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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS



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FROM THE MANAGER

The Silent Killer

With Halloween just recently passed, let me now tell you about a really scary thing. This thing is an odorless, colorless, tasteless and nonirritating gas. That is exactly what makes it so dangerous — our senses give us no warning. This gas is a byproduct of combustion. Furnaces, fireplaces, gas stoves, kerosene heaters, portable generators, cars and trucks all produce it. This gas is named carbon monoxide — or CO — and it is the No. 1 form of lethal poisoning in America. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), over 400 people in the U.S. die and nearly 50,000 people end up in the emergency room each year from CO poisoning.

The CDC describes the symptoms of CO poisoning as headache and dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, confusion and loss of muscle coordination. CO poisoning can cause heart, nerve and brain damage. It can kill without the victim realizing that anything is going on.

Now that temperatures have dropped, the use of fireplaces, furnaces and space heaters has increased with the season. Nebraska Medicine provides the following recommendations on how to prevent CO poisoning:

▶ Have a CO detector on every level of your home and be sure it is function-

ing properly by testing it at least twice per year.

- ▶ Check the exhaust system of your car or truck for leaks and repair if necessary.
- ▶ Never run your car or truck inside a garage — especially one attached to a house — even with the garage door open.
- ▶ Maintain and service heating systems, water heaters, or any other gas, oil, wood or other fuel burning appliances.
- ▶ Check and clean your chimney regularly.
- ▶ Never use a generator inside your home, basement or garage — keep it outdoors and well away from any window, door or vent.
- ▶ Never burn charcoal indoors.
- ▶ Never heat a room with a gas range or oven.

If your CO detector goes off — do not ignore it or remove the batteries. Move outside to fresh air immediately, call 911, make sure everyone in the



Michael Volker

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A Storm Is Always Ready

ARE YOU?

When Mother Nature threatens to unleash a severe storm, be ready by having an emergency kit on hand.

Your kit should include:

- ▶ Bottles of water
- ▶ Nonperishable food
- ▶ Can opener



- ▶ Portable phone charger
- ▶ Flashlights
- ▶ Batteries

- ▶ First-aid supplies
- ▶ Hand sanitizer
- ▶ Prescriptions



- ▶ Pain reliever
- ▶ Warm clothing
- ▶ Blankets

- ▶ Battery-operated radio
- ▶ Important documents
- ▶ Books and games



- ▶ Cash money
- ▶ Baby supplies
- ▶ Pet supplies

Once your kit is assembled, check it a few times a year to make sure items have not expired and that no one has borrowed a necessary item.

The Silent Killer

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home is accounted for, and do not go back inside until told to do so.

With the Christmas holidays approaching and the use of appliances that burn fuel on the rise — please be safe and have a working CO detector on every floor of your home. Now there is a great present idea — a CO detector with fresh batteries!

A side note: One of the benefits of being a member of Brown-Atchison Electric Cooperative is that any margins the cooperative makes are returned to the membership. These margins are

called capital credits. Periodically the board of trustees authorizes staff to retire capital credits. **THIS YEAR, WE ARE RETIRING CAPITAL CREDITS FROM 1998.** If you were a member during 1998 and are still an active member, there is a credit on your December bill. For no-longer active members, a check will be sent to the address we have on record for that former member for their share of the 1998 capital credits.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us here at Brown-Atchison Electric Cooperative.

Stay Safe During Severe Winter Weather

When severe winter weather hits, power outages can occur. Roadways can be dangerous. Do all you can to prepare your pantry, home and car for the next severe winter storm. Once you are ready, watch and listen for weather bulletins mentioning winter storms, blizzard warnings or windchill dangers.

Supplies for the Storm

At home, have enough nonperishable food, water and medical supplies and medicines for 72 hours. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest storing 1 gallon of water per person per day. Have cell phones and chargers, as well as backup charging sources, ready. Gather important documents and medical records. Protect your pets and make sure you have enough supplies for them too. Additional items to have ready: a first-aid kit, a flashlight and batteries, hand sanitizer, blankets and warm clothing.

Readying the House

Weatherproof your home ahead of winter by caulking windows and doors and looking for other air leaks that need attention. Inspect chimney flues for wood stoves or wood-burning fireplaces. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on each floor of your home. Protect pipes from freezing.

Prepare Your Vehicle With an Emergency Kit

According to Consumer Reports, it can be cheaper to buy a prepared emergency kit than to purchase items individually. A kit typically includes battery booster cables, an ice scraper, a portable shovel, flashlights, a signaling cone, backup batteries for the flashlight, roadside triangles, a reflective vest, a basic first-aid kit (add in what is needed for individual needs) and a cell phone charger.

