

Since 1940

WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* January 2022 NEWS

TAYLOR ELECTRIC
Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy Partner



TREK INTO THE NEW YEAR

MAKING DOLLARS AND SENSE
OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY

ADVANCING THROUGH ADVOCACY



Kenneth Ceaglske, Jr., former Speaker of the House of Representatives, means that even

WORKING WITH LOCAL LEGISLATORS

“All politics is local.” This observation by the late Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill, Jr., former Speaker of the House of Representatives, means that even

national politics have a local impact, and people care most about issues that directly affect them. Indirectly, this famous adage underscores the importance and value of local politics.

Taylor Electric plays a part in some of those politics. We belong to state and national organizations that support clean, reliable, and affordable energy for our members. We are part of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA), Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC), National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC), Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange (Federated), and a few others.

NRECA is our ally that helps us at the federal level with the many issues that come up there. Each state sends a representative to the NRECA board. While we do not have a member of our board on the NRECA board, we do have representation from one of our neighboring Wisconsin cooperatives. NRECA sponsors a trip for our local representatives to visit our D.C. legislators in the spring.

WECA represents us both locally and in concert with NRECA. We have direct representation on three of the committees, with Pat Waldhart on the Legislative Committee, Don Everhard on the Education Committee, and me on the Job Training and Safety Committee within WECA. We also have three representatives from cooperatives in our district (Northeast Wisconsin). WECA is sponsoring a lobby day at

the capital in Madison coming up in February to meet with our state legislators to present our point of view on issues like electric vehicles and solar production.

Dairyland Power Cooperative also has staff that are attentive to political issues, particularly in the area of power generation and reliability. We have a director, Chuck Zenner, who is active on the DPC board, directing the future of the generation and transmission system in the area.

While CFC is our banker, they swing a big stick in Washington, D.C., as well as the funding markets in New York. They are a well-respected organization and can help influence some of the national issues that we have faced. We had local representation on the CFC board up until last year. The late Dean Tesch had risen to the level of president of the board of directors at CFC.

Federated may not be as big a player in the political scene, but they actively support us by providing insurance for our equipment and workers. They are active in the politics and education in that realm. Our very own Brian Hallgren was recently elected to the national board for Federated.

One of the great aspects of the cooperative model is that we are active in governmental issues that affect our local members, whether those members are from a small cooperative in Wisconsin or a large cooperative in Texas. Rural America sees many of the same challenges, and we speak with a large, well respected voice when we get together.

We’re proud to power your life and bring good things to the community. We hope you’ll continue to advise Taylor Electric on matters of importance so we can continue to advocate on your behalf and improve the quality of life for all.

**Check out
our
NEW &
IMPROVED
website!**



taylorelectric.org

Visit us online at taylorelectric.org!

At our website, you can:

- Manage your account and pay your bills online through SmartHub
- View a live outage map during storms and follow restoral progress
- Learn about our products and services
- Find incentives and programs that will help you save money
- See which local businesses offer discounts with your Co-op Connections Card
- And so much more!

ARE PORTABLE SPACE HEATERS EFFICIENT FOR MY HOME?

Small space heaters are meant to do exactly as their name says: heat a small space. But unfortunately, many people use portable space heaters to heat their entire home, which can really take a toll on your energy bills. The truth is, whether you should use space heaters really depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

If you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like inadequate insulation, drafty windows and exterior doors, or an inefficient heating system, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home. If you're on a tight budget, caulking and weather stripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy. Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a great next step. Loose fill insulation typically costs \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot. Taking these proactive energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters for

supplemental warmth can reduce your heating and cooling bills for years to come.

Perhaps your home is energy efficient but you're cold-natured and want a specific room to be cozier than the rest. In this case, a space heater may work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling fans; we use ceiling fans in the summer to cool people, not rooms. A space heater can be used in a similar way during winter months. Only use a space heater in small spaces that you're occupying and, if possible, try to shut off other rooms to contain the warmth provided by the space heater. If you decide to use a space heater to heat a small area in your home, make sure the heater is properly sized for the space; most heaters include a general sizing table.

A word about safety: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates more than 25,000 residential fires are associated with the use of space heaters every year, resulting in

more than 300 deaths. If you must use a space heater, purchase a newer model that includes the most current safety features and make sure it carries the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label. Choose a thermostatically controlled heater to avoid energy waste and overheating, and place the heater on a level surface away from foot traffic when in use. Always keep children and pets away from space heaters.

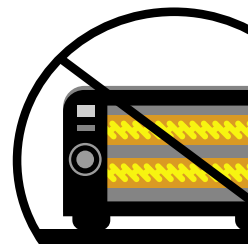
Consider alternative ways to stay warm like extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors, lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation (and appeal!) and maintain warmth. We know it's cold out there, but remember in addition to safety concerns, space heaters can greatly increase your energy bills if used improperly.

If you're looking for alternative ways to save energy and increase comfort in your home, contact Taylor Electric Cooperative. We're here to help you manage your energy use.

TIPS TO DITCH THE SPACE HEATER

Space heaters are energy hogs, and older models can be extremely dangerous. This winter, ditch the space heater and try these alternative solutions to stay cozy.

- Use an electric blanket to keep warm during the night.
- Caulk and weatherstrip around all windows and doors to prevent heat loss.
- Consider adding insulation to your attic and around duct work.





WEATHERING WINTER STORMS SAFELY

We're in the thick of winter now, and that means snow and ice storms can occur any time. Winter storms can cause hazardous road conditions, downed power lines, and extended power outages.

