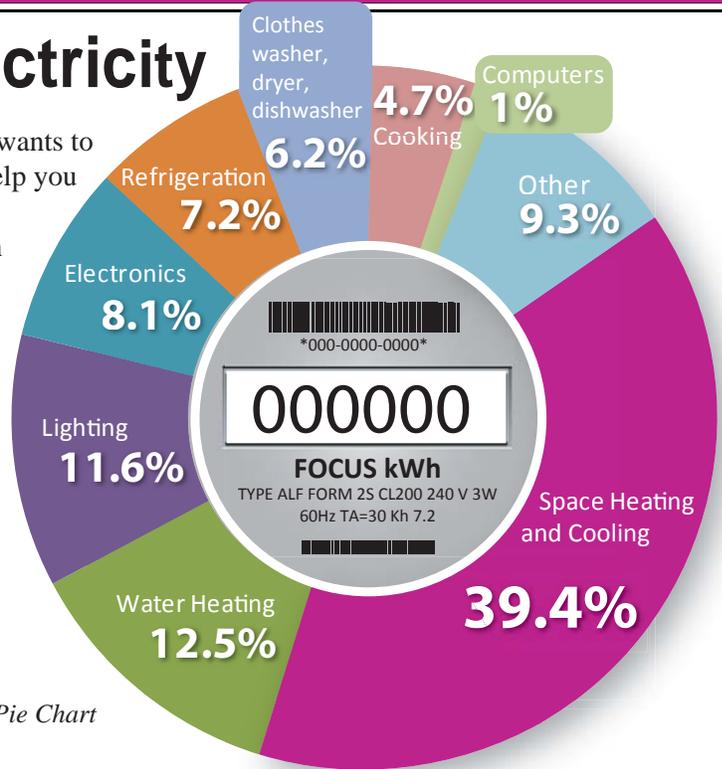
As your electric supplier, Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative wants to help you determine your electric usage. We hope this graph will help you use your electricity as efficiently as possible.

This graph shows how energy is used in an average home with four family members. Your use may vary depending on your lifestyle, the size of your family and the size, age and efficiency of your appliances. The amount used also varies with the weather and the amount of insulation in your home's walls and ceiling.

Appliances that are manufactured today are typically much more efficient. As appliances age, their efficiency decreases. Knowing the age and life expectancy of your electric appliances can help you understand your electrical use.

If your appliances are at or nearing the end of their expected life. You may plan ahead by shopping for Energy Star appliances. When replacing old appliances pay attention to energy efficiency. The energy-efficient choice will save you money in the long run.

*Source: 2009 Buildings Energy Data Book, U.S. Department of Energy, Pie Chart Represents an all-electric home. Updated February 2011.*



## Giving Back through Operation Round-Up



By allowing Cookson Hills to "round up" member's electric bills to the nearest

dollar, participating Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative members are able to help their local communities for just pennies a month.

In March, the first Quarter of 2011, the Cookson Hills Electric Foundation Board, which makes Operation Round-Up funding decisions, awarded \$4,891.31. Today, more than \$556,908.77 has been awarded to provide much needed assistance to individuals and nonprofit organizations in our communities.

The next meeting is June 7, 2011 and the deadline to apply for Operation Round-Up is May 24, 2011.

The Cookson Hills Electric Foundation Board meets quarterly to review these requests. For more information about Operation Round-Up, visit our website [www.cooksonhills.com](http://www.cooksonhills.com) or call Amy Smith at (918) 967-4614.

## Sometimes the Smallest Appliances are the Biggest Energy Wasters

Do you have a coffee maker? What about a digital picture frame? Or a cable or satellite receiver?

You might not think of these types of devices as energy hogs but when left on all day and night they quickly add up to a lot of wasted electricity.

For example, cable and satellite receivers typically only draw about 30 watts of energy. But because these receivers are often left on even when your television is turned off, over the course of a year can use up to 265 kilowatt-hours, equivalent to the annual energy consumption of a 28-inch television.

Meanwhile, if every home in the U.S. had a digital picture frame displaying around the clock it would take five power plants alone to power them, according to a recent Electric Power Research Institute estimate.

As for coffee makers, they also consume a lot of power. Most coffee makers usually run on 900 to 1,200 watts. If you want to save energy and money, refrain from making more coffee than

necessary or leaving the warmer on for long periods.

The number of always-on devices is on the rise. The typical U.S. home 30 years ago had about three always-on devices; today that number has climbed to more than 30.

Often the best way to combat these energy wasters is to plug these appliances into a power strip, and switch it off after you are done using them.

Knowing how much energy we waste keeping devices on all the time should motivate us to change our habits.



# Spring Project Safety

Spring is the time of year when many individuals begin work on home improvements. While making a to-do-list, keep in mind that there are federal tax incentives which include efficiency improvements during repairs as well as new construction. Before people start tackling do-it-yourself projects, Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative asks everyone to take precautions before starting renovations or construction projects, especially when working around electrical equipment and overhead power lines.

## Safety tips to keep in mind:

Look up and around you. Be sure to lower your long equipment when you are moving it. Carry ladders and other long items horizontally whenever possible. Remember, aluminum

ladders, as well as wooden ladders, can conduct electricity. Fiberglass may provide better protection against electric shock.

Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from lines. Never trim trees near power lines; leave that to the professionals.

Never use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines. Contact a professional maintenance contractor.

Use heavy-duty, three-prong extension cords for tools with three-prong plugs. Never remove or bend back the third prong on extension cords. It is a safety feature designed to reduce the risk of electrocution or shock.

If your projects include digging, like building a deck or planting a tree,

“Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house.”



safelectricity.org

call Okie before you dig by dialing 811 or 800-522-OKIE. Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. This service is free, prevents the inconvenience of having utilities interrupted, and can help you avoid serious injury.

If it is raining or the ground is wet, do not use electric power yard tools. Never use electrical appliances or touch circuit breakers or fuses when you are wet or standing in water. Keep electrical equipment at least 10 feet from wet areas.

## The Hot Watts Q&A

**Question:** We are adding on to our house this spring and the electrician says he needs to pull the electric meter to shut off the power at the pole. I have always heard not to tamper with the electric meter. Is it okay for my electrician to pull my meter?

**Answer:** If an electrician, contractor, or other craftsman is working on your wiring or installing special equipment, and finds it necessary to gain access to your meter installation, contact Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative (CHEC) to schedule a time to have the meter pulled. There will be no charge to the member if you call CHEC to have your meter pulled. No one is authorized to cut a meter seal or remove a meter except CHEC personnel. If a CHEC representative finds a meter seal cut there will be a \$50 reseal fee added to the account. If the member calls in to report a cut meter seal there will be a \$25 reseal fee.

Planting a tree?

Installing a fence?

Building a pool?

Call OKIE before you dig

Dial 811

or 800-522-OKIE

