

# WHITE RIVER ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

JANUARY 2021



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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.



## LET'S CONNECT

BY ALAN MICHALEWICZ

GENERAL MANAGER

When we say that we live in a “connected” world, most of us think about technology, like our smartphones and other devices and gadgets. But when you’re a consumer-member of an electric co-op, there’s so much more to being part of our connected co-op community.

As a consumer-member of White River Electric Association, you help to power good in our local community throughout the year with donations and sponsorships that help the most vulnerable in our community. WREA is proud of our long-standing tradition of supporting a variety of local groups, including the Meeker School District, Meeker Hope West Hospice, Meals on Wheels, RBC 4-H, Horizons, the Pioneer Health Care Foundation and many other worthy groups. We depend on you because you power our success and, when WREA does well, the community thrives because we’re all connected.

We greatly value our connection to you, the consumer-members we serve. And we want to help you maximize the value you can get from WREA through a variety of programs, products and services that we offer our consumer-members. If you haven’t already, please sign on to your WREA online account at [www.wrea.org](http://www.wrea.org) and go to the SmartHub link. You can begin to receive electronic bills, pay online, set up auto pay and monitor your electric usage. It is a free and secure way to pay bills and monitor your account. Call WREA at 970-878-5041 if you need assistance.

When you follow WREA on our Facebook page, you can stay up to date on local events, outages, our annual meeting, director elections and more. When you connect with us, you get real-time updates from your co-op. That’s why we want to make sure we have your most current contact information on



ALAN MICHALEWICZ

hand. If we can’t connect with you on these platforms or in person, you could miss out on potential savings or important information. Please call, log on to your SmartHub account or email WREA at [wrea@wrea.org](mailto:wrea@wrea.org) to update your information.

White River Electric Association relies on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, and up-to-date contact information from our members helps ensure that we can provide the highest level of service that you expect and deserve.

Updated contact information can even speed up the power restoration process during an outage. That’s because when you call to report an outage, our automated system recognizes your phone number and matches it with your account location. Accurate information helps our outage-management system predict the location and possible cause of an outage, making it easier for WREA crews to correct the problem.

We hope you will connect with us whenever and wherever you can — whether that means attending our annual meeting, stopping by the front counter, providing consumer-member feedback on a recent visit or call with our employees, or simply downloading our app.

WREA exists to serve our consumer-members and, when we’re better connected to you and our local community, we’re better prepared to answer the call.

To update your contact information or to learn more about co-op products and services that can help you save, visit [www.wrea.org](http://www.wrea.org), call 970-878-5041 or stop by our office at 233 6th Street, Meeker.

We look forward to connecting with you.



◀ Adding humidity inside your home can make the air feel a little warmer. *Photo Credit: Abby Berry, NRECA*

# Five Ways to Stay Cozy All Winter Long

BY ABBY BERRY

**B**aby, it's cold outside. When you're feeling chilly at home, there are several budget-friendly ways you can keep comfortable without turning up the thermostat.

Here are five easy ways to stay cozy this winter.

Whether you're experiencing extremely cold winter temps or you simply "run cold," an electric blanket can deliver quick warmth that a regular throw or blanket cannot. Electric blankets can include a variety of features, like timers and dual temperature settings (if your cuddle buddy prefers less heat). This winter, consider an electric blanket instead of turning up the heat and your energy bill will thank you.

One of the easiest ways to stay cozy at home is to keep your feet warm. Our feet play a critical role in regulating body temperature. When your feet are warm, your body automatically feels warmer. Try a pair of comfortable wool socks or house slippers to stay toasty.

On winter days when the sun is shining, take advantage and harness natural warmth from sunlight. If you open all curtains, drapes and blinds in your home to let the sunshine in, you'll feel the difference.

Another way to make your home cozier is to use a humidifier. Cold air doesn't hold water vapor like warm air, so adding humidity inside your home can help you feel a little warmer. A favorable level of humidity inside your home can also help clear sinuses, soften skin and improve sleep.

Beyond adding visual appeal to your home, area rugs can also provide extra insulation and a warm surface for your feet on cold winter days. Use large area rugs in rooms where you spend the most

time. You'll enjoy the new colors and textures of the rug, and the additional warmth will help keep your home comfortable.

These are just a few ideas to stay cozy this winter without turning up the thermostat. Don't forget the hot chocolate!

