

WHITE RIVER ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

NOVEMBER 2020



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White River Electric

Association, Inc., strives to provide its member-consumers with safe, reliable and responsible electric energy and other services at the most reasonable costs possible while remaining committed to customer and community service.



Meeting New Challenges with Optimism

BY ALAN MICHALEWICZ

GENERAL MANAGER



ALAN J. MICHALEWICZ

Over the past few months, like so many of you, White River Electric Association was forced to meet new challenges. For most of us, we were blindsided by the twists and turns 2020 brought and the fallout that continues worldwide as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately, in rural America, we are buffered from much of the social unrest affecting more urban areas, but the trickle effect is inevitable — no matter where you choose to call home. This time last year, we expressed our gratitude for a strong economy, good health and the unity and strength of our local community. As a community, we've seen “boom and bust” more times than we care to count and there's one thing we know for certain: Our community is resilient.

The past seven months have certainly changed our “normal.” Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, White River Electric made numerous adjustments to programs and operations in order to provide business continuity and maintain reliability for our members. White River Electric continues to examine ways to cut costs and work more efficiently, all the while staying focused on a bigger mission of helping our consumer-members during this turbulent time and to be a catalyst for good.

Though many of our annual local events, like the Range Call, Meeker Classic, HopeWest Gala and the Fall Festival, had to be abbreviated or canceled in 2020, we believe they will rebound in 2021 with a rejuvenated dedication and purpose.

These events not only bring income to our community but also remind us to be thankful for the dedicated event organizers who bring a sense of unity and tradition through each event. Regardless of recent cancellations, this is a time to recognize and celebrate so many local volunteers who embody the slogan “commitment to community.”

As we learn to ebb and flow through the ever-changing times, WREA continues to participate in state and national educational programs such as the Washington D.C. Youth Tour and Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp. These programs allow Meeker's brightest young people to travel to Washington, D.C., for a weeklong immersion of policy-making in action and participate in sessions hosted by some of the nation's most celebrated motivational speakers.

Our core job is to keep the lights on, and it will remain our primary focus as we look toward 2021. In addition, we will continue our commitment to safety — not just for our employees, but for our community as well. If there's anything we can do to help you — whether it's providing energy-saving advice to help lower your monthly bill or discussing payment plan options during these difficult times — please reach out to us at 970-878-5041.

Concern for community is the heart and soul of who we are. No matter what the future brings, we are grateful for your feedback and support, and you can count on your local electric co-op to care about you.

ANOTHER LOOK AT ENERGY STAR

BY DERRILL HOLLY

When it comes to consumer technology, innovation not only can mean more and better features, it can also mean more efficient energy use designed to save you money. That's been the goal of the government-backed Energy Star program since 1992.

White River Electric and more than 100 electric cooperatives in 18 states maintain partner status with the Energy Star program. Through this partnership, we participate in incentive programs for certain types of consumer products that can include rebates for qualified purchases.

"When it comes to heating and cooling costs, savings are driven by local climate conditions," said Maureen McNamara, a utility partnership manager with the Energy Star program. "That's why we're constantly looking at products in the marketplace to determine which ones best meet consumer needs."

That means many products that now carry the Energy Star label are much more efficient than similar devices were a decade ago.

Replacing older heating and cooling equipment with a properly sized and installed Energy Star-certified heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system can save the average consumer about \$160 per year on their utility costs.



▲ When shopping for new appliances and electronics, look for the Energy Star certification label, which signals an energy-efficient product. Photo Source: Energy Star.

Energy Star-rated smart thermostats can add another 8% to your annual savings, and a heat pump water heater rated under the program can potentially shave \$330 from your annual utility costs.

"Consumers need to consider two price tags: the price to buy a product and the price to operate it," McNamara said.

With consumers taking a more active role in controlling their energy costs, Energy Star added more online tools and provides useful information on various categories of appliances, home entertainment and personal communications devices.

"The EnergyStar.gov online portal for saving at home provides advice that is tailored to individual circumstances," McNamara said, "so not only where you live, but whether you rent or own your home, and whether you choose to take on projects on your own or hire contractors."

"We know that some consumers can take on larger and more expensive projects, while others have to pursue efficiency goals incrementally and are much more interested in options requiring less initial investment."

McNamara also added that Energy Star ratings are regularly updated to account for design changes and improved overall efficiency.

"That's helped us keep the Energy Star brand relevant for consumers," McNamara said. "When we revise our standards, that adds value to our program and to consumers."

To learn more about Energy Star-rated appliances and electronics, visit EnergyStar.gov.

Derrill Holly writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



November 2020
Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month

Keep cold air out to save energy.
Seal air leaks around pipes and any gaps around chimneys and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.

Source: energy.gov

Update Your Kitchen Appliances for Better Efficiency

BY MARIA KANEVSKY

With more people staying at home than ever before, many of us are spending extra time in the kitchen. Whether you're roasting a chicken, blending your favorite smoothie or baking a loaf of sourdough bread, kitchen appliances are used nearly every day.

Using energy-efficient kitchen appliances can help you save energy over the long run and ultimately lower your monthly energy bills. For any home chef who is interested in new, electric gadgets for the kitchen — while also being energy efficient — there are several options available.

Stoves consume a great deal of energy in the kitchen. One of the most energy-efficient forms of cooktop cooking is with an induction cooktop. Electromagnetic energy used in induction cooktops is directly transferred to the pan, helping to reduce cooking times, which saves energy.

