

February 2017

# Hot Watts

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



## Watts Inside

- ♥ Energy Star, Page 2
- ♥ Watt's Cooking, Page 2
- ♥ Digital Devices, Page 3
- ♥ Stay in touch, Page 3
- ♥ Scholarship Deadline, Page 3
- ♥ Mylar Balloons, Page 4



Energy Efficiency

### Tip of the Month

A crackling fire in the hearth warms the house, but don't let it heat up your electric bill! Caulk around the fireplace hearth and keep the damper closed when a fire is not burning.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy



**Congratulations!**

**Mary A. Casteel** is our online survey winner.



## Rebates Available in 2017

Once again CHEC and Associated Electric Cooperative (AECI) are partnering together to provide our members with the "Take Control and Save" program for 2017. The program was designed to promote efficient use of electricity in an effort to reduce consumer energy costs. We understand that by spending less on your energy costs, you can save money for other important things in life.

CHEC has rebates available on room air conditioners, electric water heaters, ground

source heat pumps, and dual fuel & mini-split heat pumps. To qualify for these rebates, you must be a member of CHEC.

A complete list of the eligibility criteria and rebate requirements are available on our website at [www.cooksonhills.com](http://www.cooksonhills.com) and at your local office. If you have any questions, please contact Donna Rhodes at 918-775-2211.



## Are you using SmartHub?

CHEC offers the latest technology to help you manage your electric account 24/7 by computer, smartphone, or tablet with a free application called SmartHub. SmartHub is an application that is available in both mobile apps and in a web version.

With SmartHub, you can:

- Make a secure payment with a Visa or MasterCard
- Check your daily or hourly electric usage
- Notify member services of account issues
- Receive alerts by email
- View bills and see payment history
- Set up recurring payments

The web version has a profile page available for members to maintain their personal information, password, and security phrase. Go to our website at [www.cooksonhills.com](http://www.cooksonhills.com) to register your account.

The mobile app can be downloaded and installed on your compatible mobile phone or tablet. Simply look for "SmartHub" in the Apple Store or in the Android Market. If duplicates appear, look for the app provided by our partner, National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC). The app is free to download and install.

Members making payments through the SmartHub app or web version will be charged a \$3.95 convenience fee.

If you aren't using SmartHub, consider starting today. SmartHub is a convenient method of payment and communication, and a great way to help you monitor your electric usage. If you have any question concerning SmartHub, please contact your local office at 800-328-2368 (Stigler) or 918-775-2211 (Sallisaw).



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*Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



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



# ENERGY STAR Buyers Guide

Purchasing ENERGY STAR-certified appliances and electronics is a great way to save energy in your home. But how do you choose the right product? It depends on your energy-saving goals and how you use energy in your home.



Do you wash multiple loads of laundry each week? Investing in an ENERGY STAR-certified washer could save you around \$45 on your utility bill each year. Some of the top-rated ENERGY STAR-certified large washers come from LG and Samsung. Visit ENERGY STAR's "Most Efficient 2017" page to learn more.



Home computers can use a shocking amount of energy each year. If all computers in the U.S. were ENERGY STAR certified, we would save more than \$1 billion in energy costs per year. If you can't buy an ENERGY STAR-certified computer, consider updating the power management setting on your computer. Visit [energystar.gov/products/office\\_equipment/computers](http://energystar.gov/products/office_equipment/computers).



The larger TVs get, the more energy they use. But ENERGY STAR-certified TVs are, on average, 25% more efficient than conventional models. LG, Samsung and Vizio make the list of ENERGY STAR's most efficient 2016 TVs.

**There are many different types of ENERGY STAR-certified products, including:**

- Air purifiers
- Roof products
- Set-top boxes and cable boxes
- Decorative light strands
- Data center storage
- Pool pumps
- Vending machines
- Dehumidifiers

Learn more about ENERGY STAR products. Visit [energystar.gov/products](http://energystar.gov/products)



## Watts Cooking?



### Apple Nachos

- 1 Fuji apple, sliced thin
- ¼ cup smooth peanut butter, melted
- ¼ cup semi-sweet chocolate chips, melted
- Handful of chocolate chips for sprinkling



Arrange apple slices on a plate. Drizzle melted peanut butter over apple slices with a spoon, and do the same with the melted chocolate. Sprinkle a handful of chocolate chips over the plate as topping. Serve immediately.

# Digital Devices Impact Energy Use

By Tom Tate

Ah, the Digital Age. We have gadgets galore, the ability to manage our homes in new and innovative ways, brilliant images and captivating sounds of modern entertainment options and of course, the internet. Clearly, digital devices reign supreme. Yet these cool new capabilities come with a couple of pitfalls; vampire loads and the issue of “technology reincarnation.”

Over the course of the Digital Age, electricity use has continued to increase. Families have multiple televisions. Computer prices have plummeted, meaning many homes now have multiple computers. Everyone in the family needs a cell phone. Gaming consoles and set top cable/satellite boxes satisfy our desire for entertainment.

Major appliances aside, most digital devices do not use 120-volt power, which is the standard voltage of a home outlet. They actually use a lot less. So, trying to plug your brand new smartphone directly into an outlet is going to lead to a fried device and lots of tears from someone. This is why low-voltage devices come with a power adapter. These “wall warts” as some term them, take the 120-volt electricity supplied by CHEC and convert it to say, five volts. Unfortunately, most folks leave their adapters plugged in to make recharging easier. The problem with this approach is that the seemingly innocuous wall wart uses power even when it isn’t charging a device.

