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WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* February 2017 NEWS

Hike by *Candlelight*



TAYLOR ELECTRIC
Cooperative



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL FIND AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

Did you know every cooperative is required to conduct an annual meeting of the membership? The purpose is to hold the election for the board of directors, share important financial information, occasionally vote on other matters such as bylaw changes and of course—the great door prizes!

Taylor Electric's annual meeting is a community gathering where neighbors can meet new neighbors—or catch up with old acquaintances. As our lives get busier with the “errands of life” and more of our interactions with others are online (via social media), we must renew the value of face-to-face human connections. Very few organizations are uniquely positioned like Taylor Electric to bring together all members of our local communities.

While rural Americans probably do a better job of staying connected to our neighbors (in part because we need too), it is not something we should take for granted. The simple act of smiling, saying hello, and shaking someone's hand truly lifts both parties.

Our country and community face many challenges. Our economy feels like it has been stagnant for years. Overcoming these challenges will only happen if we come together.

Taylor Electric's annual meeting is designed to take care of the important business of your co-op and the equally important business of building a real sense of community. All cooperatives serve both an economic and social purpose. While safe, reliable, and affordable electric power is crucial to our mission, improving the quality of life for all members is at the core of what we do every day.

If you have not attended the annual meeting in the past or if it has been a few years, we urge you to take the time to be with your fellow co-op members. We get out of life what we put into it. Taylor Electric is connected to you by more than just powerlines. We are your neighbors, and we look forward to seeing you at your annual meeting on Saturday, March 25, at the Medford Area Senior High School starting at 9:30 a.m.



81ST ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD MARCH 25, 2017 Time for Director Elections

Taylor Electric Cooperative's 81st annual meeting will be held at the Medford Area Senior High School in Medford on Saturday, March 25, 2017. One of the most important duties of the members at this meeting will be to elect members to fill two seats on the board of directors.

These seats are currently held by Patricia Waldhart and Chuck Zenner, both of whom are eligible for re-election. Waldhart has completed three terms, and Zenner has completed two terms of service on the board (members are eligible to serve up to five three-year terms).



Patricia Waldhart



Chuck Zenner

Since the nominating committee has already met, to be on the ballot for election, a member needs to be nominated by petition, which involves getting signatures of not less than 25 members and delivering that nomination petition to the co-op not less than seven days prior to the annual meeting (by March 17, 2017, for the upcoming annual meeting).

The Nominating Committee for the 2017 Annual Meeting is as follows: Bill Elsner, Frank Bohte, and Juleen Hallgren.

Please contact President and CEO Mike Schaefer if you have any questions about being nominated for a seat on the board.

The cooperative's bylaws establish minimum qualifications for a director. They are:

1. Must be a member. (For memberships that are held jointly, either person may run for election to the board of directors.)
2. Must be receiving electric service from the co-op at his or her place of permanent residence.
3. Must not be employed by, or financially interested in, a competing enterprise.
4. Must not be employed by, or financially interested in, a business selling electric energy or supplies to the cooperative or the members.
5. Must not have been employed by the cooperative at any time in the last seven years.

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Easy Steps to Greater Efficiency

Do you want to save money and electricity but have limited time, money and patience? According to the Department of Energy, a “typical American family” spends nearly \$2,000 per year on their home energy bills. Much of that money, however, is wasted through leaky windows or ducts, old appliances, or inefficient heating and cooling systems.

Luckily, there are several relatively easy ways to save energy without a substantial commitment of time and money. These efforts will help you save whether you own or rent an older or newly constructed home. And, you won’t have to hire a specialist or call in a favor from someone who is handy with tools to help you.

Where to Start

According to Money Magazine, “improving the envelope” of your home is a good place to start. Sunlight, seasonal temperature changes, and wind vibrations can loosen up even a tight home, increasing air leakage. Doors and windows may not close tightly, and duct work can spring leaks, wasting cooled and heated air. By placing weather stripping and caulk around windows and doors, you can keep cool air inside during warm months and prevent chilly air from penetrating the indoors during colder months. Sealing gaps around piping, dryer vents, fans, and outlets also helps to seal the envelope and creates greater efficiency. Apply weather stripping around overlooked spaces like your attic hatch or pull-down stairs.

Replacing incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs can make a big difference in home efficiency and is one of the fastest ways to cut your energy bill. Known for their longevity and efficiency, LED bulbs have an estimated operational life span of typically 10,000 to 20,000 hours compared to 1,000 hours of a typical incandescent. According to the Department of Energy (DOE), by replacing your home’s five most frequently used light fixtures or bulbs with models that have earned the ENERGY STAR rating, you can save \$75 each year.

Wrapping Up Savings

Installing a blanket around your water heater could reduce standby heat losses by 25 to 45 percent and save you about 7 to 16 percent in water heating costs, according to the DOE. For a small investment of about \$30, you can purchase pre-cut jackets or blankets and install them in about one hour. On a safety note, the DOE recommends that you not set the thermostat above 130 degrees Fahrenheit on an electric water heater with an insulating jacket or blanket; the higher temperature setting could cause the wiring to overheat.

Given that a large portion of your monthly energy bill goes toward heating and cooling your home, it makes sense to ensure your home’s heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system is performing at an optimal level. Checking, changing, or cleaning your filter extends the life of your HVAC system and saves you money.