Gas stovetops are generally less energy efficient than induction cooktops or any other type of electric cooktop for that matter. This is because a significant amount of energy from the gas stovetop is not transferred directly to the food, instead heating the surrounding air and warming your kitchen.

Since induction cooktops use a magnetic field to heat pans, you can touch the stove without burning yourself, which is an added safety bonus. It's important to note that induction cooktops only work with compatible cookware that is magnetic. An easy test for compatibility is to place a magnet near the cookware; if it sticks, then it will work with an induction cooktop.

A cup of morning coffee or tea is a daily ritual for many. This makes the hot water kettle an essential part of the kitchen to achieve that daily brew. Electric kettles are more energy efficient than cooktop kettles, since the heating component underneath the kettle directly heats the water. The electric kettle's automatic shutoff feature further helps to reduce energy and prevents overheating. Another benefit with electric kettles is that you can choose the exact temperature to heat the water, which allows for a finer brew that brings out the best flavor in any tea or coffee. Overall, electric kettles are more convenient, efficient and portable than their cooktop counterparts.

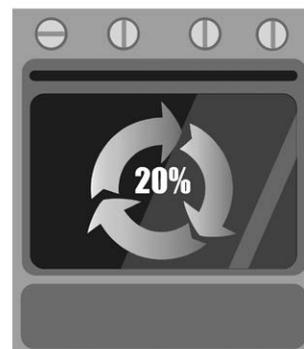


▲ Energy-efficient kitchen appliances can help you save energy over the long run, and ultimately lower your monthly energy bills. Photo credit: Whirlpool.

Microwave ovens are typically the most efficient way to cook or heat food compared to other kitchen appliances, and state-of-the-art ovens are becoming smarter. Some microwave ovens can even scan barcodes of microwaveable meals and heat them accordingly. Others can be paired with an Amazon Alexa or Google Assistant and react to voice commands. Many of these additional features are becoming increasingly common among smart home devices to provide extra comfort and convenience.

Kitchen appliances aren't replaced often, so be sure to do your research before you purchase any new gadgets. Different types of products provide varying benefits, and understanding your needs on the front end will help you make the right choice.

Maria Kanevsky is a program analyst for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



Convection ovens use **20% less energy** a month compared to a standard oven.

Source: Energystar.gov

Safe Electricity.org®

Five Electrical Safety Features to Be Thankful For

Most days, we go about our lives without thinking too much about the many electronic gadgets and electrical safety features that allow us to perform simple tasks at work and home without a second thought. This Thanksgiving, let's take a moment to be thankful for some of the devices that help make our daily tasks safer and more convenient.

For your safety: built-in devices

GFCIs. Ground fault circuit interrupters are inexpensive electrical devices that can either be installed in your electrical system or built into a power cord to protect you from severe electrical shocks. GFCIs are generally installed where electrical circuits may accidentally come into contact with water, such as kitchens, bath and laundry rooms, outdoors or in the garage. Be sure to test GFCIs monthly to make sure they are working properly.

AFCIs. Arc fault circuit interrupters could potentially prevent more than 50% of electrical fires that occur every year, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. These safety devices are typically found within your electrical panel or receptacles in the wall. An arc fault is a dangerous electrical problem caused by damaged, overheated or stressed electrical wiring or devices.

Circuit breakers. Usually found in a garage, basement or laundry room, circuit

breaker boxes are an essential safety feature in your home, preventing electrical injuries and fires. Each box is filled with individual circuit breakers designed to “trip,” or shut off, when necessary to stop the flow of electricity. Circuits trip for several reasons, including overloaded circuits (too much draw on one circuit), ground faults (abnormal flow in a circuit) and short circuits (when current travels along an unintended path).

Use them safely: convenience items

Device chargers. Whether we are using devices for work or personal reasons, most of us can't go a day without accessing our favorite cellphone, tablet, laptop or other portable essential. While relying on our chargers to keep these items running, be sure to treat charging components with care and use them correctly. Here are some safety tips:

- Personal electronic devices should not be placed under pillows or used on or underneath bedding.
- Do not leave cords plugged in when not charging because little ones or pets who put them in their mouths can get burned or shocked.
- Do not leave chargers around when not in use because toddlers might try to insert the wrong end into an electrical outlet and get shocked or burned — childproof your outlets as well if they are not the tamper resistant versions.

- Don't use charging devices near water or in damp conditions.
- Replace original charging components with the same brand and type whenever possible. Using off-brand or generic versions can be dangerous if they are faulty.

Extension cords and multi-outlet power strips. Extension cords and multi-outlet power strips or devices, while incredibly handy, should always be inspected for damage prior to use. Use them as a temporary fix, not a long-term solution, and use them safely:

- Plug them directly into an outlet and not into another extension cord or power strip.
- If you are using a strip or extension cord outside, make sure it is rated for outdoor use.
- Never use an item that feels hot or is damaged in any way.
- Make sure cords and strips are approved by a reputable independent testing laboratory such as UL.
- When using an extension cord, make sure the wattage rating of the cord and the appliance match.

These are just a few items be thankful for this year.

For more information about safety around electricity, go to SafeElectricity.org.

Winter Storm Outage Preparedness

It's the time of year when snow, ice and wind can disrupt power. Assemble an emergency supply kit to keep you safe and warm during an outage with items such as flashlights, a first aid kit, nonperishable foods and drinking water. If you already have an emergency kit from last winter, review the items to ensure nothing is expired and replace needed supplies.

For more ideas for your emergency supply kit, visit SafeElectricity.org.

