



news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

EFFICIENCY UPGRADES TO HELP SAVE YOU MONEY

SUMMER is an opportune time for home upgrades and DIY projects. If you're planning to make improvements to your home, consider upgrades that promote better efficiency.

Here are a few projects that can help you save energy and money — and increase the comfort of your home.

Installing a smart thermostat is one of the simplest ways to manage home energy use and keep summer bills in check. Smart thermostats are easy to install and allow you to control your heating and cooling system from your phone. You can purchase an ENERGY STAR®-certified smart thermostat for as low as \$100, which can save you eight percent on annual heating and cooling costs, about \$50 per year. This upgrade will quickly pay for itself, and you'll gain insight into better ways to heat and cool your home.

Speaking of *smart*, additional devices such as smart LED bulbs also offer convenient control and help boost energy savings at home. With smart lighting, you can set a schedule for when and how your lights should be turned on or off. And the next time you head out to run errands and realize you left the lights on, all you have to do

is turn them off through your phone. Smart lights come in a variety of shapes, colors and brightness levels — and you can purchase bulbs for indoor or outdoor use. Schedule outdoor smart lights to illuminate your home at night, and when you're out of town for better security.

While it's not as trendy as incorporating smart technologies, sealing air leaks around your home is a simple, effective way to save energy and lower your bills. Applying new (or replacing old) weather stripping around doors and windows can instantly make

your home more comfortable and reduce energy waste. Applying caulk to fill gaps can also improve the seal of your home. Caulk can be applied to a variety of areas, including windows, doors, bathtubs and sinks.

If your home feels too warm during summer (and too chilly during winter) even after you've sealed gaps with weather stripping and caulk, your home may need additional insulation. Insulation is considered a more expensive efficiency upgrade; however, if your home is under-insulated, additional insulation can make a big impact

See **EFFICIENCY**, page 7



ABOVE: Sealing air leaks around your home is a simple, effective way to save energy and lower your bills.

BELOW: Smart LED bulbs, paired with an app, offer convenient control and help boost energy savings at home.



Manager's Notes: Lower Snake River dams an important power source for Lincoln Electric

In the June issue of *Rural Montana*, I was introduced as the new manager of Lincoln Electric Cooperative (LEC).



**Manager's Notes
by Matt Quinn**

My wife, Jody, and I are settling into the beautiful LEC service territory and are meeting so many wonderful members of the community. I continue to learn more and more about our cooperative, our challenges and opportunities, and ways to improve our service to our members.

I'm proud to lead such an incredible team of dedicated employees working every day to fulfill our mission: "To provide reliable energy, at reasonable rates, with exceptional member service and commitment to the communities we serve."

To fulfill our mission, we must consider an essential building block, the availability of affordable energy. We must have access to electric generation that is reliable and affordable. We procure 100 percent of our electricity as members of a larger cooperative,



Pacific Northwest Generating Cooperative (PNGC), through which our electricity comes from the Bonneville Power Administration. That power is primarily generated through four dams on the Lower Snake River, which were built in the 1960s and '70s and continue to operate today.

These four dams, combined, produce enough electricity to power all of Montana and Wyoming. As you know, hydroelectric power is carbon-free,

renewable and dependable, creating the ideal source of electricity for our members.

However, that source of power is at great risk due to a series of moves by the administration. Late last year the Biden Administration announced an agreement to "work in partnership with Tribes and States from the Pacific Northwest to restore wild salmon populations, expand Tribally sponsored clean energy production,

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
President

Joel Graves
Vice President

Sandi Mason
Secretary-Treasurer

Myra Appel
Rodney Kane
Rick Peterson
David Purdy
Marianne Roose

Matthew Quinn
General Manager

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:
THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 2024



**Lincoln Electric
Cooperative, Inc.**

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

SEND YOUR IDEAS TO:
memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop

and provide stability for communities that depend on the Columbia River System for agriculture, energy, recreation and transportation.” This agreement prioritizes wild salmon over the power needs of not only our members, but PNGC members comprising of 18 different cooperatives from across the Northwest.

