



# TRI-COUNTY Electric Cooperative, Inc.

*" A Commitment to Service and Savings "*

## Mobile Homes and Energy Consumption

Some Cooperative members believe their electricity bills should be lower because they live in modest mobile homes. The fact of the matter is that mobile homes, especially those manufactured before 1976, can consume much more than their fair share of energy. Here are some tips and suggestions to consider if you own or rent a mobile home. These same energy saving tips will work on site built homes as well.

**AIR CONDITIONING** is the largest user of energy for most mobile homes. During the months of June through September high temperatures and humidity combine to increase the demand for air conditioning. For many families once the temperature gets above 90 degrees, the air-conditioning will not cut off until late evening after the sun has set. Temperatures inside the home begin to rise as the air-conditioning system is removing as much heat as possible, but ultimately more heat is coming in than the system is capable of removing. Selecting high efficiency heating and cooling equipment can reduce power consumption but requires a significant investment by the property owner. Making sure that only air from the conditioned floor space is being circulated through the system requires an inspection of the ductwork system.

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**DUCTWORK** must be properly sealed so that it does not leak conditioned air outdoors. It is equally important to check the return air to make sure the air-conditioning unit is not drawing heated outdoor air into the system. We want to make sure that all duct joints and terminations are properly sealed so the system is only seeing air from the interior of the home. Loose joints, cuts and tears in the duct system will substantially increase power consumption and repair should be a top priority.

**FILTERS** need to be kept clean to protect the indoor evaporator coil from becoming blocked with dust. In most systems it is possible to inspect the surface of the coil for dirt and contamination using a flashlight and mirror. A properly maintained filter keeps the aluminum coil clean and shiny. If the coil is blocked with debris, a professional cleaning is a good investment and will extend the service life of your system.

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**INFILTRATION** is a serious problem for most mobile homes. Settling caused by improper drainage or support piers that are not deep enough into solid soil will cause shifting. This movement makes doors and windows not close properly. A door or window that can not be properly closed is another serious problem and needs correction. Normally when the home is jacked up and re-leveled, doors and windows will work properly unless the stress of settling caused damage to the door or window. Drainage problems need to be corrected to prevent a reoccurrence of the problem. Support piers need to be deep enough to maintain stability, otherwise re-leveling will be a constant necessity.

**TEMPERATURE CONTROL** The work load for your air-conditioning system is determined by the thermostat setting and the actual outdoor temperature. The difference between these two numbers is the amount of work your system must overcome. A thermostat setting of 78 to 80 degrees is recommended especially on hot days. If your home is suffering from high humidity, we recommend that you determine the source for the humidity and use exhaust ventilation to remove moisture from bathrooms and kitchen cooking areas. By reducing the humidity in the home our bodies own cooling system can do a more effective job of keeping us cool. The operation of a small dehumidifier could make the home more comfortable and uses less electricity than the central air-conditioning system. Using fans will also make higher thermostat settings feel more comfortable.



**LIGHTING** Are you still using the old style incandescent light bulbs? If so its time to try a compact fluorescent bulb. These bulbs use up to 75% less energy for the same amount of light. They cost a little more but last significantly longer. And since they are lower wattage they introduce less heat into the living area. If your den, dining room and kitchen is equipped with recessed lighting and the three rooms have a total of 10 recessed fixtures with a 75 watt bulb in each fixture. You are introducing 750 watts of heat to the home. This is the equivalent of a small space heater fighting against your air-conditioning. By replacing the 75 watt bulbs with 18 watt compact fluorescent, you are reducing the cost of lighting the rooms by 570 watts and stopping the introduction of 1,947 BTU's of heat. You save on lighting, cooling and bulb maintenance.



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# Spring Cleaning Should Also Include An Inspection

Windows in our home and business brings the beauty of the outdoors into our living room or office. Now that the trees are done dropping seeds it's time to get out the bucket and squeegee and remove the winter and spring grime from our view. This is a great time to also inspect caulking and weather stripping to make sure that your windows are keeping the outside out and the inside in.

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Windows are a major contributor to infiltration and they come in a wide range of thermal efficiency. No window can do its job if it was not properly installed or when age has taken its toll and materials used to manufacture the window have begun to fail. Torn or missing gasket material, loose fitting glass and broken balancers are just a few signs that replacement windows should be considered. New windows are a considerable investment but high efficiency windows will significantly improve the appearance and comfort of your home and reduce the cost for cooling and heating.

If replacement windows are not in the budget, than attempting to repair existing windows and improve the thermal efficiency will help. Caulking, window glazing and even gasket material is available at local hardware centers. A weekend family project can significantly reduce the cost of cooling your home once the repairs are made.



Insulating drapes and blinds help to improve the thermal efficiency of older windows

Adding insulating blinds or thermal draperies is another way to make those old windows do a better job of keeping mother nature outdoors where she belongs. Outdoor shade that blocks incoming sunlight is another very effective way of reducing heat gain through windows. Planting trees and shrubs around the home will screen windows and even walls from direct sunlight, helping to reduce thermal gain inside the home.

Applying common sense to windows has the potential to save home owners substantial sums of energy used for cooling and heating the home. Make your commitment to clean and inspect those windows before the hot Texas summer starts bearing down on your home.

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# From The Cooperative Kitchen



This month's recipe was provided by Linda G. Rotton from Newark TX. She will receive a Texas Co-Op Power Cookbook, compliments of TCEC.



◆◆◆ INGREDIENTS ◆◆◆

- 1/4 - Cup Raisins – or 1/2 Cup Grapes (Chopped)
- 2 - Large Apples Cut Into Small Pieces
- 1 - Cup Chopped Celery
- 1/2 - Cup Chopped Carrots
- 1/2 - Cup Chopped Walnuts
- 1/2 - Cup Pineapple (Chopped & Left In Juice)
- 2 - Tablespoons Cinnamon
- 2-1/2 - Tablespoons Sugar or Splenda
- 1-1/2 - Tablespoons Imitation Vanilla (Only 1 Teaspoon If Vanilla Is Pure)
- OPTIONAL - Add 2 Tablespoons Uncooked Oats

Mix all ingredients in a bowl and chill in the refrigerator. This salad is not only good, it is full of vitamins and good for you! Make it and enjoy it with family and friends.

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# 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!**



# TRI-COUNTY

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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