



Willie's World

A Publication of Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative

January 2010 Issue

TRACKING THE ELECTRICITY YOU USE

Articles:

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Eat potato chips straight out of the bag and they'll be gone in no time. Pour them into a bowl first and they disappear a little slower.

The same goes for electricity. Learning to track how much electricity your home consumes remains a good way to start managing electric use—billed by your electric co-op in kilowatt-hours (kWh).

Devices are appearing in stores that provide a constant, digital reading of how much electricity your home or even individual appliances are using. One type, like the Kill A Watt™, fits between an electrical outlet and an appliance to give you an instant reading of how much electricity an appliance draws.

Another type connects to your electricity meter and wirelessly relays usage information to a small screen inside. Called an in-home display, the device looks similar to a wireless weather monitor and can help make consumers more aware of energy being used day to day. Research conducted by the Arlington, VA-based Cooperative Research Network (CRN), the research arm of Arlington, Va.-based

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, shows that most consumers who have an in-home display use less energy than those without one. And even after homeowners stop paying attention to the devices, most still use 1 to 3 percent less energy than before.

"The question of whether in-home displays catch on and become permanent fixtures in the American home is still open," explains Brian Sloboda, program manager with CRN. "However, for anyone wanting to take a proactive approach to understanding electric consumption, the in-home display may be worth exploring. You could use the knowledge that an in-house display provides to change the way you use electricity in your home and save some money."

There's also the old-fashioned way of tracking electricity use: reading your meter. As your home draws current from power lines, your electricity meter keeps a steady record of every watt being used. Many meters today are digital, replacing the older—though still reliable—design that uses spinning disks and dials.

Digital versions make tracking energy use a breeze: jot down the number you see, and check it again in a month. The difference between the two represents the amount of electricity that has been used for that month, or a typical billing period. Check it more frequently to get an idea of how you use electricity in a given week, or even day by day.

To read an older model meter (with spinning dials), write down the numbers as shown on the small dials from left to right. Some of the dials spin clockwise, some counter-clockwise, but record each number closest to the dial hand. Once you have the full reading it can be compared to later readings, as described above.

If you have any questions about reading your meter or learning more about how much electricity your home uses, please contact Arkansas Valley Electric at 1-800-468-2176.

-Scott Gates

Sources: Cooperative Research Network, U.S. Department of Energy

MONTHLY SAFETY TIP



Willie Wirehand wants you to remember...

"Protect small children. Unplug all appliances, such as hair dryers or coffee makers, when they are not in use."

Holiday Closing

Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative offices in Ozark, Waldron, Pocola and Van Buren will be closed Friday January 1, 2010 in observance of New Years.

In case of emergency, Ozark, Van Buren and Pocola service area call 1-800-468-2176.

Waldron service area call 1-800-468-2152.

For automated outage reporting, call 1-866-TOAVECC or [report online](#).

LINEMAN LIGHT THE WORLD, ONE LIFE AT TIME

A well-worn joke between line workers: "If they sent a lineman to the moon, there wouldn't be a dark side."

Our line crews are known for their ability to maintain electric systems, extend distribution lines to growing communities, and fix trouble spots during storms. Despite these accomplishments, few linemen have experienced the wonder of providing power to a family for the first time. But that's changing fast.

Electricity is something most of us grew up with. With all this talk about climate change, energy efficiency, and the impact congressional action might have on our monthly electric bills, we sometimes forget we're lucky to have power at all.

Currently, more than 2 billion people around the globe live without electricity. And as electric co-ops across the country celebrate 75 years of providing safe, reliable, and affordable electric service for rural Americans, another story unfolds, echoing our success. Volunteer linemen from Arkansas and across the nation are spreading rural electrification overseas, sharing light and hope with war-torn or forgotten communities.

These men and women are volunteering personal time to bring a sense of safety to folks in distant lands, sometimes simply by adding street lights. They're delivering dreams as they wire classrooms for electricity. Medicine can finally be refrigerated and micro-businesses are born.

All of these amazing efforts are coordinated by NRECA International Programs—a division of Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the service arm of the nation's 900-plus not-for-profit electric co-ops. Since its founding in 1962, NRECA International Programs has brought lights and power to more than 100 million rural residents in other countries.

