



MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER

BRAD
BIERSTEDT

Resolve To Be Energy Efficient

IT'S TIME TO MAKE New Year's resolutions. Why not make energy efficiency one of your goals for 2021? Saving energy is not only a good way to save money but also conserves our valuable resources.

Karnes Electric Cooperative is here to help. Every month in *Texas Co-op Power*, we publish timely tips on how to use electricity wisely and safely.

Some of the best ways to conserve energy in January include:

Taking down your Christmas lights. As tempting as it might be to extend the holiday season, there is no need to extend the higher electric bill that might come with all the electric-powered decor.

Turning down the thermostat. You can save about 3% on your energy bill for every degree you drop the temperature.

Switching the direction of your ceiling fans so that they turn clockwise. This pulls cool air toward the ceiling, which in turn pushes the warm air that collects near the ceiling back toward the floor.

Upgrading your fireplace by adding an insert or replacing it with an energy-efficient model.

Traditional wood-burning fireplaces can draw heat out of your home if not used properly, but a few changes can help keep the warmth inside.

Letting the sun shine in through the windows, especially south-facing windows, to take advantage of solar heat gain.

Using space heaters selectively. You can save energy by heating only the room you are in.

Wearing warmer clothes. Putting on a sweater and slippers or wool socks might allow you to lower your thermostat temperature.

Limiting the use of exhaust fans. They suck out all the indoor air your heater has worked so hard to heat.

Eliminating drafts. Cold winter air can sneak in around windows, doors and even electrical outlets. Weatherstripping, insulation and insulated curtains can go a long way toward keeping the warm air in and the cold air out.

For more energy-saving tips this winter or any season, visit texascooppower.com and click on the Energy tab. The news and information there can help you keep your resolution to save energy all year long. ■



EZUMEIMAGES | ISTOCK.COM

Green Chile Cheddar Cheese Soup

- 4 large potatoes**
- 1 small onion, chopped**
- 4 cans (about 7 cups) chicken broth, or 4 bouillon cubes**
- 1 tablespoon salt**
- 1 cup milk, cream or half-and-half**
- 1 can (4 ounces) chopped green chiles**
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese, plus more for garnish**
- Pepper, to taste**
- Bacon, cooked and crumbled (optional)**
- Sour cream (optional)**
- Chopped green onion (optional)**


1. Peel potatoes and chop into medium dice. Put potatoes and onion in a slow cooker and add chicken broth to cover, reserving remaining broth. You may substitute water mixed with 4 bouillon cubes. Add salt.

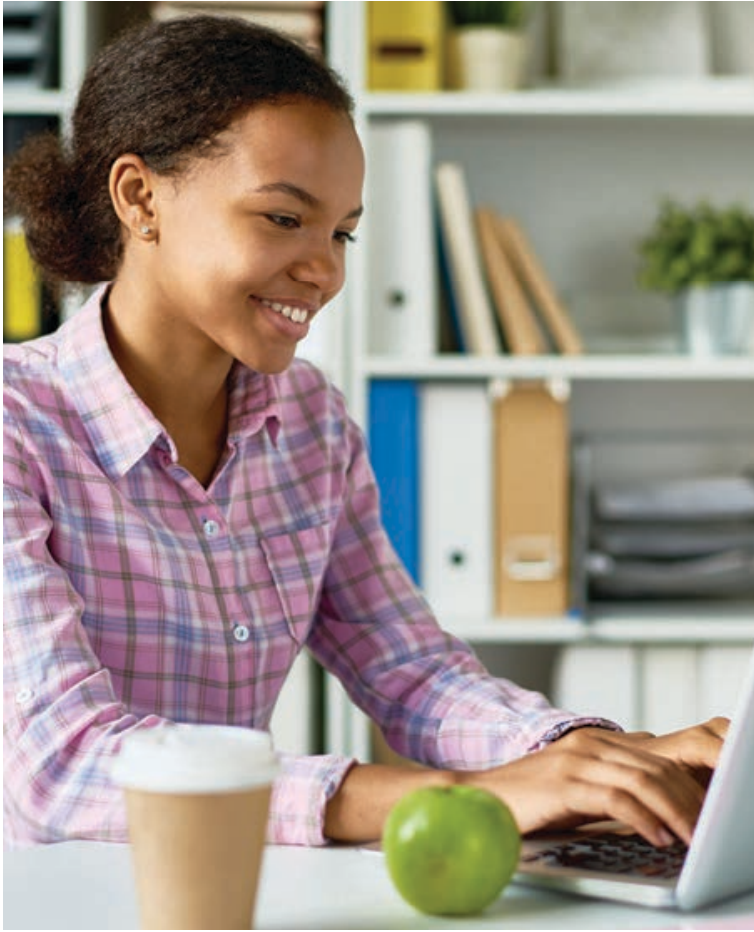
2. Cover and bring to a boil on high, then lower heat and simmer 30 minutes, or until potatoes are just tender. Remove half of the potatoes to a colander or bowl. Mash remaining potatoes in cooking broth with a potato masher or spoon. Return reserved potatoes to cooker along with milk, green chiles and cheese.

