Owned by the Members We Serve

BROWN-ATCHISON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

BROWN-ATCHISON ELECTRIC CO-OP, INC.

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Michael Volker
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CONTACT US

1712 Central
Horton, KS 66439
785-486-2117

NEW OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY-THURSDAY
7 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

FRIDAY
7 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

FROM THE MANAGER

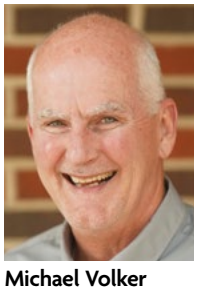
Some Like It Hot!

At Brown-Atchison Electric — we try to think ahead. But today, I sit in September on a 95-degree day writing about concerns regarding the upcoming winter! It seems strange, but the "Old Man" will be here before we know it. It is time to ask: "Is your HVAC system ready for winter?"

Here's what to check to see if your heating system is ready for winter. A few simple maintenance steps can improve comfort, reduce energy use, and help prevent a breakdown when you need heat the most.

SCHEDULE A PROFESSIONAL INSPECTION

- Have your heating system inspected by a qualified HVAC professional each year. (I do). A professional can check for worn parts, airflow issues, safe operation, and other problems.
- Ensure the inspection includes checking for proper ventilation and signs of carbon monoxide risks if your home burns fuel for heat.



Michael Volker

CHANGE OR CLEAN AIR FILTERS

- Check your air filter regularly and replace or clean it as needed. A dirty filter blocks airflow and makes your system work harder.
- Consider filter changes more often for homes with pets, allergies, heavy system use or significant dust.

CHECK AIRFLOW THROUGHOUT THE HOME

- Ensure all registers are clean and not blocked by furniture or other items.
- Vacuum vents to remove dust and keep air moving freely.
- Keep most of the registers open throughout your home. Closing vents in unused rooms can disrupt airflow and make your system work harder.

REDUCE HEAT LOSS

- Look for drafts around windows and doors and seal gaps with

Continued on page 12B ▶

RSVP TO JOIN US OCT. 26

Call us if you have any questions regarding the rate changes or to RSVP to attend the open meeting from 7-8 p.m. on Oct. 26.

OCTOBER 26

Some Like It Hot

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weatherstripping or caulk. Proper sealing is by far the biggest bang for the buck in lowering energy bills.
- Check insulation in attics, basements and crawl spaces.

PREPARE OUTDOOR HVAC EQUIPMENT

- Remove debris around outdoor HVAC equipment. Trim vegetation to maintain at least 2 feet of clearance around the unit.
- Check your furnace's outdoor air intake and exhaust pipes. Debris can block airflow, keeping your furnace from operating properly and increasing the risk of carbon monoxide buildup.
- Keep outdoor heat pumps clear of snow, ice and debris during the winter. Heat pumps need airflow to work properly.

ADJUST YOUR THERMOSTAT FOR ENERGY SAVINGS

- Install or program a smart thermostat to match your household schedule. Moderately lowering the temperature when you are asleep or away from home can help save energy without compromising comfort.
- Review the settings on your thermostat before winter begins.

KNOW WHEN IT MAY BE TIME FOR A REPLACEMENT

Heating systems more than 10 years old may operate less efficiently than newer models. Planning ahead can help you avoid an emergency replacement during extreme cold. Check with Brown-Atchison Electric for rebates on energy-efficient replacements.

> "Together, with the savings from the Willis Solar Farm,we've saved over $280,000 in wholesale power costs over the last 12 months."

- Watch for signs such as increasing energy bills, uneven heating, or frequent repairs.
- When it is time to replace your system, consider Energy Star-labeled equipment for long-term energy savings and efficiency.

By planning ahead, your system will more likely perform reliably and efficiently all through the coming winter. It will also result in savings on your utility bills!

Speaking of savings on bills, time for a HUGE shout-out to all those that participated in the Beat-the-Peak and Standby Generator programs. Together, with the savings from the Willis Solar Farm, we've saved over $280,000 in wholesale power costs over the last 12 months. These savings are reflected on power bills with lower Energy Cost Adjustments (ECA) every month. **THANK YOU!**

Finally, please call us if you have any questions regarding the rate changes or to RSVP to attend the open meeting from 7-8 p.m. on Oct. 26.

SAVE ENERGY THIS *Fall and Winter*

FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE TIPS TO REDUCE ENERGY USE AND KEEP YOU WARM THIS SEASON:

- Seal gaps around windows and doors with caulk or weatherstripping.
- Close curtains and blinds at night to keep the cold out.
- Open window coverings on sunny days to let the sun in.
- Clean or replace furnace filters.
- Run ceiling fans clockwise to push warm air down.
- Check insulation in your attic, attic hatch and crawl space.
- Use a smart thermostat to lower temperatures when asleep or away.
- Close the fireplace flue when not in use.
- Schedule a home energy audit to find and fix energy wasters.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

Protect Your Home Network During Cybersecurity Awareness Month

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month, a good time to check the security of the technology we use every day. From phones and laptops to smart TVs, thermostats and doorbells, many household devices connect to the internet.

This connection provides convenience, but it also means your home network needs protection. Your router acts like the front door between these devices and the internet, and it's important to keep it secure.

The good news: You do not have to be a technology expert. A few simple steps can help protect your devices, accounts and your family's personal information.

