

March 2017

# Hot Watts

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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## Co-op Connections Card



**Energy Efficiency**

### Tip of the Month

Warmer weather is on the way! Use energy efficient window treatments or coverings, like blinds, shades and films, to reduce heat gain in your home. These devices not only improve the look of your home but also reduce energy costs.

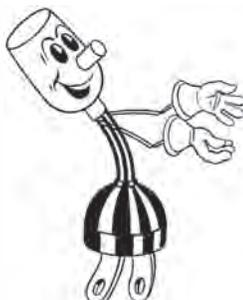
Source: U.S. Department of Energy

### Congratulations!

**Willard E. Cooper Jr.** is our online survey winner.



Happy St. Patrick's Day!



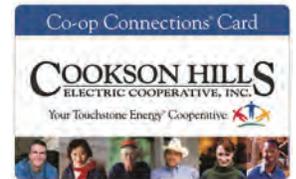
**D**id you know that being a member of CHEC has another perk? As a member, you have access to the Co-op Connections Program that provides discounts on many products and services.

CHEC, a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, joined the Co-op Connections program in 2012. Since that time members have received benefits on dental and vision services, hearing aids, and chiropractic care. Please note not all dentists, chiropractors, or hearing and vision providers participate in the program.

The most beneficial use of the card is the pharmacy discount. Present your Co-op Connections Card to your local pharmacy to see if you can save on your next prescription.

Additionally, local businesses offer discounts on goods and services when you show them your Co-op Connections Card. For a participating business directory and for information on how your business can join the program, please visit our website [www.cooksonhills.com](http://www.cooksonhills.com) and click on the "Co-op Connections Card."

Each member was mailed a Co-op Connection Card when we initiated the program. All new members are issued



a card when applying for electric services. You may visit the Co-op Connections website, [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop), and print a card if you have misplaced or lost your card. Also, you can carry the card electronically by downloading the Co-op Connections Card app to your smart device. Go to the Apple Store or the Android Market and search for "Co-op Connections Card."

You may also obtain additional information by visiting [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop). Use the search engine to find discounts right here at home or anywhere you travel. If you have any questions concerning the Co-op Connections Card or its services, please contact Donna Rhodes at 918-775-2211.

See page 4 for local discounts.

## Reminder:

Beginning with March billing, residential accounts switch from winter rates to summer rates. Summer rates will remain in effect through November. During this time all energy usage is billed at the same rate (All kWh - \$0.08720 per kWh). Winter rates, which include December through February, are billed on a declining block rate (First 800 kWh - \$0.08720 per kWh, over 800 kWh - \$0.07720 per kWh). If you have any questions about rates, please call us at 800-328-2368.

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Alternate Emergency Only:  
 918-552-0016



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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**

# Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place

For more tips on smart tree planting in your community, contact your local electric cooperative or visit [www.ArborDay.org](http://www.ArborDay.org).

**Trees beautify our neighborhoods, and when planted in the right spot, can even help lower energy bills. But the wrong tree in the wrong place can be a hazard... especially to power lines.**

