



RURAL  
MISSOURI

December 2017

# Sac Osage Electric Cooperative

# News

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## Capital Credit money owed to YOU!



The Board of Directors of Sac Osage Electric Cooperative have authorized general and deceased capital credit distributions of \$725,000 and \$100,000 respectively. The general distribution should fully retire capital credits for the years of 1992, 1993, 1994 and a small portion of 1995. If you are a current member that was served by Sac Osage Electric during those years, you will receive a portion of this capital credit distribution, which will appear as a credit on your December bill which you will receive in January.

Electric utilities are a capital-intensive industry requiring a large investment in plant and equipment and each member of Sac Osage Electric contributes to the equity of the co-op through the margins of the utility. Member equity is the essential tool for Sac Osage Electric to build, maintain, and upgrade the facilities necessary to provide members with reliable, economical electric service. This investment is also necessary to finance construction during periods of growth and to implement the latest necessary technology.

At the end of each operating year, excess revenue of the Cooperative is allocated back to members (or former members) on a basis directly proportional to the amount of kilowatt-hours used in that given year. In other words, capital credits are to a cooperative what shares of stock are to an investor-owned utility. When a person owns stock in an investor-owned company, their stock may pay dividends based on the performance of that company.

As a member of Sac Osage Electric, you accumulate dividends based on your electrical usage for each given year. However, if you were a customer of an investor-owned utility, you would have no equity to show for the bills you paid regardless of how much you spent or how many years you contributed to that utility. Customers of investor-owned utilities earn no return on the profits of a utility unless they purchase stock in that company. On the other hand, members of Sac Osage Electric benefit by being owners of the Cooperative, thereby entitled to share in capital credit allocations and distributions.

Members have democratic control of the cooperative and every time they turn on a light, watch TV or use their electric stove, they add to their equity in the co-op and accumulate capital credits. There is no better way to express the benefits and rewards of belonging to a co-op and receiving service from Sac Osage Electric than the issuance of these capital credits. Retirement of member dividends is a direct result of achievement of the financial goals set by the Board of Directors for Sac Osage Electric Cooperative.

# Merry Christmas!

**Sac Osage Electric Cooperative  
will be closed on Monday, Dec.  
25th for Christmas & Monday,  
Jan. 1st for New Year's Day.**



## Do you see what I see?

While many think of Santa Lucia (Dec. 13) as the Swedish saint with candles in her hair, bringing back the light to the solstice season, the saint is primarily the patroness of eyesight in Sicily. Legend has it that an admirer flattered her for her captivating eyes, upon which



she plucked them out and sent them to him so she would be sure to resist the temptations of love. Italian churches often display ornate masks of silver or wax in her honor, and those faithful to St. Lucia hang similar ornaments in their homes to protect against eye disease.

## Chill December

And after him (November) came next the chill December; Yet he through merry feasting which he made, And great bonfires, did not the cold remember . . ." Edmund Spenser (1552–1599) penned rhymes such as this for each of the 12 months and thus gave us a modern-day prescription for warming the days of this wintry month. With the holidays ahead, festive feasts with family and friends may consume you. Mark your calendar now, reserving time for planting "Paper White" narcissus, preparing baked gifts, roasting chestnuts and enjoying the snow — if you have some. Remember the gift of time; not all presents can be purchased.



## Ancient superstitions



Many ancient vows and superstitions involved food. At medieval feasts, a roasted peacock, with its feathers and head intact, was often common fare. Knights would put a hand onto the roasted peacock's back and make a vow for the coming year, much like our New Year's resolutions. Ancient Egyptians believed that onions kept evil spirits away. When they took an oath, they placed one hand on an onion.

For recipes, gardening tips and weather forecasts, visit:  
[www.almanac.com](http://www.almanac.com)

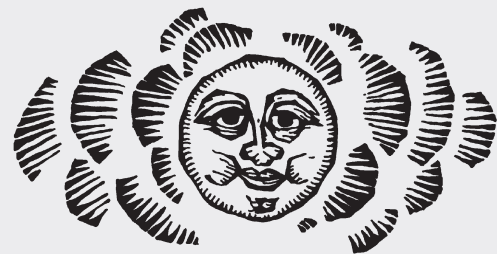
### Recipe for Chocolate Brownie Pie



2 squares unsweetened chocolate  
2 tablespoons butter  
3 large eggs  
1/2 cup sugar  
3/4 cup dark corn syrup  
3/4 cup pecan halves  
1 unbaked pie shell (9-inch)

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Melt the unsweetened chocolate and butter over hot water. Beat together the eggs, sugar, chocolate mixture and corn syrup. Stir in the pecan halves. Pour into the unbaked pie shell. Bake 40 to 50 minutes or just until set. Serve warm or cold with ice cream or whipped cream. Makes 8 to 10 servings.

