

January 2018

# Hot Watts

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### Energy Efficiency

#### Tip of the Month

Looking for an easy way to make your home cozier? Try using an area rug to increase the insulation levels of your floors. Area rugs are stylish and can keep cool air from entering through your floors. Your toes will thank you!

#### Congratulations!

**Michael Coble** is our online survey winner.

#### Offices Closed

CHEC's offices will be closed January 1, 2018 in observance of the New Year.



## Right-of-Way Contracts for 2018

Right-of-way maintenance is an important task of utility companies so that they may provide reliable electric service. Regular inspections and maintenance of all overhead distribution lines in our seven county service area is a major ongoing project. CHEC's goals of decreasing power outages and outage duration time is directly linked to maintaining proper clearances within our right-of-ways. CHEC contracts with companies whose crews work year-round clearing trees, limbs, and debris away from power pole and electric lines in our right-of-ways.

CHEC has contracted with West Tree Service to clear and maintain right-of-ways in our service territories throughout 2018. West Tree will focus on trimming yard trees and hot spots that demand immediate attention. Also, West Tree will clear the right-of-way on all circuits at the Vian substation with use of their mechanical machinery and bucket trucks.

These crews working on your property are indeed doing work on behalf of CHEC. The contractor crews' vehicles should be identified by their company name, logo, or our CHEC logo on the door of their vehicle. If you have any questions concerning right-of-way, please call 800-328-2368 or 918-775-2211.



### West Tree Service

## Co-ops Push for Common-Sense Replacement Rule in Place of CPP

By Dan Riedinger

In October, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced plans to repeal the Clean Power Plan, a regulation that would have increased costs and impacted many electric cooperatives across the nation. Now the EPA, informed by public comment, must work to develop a common-sense replacement plan.

We're working with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), our national trade association, to encourage the EPA to replace the rule with a plan that focuses on individual power plants. We hope the agency will craft a replacement rule to address power plant emissions legally, provide co-ops with the certainty and flexibility they need to meet their members' needs, and support co-ops in their mission to provide affordable and reliable electricity.

Electric co-ops depend on a diverse fuel mix to meet the energy needs of 42 million members across the nation, protect reliability of the energy system and ensure affordable power. The fact is that no two electric co-ops are exactly alike. The nation's 900 electric co-ops rely on a diverse fuel mix to meet members' energy needs, maintain reliability and ensure affordability. Each one makes strategic long-term investments in energy sources that make the most sense for them. Any new regulation needs to account for this reality.

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*Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



**If You Find Your Account Number  
Hidden in This Issue of the Hot Watts,  
You'll Receive a \$25 Credit on  
Your Electric Bill**

# Rebates Available in 2018

Once again CHEC and Associated Electric Cooperative (AECI) are partnering together to provide our members with the "Take Control and Save" program for 2018. The program was designed to promote efficient use of electricity in an effort to reduce energy consumption. We understand that by spending less on your energy costs, you can save money for other important things in life.

CHEC has rebates available on room air conditioners, electric water heaters, ground source heat pumps, and dual fuel and mini-split heat pumps. To qualify for these rebates, you must be a member of CHEC.

A complete list of eligibility criteria and rebate requirements are available on our website at [www.cooksonhills.com](http://www.cooksonhills.com) and at your local office. If you have any questions, please contact Donna Rhodes at 918-775-2211.



## GENERATOR Safety

**Avoid deadly backfeed and keep linemen safe.**

Learn how to **safely connect** to your portable generator at:



## Replacement

This flexibility to pursue a diverse fuel mix allows co-ops to respond to local and regional factors and member preferences while ensuring affordable and reliable power. Past federal policy pushed cooperatives away from natural gas use for electricity to developing coal-based electric generation. In many cases, co-op members are still paying for those facilities—and the roughly \$12 billion in pollution control measures that were added to them since the early 1990s.

But as it turns out, electric co-ops and other utilities are already making significant changes in how they generate power. Co-ops and their members value a healthy environment and vibrant rural communities. Market forces and members' interests are driving co-ops to further diversify their electric generation portfolios.

We live in a carbon constrained world and electric co-ops are reducing their carbon footprint. In fact, since 2005, co-ops have increased electric generation by 15 million megawatt-hours while reducing carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 10 percent.

Given the progress happening without the Clean Power Plan, you may ask why we want the EPA to go back to the drawing board to come up with a replacement rule. The main reason is certainty. A workable, common-sense rule that adheres to the law clarifies the rules of the road for co-ops, which will then be better able to make smart, long-term investments in electric generation. Regulatory certainty is an essential ingredient in ensuring a reliable supply of affordable power.

Co-ops are looking forward to working with the EPA on a plan that gets it right this time around.

*Dan Riedinger writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*

# Youth Tour Trip to Washington, D.C.

Each year, CHEC participates in the cooperative-sponsored National Youth Tour Program. The program provides rural electric cooperative students an opportunity to earn a trip to visit Washington, D.C., by writing an essay on a topic determined by the cooperative. This year's topic is "What do you find most interesting about rural electric cooperatives?"

Donna Rhodes, Youth Tour coordinator, has visited or will visit area schools to share a presentation on the history of electric cooperatives and on the annual CHEC Youth Tour Essay Contest. Local high school teachers will administer the contest. Essays must be submitted by February 16, 2018. All essays will then be reviewed by a judge that is not employed by CHEC, who will select four finalists.