START WITH YOUR ROUTER

Your router connects your phones, computers, tablets and smart devices to the internet. Taking a few minutes to review its settings can make a big difference.

CHANGE DEFAULT PASSWORDS

Change your router's default network name and password to something unique. Avoid using your name, address or phone number in your Wi-Fi network name.

Change the password used to access your router's settings. It's different than your Wi-Fi password. Use long, unique passwords, and consider a password manager to help create and store them.

USE THE SAFEST WI-FI SECURITY SETTING AVAILABLE

Your Wi-Fi security settings help protect information moving between your devices and your router and help keep people nearby from joining your network without permission.

In your router's settings or app, look for the Wi-Fi security option. Choose WPA3 if it is available. If not, choose WPA2. Avoid WEP or WPA, which are outdated and easier to break into.

If you are unsure how to find this setting, check your router app, look for instructions from your internet provider, or search the router model number with "change Wi-Fi security settings" on your internet browser to find instructions online.

UPDATE DEVICE SOFTWARE

Software updates are not just about new features. They often fix security problems that scammers or hackers could exploit.

Turn on automatic updates when available for your router, phone, computer, tablet and smart devices. If automatic updates are not an option, check for updates regularly.

This includes devices that are easy to forget, such as smart TVs, cameras, doorbells, printers, gaming systems and thermostats. If your router or modem is outdated and no longer receives security updates, consider replacing it.

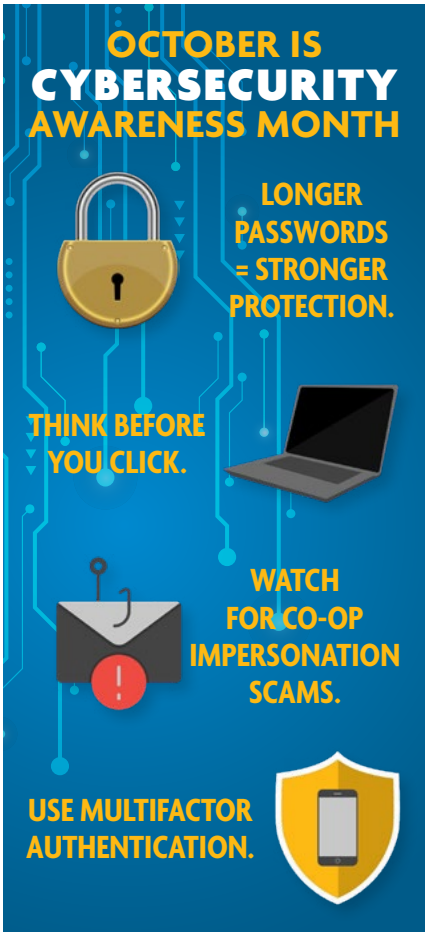
CREATE A GUEST NETWORK

Many routers allow you to set up a guest network. This gives visitors internet access without connecting them to the same network as your personal computers, phones and sensitive information.

A guest network can also be useful for smart devices, such as smart TVs, speakers, cameras and appliances, which may not have the same security features as a laptop or phone.

REVIEW CONNECTED DEVICES

Most router apps or settings pages show a list of connected devices. If you see something you do not recognize, remove or block it, then change your Wi-Fi password. Disconnect old devices you no longer use.



TURN OFF FEATURES YOU DO NOT NEED

Some router features are convenient but may add risk if they are not needed.

Consider turning off remote management, which allows router settings to be changed from outside your home network. Also, review features such as Wi-Fi Protected Setup (WPS) and turn them off if you are not using them.

A SAFER HOME NETWORK STARTS WITH SIMPLE HABITS

You do not have to fix everything at once. Start with a few basic steps: Change default passwords, update your devices, use strong Wi-Fi security, and turn on multi-factor authentication for important accounts.

Small actions can help protect your personal information, your devices and your family's online safety.

Co-op Month Quiz

October is National Co-op Month

Did you know there are many different kinds of cooperatives? A cooperative, or co-op, is a business that's owned by the people who use it. Some co-ops help people buy groceries, some help farmers sell their crops and some — like your electric co-op — bring power to your home. Read each clue below and guess the type of cooperative you think it is.

Energy Explorers

ANSWER CHOICES:

WORKER PRODUCER CONSUMERS UTILITY RETAIL FINANCIAL HOUSING

▸ 1. YOUR LOCAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

It keeps the lights on, restores power after storms and is owned by the members it serves.

TYPE: _____

▸ 2. REI

People can become members to shop for outdoor gear, enjoy special benefits, and help support the business.

TYPE: _____

▸ 3. OCEAN SPRAY

Thousands of cranberry and grapefruit farmers work together to grow fruit and produce juice sold across the country.

TYPE: _____

▸ 4. YOUR LOCAL CREDIT UNION

Members save money, open checking accounts, and apply for loans through a financial institution they own together.

TYPE: _____

▸ 5. A GROCERY CO-OP

Local shoppers become members to help support a community grocery store and buy fresh foods.

TYPE: _____

▸ 6. A COOPERATIVE APARTMENT BUILDING

People work together to own and manage the place where they live.

TYPE: _____

▸ 7. A COOPERATIVE BAKERY

The people who bake the bread, decorate the cakes, and serve customers also own the business together.

TYPE: _____

Answer Key:

1. *Utility* **2.** *Retail* **3.** *Producer* **4.** *Financial* **5.** *Consumer* **6.** *Housing* **7.** *Worker*