3. Let simmer 30–45 additional minutes. Add more salt and pepper to taste. If soup is too thick, add extra chicken broth.

4. Serve with extra shredded cheese, crumbled bacon, sour cream and sliced green onion on top, if desired.

SERVES 6

 Find this and more delicious recipes online at TexasCoopPower.com.



Karnes EC Scholarships Available for Members

SCHOLARSHIPS WILL AGAIN be available through Karnes Electric Cooperative this year, thanks to a law enacted September 1, 1997, that allows nonprofit electric cooperatives to put unclaimed funds previously collected by the comptroller's office for the state general fund to use for student scholarships.

The Karnes EC Board of Directors has approved 10 \$1,500 scholarships to be awarded this year. These scholarships will go to graduating high school students who are legal dependents of active Karnes EC members receiving electric service from the co-op. Eight of the scholarships will go to students who will attend a qualifying four-year university, and two scholarships will go to students who will attend a qualifying two-year or vocational college.

Applications are available on the Karnes EC website, karnesec.org, as well as through counselors at all high schools in the Karnes EC service area. Applications must be received by 5 p.m. March 12. Applications received after that deadline will not be eligible. Recipients will be announced within 60 days of this date.

Karnes EC is excited to be able to provide these scholarships. Check with your school counselor if you or someone you know is interested and meets the qualifications. If you need more information, contact the KEC office at 1-888-807-3952 and ask to speak to Kimberly Sanchez or email ksanchez@karnesec.org. ■

Karnes Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

CONTACT US

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24/7 Outage Reporting

TOLL-FREE
1-888-807-3952

ONLINE
At karnesec.org using your SmartHub account, or use the SmartHub app on your mobile device.

Please be prepared to provide your account number and meter number.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Online or via the SmartHub app
- 24-hour pay-by-phone
- Auto bill pay
- Mail
- In person
- Night drop
- Kiosk located at Pleasanton Member Service Center

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Open Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Karnes City Headquarters

1007 N. Highway 123, Karnes City

Pleasanton Member Service Center

1824 W. Goodwin St., Pleasanton

MISSION STATEMENT

Providing quality service to empower communities and improve lives.

Monitoring the Line for Reliability

Electric co-ops use a variety of monitoring and automation technologies that improve power reliability, shorten outage times and reduce labor time for crews. Here are four technologies we use to improve reliability.



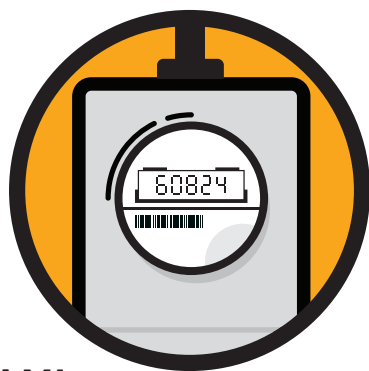
Drones

Drones may be used to inspect the power lines we maintain. Drones can provide infrared evaluation to locate hot spots on power lines and vegetation assessment to locate trees and other vegetation that can cause outages.



