



Sac Osage Electric Cooperative

News

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Capital Credits

The Board of Directors of Sac Osage Electric Cooperative have authorized general and deceased capital credit distributions of \$850,000 and \$105,000 respectively. The general distribution should fully retire capital credits for the years of 1995 and half of 1996. 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.



Sac Osage Electric Cooperative will be closed on Tuesday, December 25th for Christmas and Tuesday, January 1st for New Year's Day.



Tips for Staying Safe This Holiday Season

Gathering with family and friends during the holidays often means making great memories, reliving traditions, and sharing the spirit of the season. However, all the festivities, don't forget about safety. Safe Electricity shares tips to help ensure that your holiday season—whether decorating, feasting, or traveling — remains a safe one.

Keep safety in mind when decorating the home. Ensure that your tree is placed at least 3 feet away from heat sources such as fireplaces or radiators and on a stable platform. Before hanging holiday lights, check for worn spots, fraying, and excessive kinking. Damaged stands of lights should not be used. Consider investing in LED light strands. Although they are more expensive than traditional incandescent bulbs, LED lights last much longer and are also more efficient and durable.

Don't get burned in the kitchen. Clean your stovetop and oven often, especially before the large amount of baking and cooking that takes place for family gatherings. Doing so will help prevent fires in the kitchen, should a malfunction or accident in the kitchen take place. Do not leave combustible items, such as towels or pot holders, near the stove top. Keep all appliance cords away from heat. Never use appliances near the kitchen sink. Plug appliances into ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlets. Unplug your appliances when they are not in use.

Whether you are leaving the home for a few hours or for a few weeks, turn off all lights when they are not in use. Your neighbors can still enjoy your exterior Christmas lights while you are away if you put them on an automatic timer. This will remove the extra worry of an electrical accident while also reducing energy costs. If you will be gone for an extended holiday trip, you can reduce the risk of a power surge damaging equipment by unplugging unneeded electrical devices before leaving.

For more home electrical safety tips, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Notice of Net Metering Law

On January 1, 2008, the State of Missouri's Net Metering Law took effect requiring all electric utilities to offer a net metering program to customers generating up to 100 kilowatts of electricity. These systems can generate electricity using wind energy, solar-thermal energy, hydroelectric energy, photovoltaics', fuel cells using hydrogen produced by one of the aforementioned resources, and other sources of energy certified as renewable by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

Systems must be intended primarily to offset part or all of the member's electricity requirements and must be located on property owned, operated, leased or otherwise controlled by that member. The Net Metering Law states that any power that is not used by the member generating the power (commercial or residential) will be credited to their utility bill at the utility's avoided-cost rate each month. Credits from net metering must be used within twelve months of generation or they expire.

Members must complete a Net Metering application and agree to terms and guidelines before their generating system will be connected to the cooperative's system. For further information or to request an application, please contact our office toll free at 800-876-2701.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Holidays are more festive when they don't leave you with big bills to pay later. That's why you should switch to LED bulbs for your Christmas lighting displays. LED bulbs not only cost less to operate — using 33 percent less energy — they will last longer. LED bulbs also are cool to the touch so are less dangerous than incandescent bulbs.

SAFETY FIRST!

Have a Safe Christmas:

- Inspect decorations before use
- Keep wires away from children & pets
- Don't overload electrical outlets
- Turn off & unplug all decorations before going to bed.
- Be sure exterior lights & cords are rated for outdoor use



Merry Christmas Greetings from Sac Osage Electric Cooperative Board of Directors and Employees

Weather Lore

Some say that if it rains on the first Sunday of December, it will rain for a week. Weather proverbs are our attempts to explain and understand our climate. Some are useful, some are ridiculous, but almost all are interesting. Here's another one relating to the days of the month: If it storms on the first Thursday of the month, count the remaining days of the month, add to this the number of days until the New Moon (Dec. 17 this month), and that will give you the number of storms for that season.

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.



WEATHER PROVERBS



If the wind blows much on St. Stephen's Day (Dec. 26), the grapes 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.

Recipe for Never-Fail Christmas Fudge



Photo Credit: GreenArt/shutterstock

2 cups sugar	1/8 teaspoon salt
2/3 cup evaporated milk	1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
12 marshmallows (not minis)	1 cup chopped walnuts
1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter	1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Grease or line an 8x8-inch pan with nonstick foil. Set aside. In a 2-quart saucepan over medium heat, combine the sugar, milk, marshmallows, butter and salt. Cook, stirring constantly, until the mixture is bubbling.

