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July 2012

Hot Watts

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Water heating ranks as one of the top three energy-related expenses in your home. Save energy and money by installing a water heater blanket, using low-flow showerheads and faucets, and lowering the thermostat on your water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Congratulations
Mary Smith is our online survey winner!

Offices Closed
CHEC will be closed Wednesday, July 4th in observance of Independence Day!



Cookson Hills Electric Empowers Local Youth

Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative (CHEC) joined Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC) and electric cooperatives from across the state in sponsoring students to attend the YouthPower Energy Camp at Canyon Camp near Hinton, Oklahoma.

YouthPower Energy Camp is a program specifically for eighth grade students. While at camp they formed a coke and candy co-op, selected a manager and dispersed dividends. Students enjoyed many games, the chance to climb a utility pole, and a ride in a bucket truck.

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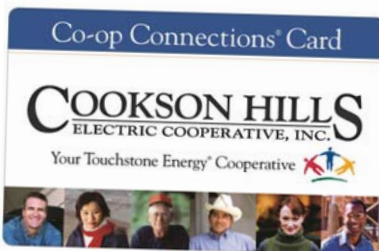


Left to right: Taylor Holmes, Tayler Knapp, Brooklyn Olzawski and Hannah Hurst. These students have recently returned from the 2012 Rural Electric YouthPower Energy Camp.

Photo by: OAEC

A Smart Business Connection

■ Increase your business exposure with the Co-op Connections Program



If you are an area business owner who is interested in partnering with Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative

(CHEC) and connecting with thousands of potential customers, we have a deal for you.

The Touchstone Energy Co-op Connections Card program links your business with hundreds of thousands of electric cooperative members across the U.S. — for **FREE**. To participate, your business agrees to offer some type of discount to cardholders. The amount and/or type of discount is up to the business owner, so you retain complete control.

Locally, some 14,000 CHEC members will carry Co-op Connections savings cards. The card provides an incentive for co-op members to shop with participating businesses.

" We will list your business for free on our website, monthly newsletters, and other promotions in exchange for your offer of a discount to our members that show their Co-op Connections Card. "

Co-op Connections cardholders visit our website (www.cooksonhills.com) to find deals on just about every product or service you can imagine; saddles, garden tools, automotive parts, agricultural products, clothing, specialty gifts, *Business Connection continued on page 3* ►

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 will receive a \$25 credit on your next electric bill.

Renters Have the Power to Save Electricity

If you rent your home, it often seems that you can not do much to control your electric bills. But in reality, there are lots of low or no-cost tricks that you can put into place to cut down on electricity use. Usually leases forbid renters to make alterations to a structure, so your energy-saving solutions have to be simple.

The notion that regularly powering down your computer will shorten its life is outdated. Nowadays, computers tend to become outdated themselves before frequent shutdowns cause any damage. The U.S. Department of Energy consumer website, EnergySavers.gov, offers this guideline: If you do not use your computer for more than 20 minutes, shut off the monitor; if you will not use it for more than two hours, shut the whole thing down. However, if your computer takes its time waking up, your own time might be worth more than the electricity you save.

Most electronics feature a glowing light when turned off, that means they are still drawing electricity. A quick fix for this "vampire," or phantom, load involves plugging various devices into a power strip. Simply flip the switch on the power strip when you are not using the devices.

While your hands are most likely tied when it comes to the types of major appliances installed, if one needs to be replaced, lobby your landlord to purchase an ENERGY STAR model.

A roll of weather stripping and a tube of caulk can go a long way in saving energy and money. Check for gaps around doors and windows. Can you see daylight? If so, ask your landlord if you can seal cracks and reduce air flow.

The air sealing section on the website, EnergySavers.gov offers tips on the right types of weather stripping and caulk for your residence. While you are talking to your landlord, ask if he or she will pay the cost if you do the labor.

Look to your windows for additional savings. Of course, you probably can not replace them, but if they are drafty in the winter, try sealing kits you can purchase at



Courtesy Photo

Renting your home means energy efficiency solutions must be simple.

any home improvement store. These plastic sheets fit over your window to block drafts. Curtains can also help, close them in the summer to block sunlight, and open them in the winter to let the warmth in.

Useful Energy Saving Tips

A few more simple tips can help lower your electric bills:

- When light bulbs burn out, replace them with compact fluorescent lights (CFLs). If they have an ENERGY STAR label, these bulbs typically last up to 10 times longer than traditional incandescent bulbs and use 75 percent less electricity.
Use your vacuum to clean coils in the bottom panel of your refrigerator.
Keep your dryer vents clean. Clogged refrigerator coils and dryer vents will cause your appliances to work harder and increase the risk of fire.
Do not allow furniture to block air vents, and shut the vents in rooms you do not use.
Check the temperature on your water heater. These devices do not need to be set at more than 120 degrees for daily showers and chores.

