

Unplug with Meaningful Community Programs

Most adults have a vague memory of a time when “checking for messages” meant listening to an answering machine. We carried on with our days without relying on cellphones and managed just fine, but today we are more connected than ever through our smartphones and other devices.

Our phones are so much more now — from cameras to calendars to social media connections — and truly disconnecting from them can be difficult. But it’s even harder for our kids to unplug because they only know life with these tiny screens. It’s difficult for them to imagine life without computers, gaming devices, tablets or cellphones.

But there’s great value in unplugging for children and adults, even if it’s for just a short period of time. For kids, time away from the screen to be outside with other children allows them to connect with nature and others in a way that a virtual experience simply does not allow. They are able to experience life in the moment and allow their creativity and energy to break free.

Fortunately, we have access to great community programs and organizations

that provide children with a safe place to play, learn and grow, while cultivating new skills and interests.

These types of clubs and programs offer kids an opportunity to explore activities and interests outside of school academics. Children can investigate areas they might not otherwise have access to and discover new interests and passions. They often learn new skills and strengthen existing ones. It’s no secret that the broader the range of experiences and activities children are exposed to, the more likely they are to find their own path and possibly a career.

Community programs also foster important leadership development and public speaking skills. Through guided and informal play and activities, children learn problem-solving and social skills that enable them to resolve conflicts peacefully and improve interpersonal relationships.

Adults can also find meaningful opportunities to spend time with the kids when we all unplug. From board games to craft projects to playing in the park, there are many ways we can unplug for some family fun.

While you and your children are disconnecting, take a moment to identify potential



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energy savings. Unplug electronics that are not in use to avoid “vampire” energy loss. This is the energy that is drained from technology and electronics even when they are not in use. For example, although it is turned off, your television is waiting to receive a signal from the remote and your DVR is waiting to record the next show or perform an update.

Let’s encourage youngsters to step away from the screens and join in — to play and be part of an organization that helps them connect with others, find meaningful interactions and explore new activities and interests.

When you do plug back in, San Isabel Electric is here to help you save money and energy by connecting you with our energy saving programs and services. While we’d love to see you in person, we’re also just a call or click away at 800-279-SIEA or SIEA.com.



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Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Old, uninsulated and improperly installed exterior doors can waste energy and money. Shut the door on wasted energy by weather stripping and sealing all exterior doors. If you have an old exterior door, consider replacing it with a newer, energy efficient model.

Source: energy.gov

October is
**NATIONAL
CO-OP MONTH**

Thank you for being a valued member of San Isabel Electric.



The Pros and Cons of App-Enabled Lighting Options

BY MARIA KANEVSKY

Out of all the smart home technologies available on the market, smart lighting is one of the easiest technologies to integrate into your home. Smart lighting can be controlled by voice command, through your smartphone or through a smart home hub (such as Amazon Alexa), making them relatively easy to control. They are also among the most affordable smart home devices, starting at about \$10 per bulb.

There's a range of benefits from using smart lightbulbs. One of the most useful aspects of smart lighting is the ability to control the lighting while you're away from home. For example, if you leave for work and forget to turn off the lights at home, you can easily turn them off with a few taps on a smartphone app. Alternatively, if you're traveling but want to appear as if you're home, you can turn on your lights at a certain time to create that illusion.

Similarly, many smart lights offer the option for a customizable schedule. Consumers can schedule lighting to turn on or off at certain times of the day, depending on their preferences. For instance, turning off all the lights at home just before bedtime, or scheduling the lights to turn on just before returning home from work.

To increase safety at home, many smart lightbulbs have motion-detection technology that can sense if a person is in the room or nearby. This feature can be programmed to send an alert to your phone when the smart lighting detects an unexpected motion, either inside or outside the home.

Beyond the more practical applications, smart lighting can simply be fun to use. Bulbs are available in a variety of colors and dimming options that can help to set different themes or moods for the room, from an exciting bright white to a calming dim light. Various color temperatures can



Out of all the smart home technologies available on the market, smart lighting is one of the easiest and most affordable technologies to integrate into your home.
Photo Credit: Philips.

create different moods and also potentially help with winding down at night and improving sleep quality. Blue light, which mimics daylight, prevents the release of melatonin, an important hormone to feel sleepy. Setting smart lights to warmer-colored lights at night can help release melatonin, and therefore lead to a better night's sleep.

With all the benefits of smart lighting, there is also a higher price tag compared to regular lightbulbs. Most smart lighting options on the market use LED bulbs, which are more expensive but use less energy than traditional incandescent lightbulbs and need to be replaced much less often. Incandescent lightbulbs cost about \$1; however, their life spans are relatively short at around 1,000 hours. LED bulbs typically start at about \$2.50 per bulb, but their life spans are almost 25 times longer than incandescent bulbs. Switching from incandescent bulbs to LED smart bulbs can help save energy and money over the long run, despite the higher initial cost.

As a new technology, there are plenty of benefits but also a few potential issues to be aware of before implementing the

technology. Some smart lightbulbs may have minor technical issues, such as not properly responding to a voice command. However, sticking with reputable brands should ensure a well-functioning lightbulb. Another factor to consider is not all smart lighting options are compatible with dimmers since smart bulbs come with their own built-in dimming mechanisms. This could lead to inconsistent lighting between smart and regular bulbs and could cause smart lights to flicker if they clash with the existing dimmer switch. To prevent this, simply avoid placing smart lightbulbs in fixtures that already have a dimmer switch.

Before making any purchases, be sure to research which smart lighting options work best for your home. Read several reviews to ensure your purchase is reliable during the entirety of its life span. There are plenty of smart lighting options out there and choosing the best personalized option will help you make the most of it.

Maria Kanevsky writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

ARE HOME ELECTRONICS AND APPLIANCES DRAINING YOUR ENERGY?

If you collect your spare change in a jar, all those coins add up over time, usually to a larger amount than you expect.

Small amounts of consumed energy throughout your home add up as well, so plug “energy vampires” into a smart power strip that detects dormant devices or unplug items when not in use, especially those with illuminated controls.

TOP NINE ENERGY VAMPIRES





HOME ENERGY-EFFICIENCY MAKEOVER

The home energy makeover could include but is not limited to:

- heating & cooling
- duct & air sealing
- attic insulation
- lighting
- appliance upgrades
- water heater
- home ventilation
- windows
- solar
- EV charger
- outdoor power equipment
- & more

Participants can apply online or call 800-279-SIEA to request a printable application or an application by mail. Mailed applications will include a self-addressed return envelope.



APPLICATION DEADLINE:
MARCH 31, 2022



CALL 800-279-SIEA TO REQUEST A PRINTABLE APPLICATION

The Internal Revenue Service requires San Isabel Electric Association, Inc. to send a 1099-MISC form to anyone awarded a prize of more than \$ 600.00. Please be aware that the home energy efficiency donation may be considered taxable to the recipient at the fair market value of the reward. The recipient of the award should seek the advice of his or her own individual or business tax practitioner.



SIEA.COM/HOMEENERGYMAKEOVER