This agreement, unless Congress moves to stop its implementation, will lead to the removal of the four lower Snake River dams. The repercussions of this action will devastate our ability to maintain the reliability and affordability of the electricity we supply

to our members. Because of this, we continue to advocate on behalf of our members with state and national elected officials to stop the Biden Administration and environmental groups from breaching these dams. We need our members’ voices heard in Washington, D.C., by calling or writing your state and national elected representatives, and telling them to prioritize sustaining this resource.

In a time when the country is already experiencing shortages of reliable power, it is not logical to increase the burden. Solar and wind generation will not replace the energy afforded to

the region by these dams if they are breached.

While we continue to advocate on behalf of our members’ access to reliable and affordable hydroelectric-sourced power, we are not standing idly by. We continue to work with our Board of Trustees to look for alternative sources of electricity should the Biden Administration be successful in removal of these dams.

We will continue to communicate with you on this very important matter. Thank you for your membership and trust in LEC, stop in any time to visit – our coffee is always on. RM



If your home feels too warm during summer and too chilly during winter, you may need additional insulation. | PHOTO SOURCE: GREG ROSENKE, UNSPLASH

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	YEAR TO DATE MAY 2024	YEAR TO DATE MAY 2023
kWh SALES	65,714,513	63,491,412
REVENUE	\$6,623,580	\$6,046,548
COST OF POWER	\$3,074,103	\$2,581,656
OPERATING EXPENSE	\$2,244,923	\$2,057,828
MARGINS	\$565,858	\$755,787
NUMBER OF MEMBERS	5,228	5,133
NUMBER OF METERS	6,616	6,452
MILES OF LINE	1,016	1,006
TOTAL UTILITY PLANT	\$39,942,437	\$38,857,291
MEMBER EQUITY	\$14,993,321	\$13,850,648
MAY AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL USE (KWH)	1,038	861
MAY AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL BILLING	\$135.31	\$116.37

EFFICIENCY

Continued from page 5

on reducing energy use and costs. The cost of new insulation depends on a variety of factors such as materials, size of the home and whether you use a contractor. Typically, the project costs can be recouped in a few years and your home will immediately feel more comfortable.

Of course, there are additional efficiency upgrades that can make a big impact on energy use, such as replacing old appliances with ENERGY-STAR® models or replacing old, leaky windows with new, energy-efficient windows. But these upgrades can be a bit pricey.

If you’re wanting to make your home more energy efficient but you’re not sure where to start, your best bet is to enlist the help of an expert to conduct an energy audit of your home. Contact Lincoln Electric Cooperative to schedule your free energy audit. An energy audit can easily identify areas to boost efficiency, and then you can determine the projects you want to tackle first, based on your budget and needs. RM

BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted on June 20. A quorum of trustees was present and the board took the following action:

- Approved to downsize the trustees from 9 to 8, per Article IV LEC Bylaws.
- Approved to change the August board meeting time to 4 p.m. on August 19th.
- Approved changes to Policy 404 - Donations.
- Approved a spot bonus for an employee.

ALWAYS
CALL

BEFORE YOU
DIG

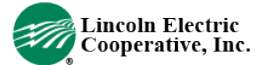


PLANNED POWER OUTAGE
FOR MEMBERS NORTH OF DICKEY LAKE
INCLUDING TREGO, FORTINE, EUREKA, REXFORD, AND SURROUNDING AREAS

POWER OFF AT
10:00 PM WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2024
AND BACK ON AT
4:00 AM THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2024

CANCELED

Outage planned for our power supplier, Bonneville Power Administration, to perform critical maintenance.



MEMBERS SOUTH OF DICKEY LAKE
INCLUDING STRYKER, OLNEY, WHITEFISH, AND SURROUNDING AREAS,
WILL HAVE TWO FIVE MINUTE INTERRUPTIONS
ONE AT THE START & ONE AT THE END OF THE OUTAGE

SIGNS OF AN

ENERGY SCAM

High-Pressure Tactics

Scammers will pressure you, creating a sense of urgency. Claims that your power will be disconnected without immediate payment are common with utility scams.

Sketchy Payment Methods

Scammers may ask for unusual payment methods like gift cards or cryptocurrency. In these cases, it's likely a scam.

Dodgy Communication

Whether an email, text message or letter, utility scams typically include poor grammar, spelling errors or unusual email addresses. These are common warning signs of a scam.

