



# FARMERS Open Lines ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2021



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips to save energy.

Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features that are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use (also known as phantom load).

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) estimates that the average home loses \$200 annually to energy wasted by phantom load.



Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

P.O. Box 330

Greenfield, IA 50849

FarmersREC.com | (800) 397-4821

### COOPERATIVE YOUTH OPPORTUNITY:

## Scholarships Applications Due April 1

Farmers Electric Cooperative wants to do all it can to support our high school seniors who are missing out on so much due to the global pandemic.

If you know a student who could use some extra money for college, please encourage him or her to apply for the Farmers Electric 2021 Scholarship.

Every year, your cooperative supports area students who plan to continue their education beyond high school. To be eligible, students must be enrolled full-time at an accredited college, university or vocational/technical school for the 2020-2021 school year. The student must also have a parent or legal guardian who is a member of Farmers Electric and resides within the cooperative's service territory.

Applications must be in our office on or before **Thursday, April 1, 2021**. The mailing address is:

Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 330, Greenfield, IA 50849.

In addition to the application, the following must be included:

- A copy of the student's transcript;
- A short essay on why electric cooperatives are important to the student; and
- A senior photo.

No other attachments are allowed. For more information, and to download an application, visit [www.farmersrec.com](http://www.farmersrec.com) and click on the "Community" tab or call (800) 397-4821.



## Required Notice of Complaints Procedure

The Iowa Utilities Board requires that all non-rate regulated utilities post the following notice to its membership. If a member has a problem with his/her service, please call or write Farmers Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 330, Greenfield, IA 50849 or call (800) 397-4821.

If your complaint is related to service disconnection, safety or engineering standards, or renewable energy and Farmers Electric does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board by calling (515) 725-7321, or toll-free (877) 565-4450, by writing to 1375 E. Court Ave., Des Moines, IA 50319-0069; or by email to [customer@iub.iowa.gov](mailto:customer@iub.iowa.gov).

# 2021 ENERGY EFFICIENCY CALENDAR



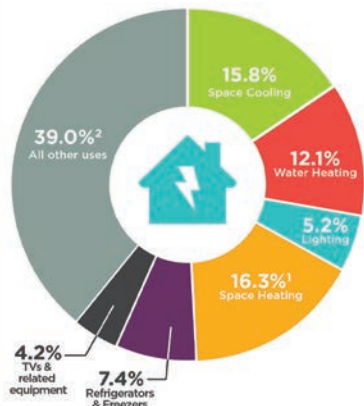
There are so many ways you can save energy! Saving energy helps reduce your family's monthly bills - and it helps our environment. Change your energy use habits by following the monthly tips below. Keep this calendar on your refrigerator to remind family members to be energy efficient throughout the year.

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
<p>Turn off ceiling fans when you leave a room.</p>	<p>Instead of turning up the heat, put on an extra layer of clothing or stay cozy under a blanket.</p>	<p>Turn off lights when you leave a room.</p>	<p>Ask an adult to help you plant a tree to help shade your home in the summer.</p>
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
<p>Decorate your backyard or porch with solar-powered lights.</p>	<p>Take short showers instead of baths.</p>	<p>Dry heavy linens outside on a clothesline instead of using the dryer.</p>	<p>Ask an adult to help you schedule a reminder to change the A/C filter every 60-90 days.</p>
SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<p>Turn off running water while brushing your teeth.</p>	<p>Unplug energy vampires, like chargers, gaming consoles and cable/satellite boxes.</p>	<p>Remind family members to use cold water when washing clothes.</p>	<p>Decorate your home with energy-saving LED holiday lights.</p>

## How Americans Use Electricity

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows combined use of clothes washers and dryers, computers, dishwashers, small appliances and other electrical equipment (noted as "all other uses" at right) accounts for nearly 40% of electricity consumption in American homes.

Source: EIA, Annual Energy Outlook 2020  
<sup>1</sup>Includes consumption for heat and operating furnace fans and boiler pumps  
<sup>2</sup>Includes miscellaneous appliances, clothes washers and dryers, computers and related equipment, stoves, dishwashers, heating elements, and motors.



## Required Statement of Nondiscrimination

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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## Excessive Clutter is a Fire Hazard

Are you like millions of Americans who vowed to get organized in 2021? If so, you're not only helping to make your life easier, but also safer!

The thing about clutter is that it can accumulate to the point of creating a dangerous situation, without a homeowner ever knowing what is happening. It may be something that slowly creeps up on you after years of accumulation and rarely throwing anything away. Before you know it, you have a fire hazard on your hands. According to the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA), fires in homes that were moderately to severely cluttered or in a state of disrepair are more likely to result in the death of the home's occupants.

