



FARMERS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Open Lines

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2017



Office Closed

The offices of Farmers Electric Cooperative will be closed Monday-Tuesday, Dec. 25-26; and Monday, Jan. 1 for the holidays. We wish all our members a safe, happy and healthy holiday season!

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Looking for a way to make your home cozier this winter? Try using an area rug to increase the insulation levels of your floors. Area rugs are stylish and can help keep cold air from entering through your floors. Your toes will thank you! – Source: U.S. Department of Energy

2017 Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Board of Directors



Happy Holidays

From the employees and board of directors to each and every one of our members, have a safe and happy holiday season

Show You Care with RECare

RECare is a program through which Farmers Electric Cooperative members can help their fellow members with electric bills and weatherization efficiency costs.

Members may donate funds on a one-time or monthly basis for distribution by local community action agencies to low-income members.

As you plan your end-of-year giving, please consider contributing to your cooperative's RECare program. Even a little goes a long way!

Member Authorization Form

Yes, I want to be a part of members helping members through the RECare program.

Enclosed is a check with a one-time donation.

I would like to make a monthly donation of \$_____.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Mail to: RECare, c/o Farmers Electric Cooperative, 2389 Hwy. 92, P.O. Box 330, Greenfield, IA 50849



Farmers Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

P.O. Box 330

Greenfield, IA 50849

FarmersREC.com | (800) 397-4821





Thank you for saving energy!

If you're thinking of taking advantage of holidays sales and making a big purchase on a refrigerator, freezer or window air conditioner, don't forget to "Pull the Plug" on those old appliances! Farmers Electric Cooperative offers a \$35 rebate for working refrigerators and \$25 for a working freezer or window A/C. Simply call our office to request collection of your old appliance. Our contractor will schedule a pick-up date and remove it at no cost to you. Recycling old appliances is easy with Farmers' Pull the Plug program!

Great (Energy Efficient) Gift Ideas for 2017

Tis the season for gift buying and present wrapping. From the tech-lover to the practical homeowner, here are a few gift ideas for the most energy-efficient and connected home products.



Google Home: Google Home connects seamlessly with smart devices like the Nest Learning Thermostat, Honeywell thermostats (except Lyric), Philips Hue and August, so you can use your voice to set the perfect temperature, turn down the lights or unlock your door. Just set it and forget it for the most efficient use of home electricity. \$129

Tricklestar 7-Outlet APS: For the techie in your life, this power strip not only safeguards your equipment from damaging power transients, but also helps lower your electric bill. The 7-outlet model offers two always-on

outlets for devices that you do not want turning off automatically, 1 master outlet, and 4 controlled outlets. The current-sensing master outlet has three selectable switching thresholds (10w, 22w or 42w) to sense when the

control device is on or off, and it then switches the controlled outlets on or off accordingly to prevent unnecessary power use from devices plugged into those outlets, eliminating what is known as vampire loads. \$22

iHome SmartPlugs: The iHome SmartPlug let you control any appliance such as lamps, fans or humidifiers from home or remotely. Its slim design fits into any standard 110 VAC outlet, leaving the second outlet free. All you need is a smartphone or tablet and the iHome Control app to control your home electronics at your fingertips no matter where you are. \$39

continued on pg. 4

GENERATE SAFETY

	NEVER operate a generator INSIDE your home or in other enclosed or partially-enclosed spaces, including GARAGES .		Make sure your generator is properly grounded and used with a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI).		Install battery-operated CO ALARMS or plug-in CO alarms with a battery backup inside the home.
	A generator is a TEMPORARY power source and should NEVER be used as a permanent solution.		Use only extension cords that have a THREE-PRONGED plug and are rated for the intended load.		Do NOT OVERLOAD the generator.
	NEVER connect generators directly to household wiring without first installing a TRANSFER SWITCH . This prevents backfeeding which could electrocute utility workers making repairs.		Your home generator should be installed by a QUALIFIED ELECTRICIAN and bear the mark of a nationally recognized testing laboratory, such as UL, Intertek or CSA.		The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends generators be positioned at least 20 FEET from doors, windows and vents to prevent CO from entering the home.

For more information about portable generators and carbon monoxide safety visit www.esfi.org

5 Reasons Why You Should Participate in Operation Round-Up

1. Participation is strictly voluntary. If you elect to take part in Operation Round-Up®, your electric bill will automatically be rounded up to the nearest dollar each month. Members can drop out of the program at any time.

2. Because your small change can change lives. The average member donation is around 50 cents per month, or \$6 annually. Even if your bill was rounded up by 99 cents for 12 months, that's only \$11.88 annually. Your contribution is tax deductible and will be shown on your billing statement.

3. You get to see the benefit of your contribution. All funds collected through Operation Round-Up are dispersed by a board of volunteers to organizations or individuals in the Farmers Electric service territory. These funds are used for emergencies, disaster relief, or other charitable reasons.

4. It's the cooperative way. More than 75 years ago, electric cooperatives began to form based on the concept of neighbors helping neighbors. In their case, it was to bring electricity to rural areas. They stood up and did for themselves what no one else would. Today, we continue to apply that same principle in everything we do.

5. Because giving is catchy. Your spare change may not buy much on its own. But when it's combined with your neighbor's spare change, and their neighbor's spare change, it adds up. In fact, since the inception of this program, Farmers Electric has given \$18,667.98 to worthy community causes.

Visit www.farmersrec.com for more information on Operation Round-Up.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

How Can We Better Serve You in 2018?