## THE OLD FARMER'S



## WEATHER PROVERBS

**If the wind blows much on St. Stephen's Day (Dec. 26), the grape will be bad in the next year.**

**Many stars in winter indicate frost.**

**Between the hours of 10 and 2, will show you what the day will do.**

**Much sleet in winter will be followed by a good fruit year.**

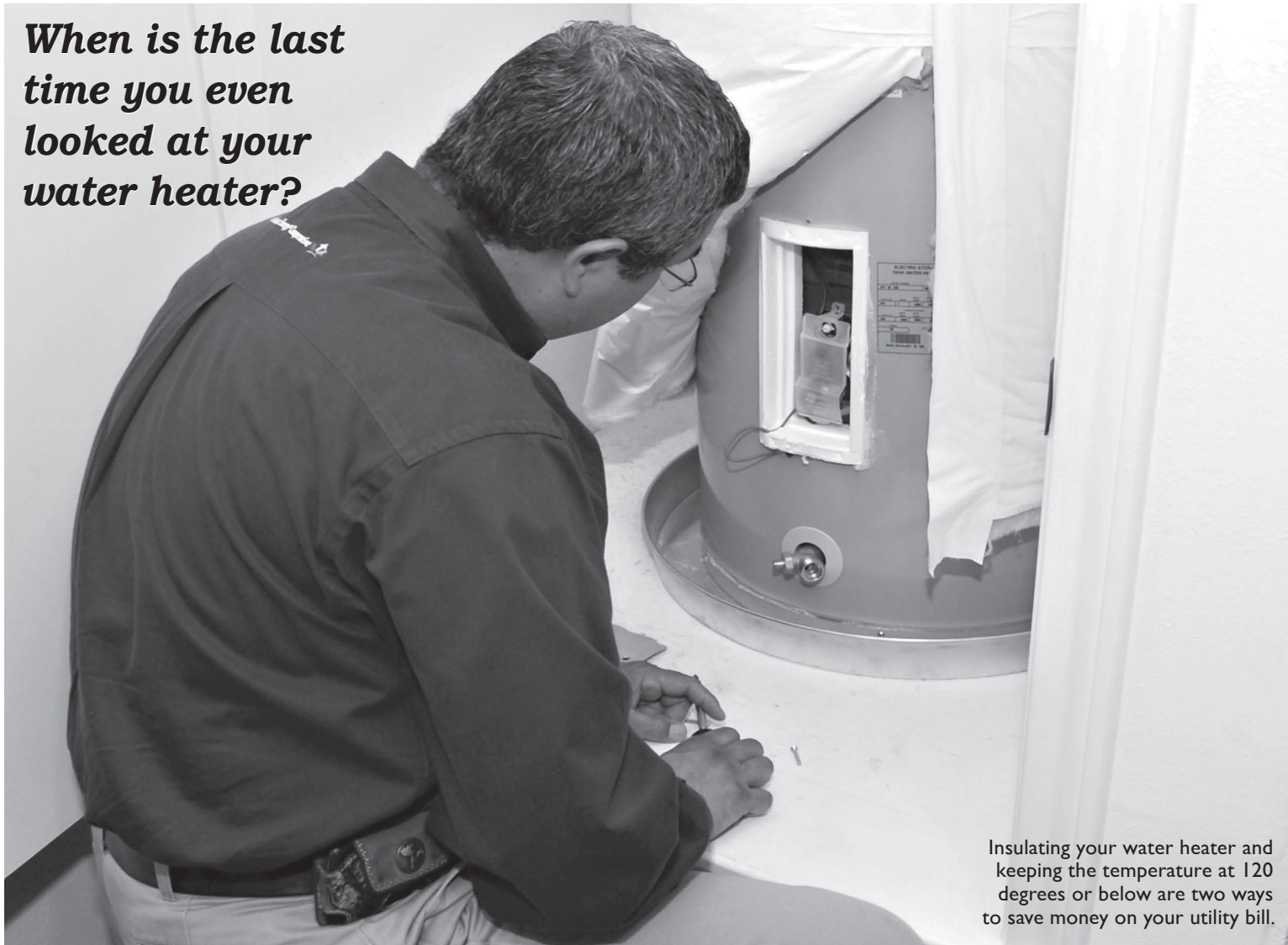
**If at Christmas ice hangs on the willow, clover may be cut at Easter.**

**If the wolves howl and foxes bark during the winter, expect cold weather.**

**Black clouds in the north in winter indicate approaching snow.**

# Water Heater Efficiency

***When is the last time you even looked at your water heater?***



Insulating your water heater and keeping the temperature at 120 degrees or below are two ways to save money on your utility bill.

photo courtesy of Water Heater Repair Portland

**Dear Pat: My water heater is 15 years old. About how long should it last? Are there things I can do to maintain it and make it more efficient? Or should I just replace it? — Max**

Dear Max: It's hard to say how long your water heater will last. Certified home inspectors estimate the life span to be about 10 years. Some manufacturers suggest 12 to 13 years, but I had a water tank that lasted more than 40 years before the heating element finally gave out. That said, it's wise to replace a water heater before it fails because sometimes failure includes a ruptured tank or a massive leak that can do a lot of damage.