The four finalists will present their essays to the CHEC Board of Trustees and other special guests at the CHEC Youth Tour Banquet held in Stigler. The finalists will be presented with a plaque and Youth Tour trip details.

During the Youth Tour trip (June 8–14, 2018), students will join 1,500 other youth from across the nations in Washington, D.C. Participants will visit monuments and other attractions as well as visit Capitol Hill to learn more about how our government operates.

The Youth Tour contest information is presented by appointment only. If your school is interested in participating this year, please contact Donna Rhodes at 918-775-2211.



Picture courtesy of OAC.



## Achievable Resolutions

By Allison Goldberg

Do most new years speed past as resolutions are forgotten? You are not alone. Setting large, difficult goals and making strong initial progress that fades as the weeks go by happens to everyone. Don't worry; small changes can have big impacts and be easier to maintain. Here are some reasonable resolutions to help you make healthy, positive changes.

If you want to eat better but find you cannot adhere to a strict, restrictive diet, try making more nutritious choices one at a time.

- Add an extra serving of nutritiously prepared vegetables every day, like steamed or roasted veggies as a side, salsa instead of butter on your baked potato or adding mushrooms to ground beef.
- Cut both sugary and artificially sweetened soft drinks to only one each week. Don't deny yourself. Make it a special treat!
- Replace sugary or refined snacks and breakfast foods with fruits, nuts and whole grains. Fresh fruit and nuts or nut butter. Avocado and cheese on whole grain toast. Lightly sweetened granola in plain yogurt. Steel cut oats with berries. Delicious and nutritious.

If you resolved to use the gym but you're not going, find a way to make it engaging and hold yourself accountable.

- Find a gym buddy, go together and hold each other accountable.
- Try a resolution accountability app, like Pact, which attaches monetary value to your dedication.
- Make working out more social with fitness social media apps or support groups on social networks.

- Make it more social in real life by joining fitness classes or searching Meetup.com for groups that get together for fitness activities, both in the gym and outdoors.
- If the gym truly isn't for you, quit. Take a dance or self-defense class, riding lessons or outdoor survival course. Do what moves you, literally and figuratively.

If you resolved to get organized but find yourself still living in clutter, running late or not getting enough sleep, tackle organization with small tasks.

- Section by section, put things away, dust or disinfect and do not allow yourself to re-clutter a cleaned area. Invest in attractive storage solutions and clean one section each evening until you finish every section.
- Decide if you pick up an object, you must put it down in its rightful place.
- Use your phone's calendar to track every appointment and block off time. Set reminders to provide enough time to get out the door and on the road. You can also use it to remind yourself to go to bed early, give the dog its medication, bake cookies for a bake sale or spend a few minutes tidying at 2251200 the end of each day.
- Say no to unnecessary or unimportant requests that stretch your time and patience, to which you cannot give your full attention or that sound just plain terrible. Prioritize the people and activities you care about most, including yourself.

*Allison Goldberg writes and edits employee benefits-related materials for the Insurance and Financial Services Dept. of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*

# Budget Billing

If you don't like surprises, we may have the perfect plan for you. Budget Billing levels your monthly bill so that you do not have those "peak and valley" bills. Although Budget Billing helps you better "budget" for your electric bill, it does not guarantee a constant recurring monthly bill. It does not reduce your electric bill, but will smooth out your charges and help you manage your electric bill.

Our Budget Billing recalculates your budget billing amount each month by averaging your current bill plus the previous 11 months' bills. By doing so, this will help stabilize your payment amounts, but ensures that you do not rack up a large running balance in the event that you experience several consecutive months of high usage. The program keeps a running balance of what you truly owe should you choose to cease participation in the program.

There is no charge for using the Budget Billing. This is a service that we provide to our members to make it easier for you to budget your electric bill and enjoy the peace of mind that comes from planning ahead. Members can sign up for Budget Billing if they have at least one year of billing history, no more than two late payments, and no returned checks.

For more information about Budget Billing, visit our website at [www.cooksonhills.com](http://www.cooksonhills.com) or call 800-328-2368.

# 10 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Looking to lower your bills this winter? Use the 10 tips below to conserve energy.

-  Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.
-  Reduce waste heat by installing a programmable thermostat.
-  Turn off lights when not in use.
-  Lower your water heater temperature. The Dept. of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120 degrees) during fall and winter months.
-  Unplug electronics like kitchen appliances and TVs when you're away.
-  Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home.
-  Close blinds and curtains at night to keep cold, drafty air out.
-  Use power strips for multiple appliances, and turn off the main switch when you're away from home.
-  Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.
-  Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

## Watt's Cooking?



### Lemon Brownies

1 cup flour

1 cup sugar

¼ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon baking powder

1 tablespoon lemon zest

¾ cup unsalted butter, melted & cooled

2 eggs

3 tablespoons lemon juice

1 teaspoon vanilla

Lemon glaze – recipe follows

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease an 8-inch square pan or line pan with non-stick foil.
- Mix flour, sugar, salt, baking powder, and zest together using a wire whisk.
- Add melted butter, lemon juice, eggs, and vanilla and stir until completely until combined.
- Pour batter into pan and bake for 20 – 25 minutes or until tester inserted in center comes out clean.
- Remove from oven and cool.
- Pour glaze over the lemon brownies and allow to set before cutting into bars.



### Lemon Glaze

1 ½ cups confectioner's sugar

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1 teaspoon lemon zest

- Sift sugar into a medium bowl. Add lemon juice and zest and stir until combined and smooth.