It's amazing what we can learn through listening and observation. Since becoming general manager of Farmers Electric Cooperative, it seems the bulk of my time is spent listening and observing. But there's a good reason for that.

The dedicated employees here at the cooperative are on the frontlines of our service to you, our members. They listen to your concerns, answer your questions and might even chat you up at the local ballpark over a hot dog. When I listen to our employees, I learn from them what they learn from you about how the cooperative can provide the best service possible.

The board room is the place where decisions are made by a group of individuals elected by the membership. In these meetings, I listen to and observe board members who roll up their sleeves and tackle what can sometimes be very tough and complicated issues. These board members work tirelessly on behalf the membership to ensure the power the co-op provides is safe, affordable and reliable.

Listening improves understanding, builds trust,

strengthens relationships and fosters cooperation. It's also crucial to collaboration and success.

That's why Farmers Electric still loves face time with our members. Our annual meeting is a social event for our whole co-op family. And we hope you'll make plans now to join us in September for an evening of co-op business, fun, fellowship and prizes.

So, how do we serve you better in 2018? The same way many of us try to serve community, society and family better, each day – by listening. In our offices, on telephones, through social media exchanges, and in our face-to-face meetings, we're ready to listen.

Whatever it is you may have questions about – energy efficiency, electrical service or any of our products and services – just ask us.

When we know what you want, we're in a better position to deliver successful results. So drop in and see us, we're always glad to hear from you.



Charlie Dunn
General Manager

Illuminate Your Holiday Season with Safety

Don't let the bright and colorful sparkle of the season distract you from taking the precautions that you need to stay safe when decorating.

If you choose an artificial tree, make sure you choose one with fire resistance protection. With a real tree, make sure the needles are green and sturdy with a trunk that is sticky with resin. These are indicators your tree is well-hydrated. Keep your tree stand filled with water so that the tree does not become overly dry and present a fire hazard.

Never place your tree near heat-emitting devices like space heaters or radiators.

Any lights that are hung either inside or outside of the home should have a label indicating that they have been certified by an accredited independent testing laboratory.

Also make sure the lights are rated for the location in which they will be used – whether indoors or outside. Before hanging your lights, check the strands for broken bulbs as well as fraying or bare wires that could present electrical hazards. Always replace damaged products.

Typically, one extension cord should only have three strands of lights connected to it at most, but you should also check that the extension cord is rated for its intended use. Never run extension cords under carpets, through doorways, or where they could be damaged by furniture.

Be sure to turn off all lights before leaving the home or going to sleep. A timer can help.

Safe Electricity hopes your season will be merry, bright, and safe. For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



FUN & FESTIVE SNACKS

ENJOY!

The diet can start in January. For this month, enjoy being with family, going to holiday parties and especially eating all the yummy food! Fill your party trays with some fun and festive snacks for the table and get ready to share the best of the holiday season.

Each month, Farmers Electric Cooperative places a call for recipes in various categories. Winners receive a \$5 credit on their account, with their recipes appearing in the next month's issue. Mail entries with your bill to: P.O. Box 330, Greenfield, IA 50849; or e-mail them to: Holi@farmersrec.com. JANUARY RECIPES: Pasta Perfection

Gift Guide...from pg. 2

Solar Backpack: If someone on your list is the outdoors type who still likes to stay connected, a solar backpack may be the answer. No more worrying about low battery life on your phone or laptop, these backpacks allow you to charge your devices in style and on the go. For added fun, customize the contents to the recipient by filling the pack with things like gift cards, trail mix, a great book or wool socks. \$50-\$150

ENERGY STAR® Anything: If you're looking to take advantage of big holiday sales on appliances, be sure to visit the ENERGY STAR Web site – www.energystar.gov – for the most energy efficient brands. Appliances account for about 13 percent of your household's energy costs, and replacing outdated appliances with energy efficient products will save you money.



Open Lines is a monthly publication of Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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The mission of Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc., is to deliver safe, reliable, affordable electricity and other services to improve the quality of life within our communities.



Hot Crackers

Ingredients

- 16 oz. box of Saltine crackers
- 1 1/4 c. vegetable or canola oil (don't use olive or coconut oil)
- 1 oz. ranch dressing seasoning
- 2 T. crushed red pepper flakes

Whisk together oil, seasoning, and red pepper flakes.

In a large bowl*, pour the oil mixture over the crackers. Use a rubber spatula to stir for 10-15 minutes to thoroughly coat the crackers and allow the oil to soak in.

You could eat these immediately, but they are so much better if you'll allow a few hours for the oil to soak all the way in. I like them best next day.

*Alternatively, you can pour all the ingredients into a bag and shake.

Lora Blomme, Bridgewater

Candy Cane Peppermint Puppy Chow

Ingredients

- 5 c. Chex cereal (rice or corn varieties are my faves)
- 10 oz. Andes Peppermint Baking Chips (or ANY peppermint flavored baking chips)
- 1 c. powdered sugar
- 6 large candy canes, crushed

Melt the Andes Peppermint Baking Chips in the microwave in a large glass bowl in 20-30 second intervals on half power, stirring between each interval until fully melted. Pour the Chex Cereal into the bowl and stir and fold the cereal and melted baking chips until fully coated.

In a large zip top baggie, pour in the powdered sugar and the crushed candy canes. Add coated Chex cereal to bag. Seal the baggie and shake vigorously until all the cereal is coated with the sugar and candy canes.

We store ours in the bag, but if you plan to store differently, it keeps up to 2 weeks in a sealed container at room temperature.

Hillary Laughery, Orient