



TRI-COUNTY

Electric Cooperative, Inc.

" A Commitment to Service and Savings "

Reduced Operating Cost With The Touch Of Your Finger!



Winter officially started on December 22 and now that the holidays are over, it's time to start looking for ways to save a little cash. Every year your cooperative receives a number of inquiries concerning the best way to reduce heating cost. By far the most effective way to reduce heating cost is to lower the thermostat setting. The lower the setting, the less costly to operate your heating system.

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For Texas, a setting of 68 degrees is recommended offering comfort with economy of operation. If this feels a little cool, try dressing warmer and keep a blanket near that favorite chair or sofa.

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You can save as much as 3% on your energy bill for every degree of temperature reduction below 68 degrees. Since approximately 60% of your monthly energy use is for heating, three or four degrees reduction in temperature can amount to considerable savings.

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You can set your thermostat manually, but there are automatic setback thermostats that take care of temperature reduction automatically. By lowering the temperature during the late evening hours and during periods when the home is not occupied, you reduce

the amount of work for the heating system and lower operating cost.

With colder weather a number of our customers enjoy sitting around a roaring fire with family and friends. A conventional fireplace provides quality atmosphere, but can actually increase the heating load for a residence. Most fireplace units utilize conditioned air for combustion. As the fire burns, combustion gases are expelled up the chimney and dissipate outdoors. The next time you start a fire, take a look at the amount of smoke coming out the top of the chimney. For every cubic foot of hot gaseous air that goes out the chimney, a replacement cubic foot of air must enter the home at outdoor unconditioned temperatures.

Your cooperative recommends that you turn off the central furnace whenever a fire is being burned. If the temperature in the house gets too uncomfortable with the furnace off, it's time to let the fire burn down, clean out the embers, close the flue damper and seal up the glass doors. Any fireplace unit that fails to keep a house comfortable when burning is probably removing more heat from the home than it is capable of contributing. A combination of fire and furnace can be costly and should be avoided. For safety sake, never close the damper with hot embers in the box and never leave the damper open during periods of non use. Use a metal bucket with an air tight lid to scoop out the remaining embers before closing the damper. Carbon monoxide gases are orderless and deadly, so never close the flue damper on a burning fire.

Operating your home efficiently is a family project, so try to get everyone pulling in the same direction. Keep doors and windows closed when cold weather strikes and make sure that the gaskets are in good working order. For more assistance with energy conservation, contact your cooperative.

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Using Your Electric Space Heater Safely

An electric space heater can increase your comfort during cold months, especially in garages, workshops and other areas that may not have central heating. But using space heating requires some attention to safety as well as comfort. Before you purchase an electric space heater make sure it has the following safety features.

- An automatic safety switch that will turn the unit off if it is tipped over.
- An overheat sensor that shuts off the heater if it gets too hot.
- A low surface temperature to protect family and pets from burns.
- A screen or grill to prevent kids from reaching inside with fingers or toys.
- A label or tag noting the heater has been tested and approved by an independent testing lab.

If you already have a space heater check it to make sure it offers the above safety features.

Check the power cord for worn insulation, look carefully for weather cracks or hard brittle areas along the length of the cord. If you find a problem, don't try to repair it with tape and never attempt to replace the cord yourself.

Never use an extension cord with an electric space heater.

Keep the heater away from water sources or damp places to avoid potentially deadly electric shock.

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Keep the heater at least three feet away from curtains, sofas, magazine racks or any other potentially flammable surface.

Never leave the heater unattended or go to bed without turning it off. Always unplug the heater to avoid accidental operation. The thermostat may shut the heater down but reactivate it once the room temperature declines. Someone may think the heater is turned off and accidentally place a combustible object in front of it. When the room temperature drops the combustible material

It Pays To Stay Informed!

Find your account number in our Member Information Bulletin and you will receive a \$20.00 credit on your electric bill. Simply contact one of the offices listed below and make them aware of your discovery.

It pays to stay informed!

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From The Cooperative Kitchen



This month's recipe was provided by Kathy Jones from Weatherford TX. She will receive a Texas Co-Op Power Cookbook, compliments of TCEC.

German Chocolate Cheesecake

... Ingredients ...

- 3 - 8 oz. packages of cream cheese (regular, lite or fat free at room temperature)
- 1.5 - Cups granulated sugar
- 6 - eggs (or egg substitute)
- 1 - Package German Chocolate (Green package)
- 2 - Teaspoons of vanilla
- 1 - Carton of Cool Whip

Break off 2 squares of the chocolate and reserve for chocolate sprinkles on top of cheesecake.

Melt remaining chocolate in microwave for about 1.5 minutes and set aside.

Cream sugar with cream cheese.

Add eggs one or two at a time, beating after each addition.

Add vanilla.

Spray 9 X 13 inch pan with Pam.

Pour 2/3 of batter into pan. Add melted chocolate to remaining 1/3 of cream cheese mixture. Stir well. Drop chocolate mixture by spoonfuls on batter. Use a knife to swirl the chocolate and vanilla and make a marble effect.

Bake at 325 degrees for 25 - 30 minutes (It may take longer in some ovens.) Allow to cool and top cheesecake with Cool Whip. Add chocolate sprinkles that were made by grating squares of reserved chocolate. Refrigerate until ready to eat and enjoy!

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