## LARGE TREES

**Height/spread of more than 40 feet, such as:**

- Maple
- Birch
- Oak
- Sweetgum
- Spruce
- Linden
- Pine

## MEDIUM TREES

**Height/spread of 25 to 40 feet, such as:**

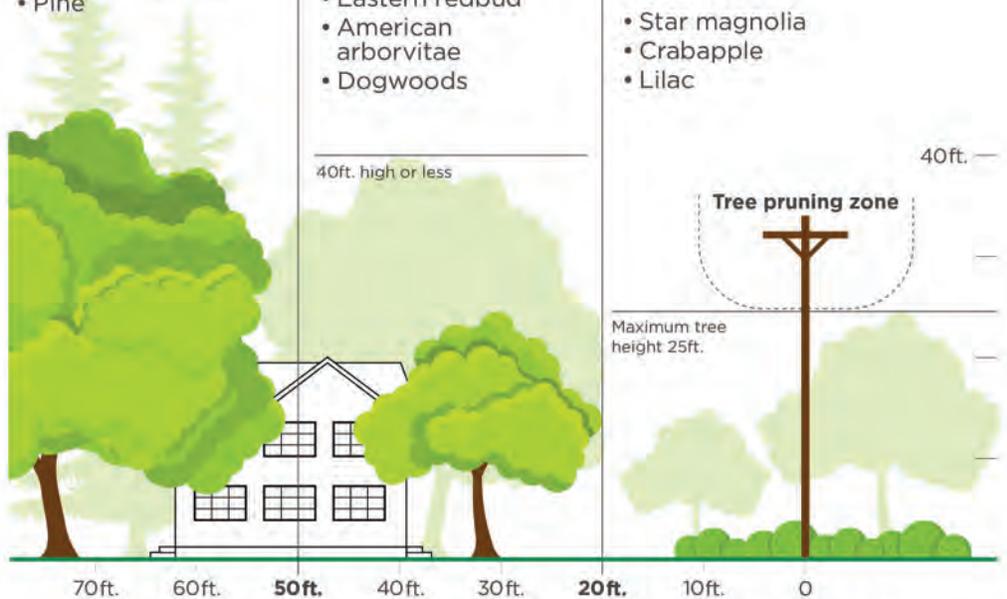
- Washington hawthorn
- Goldenraintree
- Eastern redbud
- American arborvitae
- Dogwoods

## SMALL TREES

*Avoid planting within 20 feet of power lines. When planting within 20 feet is unavoidable, use only shrubs and small trees.*

**Height/spread of no more than 25 feet such as:**

- Star magnolia
- Crabapple
- Lilac



**Be safe! Always call 811 before you dig to locate any buried utility lines.**

*Source: The Arbor Day Foundation and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association*

**Dig safely.  
 Call 811.**



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# Easy Steps to Greater Efficiency

By Anne Prince

**D**o you want to save money and electricity but have limited time, money and patience? According to the Department of Energy, a “typical American family” spends nearly \$2,000 per year on their home energy bills. Much of that money, however, is wasted through leaky windows or ducts, old appliances or inefficient heating and cooling systems.

Luckily, there are several relatively easy ways to save energy without a substantial commitment of time and money. These efforts will help you save whether you own or rent an older or newly constructed home. And, you won’t have to hire a specialist or call in a favor from someone who is handy with tools to help you.

## **Where to start**

According to Money Magazine, “improving the envelope” of your home is a good place to start. Sunlight, seasonal temperature changes and wind vibrations can loosen up even a tight home, increasing air leakage. Doors and windows may not close tightly, and duct work can spring leaks, wasting cooled and heated air. By placing weather stripping and caulk around windows and doors, you can keep cool air inside during warm months and prevent chilly air from penetrating the indoors during colder months. Sealing gaps around piping, dryer vents, fans and outlets also helps to seal the envelope and creates greater efficiency. Apply weather stripping around overlooked spaces like your attic hatch or pull-down stairs.

Replacing incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs can make a big difference in home efficiency and is one of the fastest ways to cut your energy bill. Known for their longevity and efficiency, LED bulbs have an estimated operational life span of typically 10,000 to 20,000 hours compared to 1,000 hours of a typical incandescent. According to the Department of Energy, by replacing your home’s five most frequently used light fixtures or bulbs with models that have earned the ENERGY STAR rating, you can save \$75 each year.

## **Wrapping up savings**

Installing a blanket around your water heater could reduce standby heat losses by 25 to 45 percent and save you about 7 to 16 percent in water heating costs, according to the Department of Energy. For a small investment of about \$30, you can purchase pre-cut jackets or blankets and install them in about one hour. On a safety note, the Department of

Energy recommends that you not set the thermostat above 130 degrees Fahrenheit on an electric water heater with an insulating jacket or blanket; the higher temperature setting could cause the wiring to overheat.

Given that a large portion of your monthly energy bill goes toward heating and cooling your home, it makes sense to ensure your home’s heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system is performing at an optimal level. Checking, changing or cleaning your filter extends the life of your HVAC system and saves you money.

