

January 2015

Hot Watts

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

They're out of sight, but don't forget about your air ducts. Taking care of them can save money and energy. Check ducts for air leaks. Take care of minor sealing jobs with heat-approved tape, especially in attics and in vented crawl spaces. Call the pros for major ductwork repairs.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Congratulations!

John P. James

is our online survey winner.

CHEC offices will be closed January 1st in observance of the New Year.

Youth Tour Trip to Washington D.C. in June

Annually Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative (CHEC) participates in the cooperative –sponsored national youth tour program. This program provides rural electric cooperative students an opportunity to earn a trip to Washington, D.C. by writing an essay on a topic determined by the cooperative. This year's topic is *“What impact do environmental regulations have on electric cooperatives and their members?”*

Donna Rhodes, Youth Tour Coordinator, has visited or will visit area schools to share a presentation on the history of electric cooperatives and the annual Cookson Hills Youth Tour Essay Contest. The local high school teachers will administer the annual contest. Completed essays must be submitted by February 18, 2015. All essays will then be reviewed by a judge that is not employed by CHEC. Four finalists are selected.

The four finalists will present their essays to the CHEC Board of Trustees and other special



guests at the CHEC Youth Tour Banquet held in Stigler. The winners will be presented with a plaque and the Youth Tour trip details.

During the Youth Tour trip (June 12-18, 2015), students will join 1,500 other youth from across the nation in Washington D.C. Participants will visit the monuments and other attractions, as well as visit Capitol Hill to learn more about how our government operates.

Youth Tour contest information is presented by appointment only. If your school is interested in participating this year, contact Donna Rhodes at (918) 775-2211.

**We would like to say THANK YOU to our members!
We value your patronage!
Have a safe and happy new year!**

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

We've Sent More than 1.1 Million Comments to the EPA

The public comment period on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed climate rule for existing power plants closed on December 1, 2014.

After learning more about the proposal and what it would mean for their electric bills, more than 1.1 million people took the time and energy to submit comments to the EPA through www.action.coop and www.tellepa.com. There is an inherent strength in the number of comments submitted to the EPA by America's Electric Cooperatives. These comments highlight the broad opposition to this proposal and encourage the EPA to go back to the drawing board and work with us on common-sense solutions. Every comment submitted enhanced the strength of that message. Our comments frame the debate and demonstrate broad opposition to this rule not just to the EPA, but also to other decision makers and opinion leaders who can influence the EPA's thinking.



The EPA plans to finalize their proposal and issue a finalized rule in June of 2015. Between now and then, the EPA will review the comments they receive and host meetings with stakeholders (including electric cooperatives). Throughout this period, expect numerous congressional hearings on both sides of the hill. Because of the way the EPA crafted their proposal, states are responsible for developing plans to comply. Some of the spotlight of the EPA proposal will shift to the states. Expect state legislatures to consider resolutions that influence how their state will deal with the EPA proposal. But that doesn't mean that the battle has left Washington, DC. Quite the contrary – until June of next year we'll need to keep the pressure on both state and federal arenas as the EPA works towards a final rule.

Action.coop will stay open for business. They will receive a facelift and become the advocacy hub for America's Electric Cooperatives. Here, advocates will be able to join our grassroots army, contact their elected officials, receive future advocacy alerts, and learn more about the issues impacting electric cooperatives.

WATT'S COOKING?



Brownies

2 sticks of butter
1 ¼ cup flour
¾ cup cocoa
¾ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
3 eggs
1 ½ teaspoon vanilla
2 cups sugar
1 cup pecans



Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
Butter a 13 X 9 pan.

Melt butter, set it aside and let it cool. Combine flour, cocoa, baking powder, and salt in bowl. In a separate bowl beat the eggs and vanilla until well mixed. Add sugar; beat again. Add flour mixture and butter to egg mixture a little at a time, mixing well after each addition. Stir in pecans. Spoon batter into prepared pan.

Bake for 30 to 35 minutes or until batter pulls away from the sides of the pan.

Bundle Up for Winter

Are you ready for winter's cold grasp? Snow and ice are inevitable when dealing with winter storms, but being prepared can make a world of difference. CHEC recommends the following tips to help you prepare for wintery blasts.

Winterize your home

Winter storms wreak havoc on your home. By winterizing your living space, you'll be prepared for extreme cold and hazardous conditions.

- Remember to maintain and inspect heating equipment and chimneys every year to ensure they're working safely and properly.
- Caulk and weather strip doors and windows to make the most of your heating system.
- Freezing temperatures often cause water pipes to burst. Remember to insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic. Allow faucets to drip during extreme cold to avoid frozen pipes.
- Consider installing storm windows for better insulation. You can also cover windows with plastic (from the inside) to keep the cold out.
- Make sure everyone in your family knows where the home's fire extinguisher is located and how to use it properly. House fires occur more frequently during winter months, as people tend to use alternative heating methods that may not be safe.

