Co-op Concerns

Turn to us for safety and efficiency information

When you need information, let’s face it: There are more sources out there than ever before. Most of us go straight to Google when we’re wondering about something. We check out media reports or ask our neighbors, or there’s always the “phone a friend” option.

While all these are perfectly legitimate choices for most queries, there’s really only one place to go for the most accurate, up-to-date and relevant facts with regard to electrical safety and energy efficiency: Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation.

We’ve made it our business — for more than 83 years now — to know everything there is to know about these subjects. And we have a couple of distinct advantages over Google (or even your friends and neighbors, for that matter).

Nobody knows our communities like we do. Decades have come and gone since electricity first came to homes and farms around here, yet the co-op remains as a constant — a universal and unifying element in the lives of those we serve. We’ve seen periods of rapid growth, and we’ve provided essential support for our local economy during times of struggle. Hardly any other product or service you can imagine was just as present and important in the lives of your grandparents as it is in your own.

We’ve made (and continue to make) a life-changing difference to folks around here.

Our solid track record of meeting member needs places us squarely at the top of the list for information you can count on. We have a unique understanding of the challenges that apply and the opportunities that are available right here in our area. More so than any other source you name, we know what’s what when it comes to staying safe around electricity and maximizing your energy budget through increased efficiency. But that’s not all.

At CEMC, we take it to the next level by offering educational programs, resources and technologies designed to effectively address safety concerns. And after accessing all the very latest information we offer on energy efficiency (co-op employees are pros at making this stuff easy to understand), you can rely on us to provide programs and services that are proven to reduce your energy consumption. With financing options designed to make efficiency improvements affordable, there’s no better place to turn for truly expert advice and assistance.

So when you hear about some new technology that sounds too good to be true or if you’re wondering about steps you can take to trim your electric bill, I urge you to give us a call. Not only are we armed with all the facts you need, but we actually care. We go the extra mile to make sure you have the best information with which to make decisions because you matter to us. And that, friends, is definitely not something you can expect from a search engine.
Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation sent 10 lineworkers to provide assistance to DEMCO, which powers seven parishes in southeast Louisiana, on Sept. 9. DEMCO’s service territory was severely damaged when Hurricane Ida made landfall as an extremely dangerous Category 4 hurricane on Aug. 29. Above, assisting from CEMC were, from left, Bryan Barrow, Steven Highers, Wes Boyd, Rusty Fuqua, Sammy South, Gordon White, Preston Murphey, Cole Freeman, Trey Hoover and Justin Bradley.
Don’t let Turkey Day gobble up electricity

Our use of electricity soars on Thanksgiving Day as we draft our oven, stove, refrigerator and even our heating system into overdrive as we spend extra time cooking and invite family into our homes.

Don’t spoil the holiday fun worrying about energy costs. Instead, make an effort to conserve energy even as you overuse your appliances, lights and heat. Here are some tips:

• If your dining room has an older chandelier that doesn’t use CFLs, dim the brightness by at least 10 percent. If it doesn’t have a dimmer switch, install one.
• Cook as many dishes at the same time as possible. Put two or three dishes in the oven together if their recipes call for the same temperature. That way, you can turn the oven off sooner.
• Lower your home’s thermostat before you put the turkey in the oven. The heat that the oven and stovetop will emit — along with the heat that having extra people in the house creates — will keep your home warm enough without cranking up the thermostat, even if it’s cold outside.
• Cook what you can in the microwave or slow cooker. They use less energy than the oven.

• Use the dishwasher instead of cleaning the dinner dishes by hand. Dishwashers use less energy and water than washing by hand.

Daylight Saving Time Reminder

DON'T FORGET TO FALL BACK ON NOV. 7!
Set your clocks back by one hour. This is also a great time to change your home's smoke alarm batteries.
How will we charge all the new electric vehicles?
Where you charge your EV may not be as important as how it looks and what it costs

By Paul Wesslund

What electric cars need to become a top choice for American drivers is a nationwide network of charging stations to overcome fears of running out of juice on long trips.

Or maybe that’s not true at all.

There are already nearly one-third as many charging sites in the U.S. as there are gas stations. And that doesn’t even count the “refueling stations” found in the electric outlets of every home in America.

Plus, the range of electric cars already exceeds how far most people drive in a day. Ninety percent of Americans drive less than 45 miles a day, and the average range for electric vehicles is 250 miles.

The ballyhoo over charging stations has created a powerful conventional wisdom that they’re a necessary step toward overcoming the “range anxiety” about getting stranded in the middle of nowhere. President Joe Biden’s American Jobs Plan proposes a national network of 500,000 charging stations by 2030, up from the Department of Energy’s current count of 50,000.

But the conventional wisdom masks a different road ahead.

Range anxiety may be the least of the reasons there aren’t more electric vehicles on the road, says Brian Sloboda, director of consumer solutions for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

“There are people who argue we need the charging network for the electric vehicle market to be successful. They might be right, but I’m not one of those people,” says Sloboda. “Let’s say your electric vehicle is only used for commuting, and you’re just driving it from your home to the grocery store to work. It is very likely that you would never even use public charging stations because you can charge your EV at home for a very reasonable price.”

