

HIGHLINE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

The Beacon

NOVEMBER 2023



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Our mission is to provide our members with reliable, high-quality electricity and other needed services, which will improve their economic and social well-being and provide significant long-range benefits for our communities, our state and our nation.

NEW OVID OFFICE HOURS:

HEA's Ovid office is open Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and on bill due dates.



HIGHLINE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION
IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER



Touchstone Energy®

SERVING UP SAVINGS

BY DENNIS HERMAN GENERAL MANAGER

The holiday season is just around the corner and soon, festive music will flood the airwaves, sparkling lights and decorations will adorn homes and businesses, and good tidings will abound.

The holidays also bring a frenzy of decorating, cooking, and family gatherings. Amid the hectic hustle and bustle, you may receive higher-than-usual energy bills.

Keeping this in mind, I thought this month would be a good time to remind Highline Electric Association's members of a few programs and efficiency tips to help lower your monthly energy use.

Programs designed to help you save.

Winter months typically bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. Making minor, low-cost improvements such as weatherstripping exterior doors and caulking around old, drafty windows can make a positive impact on energy bills. If you're not sure where to start, contact HEA to schedule a free home-energy audit.

We also offer time-of-use electric rates, which can help you achieve greater savings by controlling when you use the most energy at home. Contact us if you're considering an energy-efficiency upgrade but are concerned about the up-front investment. We offer an on-bill financing program that can help ease the pain of these investments.

Our team of member service representatives is available to help, so I encourage you to give us a call if you'd like to learn about specific programs and services that can lower your bills.

Be festive without breaking the bank.

My wife, Trudy, insists that I bring the Christmas decorations down from the attic



DENNIS HERMAN

faster than we can finish the Thanksgiving turkey. With holiday lights adorning our home for well over a month, we decided to make the switch to LEDs to save energy.

LED holiday lights use 88% less energy than incandescent holiday lights. To put that into perspective, the Department of Energy estimates that with standard holiday decorations, LED lights typically increase energy bills by about \$5 to \$7. But with incandescent lights, energy bills will typically increase by \$33 or more. For homes that go above and beyond with incandescent holiday lighting (think Clark Griswold), energy bills could increase by as much as \$350. Beyond energy savings, LEDs provide additional benefits, such as being shock-resistant, shatterproof, and cool to the touch, making them safer for the home.

You can also lower energy use by conveniently managing holiday lighting. Smart light timers can help you save energy by connecting to a smartphone app or voice assistant to program lights to turn on and off at set times. If you don't use smart home technology, you can still save energy by using traditional timers.

Additional ways to save during the holiday season include turning off overhead lights and using your Christmas tree to illuminate your home. If you have a fireplace, remember to close the flue when you're not burning a fire to ensure heat doesn't escape through the chimney.

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SERVING UP SAVINGS

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Cook up energy savings in the kitchen.

If you plan to have family and friends over this holiday season, you can cook up energy savings by using small countertop appliances such as microwave ovens, air fryers, and slow cookers when possible — they use much less energy than the stovetop or oven.

When using the oven, bake multiple dishes at once for maximum efficiency. After all, it takes as much energy to cook one dish as it does to cook several. Turn the oven off a few minutes before the end time on the recipe and allow the residual heat to finish baking the dish. Once the food is done, leave the stove door ajar to allow the residual heat to warm the room. When using the stove top, match the pan size to the burner to maximize the stove top's efficiency.

I hope these tips will be helpful as we approach the holiday season. Remember, we're here to answer any questions you have about managing energy use or your monthly bills. With a little planning up front, you can find efficient ways to save on everything from holiday décor to your favorite soup recipes.

From your friends at Highline, we hope you have a wonderful holiday season.

**Reminder:
DAYLIGHT SAVING
TIMES ENDS
November 5**



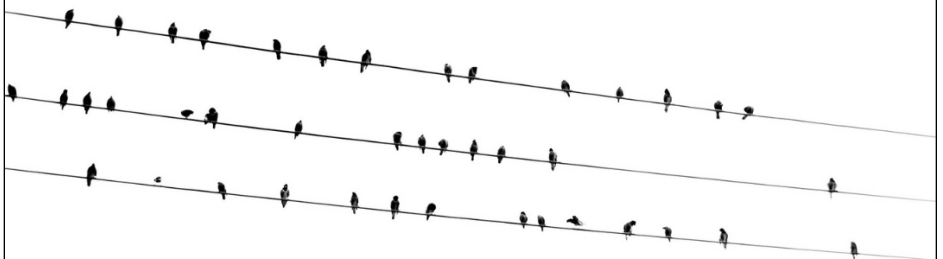
HEA SPONSORS **PARADE OF LIGHTS**

The Parade of Lights has been running in Holyoke for 25 years and Sedgwick County for eight. Highline Electric Association and CHS Grainland are proud to co-sponsor this year's parades again with the local chambers of commerce.