The life span of a conventional water heater (one with a tank) depends on factors such as the volume of water cycled through it, the hardness (mineral content) of the water and the tank's interior coating. Many water heaters come with a warranty as long as 12 years. Presumably, a longer warranty indicates higher quality and the chances of longer life. These warranties usually only cover the cost of a replacement tank; they typically do not include the cost of labor to install it or the costs from flood damage if the tank fails.

There are a few warning signs that your water heater tank or heating element may be failing:

- Water leaking from or pooling on the floor below the tank
- Rust, corrosion or mineral deposits around fittings or valves
- The water temperature from your faucets is dropping

Many experts believe that an important water heater maintenance practice is to drain the tank every year or two. Allstate.com provides an excellent step-by-step guide. However, other energy advisors recommend if the tank hasn't been drained in the past six or seven years, you should avoid doing so because draining it may remove sediment in such a way that a leak could develop.

Here are a few simple steps you can take to increase the effi-

ciency of your water heater:

- Insulate the first 6 to 10 feet of easily-accessed hot water line where it exits the tank.
- If the tank is warm to the touch or is in a cold location like your garage, consider insulating it with a heater blanket. But first, check the owner's manual to make sure doing so won't void the warranty. If you have a gas or propane water heater, be careful the blanket doesn't block the unit's air supply.
- Keep your water temperature to 120 degrees or less. This will help you save money on your heating bill and ensure a longer life for pipes and gaskets.

When it comes to water heaters, keep safety in mind, too. If you have a gas or propane water heater, protect your family from the "silent killer" of carbon monoxide gas. Pick up a carbon monoxide detector from the hardware store and install it near your water heater.

Opportunities to save money on your hot water budget abound throughout the house. Showering uses almost 17 percent of your indoor water use, so you can save money by installing efficient shower heads. Replacing older dishwashers and washing machines with more efficient models will also reduce your energy bills. You should also repair any leaky faucets, as a drip every second can add up to \$35 a year.

When it's time to purchase a new water heater, there are many options available. Some electric co-ops offer rebates on energy-efficient models, so be sure to check with them first. Others offer incentives for water heaters with large tanks or to install a switch that can be triggered remotely to turn the water heater off for brief periods of high energy demand.

*This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency. For more information on water heaters, please visit [www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips](http://www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips).*



## Granted: \$45,000 to build butterfly habitat at Thomas Hill Energy Center

Associated Electric Cooperative will receive more than \$45,000 through the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation to develop habitat at its Thomas Hill Energy Center for the threatened monarch butterfly.

The Missouri foundation received one of 23 grants totaling \$3.77 million from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation – the third year of funding for the Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund. Overall, funded projects will leverage more than \$5.85 million in matching funds, for a total of \$9.62 million nationwide to protect, conserve and increase habitat for the monarch butterfly, according to the national foundation.

Associated has proactively worked to protect the monarch butterfly, and at the same time keep electricity reliable and affordable for member systems.

Associated helped sponsor the first Missouri Monarch and Pollinator Conservation Strategy meeting in 2015 and continues to serve on the steering committee “Missourians for Monarchs,” a collaborative group of citizens, conservation and agricultural organizations, government agencies, utilities and

agribusinesses committed to pollinator conservation.

Associated and five other members of Missourians for Monarchs jointly submitted the grant proposal to the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation for \$250,000. As announced Oct. 5, the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation will receive more than \$244,000. Matching funds will bring the total to more than \$550,000 for establishment and enhancement of monarch habitat on nearly 300 acres across the state.

Associated is matching its grant funds with a budgeted \$30,000, as well as in-kind labor, said Rob LeForce, senior environmental analyst at Associated. The cooperative will develop monarch habitat on about 32 acres of its reclaimed Prairie Hill mine.

Staff at Associated’s Mining Division, as well as the coal yard crew, have been working to prepare the seven plots. Staff completed a controlled burn last week to help turn the land into a native pollinator meadow, including milkweed, native forbs and flowers.



Photograph courtesy of the Missouri Department of Conservation.

### Protecting pollinators

The population of monarch butterflies has declined 90 percent in the last 20 years, putting them at risk for placement on the endangered species list. Such a listing could have an adverse impact on Associated Electric and its members by creating restrictions that make it more difficult and costly to site and maintain transmission facilities and rights of ways.

Instead, Associated partnered with other groups to protect pollinators, which play an important role in agriculture, natural landscapes and members’ quality of life.

Merry Christmas from Sac  
Osage Electric Employees

**SAFETY  
FIRST!**

Keep the holiday season safe by taking care not to plug too many items into one outlet. Before hanging lights, check them for damage that could cause a fire or shock. Also be sure anything used outdoors is rated for outdoor use.