Air filters prevent dust and allergens from clogging your HVAC system. Otherwise, dust and dirt trapped in a system’s air filter leads to several problems, including: reduced air flow in the home and up to 15 percent higher operating costs; lowered system efficiency; and costly duct cleaning or replacement. Many HVAC professionals recommend cleaning the system filters monthly. A simple task like changing the filters on your HVAC system makes your unit run more efficiently, keeping your house cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

## **Take control of your energy savings**

Take a look at your programmable thermostat. When was the last time you checked to make sure it was programmed for the current season and family schedule? This is one of the best energy-saving tools at your fingertips. It enables you to fine tune the temperature during particular hours of the day. Many models allow you to differentiate between weekday and weekend schedules, and internet-connected thermostats can learn your schedule and make adjustments automatically. Most models come with an override option so you can make manual adjustments without losing overall programming. You can only achieve these efficiencies and savings if it is programmed properly and adjusted periodically to keep pace with changes in household routines.

Remember, there are easy steps you can take now to improve the energy efficiency of your home. To learn about additional ways to save, contact CHEC at 800-328-2368 or at 918-775-2211.

*Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs 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.*



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**Daylight Savings Time begins on Sunday, March 12<sup>th</sup>.  
Don't forget to set your clock forward one hour.**

# Breaker Box Safety Basics

We use electricity in our homes throughout the day, but we rarely think about how it gets to the wall outlets or switches. Distribution lines bring electricity to homes and most commonly connect to a house through a service drop. The electricity goes through the meter box to the service panel, which is typically found in a basement or garage. The service panel, often called a breaker box, is where breakers and fuses protect the wires inside your house from electrical overload.

With so much electricity funneling out of the breaker box through the rest of the home to your outlets and switches, it is important to not only know how to use a breaker box, but also how to do so safely.

AFCIs are installed directly in the breaker box and are designed to protect against fires caused by arcing faults in home electrical wiring. Arcing faults can be triggered by overloaded circuits, damaged wires, cracked wire insulation, loose/improper connections, faulty electrical equipment, and overheated electrical wires.

An AFCI monitors current flow and can distinguish between normal, working arcs and unwanted, dangerous arcs. When an unwanted arcing condition is detected, it shuts down the circuit. It is important to note that AFCIs do not provide protection against all of the possible circuit faults that can cause fires, but they are a significant step forward in electrical fire safety.

“Unwanted arcing can create high temperatures that can ignite walls and nearby combustible materials—such

as wood and carpets,” explains electrical inspector Mike Ashenfelter, member of the Safe Electricity Advisory Board. “If you are interested in making your home safer by installing AFCIs, contact a qualified electrician to do so.”

If an appliance is malfunctioning, if there is another electrical malfunction in your home, or if the circuit breaker flipped during a power outage, it may be necessary to cut off or switch on the power at the breaker box.

If you must flip a switch at the break box, always remember to step away and look away. You want to protect your eyes and body just in case an arc should occur.

Never attempt to turn off power at the breaker box if you must stand in water to do so. If you touch the breaker box while standing in water, it could cause electric shock or death. If you cannot reach your breaker box safely, call your electric utility to shut off power at the meter.

Be sure to call a qualified electrician or your landlord if blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers are a recurring problem. This means there is something wrong with your electrical system, and it needs to be inspected.

For more information on safety around electricity, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



## Co-op Connections Local Discounts

### Stigler

Classy Cleaners  
Eaton Hole  
Kevin’s Wood Fire Grill  
Mimi’s Flowers & Gifts  
Miss Behavin Boutique  
Miss M’s Tea Room  
RMR Pest Services  
Ruben’s  
Shelly’s Café  
Stigler Printing  
Stigler Flower Box

### Sallisaw

Gibbs Lakeside RV  
Ramm’s Law Office  
Sallisaw Family Fitness  
The Green House  
Violet’s Flowers & Gifts

### Roland

Alina’s Thai & Chinese Food  
Betty’s Alterations  
Eclectic Imports  
Sando’s Flowers & Gifts  
Thrift World

### Gore

Anne-Paige Gift Boutique  
American Beauty Salon  
Emily’s Tea Room  
Tenkiller Trading Co.

### Muldrow

Custom Designs

### Porum

Catfish Shack

## Watts Cooking?



## Chicken Spaghetti

10 oz spaghetti noodles  
3 chicken breasts, boiled & cut into pieces  
Salt & pepper to taste  
1 can cream of mushroom soup  
1 lb Velveeta, cubed  
1 can Ro-Tel  
Cook spaghetti and drain. Mix all other ingredients with the spaghetti. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