Boil and stir for 5 minutes; remove from the heat. Stir in the chocolate chips until completely melted. Add the walnuts and vanilla.

Spread into the prepared pan and cool for 4 to 6 hours in the refrigerator before cutting.

Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator or at room temperature.

**For recipes, gardening tips and
weather forecasts, visit:
www.almanac.com**

Cozy Comforts of Home

Using space heaters at home could lead to bigger bills

by Derrill Holly

During winter, for many of us, comfort at home means heat.

While a good central heating system is designed to meet whole house needs, sometimes consumers turn to space heaters for additional warmth. Some people use one to boost temperatures for a single room where the available heat is inadequate, but their widespread use, over extended periods, can boost winter heating bills.

“In some cases, space heaters can be less expensive to use if you only want to heat one room or supplement inadequate heating in a room,” according to analysts at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). “However, a space heater is not necessarily an economical source of long-term warmth. It is not an alternative to a whole-home heating system.”

Right Type for the Job

According to DOE, two types of space heaters are generally available for the residential market.

Most can deliver between 10,000 Btu and 40,000 Btu of heat per hour and commonly run on electricity, propane, natural gas or kerosene. Wood and pellet stoves are also increasingly popular choices. Convective heating circulates air within an enclosed space, while radiant heating transfers warming energy directly to objects or people within close proximity to its source.

If central heating is unavailable or inadequate, a convective heating unit can distribute heat relatively evenly throughout an enclosed space. For garages, workshops, workout rooms or laundry areas, used for a few hours a day or week, a convective heater could be a good fit.

Many convective electric heaters contain some type of sealed heat transfer liquid. They allow heat generated by the devices to store energy as heat, so they cycle less while providing consistent performance. Radiant electric heaters typically include infrared heating elements. Nearby surfaces, including people, absorb the heat. Air in immediate proximity to the unit’s cabinetry also aids in the transfer of warmth.

Safe Not Sorry

Space heaters are responsible for 25,000 residential fires a year, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Burn injuries associated with contacts with room heaters send about 6,000 people to emergency rooms every year.

Because the devices are designed to give off heat, they should always be set in locations clear of all flammable materials and out of reach of small children, pets or anyone with impaired mobility.

In recent years, many space heaters have been designed with tip-over safety features, which automatically shut off the power source in the

event that the unit tilts beyond its upright position.

Because space heaters are designed to produce heat, they should be plugged directly into a wall when possible. If an extension cord is used, it should be heavy duty, and made of 14-gauge wire or larger.

Given a choice between high, medium and low, or an adjustable thermostat, choose the latter. A unit that heats your space to the desired temperature will cycle less, saving energy.

Also, buy the right size heater for the right size space — too small and the warming results could be disappointing, too large or powerful and you’ll be uncomfortable. Any time you open doors or windows to vent away warm air, you are wasting energy.

Getting More for Less

“Space heaters are not the ideal solution for heating homes,” says Brian Sloboda, a senior program manager for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. “For every unit of electricity that is consumed by these devices, they produce one unit of heat.”

While adding several space heaters to supplement your central heating system is also likely to drive up your energy costs, selective use can help you save money.

According to analysts at the Environmental Protection Agency, the key is using space heaters in smaller rooms that are occupied infrequently, as well as lowering thermostat settings on the central system.

Lowering thermostat settings from 70 to 65 degrees and using a thermostat-controlled space heater to heat 10 percent of a home’s conditioned floor space will save a heat pump user \$67 a year. But the EPA cautions that space heaters are most efficient when used in small spaces for limited periods and can actually waste energy if consumers try to heat too much area with the devices.

There are currently no space heaters among the EPA’s list of Energy Star-rated products. Agency officials said they have evaluated several models but have no plans to include such products in the labeling program in the near future.

Still, high-end heaters are heavily marketed during cooler months.

An energy expert at your local electric co-op can help determine if a space heater is right for your home.

“They may suggest other alternatives, like sealing air leaks, adding insulation or tuning up your heating system so it operates more efficiently,” says Brian. “Those are just a few of the options that won’t increase your overall energy use.”

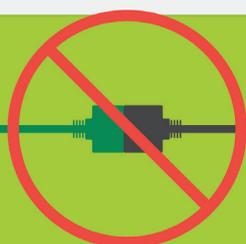
Derrill Holly writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

Use Space Heaters Safely

DON'T: Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.



DON'T: Use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to overheat, and can be a tripping hazard.



DON'T: Place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.

