



# news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

## APPLY NOW FOR HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE

**I**F you or someone you know may have difficulty paying your heating bills, there is assistance available. The Community Action Partnership of Northwest Montana (CAPNM) has programs to help.

CAPNM has provided the following information on the programs it administers. For applications or more information on any programs, please contact CAPNM as shown in the contact box.

### Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP helps pay a portion of the participants' primary heating costs during the heating season months of October through April. Eligibility is based primarily on income and resources. Benefits are usually paid directly to a participants' primary heating vendor and often qualifies the applicant for additional discounts offered by participating vendors.

Applications must be filled out completely and returned to CAPNM with all required documents between October 1 and April 30. Applicants must meet the income requirements and provide verification of their household income.

### Emergency Heating System Repair and/or Replacement

If you own your home and the primary heating system is not working or poses a health and/or safety threat, CAPNM may be able to help. You'll need

### LIHEAP INCOME, RESOURCE LIMITS

FAMILY SIZE	INCOME LIMITS (1 mo.)	RESOURCE LIMIT*
1	\$2,483	\$13,277
2	\$3,247	\$19,924
3	\$3,787	\$21,253
4	\$4,509	\$22,582
5	\$5,230	\$23,911
6	\$6,303	\$25,240

\* Excludes home, vehicles and some retirement accounts

NOTE: Income and resource limits for larger households are available on CAPNM's website.

to be approved for the current LIHEAP heating season. If you rent, your landlord is responsible for your heating system.

### Weatherization Assistance Program

LIHEAP-approved households are prioritized based upon homes with high heating costs and if household members are elderly, disabled or contain children younger than 18. Priority lists are updated twice a year; however, a household must continue to be approved for LIHEAP each heating season to remain on the list.

Upon reaching the top, the Weatherization Department contacts the

### CAPNM CONTACT INFORMATION

[www.capnm.net](http://www.capnm.net)  
[liweap@capnwmmt.org](mailto:liweap@capnwmmt.org)

**Flathead County**

406-758-5433  
800-344-5979

**Lincoln County**

406-293-2712



The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program can be used for most types of heating fuels, including wood, pellets, propane and electricity. | **COURTESY PHOTO**

household to set up an appointment to conduct an energy audit. An energy auditor will evaluate your home's energy efficiency and make recommendations of the potential measures that could be done to provide the biggest energy savings.

**See ASSISTANCE, next page**

**BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS**

<b>FINANCIAL OVERVIEW</b>	<b>YEAR TO DATE NOVEMBER 2023</b>	<b>YEAR TO DATE NOVEMBER 2022</b>
<b>KWh SALES</b>	117,534,051	116,305,877
<b>REVENUE</b>	\$12,107,892	\$11,480,087
<b>COST OF POWER</b>	\$4,752,818	\$5,220,360
<b>OPERATING EXPENSE</b>	\$4,469,083	\$3,892,607
<b>MARGINS</b>	\$1,453,197	\$875,148
<b>NUMBER OF MEMBERS</b>	5,213	5,092
<b>NUMBER OF METERS</b>	6,524	6,405
<b>MILES OF LINE</b>	1,013	1,002
<b>TOTAL UTILITY PLANT</b>	\$39,171,498	\$38,206,225
<b>MEMBER EQUITY</b>	\$14,472,981	\$12,863,785
<b>NOVEMBER AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL USE (KWH)</b>	1,823	2,120
<b>NOVEMBER AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL BILLING</b>	\$171.06	\$178.96

**The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted on December 18. A quorum of trustees was present and the board took the following action:**

- Approved the Power Vision Loan for up to \$8,000,000 from CFC.
- Approved changes to Policy 408 – Retention of Unclaimed Capital Credit Refunds.
- Approved appropriating a portion of the yearly escheated capital credit funds for Luck of the Draw scholarships in 2024.
- Approved changes to Policy 102 – Line Extensions & System Improvements.
- Approved a donation of \$2,500 from unclaimed capital credits to the LCHS Tiny House program.
- Authorized Rod Kane, Marianne Roose, Sandi Mason and Rick Peterson to attend the online Director’s Course 2620.
- Retroactively approved Ethel White and Marianne Roose to attend the Western Managers meeting in Pablo.
- Appointed Rick Peterson to the RPS board.
- Appointed Joel Graves Vice President of the LEC Board of Trustees.

**ASSISTANCE**

*Continued from previous page*

Based upon those recommendations, a combination of weatherization measures, such as wall, attic and floor insulation may be installed; and doors and windows may be repaired.

**Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Conservation Materials**


LIHEAP-approved households may receive materials (plastic window kits, energy-efficient light bulbs, low-flow

showerhead, etc.) they can install in their home to make it more comfortable and energy efficient. To receive DIY supplies, the household must be approved for the current LIHEAP heating season and request the items from CAPNM.

**Energy Share of Montana**

Energy Share helps Montana residents faced with an energy crisis meet their need and move toward self-reliance. Eligibility for Energy Share is not determined solely on income, but also on extenuating circumstances a

household is facing. Energy Share is primarily funded by state-mandated Universal System Benefits Program (USBP) charges, donations from private individuals and corporations, and repayments by previous recipients. Applications are available year-round.

Lincoln Electric Cooperative members who have applied for CAPNM programs, but still need assistance, should contact Lincoln Electric at 406-889-3301. We have an internal energy-assistance program funded by Operation Round-Up that may be able to provide additional help. 

**LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**

**CONTACT**

1-406-889-3301  
 info@lincolnelectric.coop  
 www.lincolnelectric.coop  
 Secure Payments: 1-833-890-6258

**ALWAYS REPORT OUTAGES TO:**

1-406-889-3301

**OFFICE**

312 Osloski Road  
 PO BOX 628  
 Eureka, Montana 59917

**OFFICE HOURS**

Monday - Thursday  
 7:00 AM - 5:30 PM

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

- Tina Taurman**  
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- Joel Graves**  
Vice President
- Sandi Mason**  
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- Myra Appel**  
**Becky Evins**  
**Rodney Kane**  
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**Ethel White**

Lincoln Electric's Board of Trustees holds regular monthly meetings at the boardroom in the cooperative office. These are typically scheduled on the third Monday of each month at 6 p.m. Members are encouraged to attend. If you have any items of interest, please contact the general manager prior to the meeting.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2024**



**Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

**HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?**

**SEND YOUR IDEAS TO:**  
 memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop

# HOW WINTER WEATHER IMPACTS RELIABILITY

**W**HEN outdoor temperatures drop, our electricity use increases. That's because we're doing more activities inside, and our heating systems are running longer and more often to counteract colder outdoor temperatures. Factor in that we all tend to use electricity at the same times – in the morning and early evenings – and that equals a lot of strain on our electric grid.

At Lincoln Electric Cooperative, we work closely with our power supplier, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), in resource and infrastructure planning to ensure you have the power you need whenever you flip a switch, but the electric grid is much larger than your local co-op and BPA generation facilities.

In winter months, when even more electricity is being used simultaneously across the country, it is possible for electricity demand to exceed supply, especially if an unexpected event such as a sudden snow or ice storm, or an equipment malfunction occurs. If this happens, which is rare, the grid operator for our region of the country may call for rolling power outages to relieve pressure on the grid, and Lincoln Electric will inform you about the situation.

Lincoln Electric and BPA take proactive steps to create a resilient portion of the grid and ensure electric reliability in extreme weather, including regular system maintenance, grid modernization efforts and disaster response planning; but it takes everyone to keep the grid reliable.

To help keep the heat on for you, your family and neighbors, here are a few things you can do to relieve pressure on the grid (and save a little money along the way):


- **Select the lowest comfortable**

BEST BETS FOR

## Winter Savings

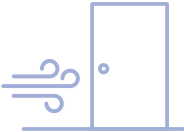
Energy consumption spikes during winter months as we spend more time indoors and heating systems work overtime. You can help reduce demand and strain on the electric grid by conserving during peak energy times. Reducing energy use will also help lower your energy bills.

**UNPLUG WHEN POSSIBLE**




Turn off unnecessary lights and electronics when you aren't using them.

**ELIMINATE DRAFTS AND AIR LEAKS**




Seal air leaks and drafts around windows and exterior doors.

**USE APPLIANCES WHEN ENERGY DEMAND IS LOWER**




Run large appliances like clothes washers, dryers and dishwashers early in the morning or before you go to bed.

**MAINTAIN HEATING EQUIPMENT**



Maintain your heating system by replacing dirty, clogged filters and scheduling an annual inspection for necessary maintenance.

**LOWER THE THERMOSTAT**



Home heating accounts for a large portion of energy consumption. Adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting (68 degrees or lower).

## thermostat setting and turn it down several degrees whenever possible.

Your heating system must run longer to make up the difference between the thermostat temperature and the outdoor temperature.

**Pro tip:** Seal air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weatherstripping. Air leaks and drafts force your heating system to work harder than necessary.