Sloboda is quick to list the advantages of electric vehicles — from how they affect the environment to their lower maintenance costs to the fact that you can wake up every morning with a full tank of “gas.” But he sees bigger issues than a lack of charging stations standing in the way of greater acceptance.

He says, “You have limited model availability, limited body styles, limited manufacturers, high prices and most people are unfamiliar with the technology.”

But Sloboda sees those problems as solvable. Right now, you’ll pay about $10,000 extra for an electric model. But those costs are coming down as batteries get cheaper and more powerful.

According to the Department of Energy, there are currently about 50,000 electric vehicle charging sites in the U.S., which is about one-third the number of gas stations. Photo source: Paul Brennan
Safety tips for the most wonderful time of the year

They’re right around the corner! Along with all the fun and family time, the holidays bring some situations where electrical safety can be a concern.

To make sure Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation members enjoy an injury-free holiday season, we want to offer some reminders for the upcoming season.

A lot of folks start putting up holiday lights right after Thanksgiving — or even before! Be sure to inspect your indoor and outdoor light strands for broken sockets, frayed wires and loose connections. If it’s time to replace your old lights with new ones, look for ones that have been approved by nationally recognized testing labs — and only buy from reputable retailers. If your philosophy is ‘the more lights, the better,’ avoid overloading outlets. And make sure you use the right kind of light strand for the right application. Lights rated for indoor use only feature a green holographic mark on the tag next to the plug, while a red mark indicates the lights are safe for both indoor and outdoor use. Outdoor lights should be plugged into ground fault circuit interrupter outlets. Use only heavy-duty extension cords outside, making note of the wattage rating of the cord as well as the power requirements of the lighted decorations you’re planning to plug into it. If you need a ladder to hang your lights, use one that is made of a nonconductive material like wood or fiberglass — just to be on the safe side. And always unplug that amazing light display before you leave home or go to bed.

Because this is the time of year when portable electric space heaters are often being turned on for the first time since last winter, CEMC urges its members to stay safe around them. Always plug space heaters into a wall outlet — not a power strip. Make sure space heaters are placed on the floor at least 3 feet away from flammable objects. If you’re in the market for a new heater, look for UL-approved units that offer built-in shutoffs that automatically cut the power if they are tipped over or become too hot. And last but not least, never leave a space heater running in a room unattended. That way, if anything should go wrong, you can take action quickly.

Finally, it makes sense to be extra-aware of kitchen safety this time of year. With family coming to celebrate around the holiday table, your kitchen appliances are likely to be getting a workout. Always have someone on duty when cooking is underway; accidents can happen when stove burners or the oven is left unattended. Keep pot holders, dish towels and other flammable items away from heat sources. It should go without saying, but for those folks who opt for a deep-fried Thanksgiving turkey, never use an outdoor frying setup indoors — no matter how cold it is outside!
Make your home ‘smarter’ one gadget at a time

Making your home even a little bit “smarter” can help your family conserve energy and keep utility bills in check.

Here are six smart devices — electronic gadgets that can interact with each other or with a computer network — that you can add to your home to cut down on wasted energy.

1. Smart plugs. Even if your appliances aren’t smart, you can plug them into smart plugs. Depending on the model of plug, you might be able to set your appliances and lights to automatically turn on or off. Some models monitor the appliances’ energy use.

2. Smart thermostat. These devices can manage your central air conditioning and heating system and adjust the temperature of your house. According to Energy Star, homes equipped with smart thermostats use an average of 8 percent less energy.

3. Smart lighting. A hub connecting to smart LED lighting fixtures allows the homeowner to schedule them to turn on and off or to control them remotely.

4. Smart motion sensors. When they’re connected to a wirelessly connected smart lighting system, motion sensors “know” when lights all over the house need to turn on — like when someone walks into the room — or off — after they detect no movement over a period of time. Even without the “smart” feature, a motion sensor in a single room can help your family cut down on wasted electricity.

5. Smart home energy monitors. When attached to your home’s electrical box, a home energy monitor keeps track of your energy consumption and can reveal patterns in energy use over a day, week or month. The more aware you are of your energy consumption, the more prepared you will be to decide where you could use less.

6. SmartHub mobile app. Monitor your electric use with Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation’s SmartHub mobile app. This free app also allows users to make payments, view billing history, report outages, check Cumberland Connect availability and more!

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**When the lights go out, so do they.**

Rain or shine, day or night, CEMC crews are ready to serve our members.

Report outages by calling 1-800-987-2362 or via the SmartHub mobile app.

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**Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month**

Fall is the perfect time to prep your home for the upcoming winter chill. One of the best ways you can save energy and stay comfortable is to caulk and weather strip areas that typically need sealing. Start by sealing around windows and doors. For additional savings, seal where plumbing, ducting and electrical wiring come through walls, floors and ceilings.

Source: energy.gov