



From All of Us to All of You - Happy New Year!

On behalf of the employees and board of directors of Oakdale Electric Cooperative, we appreciate your support of the co-op and the cooperative way of business in 2013. We wish all of you, our members, a healthy, safe, prosperous and happy 2014.



Oakdale Electric Cooperative Employees

Sherry Anderson	Joe Engel	Travis Moser	Chad Schauf
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Oakdale Electric Cooperative Directors

Rick Barrett	Greg Eirschele	Jim Van Wychen
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	Bob Hess	

Resolve to Save Energy All Year Long

This year, give your household budget a gift by putting “saving energy” at the top of your list of New Year’s resolutions. It’s easier than you think: Small lifestyle changes and simple adjustments to your home can make a big difference in the long run. Here’s a list of our recommendations to help you save energy—and money—throughout the new year.

January: Lowering your thermostat just a few degrees during winter months can save as much as \$85 per year. Programmable thermostats make it easy to save by offering pre-programmed settings to regulate a home’s temperature throughout the year.

Small Steps Can Make a Big Difference

February: Adjust your water heater. Turning down the temperature gauge to below 120 degrees Fahrenheit can heat up your savings.

March: Stop air from escaping your home and money from escaping your wallet! Head down to your home’s basement and seal those leaky ducts.

April: A little caulk can go a long way. Air leaks in your home add up. Caulking cracks and openings to the outside could save more than \$200 a year.

May: Make sure your refrigerator is on your spring cleaning to-do list; a clean refrigerator will operate more efficiently. Throw out expired items, clean the refrigerator inside and out, and check the temperature gauge. For maximum operating efficiency, a refrigerator’s temperature should be between 37 and 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

June: When was the last time you changed a filter? Replacing furnace and air conditioner filters regularly can have a big impact on a home’s energy use. Dirty filters can restrict air flow and reduce the overall efficiency of your cooling system, forcing it to work harder on hot days.

July: Your home’s cooling costs can skyrocket—right along with the temperature outside—during summer months. Keeping your thermostat set between 78 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit can save up to 8 percent on monthly cooling bills.

August: Heading out of town on vacation? Be sure to unplug all of your electronic devices like computers, printers, TV and cable boxes, DVD players, and microwaves. Electronics with digital displays and instant-on features consume energy even if they’re not in use.

September: Be a “fan-atic.” While they don’t replace an air conditioner or a heat pump, fans move the air so everyone feels more comfortable. On a milder day, a fan is a much more energy-efficient choice than cranking up the air conditioning. Fans cool people, not rooms, so turn them off when you leave.

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Protect Electronics, Prevent Hazards

Did you get some new electronics for Christmas? Before you begin using them, take a moment for safety considerations. Big-ticket electronics are at the top of a lot of wish lists, but safety may not be. Installing and operating these items safely protects not only the expensive equipment, but also your entire home. The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) offers the following tips. To learn more, visit holidaysafety.org.

Setting Up

- Check that all electrical items are certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Canadian Standards Association (CSA), or Intertek (ETL).
- Always read and follow the manufacturer's instructions before use.
- Send warranty and product registration forms for new items to manufacturers in order to be notified about product recalls. Recall information is also available on the website of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (<http://www.cpsc.gov>).
- Never install an exterior television or radio antenna close enough to contact power lines if it falls.
- Never remove the ground pin (the third prong) to make a three-prong plug fit into a two-prong outlet.
- Make sure entertainment centers and computer workstations have enough space around them for ventilation of electronic equipment.

Safe Use

- All appliances and cords should be kept in good condition. Examine them regularly for damage, and repair or dispose of damaged items.
- Keep cords out of reach of children and pets.
- Keep liquids, including drinks, away from electrical devices. Spills can result in dangerous shocks or fires.
- Unplug equipment when not in use to save energy and reduce the risks for shocks or fires. Power strips or surge protectors make a good central turn-off point.
- Always unplug electrical items by grasping the plug firmly rather than pulling on the cord.
- If you receive any kind of shock from a large appliance or any other electrical device, stop using it until an electrician has checked it.

- If an appliance smokes or sparks, or if you feel a tingle or light shock when it's on, stop using it. Discard and replace it or have it repaired by an authorized service provider.

Extension Cords

Extension cords are meant to provide a temporary solution. They should not be used as a long-term or permanent electrical circuit. Whenever possible, arrange furniture so that there are outlets available for equipment without the use of extension cords. But if you must use an extension cord, consider the following safety precautions:

- Never use an extension cord that feels hot or is damaged in any way. Touching even a single exposed strand can result in an electric shock or burn.
- Only use weather-resistant, heavy-gauge extension cords marked "for outdoor use" outside.
- Keep all outdoor extension cords clear of snow and standing water.
- Do not place power cords or extension cords in high-traffic areas or under carpets, rugs, or furniture (to avoid overheating and tripping hazards), and never nail or staple extension cords to the wall or baseboard. ■



Surge protector or power strip?

Although surge protectors and power strips both allow you to plug several devices in one location, it is important for consumers to understand that they are not interchangeable. A true surge protector includes internal components that divert or suppress the extra current from surges, protecting your valuable electronics from electrical spikes, while a power strip simply provides more outlets for a circuit.—Source: *Electrical Safety Foundation International*

New Year's Resolutions

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October: Get ready for winter by insulating your attic. Adding nine or more inches of insulation could save you more than \$150 a year.

November: As the weather cools down, pull up your window shades. Keeping blinds open during cold weather lets heat from sunlight in, reducing the need to turn up your home's thermostat.

December: Put a new ENERGY STAR appliance at the top of your Christmas wish list. Upgrading appliances like washing machines to ENERGY STAR-rated models can save up to \$140 per year.

Oakdale Electric Cooperative is dedicated to being an energy efficiency resource for its members. To learn more about how you can save money through energy efficiency practices, call us at (800) 241-2468 or visit us online at www.oakdalerec.com, where you'll find links to other energy-saving sources we provide, including Focus on Energy and Questline.

For even more information, check out TogetherWeSave.com, an online portal to energy-savings tips that uses real dollar savings projections to motivate small changes in behavior that add up to big savings. ■



Join our E-mail List and Keep Informed!

If you've got an e-mail address, we'd love to have it! From time to time we need to notify you, and e-mail is often the most efficient and easy way to do that. However, we don't have everyone's e-mail addresses on record. Please help us by sending us an e-mail at info@oakdalerec.com with your own updated contact information, especially your e-mail address. We appreciate your cooperation!



Watch Your January Statement for Previous Year's Energy Charges

Each year around tax filing time, we receive calls from many of you asking for the amount you paid for energy charges for the previous year. Hopefully, we've been able to save you the call. That amount will now be printed on your statements that you receive about the first of January each year.



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