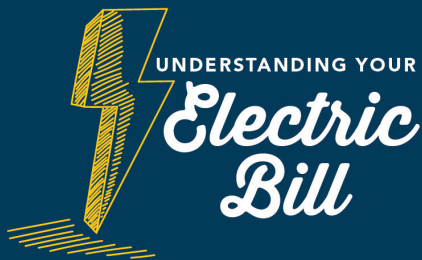




December 2022

THE WHEAT BELT CONNECTION



Over the last several months we've broken down the many influences that factor into your electric bill. This month we're taking a step back to highlight what we've covered.

AUGUST:

We looked at how our budget is determined and introduced our new bottom-up approach.

SEPTEMBER:

We dug into power costs and our relationship with Tri-State Generation and Transmission, our reliable wholesale power supplier since the early 1950s.

OCTOBER:

We explained the difference between the \$2.8M that is dedicated to general plant maintenance and our \$3.9M in investment into the electrical plant.

NOVEMBER:

We talked about our administrative expenses and how that budget is distributed.

A deep dive on each topic mentioned above is available at wheatbelt.com/yourelectricbill.

The Board of Directors and management of Wheat Belt PPD work diligently each year to keep our rates affordable, while delivering your electricity safely, reliably, and efficiently.



To view the 2023 rates that were determined using our Cost-of-Service Study conducted in 2022, use the QR code, contact our office, or visit wheatbelt.com.

IN THIS ISSUE

Editor - Kelli Chaon

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Wheat Belt 2023 Rates | Page 12-A |
| Smart Home Devices That Can Save you Money | Page 12-B/D |
| Five Way to Fight the Winter Chill | Page 12-C |
| Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month | Page 12-D |

LUCKY DRAWING

Congratulations to Kyle and Kathy Watchorn our October "Lucky Draw Winner"!

Kyle and Kathy have resided in the Dalton area for the last 50 years and own a farming operation and seed sales. They have four grown kids and 12 grandkids that range from five years old to twenty years old.

In their spare time, Kyle enjoys hunting and fishing, and Kathy enjoys reading. They both love spending any free time they have with their family.

Kyle and Kathy received a \$50 credit on their account for their prompt payment. If you would like to be included in our next drawing, and avoid a \$5 delinquent fee, please send your payment before the 16th of the month.

For your convenience, we offer several payment options. Please give us a call at 308-254-5871, or visit wheatbelt.com, and select the Customer Engagement page for information.

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Smart Home Devices That Can Save You Money



Some smart devices for your home can help you save money. Others are designed for pure convenience – like phone apps you use remotely to close your garage door, unlock your door, or see who is on your

front porch.

Using smart devices that can impact your energy bill won't make you rich, but they can help lower your bills each month, which adds up over time. Here are some devices to consider:

Smart thermostat

A smart thermostat studies your heating and cooling trends over time and can help reduce your energy bill by optimizing energy-saving tactics. You can also adjust the temperature of your home remotely and know how much energy you are using to heat or cool your home in real time. So while a programmable thermostat can help you save money, a smart version earns its name by all the extra things it can do above and beyond programming.

In either case, adjusting your thermostat up (air conditioning) or down (furnace) just one degree can make a difference in your utility bill, according to EEC Board Member Sam Adair. Adair says households can save up to 3 percent on the heating and cooling portion of their bill by making that simple adjustment. "So if your smart thermostat can shed a few degrees for a couple of hours or more, it should do nothing but save you money with the added convenience of peace of mind," Adair said.

Smart light bulbs/lighting

The first way to save money on lighting comes from good old-fashioned smarts and not a literal smart bulb, per se. Look around and see what kind of light bulbs you have in your house. By replacing your home's five most frequently used light fixtures or bulbs with Energy Star versions, you can save \$75 a year, according to energy.gov.

Upgrading your light bulbs can help you replace them less often as well. For example, a 60-watt incandescent bulb lasts an average of 1,000 hours, while a 12-watt LED bulb has an average life span of 25,000 hours.

Then there are actual smart light bulbs, which allow you to "schedule" lights and control them remotely. This could save you a little money if you or someone in your house is always leaving the lights on.

Smart window coverings

Smart window coverings are pricey but they can help you save money on your energy bills over time. For example, they allow you to lower blinds on a hot and sunny day even if you're not home, which may prevent your air conditioner from kicking on.