This invisible energy consumption is often called “vampire load.” Studies show that 5 to 10 percent of the average home’s energy use is from vampire loads. The only way to stop this is to unplug the power adapter when it is not in use or employ smart power strips. These look like the typical power strip but with a twist—only one socket gets power all the time. When the device or appliance connected to it turns on and starts using power, the remaining sockets receive power too. This is perfect for entertainment systems, computer set ups and a variety of other situations.

Technological advances have steadily increased energy efficiency and reduced purchase prices. On its face, this seems like a good thing. Unfortunately, when replacing a product at the end of its life, the tendency is to go bigger, or continue to use the old tech. This is the second issue I noted—technology reincarnation.

For example, flat screen television prices have plummeted as technology has evolved—and so has the amount of electricity they use. Consumers wander into the big box store and are dazzled by walls of giant, brilliant televisions. What they used to pay for the paltry 32” model now might net them a 50” giant. And who doesn’t want to see their favorite show or sports event in near life size? But if you spring for the bigger TV, you won’t benefit from the increased energy efficiency of the newer technology. The bigger model uses as much juice as the older, smaller TV, which likely ends up in another room (reincarnated in another setting) still using power.

Or refrigerators. These are the showpieces of the evolution of smart appliances. Many new models include touchscreens and cameras; they communicate over the internet and probably even keep food cold and make ice. Yet what often happens is the old refrigerator ends up in the basement or garage, reincarnated as a dedicated beverage unit or overflow.

I’ll offer a couple words of advice to help you avoid—or at least reduce—the effects of vampire loads and technology reincarnation. Invest in smart power strips or make a point to use outlets where you can conveniently unplug power adapters when not in use. Don’t oversize your replacement appliances and entertainment gear unless family needs dictate the larger capacities. And recycle the replaced appliances and equipment to stem technology reincarnation. You will enjoy the Digital Age for a lot less.

*Tom Tate writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation’s 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*

## Let’s Stay In Touch!

Keeping your account information up-to-date is important to you as well as to CHEC. The most common inaccurate account information is your phone number. CHEC periodically calls members to notify you of a controlled outage, billing information, and other important information. If your phone number has changed, if you have disconnected your home phone, or if you have a new cell phone number, please contact us.

You can update your phone number and other account information by visiting our website at [www.cooksonhills.com](http://www.cooksonhills.com) and logging onto SmartHub, or by calling your local office at 800-328-2368 (Stigler) or at 918-775-2211 (Sallisaw).



## Scholarship Deadline Approaching Fast

March 3, 2017 will be the last day to submit applications for the Herman Driscoll Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship committee will award four \$500 scholarships to area high school seniors planning to attend college or technical school.

Applications and guidelines may be obtained at the CHEC offices or through our website at [www.cooksonhills.com](http://www.cooksonhills.com). If you have any questions about the scholarship, please contact Felicia Williams at 800-328-2368.



# Keep the Celebration in Your Party with the Safe Use of Mylar Balloons

Mylar balloons can brighten any celebration with their shiny surfaces and colorful images, but these helium filled balloons can ruin a party if not used safely. Safe Electricity encourages you to take a few moments to learn how to make sure Mylar balloons are used and disposed of safely.

"Mylar balloons are intended to be fun and celebratory, but using them improperly causes inconveniences and safety hazards," explains Molly Hall, Executive Director of the Energy Education Council's Safe Electricity program. "Fortunately, with the proper precautions, Mylar balloons can be used without problems."

Metal conducts electricity. Because Mylar balloons have a metallic coating, are lightweight, and are buoyant, there is a good chance these balloons can cause serious damage. If released, Mylar balloons can come into contact with overhead power lines or electricity substations and can cause power outages and fires.

If you use Mylar balloons for a party or celebration, always make sure these balloons are both weighted and tied down so they do not fly away, and never purposely release a Mylar balloon.

Even if a balloon filled with helium flies away and out of reach of power lines, it will come back down as the helium slowly leaks out of the balloon. These balloons can come back down miles away from where they originated, come into contact with power lines or substations, and cause power outages putting distant communities in the dark.

If a balloon does get in a power line, do not attempt to retrieve it yourself. That is extremely dangerous. Contact your local utility to remove any objects tangled in power lines.

Do not tie Mylar balloons to children, especially with a metallic ribbon. If the balloon comes in contact with electricity, the child could receive a fatal shock.

When the celebration is over and there is no more need for the balloons, deflate them and throw them away to prevent one or more from flying away and causing damage.

Mylar balloons are certainly not the only culprits in power outages. Storms, ice, and fallen tree limbs can also cause a blackout in your neighborhood. Safe Electricity encourages everyone to create a preparedness kit in case of a power outage with enough supplies to last at least three days. This kit includes: water, food, blankets, pillows, clothes, a first aid kit, toiletries, flashlights, batteries, and a radio.

Safe Electricity wishes you happiness and safety in all your celebrations. For more safety information visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



Innovation - Integrity - Accountability - Commitment to Community

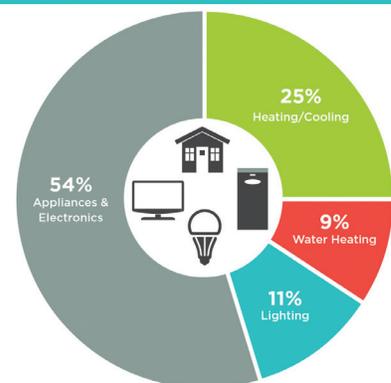


Our members are the most important part of our electric cooperative.



## How Americans Use Energy

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows that appliances and electronics account for the largest amount of electricity consumption in American homes.



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration