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Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative

SEDGWICK COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

currentnews

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative

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FROM THE MANAGER

Preparing to Serve You Better

Providing reliable power to you is and will always be a top priority for Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative. These days, power reliability seems to be making news, now more than ever.

As the energy industry continues to transition and more segments of the economy are becoming electrified, such as vehicles, machinery and even lawn equipment, additional pressures are being placed on our nation's electric grid.

With summer storm season upon us, I thought it would be a good time to tell you about a few measures we're taking to ensure you continue receiving the reliable power you depend on and deserve.

Let me be the first to say I love trees and the charm they add to our communities, and I know you do too. While trees provide shade and add beauty to our area, you may be

surprised to learn that overgrown vegetation accounts for about half of all power outages.

That's why we strive to keep the co-op's power lines clear in

right-of-way (ROW) areas. A ROW area is the land a co-op uses to construct, maintain, replace or repair underground and overhead power lines. This ROW enables Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder distribution power lines. The overall goal of our vegetation management strategy is to provide reliable power to our members while maintaining the beauty of our area.



Scott Ayres

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HAPPY

4TH OF JULY

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Our office will be closed on
Tuesday, July 4, for the holiday.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Tip of the Month

Looking for additional ways to save energy this summer? Your laundry room is a great place to start. Wash clothes with cold water, which can cut one load's energy use by more than half. Your washing machine will use the same amount of energy no matter the size of the clothes load, so fill it up when you can. When drying clothes, separate the heavier cottons. Loads will dry faster and more evenly if you separate heavier cottons like linens and towels from your lightweight clothing.



Co-op Sponsors Pedal Tractor Pull

Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative will host the Pedal Tractor Pull at the Sedgwick County Fair on Saturday, July 15.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. at the Sedgwick County Fairgrounds, just east of the open-air arena, and the pull begins at 10 a.m.

Children ages 4 to 12 are eligible to participate. There is no entry fee. Participants are required to wear shoes and must have a parent or legal guardian present to register. Top finishers will advance to the tractor pull event at the State Fair in Hutchinson.



Preparing to Serve You Better

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Modernizing Vegetation Management

Generally speaking, healthy trees don't fall on power lines, and clear lines don't cause problems. Proactive trimming and pruning keep lines clear to improve power reliability. However, traditional vegetation management is costly and time consuming. It entails on-the-ground, labor-intensive efforts involving dozens of workers assessing vegetation and overseeing the quality and completion of contractor work. Although this approach has worked for decades, advances and improvements in technology have allowed us to reduce our costs and improve efficiency.

Planned Outages Improve Reliability

Although it may seem counterintuitive, we also maintain power reliability through planned, controlled outages. By carefully cutting power to one part of

our local area for a few hours, Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative can perform system repairs and upgrades, which ultimately improve electric service. Planned outages can also be used to balance energy demand, but only in rare circumstances. Rest assured, we will always notify you in advance of a planned outage, so make sure we have your correct contact information on file to receive the latest emails or text messages.

Vegetation management is an essential tool in ensuring power reliability and minimizing the risk of outages. As advancements become more accessible and costs drop, we anticipate using additional technologies to ensure a consistent energy supply while managing the environment.

Lastly, I encourage you to follow Sedgwick County Electric Cooperative on social media so you can learn about the latest co-op updates.

Check the **WEATHER** Before You Go

More than 72% of lightning fatalities occur from June through August.

From 2006 through 2021

- 446 people were struck and killed by lightning in the U.S.
- Nearly two-thirds of the deaths happened while people were enjoying outdoor leisure activities such as fishing, camping and running.
- June, July and August are the peak months for lightning across the U.S.**
- More than 72% of lightning deaths occurred in these months.
- Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays having slightly more deaths than any other day of the week.

Lightning often strikes away from heavy rain; it can happen up to 10 miles away from rainfall.

TO PREVENT LIGHTNING-RELATED TRAGEDIES, WHEN THUNDER ROARS, GO INDOORS.

SOURCE: NATIONAL LIGHTNING SAFETY COUNCIL

Energy-Saving Projects for the Weekend Warrior

Are you a weekend warrior? If you're considering home improvement upgrades that save energy and money, we've got a few project ideas for you — all of which can be completed in a day or less!

Here are three energy-saving projects that you can easily tackle whether you're a weekend warrior pro or a DIY dabbler.

Get Smart About Home Cooling and Heating

Cooling and heating your home typically account for a large portion of energy bills. Smart thermostats can help keep your cooling and heating costs in check, with Energy Star®-certified models saving about 8% on annual energy costs.

Now that smart thermostats are more affordable (as little as \$70), this simple upgrade makes for a fun, efficient weekend project. Smart thermostats offer a variety of bells and whistles, but the average model will allow you to set custom temperature schedules, adjust the settings from anywhere using your phone, and over time, learn your cooling and heating preferences.

Your new smart thermostat will come with step-by-step instructions, but this project typically involves shutting off your HVAC at the breaker panel, disconnecting/removing the old thermostat, installing the new smart thermostat, and connecting it to your home Wi-Fi.

PLAY IT SAFE: remember to carefully read the installation instructions before you get started.