But the non-profit organization doesn't just put up a few utility poles and leave. That's not the co-op way. Staff members along with volunteers like line workers teach locals how to build and maintain simple power grids and run their own utilities. They introduce the co-op business model and show what electric power can do for schools, health clinics, farms, and local economies.

Co-op volunteers from the United States are active in 12 countries today, ranging from Costa Rica to Southern Sudan. You can help, too. To watch videos of linemen assisting overseas or to make a donation supporting these electrification efforts, visit NRECAFoundation.coop.

Sure, if they sent line workers to the moon there'd be no dark side. And with the support of electric cooperatives, volunteer linemen, and co-op consumers like you, there won't be a dark side of the earth, either, in a few years.



1-800-468-2176



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Use your microwave for cooking whenever possible. They use 50 to 65 percent less energy than conventional ovens and do not heat up your house in the summer. However, conventional ovens may be more appropriate for larger size items when cooking time is increased.

Source: Touchstone Energy Cooperatives

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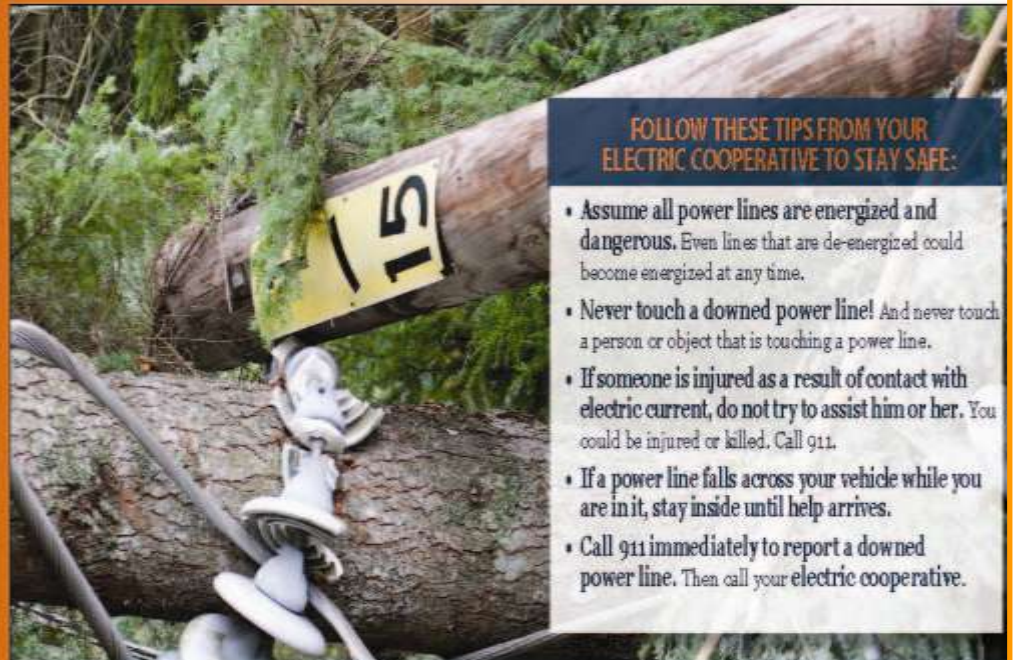
CO-OP CONNECTIONS CARD

Since its launch in August, the Co-op Connections card program has saved Arkansas Valley Electric members \$37,252.22 on prescription medication!

Questions? Contact [Member Services](#) at 800-468-2176.

Stay Clear!

*A downed power line may not be a dead line.
It could cause serious injury or death.*

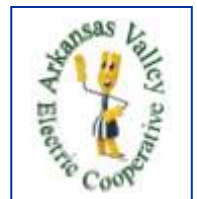


FOLLOW THESE TIPS FROM YOUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE TO STAY SAFE:

- Assume all power lines are energized and dangerous. Even lines that are de-energized could become energized at any time.
- Never touch a downed power line! And never touch a person or object that is touching a power line.
- If someone is injured as a result of contact with electric current, do not try to assist him or her. You could be injured or killed. Call 911.
- If a power line falls across your vehicle while you are in it, stay inside until help arrives.
- Call 911 immediately to report a downed power line. Then call your electric cooperative.

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We Welcome Your [Comments and suggestions](#).