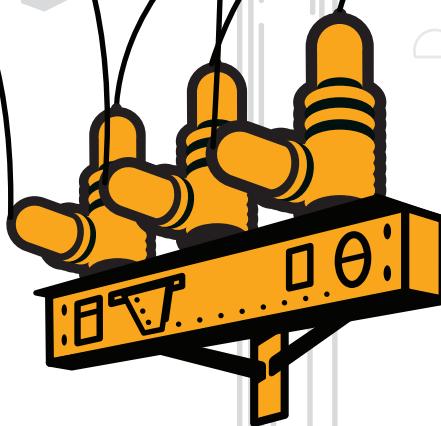
Power Sensors

Power sensors typically clamp on or connect to the power line and provide near real-time reporting on power, voltage, current and more—all of which helps to provide more reliable energy to consumer-members.



AMI

Advanced metering infrastructure provides real-time data to the co-op. In addition to meter reading, this data helps us detect faults and other potential problems on the electrical system, resulting in increased power reliability for consumer-members.



Reclosers

A recloser acts like a circuit breaker for power lines. When a problem occurs, the recloser temporarily shuts off power. If the problem is temporary, the recloser restores power. (This is why you sometimes see the power blink.) If the problem persists, the recloser will shut off power until a crew can make repairs. The recloser's antenna provides wireless, real-time data back to the co-op.





HAKULE | ISTOCK.COM

Start the New Year Right With Energy Savings

TO CONSERVE ENERGY and save money on your electric bill, there are energy-saving steps you can take now and ways to realize greater savings later.

Dial in savings.

Now: The first place to start is your thermostat. In most homes, the largest portion of the energy bill goes toward heating and cooling. Setting back your thermostat by 7–10 degrees for eight hours a day can save you up to 10% a year on heating and cooling. In the winter, try aiming for 56 degrees at night and when no one is at home, and 68 degrees when you're up and around.

Later: Make sure to adjust your air conditioning settings next summer. If you have a manual thermostat and don't always remember to adjust it, consider purchasing a smart or programmable thermostat.

Set refrigerator and freezer temps for efficiency.

Now: Make sure your refrigerator and freezer aren't set to a colder temperature than needed. The fridge should be at 38–40 degrees, and the freezer should be 5 degrees. If you have a separate chest freezer, set it to zero. Also check your water heater, which should be set at 120 degrees.

Later: Old refrigerators and freezers can use a lot of electricity. If yours was made before 1993, you can save upward of \$65 a year with a new, Energy Star-rated model. If you eliminate a second refrigerator or freezer, you can save even more, especially if it's in your garage.

Maximize the heat you've got.

Now: Look around each room and make sure the vents and radiators aren't blocked by furniture or other objects. If the

floor feels cold even when the room is warm, put down area rugs for additional warmth. Open curtains and blinds to let the sunshine in and close them at night.

Later: Enlist the help of an energy auditor or heating, ventilating and air conditioning specialist to test for duct leakage and ensure your whole system is balanced and running efficiently.

Make bright moves with your lights.

Now: The obvious first step is to make sure lights are turned off when not in use. You can do this manually or employ one of many automated strategies. If you're still using incandescent lightbulbs, switch your five most-used bulbs to LEDs to save about \$75 per year. LEDs last much longer and use about a quarter of the energy. Prices on LED bulbs have gone down in the past few years, and you can save more if you buy them in packs.

Later: Over time, plan to replace all your old incandescent bulbs, and consider smart lighting options that can be programmed to turn off when a room is not in use.

Eliminate drafts.

Now: Look carefully around your home for signs of air leaks. If you have a gap under an exterior door, you can block it with a towel or better yet, install weatherstripping. Make sure windows are sealed with caulk, and seal areas around exterior plumbing and wiring penetrations.