Go Green and Boost Your Greenery With a Rain Barrel

If you've got a green thumb, you already know that rainwater is the best water for your outdoor plants. Rainwater is free of minerals, salts and treatment chemicals found in tap water or groundwater. It also contains helpful macronutrients to foster healthy plant growth.

Installing a rain barrel is an easy way to harvest large amounts of rainwater



WALDEMAN, UNSPLASH

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, one rain barrel can save a homeowner 1,300 gallons of water annually. Most residential rain barrels range in size from 50 to 90 gallons.

and reduce home water use — it's a win-win. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, one rain barrel can save a homeowner 1,300 gallons of water annually.

Most residential rain barrels range in size from 50 to 90 gallons, so the size you purchase will depend on your watering needs.

The simplest way to install a rain barrel is positioning a plastic or wooden barrel directly under your gutter downspout. Basic piping may be required, but this is an easy way to harvest rainwater, and the barrel won't take up much space. Consider a cover for the top of your rain barrel to keep insects and small debris out of your harvested water.

Create Fresh Savings With a DIY Clothesline

If you have enough outdoor space available, installing a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on dryer costs — in the summer, you can also save on cooling costs

since unwanted heat from the clothes dryer won't be added to your home (which makes your air conditioner work harder). Additionally, air drying is much gentler on fabrics and will keep your clothes and linens looking fresh longer.

You can create your own clothesline with two T-posts, wire and hook-and-eye turnbuckles. Depending on your soil, you may need a small amount of fast-setting cement to set the posts. Another option is installing the line between two trees. A typical load of laundry requires about 35 feet of line, so keep this in mind as you're determining the best location.

If an outdoor clothesline isn't an option, no sweat! You can easily create an indoor drying rack that folds to save space. Home improvement websites like www.thespruce.com and www.hgtv.com offer step-by-step tutorials for a variety of indoor clothes racks.

These are just a few simple ideas to help you save energy and money. So, get out there, roll up those sleeves and tackle a few projects.

Energy Efficiency in Your Home

Energy efficiency continues to be a major factor in home design, and will continue to be, experts say.

Energy efficiency has so many benefits that go beyond just paying the bills,” explained Todd Abercrombie, owner of Midwest Building Performance in Peoria, Illinois. “It helps make the house more comfortable, provides more even temperatures and has a lot of societal benefits as well.”

To accomplish energy conservation, contractors and consumers take a variety of approaches.

“We are all looking for higher efficiency appliances, using LED lighting throughout homes and implementing water-saving features as well as tankless water heaters so that homeowners don’t have to pay to keep a big tank of water hot all of the time,” said Andrew Brindley, a home builder from Indianapolis.

“People want better windows, better insulation, better roofs. We are doing two-by-six walls all of the time now. They want very efficient furnaces and air conditioner systems and even want zone systems on their units to control the temperature in different rooms, so that a room that may not be used all of the time is not heated or cooled as much as rooms which are utilized more often,” added Donna Youngquist of R&D Custom Homes in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Often, especially in remodels, the goal is not necessarily about saving money, said Carl Kuchar of Woodchukar Carpentry in Payette, Idaho. “Sometimes, residents will just want to get their homes tightened up so that they are easier to heat and cool. It’s a comfort thing, not always something they approach from a return-on-investment angle,” he said.

Abercrombie said energy efficiency is multifaceted. “Energy efficiency upgrades go beyond just what you would see on your utility bills,” he said. “There are a lot of beneficial unintended consequences that can happen when you improve the efficiency of a home. For instance, moisture management, prevention of mold, improvement of indoor air quality and more.”



Whether building or remodeling, often individuals want their homes more energy efficient to simply improve the comfort of their home.



Upgrade your home to a smart thermostat. They allow you to set custom temperature schedules, adjust the settings anywhere, and over time, learn your cooling and heating preferences.

To make any residence — new construction or existing home — more energy-efficient, he suggests a full energy audit which looks at a variety of factors that unnecessarily cost consumers money. “It looks at the big picture and analyzes things such as insulation in the attic and walls to pinpoint all of the various gaps and cracks that might need to be sealed,” Abercrombie explained. “It’s helpful to have diagnostic equipment such as a blower door and infrared cameras.”

Additionally, an audit will look at heating and cooling systems as well as other systems including lighting, appliances, and electronics.

He added that energy efficiency needs to be kept in mind even during new construction. “I’ve done blower door tests even before insulation is installed to make sure we’re getting things right; there are certain things you just cannot get to after the house is buttoned up with drywall, windows and doors.”

Abercrombie said energy efficiency is all about paying attention to details. “We’re not looking at adding products that would not already be in the scope of the new construction,” he explained. “While sometimes it is about product selection, it is more about how things are installed and not missing other factors which often get missed during the rush to construct a home.”

One place that often gets overlooked when it comes to efficiency is insulation in the ceiling of the home. “Leaky ceiling syndrome,” he calls it. “Often when builders think of building an efficient house, they think about what they can do to make the walls more airtight, whether it is with house wrap or weather resistant barriers or spray foam, but they often ignore the ceiling plane — the area between the ceiling and the attic that doesn’t get sealed as well as it should. It’s the most important boundary in the home and we have more leakage there than we do in the walls,” he said.