



TRI-COUNTY Electric Cooperative, Inc.

" A Commitment to Service and Savings "

Happy New Year!
**Start the New Year Out
With A Resolution To
Schedule a FREE
Home Energy Audit
Learn How to Save Energy!**

Our homes always need attention and sometimes we need to sit down and work up a long term plan for maintenance and improvements. Failure to properly maintain your home can lead to very expensive repairs after years of neglect. Tri-County Electric Cooperative has a free home energy audit program that can help members identify problems around the home. In many cases the savings can be substantial and those savings can be reinvested in the home to further reduce energy needs.

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Attic insulation slows heat loss in the winter and stops heat gain in the summer. Insulation and proper attic ventilation are important for comfort and efficiency.

If your home is five years old or older, chances are that the amount of attic insulation is below the Department of Energy's recommendation for North Central Texas which is presently R-38.

Proper amounts of attic insulation coupled with improved attic ventilation can reduce heating and cooling costs by as much as 25%. Adding additional insulation is relatively easy in most homes and offers a quick return on investment. Savings can improve significantly depending on the amount of insulation presently in the attic. The savings a for home with no insulation will be much greater when compared to homes with an R-19 value that is being upgraded to R-38.

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Our home energy auditor will look at your attic, doors, windows and electrical and plumbing penetrations and work up a computer model of your home. The model can estimate the savings by making improvements and repairs to the home.

Poor fitting exterior doors are a leading cause for infiltration. Each time we open and close a door we put wear on the weather-stripping. The effectiveness of weather-stripping is compromised when door jambs are painted along with the weather-stripping. Paint makes the weather-stripping stiff and prevents it from sealing tight against the door. Older weather-stripping loses its elasticity and becomes hard and brittle. It will frequently break or tear leaving an exterior door with a poor state of performance.



At the bottom of a door is the threshold which seals the floor to the bottom of the door for an air tight fit. Make a visual inspection for missing or torn weather stripping. Use the dollar bill test at various points along both sides of the door and the top and bottom. Simply place a dollar bill or a piece of paper of similar thickness and size inside the door jamb and close the door. If the weather-stripping is working properly, you should encounter firm resistance when attempting to remove the dollar bill from the closed door. Check multiple locations on every edge along the door. If the dollar bill falls out or has very little resistance to removal, then the weather-stripping is not working like it should and needs realignment or replacement.

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A little time spent with a caulk gun and scraper can save energy and prevent costly repairs from water damage. Take a look at your windows, doors and plumbing penetrations and make sure they are sealed.

Windows also need to be inspected for missing or damaged weather stripping. Make sure the adhesives used to mount the glass to the frame are still holding the glass firm and replace broken or cracked glass. Check the caulking around the interior and exterior frame to make sure it is not cracked or missing. If necessary remove the old caulk and replace with new. Caulking stops both air and water leakage on exterior surfaces. Leaking windows can eventually lead to costly repairs when damp materials begin to rot and decay.

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.

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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.

Remember that a small 1500 watt space heater is capable of using 1,080 kWh if placed in an area where it will run continuously for 30 days. At a cost of 11 cents per kWh, that one heater can use \$118.80 worth of electricity.



Central Headquarters Office (817) 444-3201 or (817) 523-7231
Southwest District Office (817) 279-7010 or (817) 279-7011
Northeast District Office (817) 431-1541
B-K District Office (940) 888-3441
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From The Cooperative Kitchen



This month's recipe was provided by Sharon Ledbetter from Kennedale. She will receive a 60 Years of Home Cooking Cookbook, compliments of TCEC.



CHICKEN ENCHILADA CASSEROLE



... INGREDIENTS ...

- 1 - Diced Onion
- 1 - Small 10.5 OZ. Can of Cream of Chicken Soup
- 1 - Small Can of Pet Evaporated Milk
- 1 - Small Can of Deboned Chicken
- 1 - Small Can of Ro-Tel Tomatoes Diced & Drained
- 1 - 7.5 OZ. Package of Nacho Cheese Flavored Doritos Crushed
- 1 - Can or Carton of Sour Cream

Mix all ingredients together and place in a casserole dish to bake. Cover dish and bake in oven at 350 degrees until hot.

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This is a quick hot meal that is delicious and bone warming.

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Lowering Heating Cost With The Tip of Your Finger



Controlling heating cost is easily done with the tip of your finger. By reducing the thermostat setting you will reduce the number of hours that your furnace has to run. Fewer hours of operation will translate into less electricity or gas use. A setting of 68 degrees is recommended but the lower the setting the greater the savings. A warm sweater and blankets for watching television or reading will improve comfort on a chilly day.

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 to the left and make them aware of your discovery.

It pays to stay informed!

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