Later: Have an energy auditor do a blower door test, which is the best way to identify all air leaks in a home. ■



TIPS TO AVOID SCAMS



Scammers can threaten you with everything from shutting off power to your home to legal action. Don't fall victim to these types of scams.

Here are a few reminders from your electric co-op.

- Karnes Electric Cooperative employees will never show up at your door to demand payment.
- Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Real co-op representatives have access to the details they need to service your account.
- Demands for immediate payment by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, gift cards or reloadable cash cards should immediately raise red flags.
- If you think you've been contacted by a scammer falsely representing the co-op, please let us know as soon as possible.



Although much of the state is unaccustomed to snow and ice, temperatures can fall below freezing even in South Texas, potentially causing power outages. To keep safe and comfortable during a winter power outage:

Report any outages.

Turn off electrical appliances that were operating at the time the power went off. Leave one light on so you'll know when service has been restored.

Keep warm by closing off rooms you don't need and use only safe sources of heat, like a wood stove. Do not burn charcoal indoors. If you operate lanterns or fuel-fired cook stoves or heaters, make sure that you have adequate ventilation.

Don't drive unless absolutely necessary until conditions improve. If you must drive, go slowly.

Karnes EC encourages you to always practice safety.



January Is the Deadliest Month for CO Poisoning

WHAT CAN'T BE SEEN, smelled or heard but is deadly? Carbon monoxide. CO is an odorless, colorless gas produced when fossil fuel is burned. It can cause sudden illness and death.

Because more people are inside during the winter months, sometimes resorting to risky heating methods and power sources without proper ventilation, January is the deadliest month for CO poisoning, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

People and pets are susceptible to CO poisoning. Common symptoms are headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain and confusion.

Many households use products that burn fossil fuels, such as gas- and oil-burning furnaces, portable generators and charcoal grills. If used incorrectly, these items can pose a poisoning risk.

Every year more than 400 Americans die from CO poisoning, more than 50,000 visit an emergency room and more than 4,000 are hospitalized.

Keep your family safe from this deadly gas this winter by following these important safety measures.

- ▶ Install battery-operated CO detectors near every sleeping area.
- ▶ If a CO alarm goes off, exit the home immediately and call 911.
- ▶ Check CO detectors regularly for proper function.
- ▶ Have oil and gas furnaces inspected every year by a qualified technician.
- ▶ Have gas water heaters inspected annually by a qualified technician.
- ▶ Ensure that the chimney is checked annually and cleaned if necessary.
- ▶ Check that gas appliances are vented properly.
- ▶ Never use a generator inside the home or garage, even with doors and windows open. Only use generators outdoors and at least 20 feet away from the home.
- ▶ Do not use a charcoal grill, camp stove or other charcoal-burning products indoors.
- ▶ Do not run a vehicle in a closed garage.
- ▶ Do not use a fireplace that isn't vented.
- ▶ Do not heat your house with a gas oven or gas range.
- ▶ Seek medical attention right away if you suspect CO poisoning or feel dizzy, lightheaded or nauseated. ■

Resolve To Stay Safe

MOST OF OUR New Year's resolutions are along the lines of spending less, saving more, eating less, exercising more, working less and spending more time with family.

This year consider adding a few things to the list to help keep your family safe.

- ▶ Practice "out with the old, in with the new" with appliances. If an appliance snaps, crackles or pops but shouldn't, replace it with a safer, more energy-efficient model.
- ▶ If you have light switch plates or outlets that get warm to the touch with use, or your lights dim when certain appliances come on, it's time to call an electrician. The electrical load of most homes has increased substantially in the past 20 years, but your home's wiring may not be up to the challenge. To keep your loved ones safe, have it checked out and make the necessary improvements and repairs.
- ▶ If you regularly find yourself headed to the breaker box with a flashlight in hand to restore power, it's probably time for repairs or an upgrade. Have a professional electrician do an inspection and make repairs.
- ▶ Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers only help if they work properly. Regularly test and replace the batteries in smoke detectors. Replace or recharge fire extinguishers so they'll be ready in the event of a fire. ■