In addition, your car or truck should also be stocked with gloves, a blanket, a rain poncho, wipes, rags, boots and a hat. It cannot hurt to also have bottled water and nonperishable snacks in your vehicle in case you get stranded.

Prepare Your Vehicle

Complete annual maintenance, test the car battery and cooling system, use winter tires and replace them if the tread is less than 2/32nd of an inch, check tire pressure and wiper blades, add wiper fluid rated for less than minus 30 degrees and keep the gas tank at least half full.

Know that when the power goes out, we work hard to restore it safely and efficiently.

For information about electrical safety or storm preparation, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

How the Grid Keeps Reliable Power Flowing BY PAUL WESSLUND

New report reveals grid reliability is increasing despite new challenges

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation, also known as NERC, recently graded the nation's grid on reliability. The report revealed the electric grid is highly reliable and continues to improve despite emerging challenges that may stress it in the coming years.

NERC's "2022 State of Reliability" reports that the network of power plants, transmission lines and associated equipment — often referred to as the bulk power system or BPS — repeatedly improved its performance over the last six years. That trend comes despite the challenges of adding more energy generated from renewable sources and facing increasingly extreme weather patterns.

The impact of widespread, extreme weather events has underscored the need to plan for extreme scenarios related to resource adequacy and energy supply. Spurred by federal policies and market conditions, a drastic decline in available power generation resources has made complex electric systems more difficult to balance. As the nation's energy mix evolves and flexible generation (from sources that are fuel-assured, weatherized and dispatchable) decreases, the risk of energy shortfalls is more likely.

Despite these challenges that lie ahead, when it comes to measuring grid reliability, the year 2021 saw improvement in both the year-over-year and five-year average.

To understand the NERC report, it helps to know the system that delivers your electricity is often described as the most complex machine in the world. The U.S. bulk power system is made up of more than 7,300 power plants and nearly 160,000 miles of high-voltage power lines. This system is responsible for delivering the majority of electricity to local utilities and their millions of miles of lower-voltage lines that ultimately connect homes, businesses and other energy consumers to the electric grid.

The electricity that the bulk power system carries to you must be generated at the exact same time as you flip the switch to use it. If

that sounds like a mind-boggling job of high-tech coordination, it is. And the national grid does it every second of every day.

Despite that complexity and the widely reported threats like severe weather and cyberattacks, NERC says the grid continues to perform in a highly reliable and resilient manner overall, with year-over-year improvement, demonstrating the success of actions taken by the energy industry.

Here are a few of the major challenges the electric sector is facing — and NERC's recommendations for facing these challenges head-on.

Extreme Weather

Given the frequency and intensity of severe weather that affects electric operations, NERC recommends a shift in focus from just making sure there's ample energy supply to putting measures in place to withstand, adapt, protect against and recover from the impacts of extreme weather events.

Much of the NERC assessment focuses on the February 2021 event in Texas (Winter Storm Uri) when six days of below-freezing temperatures left some people without power for as many as four days. NERC advises steps to provide more transmission connections across the country so power can be more easily shared. NERC also sets plans to better prepare equipment for cold weather — as many generating units failed in the freezing temperatures.

Beefing Up Cybersecurity

Electric utilities repelled threats from what NERC called "increasingly bold cyber criminals" and referred to a relatively new term for using the internet for political and social protest, "hactivism." NERC has established the Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center that gathers information about the latest cyber threats and advises utilities about safeguards to take that supplement existing cybersecurity programs.

Across the U.S., electric cooperatives are working with national and local partners to fight

cyber threats and add resiliency to establish relationships, provide tools, share resources and training information to continuously improve cyber protection. In Kansas, Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., of which your electric co-op is a member, provides support and resources for co-ops to combat cybersecurity threats.

Increased Renewable Energy

Renewable fuels like wind and solar are clean energy choices, but they come with drawbacks for a smooth-running grid at any hour of the day. One major downside is they depend on whether the sun is shining or the wind is blowing. NERC calls them "variable energy resources" and sees a long-term solution in large-scale batteries that can store renewable energy so it can be available whenever it's needed. Although battery technology is rapidly improving, NERC notes that utilities should continue to rely on natural gas-fired power plants to produce additional electricity when renewable options aren't available.

Today's energy landscape is wide-ranging and rapidly changing, yet the U.S. electric grid continues to keep power flowing. Kansas electric cooperatives are working closely with grid operators and power generators and suppliers like Kansas Electric Power Cooperative Inc. and Sunflower Electric Power Corporation to provide the dependable electricity you rely on every minute of every day.

