

Can You Help Us Find These People?

Please check the following list of names. If your name appears on this list, contact our office. Oakdale Electric Cooperative would like to return capital credits to those who earned them; otherwise, unclaimed capital credits will be assigned to the Federated Youth Foundation. These funds are then used in the cooperative's scholarship and education programs. The following individuals have not claimed their capital credits. Please contact our office either in person, by mail, or by phoning 608-372-4131 or sending an email to tvonhadn@oakdalerec.com.

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Making a Change for the Better

By Anne Prince

When it comes to energy efficiency in the home, sometimes small changes can make a big impact. A small, unglamorous 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. It also saves money. And the savings gained from having your system run more efficiently can be applied to more fun or entertaining pursuits that your family can enjoy together.

The Lowdown on Dirt

As you move around your home, you drive dust into the air from carpets, furniture, and drapes. Regardless of where it comes from, dust and dirt trapped in a system's air filter lead to several problems, including:

- Reduced air flow in the home and up to 15 percent higher operating costs
- Costly duct cleaning or replacement
- Lowered system efficiency

Making the Switch

Now that you know the facts, it's time to get busy changing or cleaning the air filter in your heating/cooling system. Many HVAC professionals recommend that you clean or change the filter on your air conditioner or furnace monthly. It's simple and easy, and in many cases, it only takes a few minutes.

Filters are available in a variety of types and efficiencies, rated by a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV). MERV, a method developed by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, tests filter effectiveness. ▶

Maintaining Your Air Conditioner

Annual maintenance can help improve your comfort and the efficiency of your air conditioner while prolonging the life of your unit. Hire a certified professional when your unit needs more than basic maintenance.

1

Routinely replace or clean your air filters. This can lower your air conditioner's energy consumption by 5-15 percent.



2

Check your air conditioner's evaporator coil every year and clean it as necessary.

3

If your coil fins are bent, use a "fin comb" to straighten them.

4

If you have a split system, be sure to clean debris and leaves from the fan, compressor, and condenser.



5

Occasionally pass a stiff wire through your unit's drain channels to prevent clogs.

6

For window air conditioners, inspect the window seals to keep cool air from escaping.



Source: Department of Energy

The higher the MERV number, the higher the filter's effectiveness at keeping dust out of your system. While most types of filters must be replaced, some filters are reusable. And don't forget about the winter months. Your heating system needs to work as efficiently as possible to keep you warm (and your loved one feeling snuggly), and a clean air filter helps it do just that.

Heating and cooling professionals recommend turning your system off before changing the air filter. Make sure that the arrow on the filter—which indicates the direction of the airflow—is pointing toward the blower motor. When you've made the change, turn your system back on.

A Teachable Moment

Beyond saving money and improving the air quality in your home, changing your air filter is a great opportunity to teach your family more about energy efficiency. Consider getting everyone involved, and the entire family will learn how simple changes can make a big difference.

For other tips on how to save, visit our website at www.oakdalerec.com, or call the efficiency experts at Oakdale Electric Cooperative. ■

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.



Oakdale Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



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Deadline is Near for Oakdale Electric Cooperative's Member Photo Contest

Attention, shutterbugs: This is the LAST CALL for photos for Oakdale Electric Cooperative's 2015 Member Photo Contest! Winning photos will be featured in our 2016 calendar and may also be used in future newsletters or cooperative publications. The photo contest runs through August 21, 2015; however, submitted photos can be taken outside this date range.

Photos must be taken within Oakdale Electric Cooperative's service area. They should be of horizontal orientation and should capture life in rural Wisconsin, whether it's with landscapes, wildlife, or people.

Photos can be emailed to dprotz@oakdalerec.com, mailed to P.O. Box 128, Oakdale, WI 54649, or dropped off at the Oakdale Electric Cooperative office (489 N. Oakwood St., Oakdale).

A completed entry form must accompany each photo. For a complete set of rules, as well as entry forms and photo release forms, please visit our website at www.oakdalerec.com.

HURRY!
**Deadline for this
year's Member
Photo Contest is
August 21!**