Over the years, each parade has grown with more participants, spectators, and events to draw the community together. Each town comes up with their own activities for the evening, including chili, hot chocolate, hayrack rides, and free movies. Last year's parades had about 15 floats each. Last year's winning floats were the Town of Julesburg for the Sedgwick County parade and Holyoke FFA for the Holyoke parade.

We appreciate the support from our communities for these events. Participants and spectators, we thank you for contributing to the success of these events. Watch our website and social media channels for dates, themes, and other information regarding this year's parades and join us to see who the winners of the traveling trophy will be.

Never touch a powerline!



It's dove season!

We know those doves sitting on the lines are tempting...but for your safety, please avoid contact with and do not shoot at or in the direction of any of Highline's equipment.



Highline Electric Association Employee Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following employees who observe an employment anniversary in November:

- Chris McKay 17 years
- Eric Luedke 10 years



Thinking about Energy Efficiency improvements?

Ask about our On-bill Financing Program!

Who can apply for On-bill Financing?

Anyone who pays their electric bill to HEA is eligible to apply for the low-cost loan, thus residential customers and businesses can take advantage of the opportunity.

What's the catch?

Nothing that we can see. Investing in energy efficiency measures pays on-going dividends with lower electric (and other utility) bills. The low-interest loans and on-bill financing help HEA members finance these projects over time, while you begin to reap the energy-saving benefits and comforts of an energy efficient home or office as soon as the efficiency measures are complete.

Visit www.hea.coop or call 800.816.2236 to learn more!



Now accepting applications!



2024 Student Programs

Each year, Highline Electric Association sponsors all-expenses-paid trips for two students to attend the Washington D.C. Youth Tour and two students to attend Youth Leadership Camp near Steamboat Springs. To be a lucky winner of one of these two awesome experiences, please complete the application on our website.

Your application must be received by December 15, 2023. Please visit our website at www.hea.coop/youth to apply.

Set Up Auto Pay Today

Call Highline's office at 970-854-2236 to set up auto pay for your electric bill.

HAPPY Thanksgiving day



HEA OFFICES CLOSED NOVEMBER 23 & 24

WE WISH YOU A HAPPY THANKSGIVING!



Five Ways to Safeguard Your Home This Winter

BY ABBY BERRY

◀ There's nothing better than a warm fire on a chilly night, but it's important to maintain your fireplace for safety.

As the temperatures drop and the days grow shorter, there's a natural inclination to create a warm and cozy haven at home. Unfortunately, as we see increased use of heating equipment, candles, and electrical items, the number of home fires tends to increase during winter months.

Here are five ways you can safeguard your home this winter season.

1. Ensure that carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly. If your detectors are battery-operated, replace the batteries annually. Test the detectors once each month and give them a good dusting to clear the sensors of dirt and debris.
2. Inspect electrical cords. We depend on more cords during winter, whether for holiday lighting, extension cords, or portable heaters. Before using any corded items, double check to make sure cords aren't frayed or cracked. If you use portable space heaters, remember to keep them at least 3 feet away from flammable items. Use models that include an auto shut-off feature and overheat protection. Space heaters can take a toll on your energy bills. Use them safely and efficiently (to heat smaller spaces). Never plug a space heater into a power strip.
3. Avoid overloading electrical outlets and power strips. When overloaded with electrical items, outlets and power strips can overheat and catch fire. If you use power strips for multiple devices, make sure the strip can handle the electrical load. For a safer bet, look for power strips that include surge protection.

4. Clean the fireplace to improve safety and efficiency. There's nothing better than a warm fire on a chilly night, but it's important to maintain your fireplace for safety. As wood burns, a sticky substance known as creosote builds up in the chimney. When creosote buildup becomes too thick, a chimney fire can ignite. The chimney should be cleaned at least once a year to reduce fire risks. Regular cleaning also improves air flow and limits the amount of carbon monoxide that seeps indoors.
5. Practice safety in the kitchen. As we spend more time in the kitchen during the holiday season, be mindful of potential fire hazards. Never leave food that's cooking on the stovetop unattended. Clean and remove spilled foods from cooking surfaces and be mindful of where you place flammable items such as dish towels.

Highline Electric Association wants you and your family to stay safe during the winter season. Visit www.hea.coop for additional safety tips.

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



◀ Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors once each month and clean them to ensure that the sensors are clear of dirt and debris