About 76 percent of sunlight that falls on standard double-pane windows enters your home to become heat, according to energy.gov. Conversely, about 30 percent of a home's heating energy is lost through windows, and the efficient use of window coverings can reduce energy loss when it is cold outside.

Smart water valves

According to the U.S. EPA, an average household's water leaks can account for 10,000 gallons of water wasted every year. Collectively, that's 1 trillion gallons of water each year in the U.S.!

Continued on 12-D

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Five Way to Fight the Winter Chill and Save Energy

By: Abby Berry

We all have our favorite season. Some people love crisp, cool weather and bundling up under a favorite blanket, while others prefer the warm temperatures summer brings and all fun outdoor activities that go with it.

But there's one thing we can all agree on: high winter bills are never fun. Wheat Belt Public Power District is here to help you find ways to manage your home energy use and keep winter bills in check.

Here are five tips to help increase your home's energy efficiency this winter:

1. Mind the thermostat. This is one of the easiest ways to manage your home energy use. We recommend setting your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower) when you're home. When you're sleeping or away for an extended period of time, try setting it between 58 and 62 degrees; there's no need to heat your home when you're away or sleeping and less active.

2. Button up your home. The Department of Energy estimates that air leaks account for 24% to 40% of the energy used for heating and cooling a home. Caulking and weather stripping around windows and doors is another simple, cost-effective way to increase comfort and save energy. If you can feel drafts while standing near a window or door, it likely needs to be sealed.

3. Use window coverings wisely. Open blinds, drapes or other window coverings during the day to allow natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep the cold, drafty air out. If you feel cold air around windows, consider hanging curtains or drapes in a thicker material; heavier window coverings can make a significant difference in blocking cold outdoor air.

4. Consider your approach to appliance use. When combined, appliances and electronics account for a significant chunk of our home energy use, so assess how efficiently you're using them. For example, if you're running the dishwasher or clothes washer, only wash full loads. Look for electronic devices that consume energy even when they're not in use, like phone chargers or game consoles. Every little bit helps, so unplug them to save energy.

5. Think outside the box. If you're still feeling chilly at home, think of other ways to warm up—beyond dialing up the thermostat. Add layers of clothing, wear thick socks and bundle up under blankets. You can even add layers to your home! If you have hard-surface flooring, consider purchasing an area rug to block cold air that leaks in through the floor.

Winter months often bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. By being proactive about saving energy, you can increase the comfort of your home and reduce monthly bills. Visit our website at wheatbelt.com for additional energy-saving tips.





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Smart Home Devices cont'd from 12-B

Smart leak sensors monitor leaks under sinks, behind toilets and near other water sources in your home. And, like most smart home devices, the sensors can be linked to your smartphone to alert you of leaks. There are also smart water valves designed for your main water line for catastrophes like bursting pipes, although these are pricey and require professional installation.

The smart plug

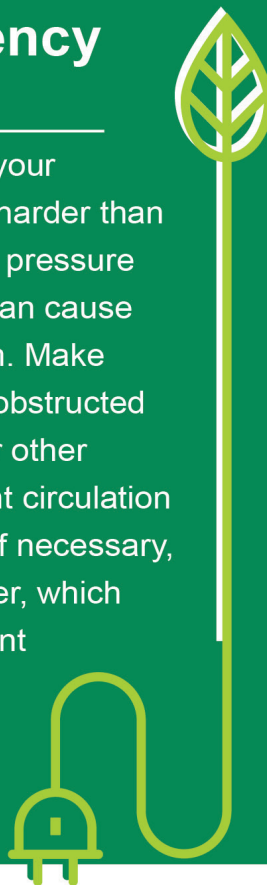
This device plugs into a regular outlet and allows you to control appliances remotely via a phone app. Most smart plugs track energy use so you can see how efficient (or inefficient) an appliance is. Some of them have a convenient away feature that allows you to program lights to make it look like someone is home.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Blocked air vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and increase pressure in the ductwork, which can cause cracks and leaks to form. Make sure all air vents are unobstructed from furniture, drapes or other items to ensure sufficient circulation throughout your home. If necessary, purchase a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture.

Source: energy.gov



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