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

## SAVE MONEY

Electricity is becoming cleaner every day and can save consumers money on their energy costs over time.

**Did you know...**  
Replacing your HVAC system with an electric heat pump can **save you nearly \$1,000 per year** on your heating and cooling bills.<sup>1</sup>

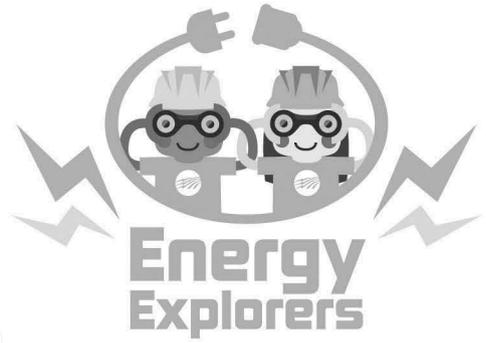
**Did you know...**  
The average cost of **charging an electric car** is equivalent to **\$1.20 per gallon of gasoline**.<sup>2</sup>

**Did you know...**  
**Owning an electric vehicle** can **save you over \$800** in annual maintenance.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jeffmcMahon/2018/08/19/if-youre-heating-with-propane-or-oil-study-says-go-electric/#268f8d77a71>  
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/femp/regaffairs>  
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-11-29/electric-vehicles-drivers-save-a-lot-on-gas-money>

# 2021 ENERGY EFFICIENCY CALENDAR

There are so many ways you can save energy! Saving energy helps reduce your family's monthly bills – and it helps our environment. Change your energy use habits by following the monthly tips below. Keep this calendar on your refrigerator to remind family members to be energy efficient throughout the year.



## JANUARY

Turn off ceiling fans when you leave room.



## FEBRUARY

Instead of turning up the heat, put on an extra layer of clothing or stay cozy under a blanket.

## MARCH

Turn off lights when you leave a room.



## APRIL

Ask an adult to help you plant a tree to help shade your home in the summer.

## MAY

Decorate your backyard or porch with solar-powered lights.

## JUNE

Take short showers instead of baths.



## JULY

Dry heavy linens outside on a clothesline instead of using the dryer.

## AUGUST

Ask an adult to help you schedule a reminder to change the A/C filter every 60-90 days.

## SEPTEMBER

Turn off running water while brushing your teeth.



## OCTOBER

Unplug energy vampires, like chargers, gaming consoles and cable/satellite boxes.

## NOVEMBER

Remind family members to use cold water when washing clothes.



## DECEMBER

Decorate your home with energy-saving LED holiday lights.

# To Mask or Not to Mask: That is (Not) the Question

Most people don't enjoy wearing masks. They are inconvenient and put the kibosh on social interaction. They can give us the sudden urge to take a deep breath and they can make it difficult for others to hear us, to name just some of the downsides.

However, as we all know, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention changed its stance on mask recommendations from when COVID-19 first hit in the United States. CDC experts first advocated not wearing masks but later changed that recommendation.

Since recommending mask usage, the CDC came up with these specific guidelines for wearing them:

- Wear masks that have two or more layers to help stop the spread of COVID-19.
- Masks are recommended for people aged 2 and older.
- They should not be worn by children younger than age 2, those who have trouble breathing or people who cannot remove it without help.
- People should not wear masks intended for health care workers (for example, N95 respirators).
- Although it might be better than nothing, the CDC does not currently recommend using gaiters or face shields. (A gaiter is like a thick headband you wear around your neck that you can pull up and over your mouth and nose.)

## How to select a mask

Although mostly common knowledge these days, here are some reminders about selecting types of masks and how to wear them.

### According to the CDC, choose masks that:

- Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric.



▲ The Centers for Disease Control has specific guidelines for wearing masks to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- Completely cover your nose and mouth.
- Fit snugly against the sides of your face and don't have gaps.

### Do not buy or use masks that:

- Are made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe, such as vinyl.
- Have exhalation valves or vents, which allow virus particles to escape or possibly enter.
- Are intended for health care workers, including N95 respirators or surgical masks.

If you wear glasses, find a mask that fits closely over your nose or one that has a nose wire or reinforcement to help limit fogging. And, although tempting, a mask cannot do its job if it is worn around your neck, under your nose, on your chin or dangling from one ear... or left in your car.



January 2021  
**Energy Efficiency**  
Tip of the Month

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips. Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features that are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use (also known as phantom load).

Source: nrel.gov