Prepare a winter survival kit

Severe winter storms often bring heavy accumulation of ice and snow, which can lead to downed power lines and extended outages. CHEC crews will work hard to restore power, but having a winter survival kit on hand is a smart idea.

- Food: Store food that does not require cooking, such as canned goods, crackers, dehydrated meats and dried fruit. Keep a large supply of water on hand. Ready.gov recommends five gallons per person.
- Medication: Be sure to refill all prescriptions in the event of a major power outage.
- Identification: Keep all forms of identification handy, such as driver's licenses, photo IDs and social security cards. Bank account information and insurance policies are also good to have on hand.
- Other items: First Aid Kit, blankets, flashlight, battery-powered radio and extra batteries.

Stay warm and safe

If an outage occurs, you should plan for an alternate heating source. A fireplace, propane space heater or wood-burning stove would be sufficient. Fuel and wood-burning heating sources should always be vented, and make sure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly. Always practice extreme caution when using alternate heating sources.

If you decide to use a portable generator during an outage, make sure it is placed outside the home for proper ventilation. Be careful not to overload the generator. Use appropriate extension cords that can handle the electric load.

Follow these tips, and your family will stay warm in the event of a power outage. For more information on preparing for winter storms, visit www.ready.gov.

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service organization for the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Did you know?

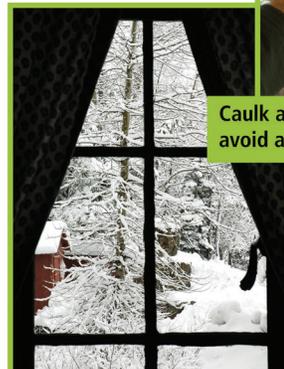
Heating your home accounts for up to 48 percent of your utility bill.

A few tips to help you save:

Clean or replace your furnace filter once a month (or as recommended).



Caulk and seal windows to avoid air leaks.



Keep draperies and shades open during the day and closed at night.



Visit www.energy.gov for more ways to save!

LS Builders Inc.

Some people worry they won't have enough to do in retirement. Lloyd Stelljes found himself in that situation after retiring from the daily workforce of thirty plus years. It wasn't long after retirement that he decided to move away from the city and start a new career in the steel building business.

"I lived in Tulsa over 30 years and retired from a job for a major airlines in 1995. I took a few months off and decided that I needed something to do," said Lloyd.

An opportunity arose to work with a gentleman in the commercial building business. After overseeing a large project in Ft. Smith, people began asking him to quote a price for steel buildings, which prompted him to start a business of his own. LS Builders Inc., was incorporated in the state of Arkansas in 1996. His license enabled him not only to sell and erect metal buildings, but to perform all the trades necessary to finish a project.

Pre-engineered steel buildings are LS Builders main product, and they are finished out into various types of buildings including manufacturing buildings, shops, offices, retail stores, storage buildings, and aircraft hangers. "Aircraft hangers were kind of a niche I fell into because I retired from the aerospace industry. I've been all around the country building aircraft hangers since I started this business."

Lloyd oversees the projects, and he sub-contracts the construction. Most of the sub-contractors have been with him since the early years. Rick Pennington is one of those contractors, and with his crew, they assemble the steel and erect the buildings. Floyd and Phil Adams are sub-contractors with LS Builders too, and have constructed



Phil Adams and Lloyd Stelljes prepare space for kiosk at CHEC office in Sallisaw



LS Builders Inc. located at the intersection of Hwys. 82 & 100

many projects together over the years. Twelve years ago they teamed up to build the CHEC office in Sallisaw. Stelljes' specialty was the building itself, and Adams' was the interior. They also constructed the shop for the new headquarters facility in Stigler two years ago.

"Probably like most businesses we have seen a downturn in the steel building business over the years. One of the reasons for that downward movement is the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) required closure of many steel mills. The U.S. sold scrap metal to China and they melted it down to raw stock, rolls of steel, or bars and sold it back to the U.S. at a higher price. The U.S. priced ourselves 2356300 out of business. Secondly, the downturn in the economy scuttled a lot of building plans. My goal is to get my business in the position it was five or six years ago, and I truly believe the steel building business it is on the way back up."

Lloyd and his wife Ruth of 56 years contemplated moving to Ft. Smith, but they decided they wanted to be at the lake. They built their home near Lake Tenkiller in 1998, and established an office a few miles from their home that same year. LS Builders' office is located at the corner of the intersection of Highway 82 (7 miles north of Vian) and Highway 100.

The decision to form LS Builders and move to the Lake Tenkiller area put everything in perspective. Health wise he says he feels better now than he did 20 years ago, attributing that to a relaxed lifestyle and living in the open country with clean air. He enjoys his semi-retirement because he is at liberty to work at his own pace and reap the rewards that the business provides.

To contact Lloyd, you may email him at gwrdr@windstream.net or call the office at 918-773-6121 or 918-776-3900.