

EXISTING HOMES

# Holding on to Comfort

*While Saving Energy Dollars*



# Why Higher Energy Costs?

We're all in this together. . . you, your neighbors, your electric cooperative, and our nation. Energy prices have risen significantly due to a number of events impacting our national economy. Just like the cost of gasoline is impacting your life, so is the cost of electric power for your home.

Utilities throughout the nation are finding it necessary to pass on the increased cost for fueling of generating plants. Natural gas fuel cost for wholesale power generation has tripled when compared to just a few years ago. Fortunately, the fuel sources of your electric cooperative also include nuclear and coal, lessening the increase on your monthly electric bill.

## Faster Payback for Efficiency

Using the same amount of home energy this year means higher monthly bills compared to last year. So what can be done to maintain your energy budget without sacrificing home comfort?

Higher energy costs mean faster payback when purchasing energy efficient lighting, appliances, and heating/cooling systems. Of course, energy usage habits also play a role in keeping your monthly home energy costs in line within your budget. Look for products with the ENERGY STAR® label.



**Holding on to comfort in existing site-built homes while saving energy dollars...**

# Where to Start

**Your local electric power association would like to partner with you in an effort to maintain home comfort at a cost that you can afford. To help in reducing your energy usage, we suggest energy saving projects and tips. Remember that about half of your energy usage is for heating and cooling, so those energy saving efforts may be more apparent on your monthly bill. During an extreme weather month, heating and cooling could make up 75 percent or more of your energy usage. Water heating energy comes next in line for savings.**

## Quick Tips



*Lowering your thermostat by **one degree** in winter can save around 6% of heating energy usage.*



*Replacing each standard light bulb with an **ENERGY STAR® CFL** (Compact Fluorescent Light Bulb) will give you **8 times the bulb life and save \$40 in energy costs** over the life of the CFL bulb. (Important: Read CFL labels for fixture type and location. CFLs come in different sizes)*



*Replacing older heating/cooling systems can result in **big energy savings\***.*

*Replace an electric furnace and older AC with a new **ENERGY STAR® Heat Pump**. Save around half or more of heating/cooling energy.*

*Replace older heat pump with a new **ENERGY STAR® Geothermal System** (heat, cool, water heating). Save around 45% of heating and cooling, and half or more of water heating energy.*

*\*Energy savings are approximate. For more information about **ENERGY STAR®**, see <http://www.energystar.gov>.*

- Close the damper on any fireplace not in use.
- Turn off kitchen and bath exhaust fans immediately after use.
- In winter, wear warm clothing indoors and lower the thermostat setting.
- In summer, wear cool clothing and raise the thermostat setting.
- Open the sun-shades on south-facing windows in winter.
- Close the shades on sunny windows in summer.
- Keep interior doors cracked for avoiding pressure imbalances and air leakage.
- Replace or clean the filter on your central heating/cooling system once a month.
- Lower the water heater temperature setting.
- Use the cold or warm water cycle on your clothes washer.
- Clean the lint filter with each dryer load.
- Make sure that the dryer vent to the outside is not blocked by lint.
- Turn off lights when not in use.
- Use small appliances and microwave ovens for most efficient cooking.
- Check the well pump to see that it does not operate continuously.
- Make sure that the airflow returning to your heating/cooling system is not being pulled from the attic or crawl space.
- Check crawl spaces to see if animals have pulled ducting loose as they seek warm air in winter.
- Check for signs of a hot water pipe leak under the house or around the slab edge.
- For households without central heating & cooling, keep one room more comfortable.

## Energy Saving Projects

- Replace your old heating system with an **ENERGY STAR®** heat pump or geothermal system.
- Have leaky ducts sealed with mastic to save the most energy. (Most ducts leak 20% or more.)
- Install an **ENERGY STAR®** programmable thermostat and use it according to directions.
- Install R-38 or higher insulation in the attic and R-19 under floors over a crawl space.
- Seal leaky windows with low-cost interior storm window kits. Use rigid plastic for child safety.
- Weather-strip and caulk leaky windows and doors.
- Caulk or use foam sealant on openings where pipes go through walls.
- Shade sunny windows in summer. Outside shading works best.
- Pull back shades and awnings on south-facing windows in winter.
- Replace standard light bulbs with **ENERGY STAR®** compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs).
- Install motion sensors to control outdoor lighting.
- Wrap your water heater with an insulation blanket.
- Install timers on pool pumps and water heaters.
- Consider eliminating additional aging refrigerators and freezers in the garage.