Before a storm ever begins, tune into your local weather service for the weather forecast. It is important to know the differences among various watches and warnings.

- **Winter Storm Watches** signify that stormy conditions, including heavy snow, freezing rain, or sleet, are likely within the next few days. You should be alert, as this means adverse conditions could begin within the next 12 to 48 hours.
- **Winter Storm Warnings** call for stormy conditions to begin within the next 24 hours. Those in the range of the warning should be mindful of the impending conditions and consider canceling plans to travel.
- **Blizzard Warnings** advise those in the affected areas to seek refuge immediately due to high levels of snow, strong winds, and resulting near-zero visibility to those traveling on the road.

If the power goes out, notify Taylor Electric of the outage. Have an emergency kit prepared to help you weather the storm and the outage safely and comfortably. This kit should include bottled water, non-perishable food, flashlights, a weather radio, and extra batteries.

If you are using an alternative heating source during an outage, know how to use it safely and have all supplies for it gathered. To keep warm during an outage, dress in layers, cover windows at night, close off unneeded rooms, and place draft blocks at the bottom of doors.

To protect your circuits and appliances when power is restored, switch off lights and unplug appliances. Leave one light switched on as a quick reminder that the power is restored.

Only venture outside if absolutely necessary. Downed power lines could be submerged in snow and ice, making them difficult to see. If you must go outside, use caution and treat all downed and hanging lines as if they are energized. Stay away, warn others to stay away, and immediately contact Taylor Electric Cooperative.

If travel is necessary, keep an emergency kit in your vehicle. It should include a windshield scraper, a first aid kit, a cell phone charging adaptor, booster cables, a blanket, and a flashlight with extra batteries.

Never drive over a downed line because that could pull down the pole and other equipment, causing additional hazards. If you see a downed line, do not get out of your car. The safest place is inside the vehicle. Contact Taylor Electric immediately.—*Safe Electricity*

Normal power line **Lines weighed down by ice** **Top line melted after bottom line**

ICE ON POWER LINES IS A WEIGHTY SUBJECT

When it comes to getting electricity across power lines and into homes, ice can be a force to be reckoned with.

ICE ON DISTRIBUTION LINES

Ice can quickly lead to broken power poles and other pole equipment. Ice can also make falling tree branches 30x heavier and much more likely to break power lines.

ON A 300-FOOT SPAN OF 1-INCH-THICK POWER LINES

- 1/2 inch of ice adds 281 pounds of weight
- 1 inch of ice adds 749 pounds of weight
- 2 inches of ice adds 2,248 pounds of weight

WHEN ICE MELTS

Melting ice can cause power outages. If ice on the bottom (neutral) line melts before the lines above, it can cause the lines to touch.

OTHER ICE FACTS

- Damage can begin when ice exceeds 1/4 of an inch
- 1/2 inch of ice can cause a line to sag up to 12 inches
- Pressure can also be caused by a broken tree limb
- Both ice and melting ice can cause power outages

Safe Electricity.org®

Source: Jerri Ingarten-Whitley and Victory Electric Cooperative

DO YOU NEED HELP WITH YOUR HEATING COSTS?

WHEAP provides assistance to qualifying households

The Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) provides assistance for heating costs, electric costs, and energy crisis situations. Operating with federal and state funding, the program provides assistance to households across the state to help lower the burden incurred with monthly energy costs.

Most types of fuel are eligible to receive assistance. Whether you use wood, propane, natural gas, electricity, or fuel oil to heat your home, energy assistance is available if you qualify.

Your household may be eligible for WHEAP services based on a number of

factors, including household income. If the gross income for your household is less than the amount shown on the chart at right, you might be eligible to receive assistance. Households must complete a Home Energy Plus application through the local WHEAP agency or apply online via: <https://energybenefit.wi.gov/>.

For more information on WHEAP and how to apply, please call **1-866-HEATWIS (432-8947)**, or visit the “Where to Apply” tab on **www.homeenergyplus.wi.gov** to find your local energy assistance agency. You may also apply online at **energybenefit.wi.gov/**.

Income Guidelines for the 2021–2022 Home Energy Plus Program Year (10/01/2021 through 9/30/2022)

60 percent of state median income guidelines

| Household Size | One Month Income | Annual Income |
|----------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1 | \$ 2,591.92 | \$31,103 |
| 2 | \$ 3,389.42 | \$40,673 |
| 3 | \$ 4,186.92 | \$50,243 |
| 4 | \$ 4,984.42 | \$59,813 |
| 5 | \$ 5,781.92 | \$69,383 |
| 6 | \$ 6,579.42 | \$78,953 |
| 7 | \$ 6,729.00 | \$80,748 |
| 8 | \$ 6,878.50 | \$82,542 |

REBATES AVAILABLE FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY UPGRADES

Details about the 2022 incentive program coming next month

Are new appliances in your plans for 2022? If so, remember that the price tag isn't the only thing to check to make sure you're getting the best deal.

When you shop for a new appliance, look for the ENERGY STAR® label. ENERGY STAR products usually exceed minimum federal standards by a substantial amount.

Also, be sure to check our website at taylorelectric.org and look under Energy Savings to see if your purchase qualifies for a rebate through Taylor

Electric Cooperative's Energy Incentive Program. We offer rebates to help you save money on a number of energy efficiency upgrades to your home, farm, or business, including the purchase of qualified appliances, lighting, HVAC systems, and more.

Watched next month's issue for more details about rebates through Taylor Electric's 2022 Energy Incentive Program.



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