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March 2011

# Hot Watts

Published by Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



### Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

Use a programmable thermostat to vary your home's temperature based on your schedule. Lower your thermostat when you're not home or at night to save as much as 10 percent on heating and cooling costs!

Source: Alliance to Save Energy

### Congratulations

Adam Scott is our online survey winner!

Complete our online member survey and you will be automatically entered for a chance to win a \$10.00 electric credit!



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## Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative Board Approves Member Rate Credit

Due to higher than projected sales in 2010, Cookson Hills Members who had electric usage anytime during 2010 received a "**Member Rate Credit**" on their electric bill this month. The Cookson Hill Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees voted to issue a credit according to each member's usage. This is just a small part of what being a member-owner of Cookson Hills Electric is all about. Thank you for your continued support.

## Local 2-1-1 helpline finds solutions fast

*When you don't know who to call, dial 2-1-1*

A service called 2-1-1 helpline is available to lend a hand. The 2-1-1 system was implemented in Oklahoma in 2005.

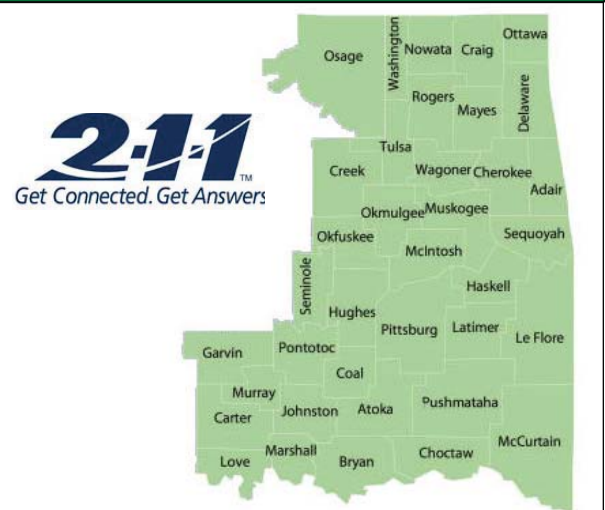
Simply dial 2-1-1 to find services for food, clothing, health care, shelter, housing, utility bill assistance, support groups, legal aid, employment and other health and human services in Oklahoma. Helpline representatives will help you access services from over 2,500 programs that exist to help people in need. During a disaster such as an ice storm or tornado, the hotline also connects disaster victims with emergency services.

2-1-1 helps you find answers fast by reducing the number of calls you have to make. When you call 2-1-1, you get more than just a telephone number; you get real information that will help you.

Anyone who needs help or who would like to volunteer their time or services may use the 2-1-1 helpline. From individuals seeking assistance to case workers, clergy, teachers

and other social services representatives, the 2-1-1 helpline is a one stop resource you can count on, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Those who operate the 2-1-1 helpline emphasize that the program is for anyone seeking services.

### 2-1-1 Helpline Service Area



### Hot Watts

is published monthly by Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc. *Hot Watts* informs members in parts of seven Eastern Oklahoma counties about Cookson Hills' programs and issues. Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative continually strives to provide quality electrical service at a reasonable cost for its members.

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Cookson Hills welcomes members to submit photos, and articles which will be subject to Cookson Hills editing.

Any submissions must be received before the 12th of the month prior to the publication date.

**If You Find Your  
Account Number Hidden  
in this Issue of the *Hot Watts*  
You'll Receive a \$25 Credit  
on Your Electric Bill.**

### Safety

# Look Up!

## For overhead power lines when working outdoors

If you will be gutter cleaning, removing branches from the roof, or washing exterior windows, be mindful that any of those could put you dangerously close to the electrical service attached to your home.

In many neighborhoods overhead electric lines are part of the landscape, and they may be overlooked because we are so familiar with them. Overhead power lines can carry thousands of volts of electric current. Keep yourself and equipment at least

10 feet away from power lines and service connections. When working outside, remember:

- Always look up before using long tools like pruning poles, ladders or antennas.
- Never place tall items like a ladder or antenna near a power line or electric service connection to your home.

- Be especially aware when working near backyard swimming pools. Pool cleaning equipment, especially long metal poles on leaf skimmers, will conduct current to the person holding it.



Touchstone Energy

- When trimming trees, be aware broken or dislodged branches may have also become tangled in overhead electric lines, or pushed the wire closer to the ground.

As warmer weather draws you to springtime tasks around your home, be aware of power lines and stay safely away.

## Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative Continues Construction

In a continuing effort to provide dependable electric service, Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative (CHEC) is making upgrades to the system in 2011. This time contractor crews are working east of Keota.

Gordon Construction Contractors are upgrading the lines from a single-phase line to a three-phase

line to support the increased demand of electricity in this area. These upgrades are a part of CHEC's long-range work plan. The three-phase line will assure adequate voltage for all members during the peak season months.

When the original single-phase line was built, it was serving a smaller load. Since then the demand for elec-

# Copper theft is risky business

High prices for copper are fueling growing incidents of copper theft across Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative's (CHEC) system. This illegal activity not only puts the thief in danger of disfigurement or a painful death due to electrocution, but also harms all of CHEC's members.

The added expense of replacing the stolen copper and the additional labor to make the repairs are among the costs that impact electric rates.

The theft also has an impact on the quality of service CHEC members receive.

The Electrical Safety Foundation estimates 34801 that copper theft incidents are responsible for more than 450,000 minutes of outages experienced by utilities nationwide this past year.