PAUL WESSLUND writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

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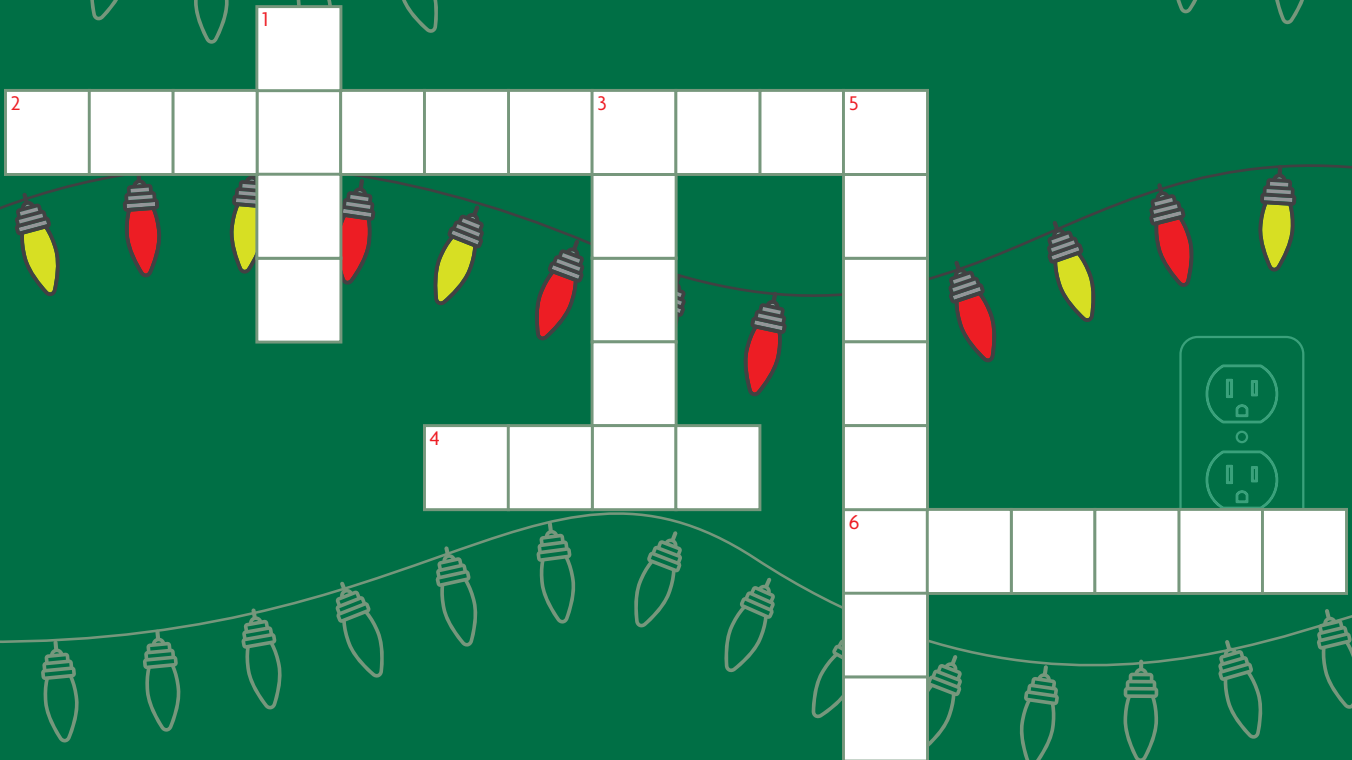
HOLIDAY EFFICIENCY CROSSWORD PUZZLE

The holiday season is a fun, festive time of year!
It's also a time when we use more electricity.

Complete the crossword puzzle below to learn how you
and your family can be more energy efficient this holiday season.



1. **DOWN:** Decorate your _____ with energy-saving LED lights.
2. **ACROSS:** Smart or programmable _____ can help control heating costs if you're traveling during the holiday season.
3. **DOWN:** Save energy by using a _____ to turn off holiday lights at night.
4. **ACROSS:** If you have a fireplace, ask an adult to close the damper when a _____ is not burning.
5. **DOWN:** Open blinds and curtains during the day to let natural _____ in to warm your home.
6. **ACROSS:** Lower the thermostat when your family has _____ visiting during the holidays.



ANSWER KEY

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. DOWN: Tree | 3. DOWN: Timer | 5. DOWN: Sunlight |
| 2. ACROSS: Thermostats | 4. ACROSS: Fire | 6. ACROSS: Guests |