Clutter is a safety issue when it impedes free movement around the house. In addition to causing falls (more than 1.6 million seniors suffer injuries from falls at home every year), clutter can prevent someone from exiting the home safely in the event of a fire. What would you do if your only escape during a house fire was a first-floor window you couldn't reach because stacks of clutter blocked

# Let's Connect

**W**hen we say that we live in a "connected" world, most of us think about technology, like our smart phones and other devices and gadgets. But when you're a member of an electric co-op (that's you!), there's so much more to being part of our connected co-op community.

As a member of Farmers Electric Cooperative, you help to power good in our local community through initiatives like Operation Round Up, food, clothing and toy drives and other initiatives that help the most vulnerable in our community.

We depend on you because you power our success, and when Farmers does well, the community thrives because we're all connected.

We greatly value our connection to you, the members we serve. And we'd like to help you maximize the value you can get from your membership through a variety of programs, products and services that we offer our members. For example, we can help you save money on your energy bill with rebates on energy efficient appliances or systems for home, work or farm. When you download the SmartHub app, you can monitor and manage your home energy use, pay your bill online and access a menu of additional options for potential savings and more.

When you follow us on social media, you can stay up to date on power restoration efforts, tree trimming planning, co-op director elections, giveaways and more. You'll also see photos of our line crews in action and our employees helping with community service projects—and who doesn't enjoy seeing good things happening in our community!

Our cooperative relies on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, and up-to-date contact information from our members helps ensure that we can provide the highest level of service that you expect and deserve.

Updated contact information can even speed up the power restoration process during an outage. That's because when you call to report an outage, our automated system recognizes your phone number and matches



**CHARLIE DUNN**  
CEO

it with your account location. Accurate information helps our outage-management system predict the location and the possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our line crews to correct the problem.

Farmers Electric exists to serve our members, and when we're better connected to you and our local community, we're better prepared to answer the call in the new year and beyond.

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## Clutter...continued

it? Clutter can also inhibit the ability of firefighters to rescue the occupants of a home, and other efforts to battle a blaze.

Clutter, in general, is a fire hazard, particularly when stacks of old newspapers or magazines have dried out over the years. This creates a virtual tinder box just waiting for one spark to ignite a single page.

Sometimes clutter can become so pervasive that it invites household pests including mice, rats and cockroaches. In addition to poor sanitary conditions, these pests can cause structural damage to your home and chew on wiring that can create a fire hazard.

Need some help getting started decluttering? Try these ideas: [www.becomingminimalist.com/creative-ways-to-declutter](http://www.becomingminimalist.com/creative-ways-to-declutter).



If you're like the millions of Americans who resolve to lose weight in 2021, this month's recipes can help you reach your goal to be the best you can be!

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. Plan now to participate by mailing your entry with your bill to: P.O. Box 330, Greenfield, IA 50849; or e-mailing it to: HWeston@farmersrec.com. **FEBRUARY:** Chocolate lovers

### Skillet Sausage & Zucchini



Photo: thewholecook.com

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 1/2 T. olive or avocado oil
- 4 fully cooked sausages, sliced into circles 1/4 inch thick
- 2 medium zucchinis, cubed
- 1 onion, cut into 3/4 inch pieces (close to same size as zucchini)
- 1 bell pepper, any color, cut into 3/4 inch pieces (close to same size as zucchini)

Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Once the oil is hot, add sliced sausage. Sauté, flipping sausage frequently, for 1 to 2 minutes or until sausage slices have some browning. Remove from pan and set aside. Reduce heat to medium. Add remaining 1 1/2 tablespoons of oil to skillet with the zucchini, onion, and bell pepper. Sprinkle with salt, oregano, basil, garlic powder, onion powder, and pepper. Stir. Let cook until the onion is translucent, and peppers and zucchini are close to tender, about 5 to 10 minutes. Add sausage back to the skillet along with minced garlic. Stir. Cover so everything heats through for 1 to 2 minutes. Taste. Add extra salt if desired. Garnish with chopped fresh basil (optional).

*Sharon Wood, Wota*

### Monster Cookie Energy Balls

#### INGREDIENTS

- 3 c. whole old-fashioned oats
- 1 c. creamy or crunchy peanut butter
- 1/2 c. honey
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/2 c. mini chocolate chips
- 1/2 c. mini M&Ms®

Combine all ingredients into a mixing bowl. I usually melt the peanut butter in microwave safe bowl before adding honey and oats so it is a little easier to mix. Shape into balls, about 1" in size or whatever size you prefer. Place on a small cookie sheet or large plate. Refrigerate for 30 minutes. Store leftovers covered in the refrigerator or freezer.



Photo: onelittleproject.com

*Linda Barker, Winterset*

**Want a chance to get \$5 off your next electric bill? Enter a recipe in our recipe contest each month!**



- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp. dried basil
- 1/4 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp. onion powder
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1 tsp. garlic, minced
- Fresh basil for garnish (optional)



**Farmers Electric Cooperative**

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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. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.