## • Stagger your use of major appliances such as dishwashers, ovens and dryers.

**Pro tip:** Start the dishwasher before you go to bed and use smaller countertop appliances such as slow cookers and air fryers to save energy.

## • Ensure that your heating system is optimized for efficiency with regular maintenance and proper insulation.

**Pro tip:** Make sure your furnace filter isn't clogged and dirty. Replace it as needed.


## • When possible, use cold water to reduce water heating costs.

**Pro tip:** Setting your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees can help you save energy and reduce mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.

## • Unplug devices when not in use to eliminate unnecessary energy use.

Even when turned off, electronics in standby mode consume energy.

**Pro tip:** Plug devices into a power strip so you can turn them all off at once with the push of a button.

As we face the challenges posed by winter weather, understanding its impact on energy demand is crucial for maintaining a reliable power supply. By adopting energy conservation practices during periods of extreme cold, not only can you save money on your electric bills, but you can also each contribute to the resilience of the power grid, keeping our local community warm and connected. 

# THREE DIY EFFICIENCY PROJECTS TO TACKLE

**A** New Year brings new opportunities to save energy – and money. You may think energy-efficiency upgrades require a great deal of time and expense, but that's not always the case.

If you're interested in making your home more efficient but don't want to break the bank, there are several DIY projects you can tackle to increase energy savings. Let's take a look at three inexpensive efficiency upgrades that can help you save energy throughout the year.

## Trim Dryer Vent

**Level of difficulty:** *easy. Supplies needed: tin snips, gloves, measuring tape and masking tape. Estimated Cost: about \$25 depending on the supplies you already have.*

If your dryer vent hose is too long, your dryer is working harder than it has to, using more energy than necessary. The vent hose should be long enough for you to pull the dryer out a couple feet from the wall, but the shape of the hose should form a line – it should not have a lot of slack, with twists and curves. A shorter, unobstructed vent hose increases the

efficiency of your dryer, dries clothing faster and reduces lint buildup, which can create potential fire hazards.

Simply measure, mark and trim the hose to the desired length, then reattach the hose to your dryer and exterior vent. Check out *YouTube.com* for a quick video tutorial.

## Seal Air Leaks

**Level of difficulty:** *moderate. Supplies needed: caulk and caulk gun, weather stripping, gloves, putty knife, paper towels. Estimated Cost: \$25 to \$50 depending on the materials you purchase.*


Sealing air leaks in your home can help you save 10 percent to 20 percent on heating and cooling bills. Apply caulk around windows, doors, electrical wiring and plumbing to seal in conditioned air. You should also weather strip exterior doors, which can keep out drafts and help you control energy costs. Types of caulking and weather stripping materials vary, but ask your local hardware or home store for assistance if you're unsure about the supplies you need. For more information, go to <https://bit.ly/2Kesu6W>

## Insulate Attic Stairs Opening

**Level of difficulty:** *moderate. Supplies needed (if you build the box yourself): rigid foam board, faced blanket insulation, tape for foam board, measuring tape, utility knife, caulk and caulk gun, plywood. Estimated Cost: \$50 to \$100.*

A properly insulated attic is one of the best ways to optimize energy savings and comfort in your home, but many homeowners don't consider insulating the attic stairs, or the opening to your attic space. Even a well-insulated attic can leak air through the stair opening, but luckily, there's an easy fix.

An insulated cover box can seal and insulate the attic stairs opening. You can build your own insulated cover box or purchase a pre-built box or kit from a local home improvement store such as Home Depot or Lowe's for about \$60. If you decide to build your own, check out these step-by-step instructions: <https://bit.ly/36YNCYQ>.

Saving energy doesn't have to be hard. With a little time and effort, you can maximize energy savings and increase the comfort of your home. To learn about additional ways to save, check out [energy.gov/save](https://energy.gov/save). 

# LUCK OF THE DRAW SCHOLARSHIPS

APPLY NOW FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE SUMMER OR FALL 2024 SEMESTER

- Drawing held at Lincoln Electric's Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 20, 2024, at the LCHS Auditorium in Eureka
  - Student or their parent/legal guardian must be an active member of Lincoln Electric currently receiving electric service
  - Student and/or their parent/legal guardian must register for the Annual Meeting and at the Luck of the Draw Scholarship table prior to 9:15 a.m. to be eligible
- See the application for full eligibility details*

APPLY ONLINE AT [WWW.LINCOLNELECTRIC.COOP](http://WWW.LINCOLNELECTRIC.COOP)

**APPLICATION DEADLINE IS MONDAY, APRIL 8**