There can also be impacts to the reliability of electric services caused by surges, fires, explosions or outages. Furthermore, it jeopardizes the safety of the public and CHEC employees.

Stealing wire from the power system is not only illegal; it can be a deadly decision.

More than 50 people are severely injured and disfigured annually as a result of copper theft incidents, and there are averages of 35 copper

theft fatalities nationwide every year.

New techniques involving the identification of where the copper came from helps make it possible for local police to work with scrap buyers to trace stolen copper back to its original location.

Members of CHEC can play a key role in preventing copper thefts by keeping an eye out for suspicious activity at substations and poles.

To report copper theft or information regarding copper theft please call CHEC at 800-328-2368 or (918) 967-4614.



## and Line Upgrades

Electricity has increased. The three-phase line will split up the load so all areas will have adequate service.

Gordon Construction Contractors have upgraded five miles of single-phase line to three-phase line with 104 new poles installed on this project.



Photo by: Larry Mattes

## How to Clean Up a Broken Compact Fluorescent Lightbulb (CFL)



-  **1** Ventilate the room.
-  **2** Scoop up powder and glass fragments using stiff paper or cardboard. Seal in a plastic bag.
- 3** Use duct tape to pick up any fragments or powder.
-  **4** Immediately place all materials used to clean up and the plastic bag in an outdoor trash container. Remember to wash your hands.
- 5** Discard any clothing or bedding that comes in direct contact with broken glass or powder from inside the bulb. Washing tainted items may cause mercury fragments in clothing to contaminate the machine and/or pollute sewage.

To learn more about CFLs and why you should be careful when cleaning up a broken bulb, visit [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov).

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation Institute, YASLY

## Spring forward your clocks

We spring forward this year on March 13th, kicking off months of extra sunlight in the evening. These extra daylight hours save electricity by allowing members to turn the lights on a little later in the evening.

This year, make those energy savings go even further. When you set your clock forward one hour, change a light bulb in your home from an energy-wasting incandescent bulb to a compact fluorescent (CFL) bulb. That single bulb will pay for itself many times over in lower energy bills by next March, as the bulbs offer a similar quality of light but use significantly less energy. You can buy energy efficient CFL light bulbs anywhere light bulb replacements are sold.



## The Hot Watts Q&A

**Question:** My neighbor lives in a similar size house. Why is my electric bill always higher than my neighbor's bill?

**Answer:** Many factors impact the amount of energy used in a home, so it is very difficult to make direct comparisons between two different households. A primary consideration is how well the home is weatherized. Attic insulation, insulated doors and windows and eliminating outside air infiltration are the most cost-effective ways to improve the energy efficiency of any structure.

The number of occupants and their ages can also have a dramatic impact on the amount of energy used. Hot water use for showers and baths as well as for laundry and dishwashing needs is another major factor of energy use.

The type of heating or cooling system for the home is of major importance. A high-efficiency electric heat pump will use half or even less energy to heat or cool the same amount of space as compared to an electric furnace or older-model inefficient heat pump. And, of course, many homes are heated with natural gas or propane, although electricity is still used for the furnace fans. Electric space heaters can also have an impact on increasing your electric usage. Do not forget all those other electricity-users (TV, lights, computers, microwaves, etc.)

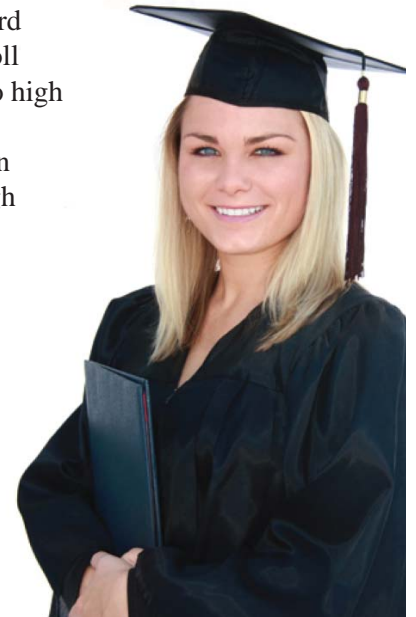
If you have questions about your electric usage, please contact us at (918) 967-4614 or 800-328-2368.

## Applications for the Herman Driscoll Memorial Scholarship are due April 8

Are you a high school senior who is graduating this spring? Are you a dependent of a member of Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative? Need help with college expenses? The employees and Board of Directors of Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative award four \$500 Herman Driscoll Memorial Scholarships to high school seniors each year.

Seniors may obtain an application from their high school counselor, visit [www.cooksonhills.com](http://www.cooksonhills.com), or contact CHEC toll-free at 800-328-2368 or 918-967-4614.

**Don't wait, you could earn \$500 for college!**



## New dialing procedure for members in the (918) area code

The area code (918), which serves Tulsa and much of northeastern Oklahoma, is running out of new telephone numbers, so new numbers will be assigned the new (539) area code. The adding of a new area code overlay plan approved by state regulators means eastern Oklahoma residents will have to dial 10 digits (area code + phone number) on all local calls.

Effective March 5, 2011, all local calls must be dialed using this new dialing procedure. There is no change for dialing long distance calls. You will still dial the 11 digits (1 + area code + phone number).

After March 5, 2011, if you do not use the new dialing procedure, your call will not be completed, and a recording will instruct you to hang up and dial again.