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy (EnergySavers.gov), Cooperative Research Network

Energy Camp

Continued from page 1

This year, Taylor Holmes of Gans Schools, the daughter of Billy and Balinda Holmes; Taylor Knapp of Gans Schools, daughter of Eual and Erin Knapp; Brooklyn Olzawski of Stigler Schools, daughter of Craig and Ashley Olzawski; and Hannah Hurst of Stigler Schools, daughter of Wade and Tracy Hurst, attended this year's camp with approximately 79 other outstanding students from Oklahoma.

"In my opinion, the most exciting part of the trip was the pizza party and dance. I had a great time dancing with all my new friends I made," said Knapp.

At the camp, the students attended sessions on energy, electrical safety and rural electric careers. Other special activities of the four-day program included hands-on electrical demonstrations, a 13 low-element ropes course and 2364400 swimming.

"Other highlights of the trip were the funny times in our cabin and go-carts at Celebration Station," said Hurst.



Brooklyn Olzawski



Taylor Knapp



Hannah Hurst



Taylor Holmes

Photos by: Kristie Cash

Business Connection

Continued from page 1

makeup and more. The site makes it easy for shoppers to locate participating businesses, check deals and discounts, and contact businesses by phone or online. Remember, these benefits are free to participating businesses.

With so many co-op members using their Co-op Connections Card, there is no reason why your business should not be involved.

For details on partnering with CHEC on the Co-op Connections Card program, please contact Donna Rhodes at 918-775-2211 or toll-free at 800-328-2368. You can also visit our website for more information at www.cooksonhills.com.

How to Get the Local Discounts: Look for the Co-op Connections decals at local businesses. Show your Co-op Connections Card to get their discount offer. View local discount offers and watch for updates in our newsletter and on our website.

Know What's Below - Call 811



Did You Know?

It is the law to call before you dig.

The service is fast, easy, and free.

Facility Operators will mark their underground lines.



Know the Cost to Running Your Pool Pump?

Circulating your pool's water keeps the chemicals mixed and removes debris, but pool pumps often run much longer than necessary. This includes portable above ground pools, so limit the time your pool pump is on. If the water circulates while chemicals are



Courtesy Photo

added, they should remain mixed; and most debris can be removed using a skimmer or vacuum. You can also save by getting the smallest size pump your pool requires, since larger pumps use more energy.

Running a one horsepower pool pump for 12 hours a day costs about \$43 a month!

Source: www.TakeControlAndSave.coop

Water safety tips

- Do not have any electrical appliances within five feet of a pool or hot tub.
- Better yet, use battery operated, rather than electrical, appliances near water.
- Any electrical outlets within twenty feet of a pool or hot tub should be equipped with a GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter).
- Never swim or use your outdoor hot tub during a thunderstorm.
- Do not touch any electrical appliances until you are completely dry.



To learn more about electrical safety visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

For more energy efficient ideas for pools, visit the U.S. Department of Energy's website: www.energysavers.gov. To find out more about how to save energy and money in your home, visit www.TakeControlAndSave.coop.

Use Caution with Fourth of July Fireworks



What would the Fourth of July be without cookouts, baseball games, and pyrotechnic displays in the night sky? However, it is easy to forget that fireworks are dangerous explosives, and carelessness could have deadly consequences.

The federal government has banned sales of the most dangerous fireworks to consumers, such as cherry bombs and M-80s. But sparklers, firecrackers, and other smaller fireworks remain legal in Oklahoma.

To help make sure your holiday celebrations do not end with a trip to the emergency room, follow these safety tips:

- Sparklers are not safe for small children. They burn at very high temperatures—up to 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit, hot enough to melt some metals—and can easily set clothes on fire.
- Ignite fireworks in a clearing, away from power lines, homes, other structures, dry leaves and grass, and other flammable materials. Never light them in any type of container.

- Keep a bucket of water handy in case of emergencies and for fireworks that fail to ignite or explode.
- Check instructions for storage, but generally keep fireworks in a cool, dry place.
- Do not place any part of your body directly over fireworks while you are lighting them, and immediately move away as soon as the device is lit.
- “Homemade” fireworks kits are illegal. Never try to make your own.
- After fireworks have completely burned out, soak them with a hose before throwing them in the trash to help prevent fires.

The Fourth of July is a time to celebrate, but we urge you to use caution with fireworks—and always look up for power lines before you shoot anything skyward.

Firework Injuries

Every year, thousands of people are injured by fireworks—8,600 in 2010 alone, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). The agency also reports that three people died the same year.