Air filters prevent dust and allergens from clogging your HVAC system. Otherwise, dust and dirt trapped in a system’s air filter leads to several problems, including reduced air flow in the home and up to 15 percent higher operating

costs; lowered system efficiency; and costly duct cleaning or replacement. Many professionals recommend cleaning the system filters monthly. A simple task like changing the filters on your HVAC system makes your unit run more efficiently, keeping your house cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

Take Control of Your Energy Savings

Take a look at your programmable thermostat. When was the last time you checked to make sure it was programmed for the current season and family schedule? This is one of the best energy-saving tools at your fingertips. It enables you to fine tune the temperature during particular hours of the day. Many models allow you to differentiate between weekday and weekend schedules, and internet-connected thermostats can learn your schedule and make adjustments automatically. Most models come with an override option so you can make manual adjustments without losing overall programming. You can only achieve these efficiencies and savings if it is programmed properly and adjusted periodically to keep pace with changes in household routines.



Weathering a Winter Power Outage

When a snow or ice storm strikes, it can cause power outages in very cold temperatures. Depending on the severity of the storm, the outage can last for days as utility crews work in difficult conditions to restore power to all the affected areas.

“The Federal Emergency Management Association tells us that winter storms are deceptive killers because most deaths are indirectly related to storms,” says Molly Hall, executive director of the Energy Education Council’s Safe Electricity program. “To be truly prepared for a winter power outage, you need more than supplies. You need to know what to do when a snow storm strikes.”

Winter storms can severely damage power lines by weighing lines down with ice, causing trees to fall into power lines, or creating hazardous road conditions resulting in automobile accidents with

“To be truly prepared for a winter power outage, you need more than just supplies.” – Molly Hall, Safe Electricity

power poles. All of these scenarios can create prolonged power outages.

When the lights go out, you should first contact your co-op to inform them of the outage. Once they are aware of an outage, they will immediately begin the assessment and restoration process. How long it takes to get your power restored depends on the extent of the storm’s destruction, the number of outages, and when it becomes safe for utility personnel to get to the affected areas. Until the power comes back on, do all you can to keep your family comfortable.

After contacting the utility, get out your storm preparedness kit to help get you and your family through the power outage. This kit will need to be assembled ahead of time and should include such items as: bottled water, non-perishable food, blankets, warm clothing, first aid kit/medicine, flashlight, radio, extra batteries, and toiletries.

Monitor the temperature in your home. Infants and elderly people are more susceptible to the cold. You may want to stay with friends or relatives or go to a shelter if you cannot keep your home warm.

There are many ways to stay warm during a winter power outage. First, dress warm and cover up in layers of blankets. Next, remember to close off unneeded rooms and place draft blocks at the bottom of doors to minimize cold air entering the house. Also, cover the windows at night to keep the cold air out. Finally, avoid going outside. Opening doors will let cold air in, and going outside will make you more vulnerable to the cold.

If you are using an alternative heating source during a power outage, be sure to know how to use it safely and that you have all supplies gathered for it. Follow operating instructions, use fire safeguards, and properly ventilate. Always keep a multipurpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher nearby and know how to use it.

Use caution when using a portable generator. These should never be operated indoors because they omit deadly carbon monoxide. Additionally, never plug it into a wall outlet. This is an important precaution in preventing backfeed, which occurs when electricity travels from the generator back through the power lines. Backfeed creates danger for anyone near lines, particularly crews working to restore power.

Take steps to protect your circuits and appliances before power is restored by switching off lights and unplugging everything. Leave one light switched on as a quick reminder that the power is restored.

A winter storm brings a multitude of ways to sustain an injury as snow, ice, and cold temperatures might linger for days. Hall adds, “Once a winter storm front has passed, it can still be dangerous if you have to get out of the house for important basic necessities. Car accidents can still happen on slippery roads, and more than egos can be bruised when

taking a fall on icy sidewalks. So we encourage people to take preparation steps now to help weather the storm safely.”

For more information on weathering a winter storm, visit SafeElectricity.org.

MY CO-OP



KNOW WHAT TO DO

if in an Auto Accident with Power Lines

If the car you are in hits a utility pole, **your vehicle and the surrounding area can be energized.**



Even if you do not touch lines or equipment, you can still be killed or seriously injured!



- 1. Do NOT leave the car, and warn others to stay away.**

2. Call 911 to have the utility notified.



- 3. Wait** until a utility professional has told you it is safe.

The **only** reason to exit the vehicle is **if it's on fire.**



If the car is on fire, jump clear of the vehicle, **with feet together, and without touching the car and the ground at the same time.**



Continue to **hop away** with your feet together as far as you can.



Learn more at 

Annual Meeting

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6. Must not have pursued any claim or litigation against the cooperative at any time in the prior seven years.
7. Must not have been delinquent on any obligation owed the cooperative for more than 60 days during the prior year.
8. Must not have been convicted of a felony or other offense involving dishonesty for which completion of the sentence, including any period of probation or parole, occurred within 10 years of election or appointment to the board.

In addition, board members are expected to:

1. Attend all regular monthly board meetings.
2. Attend all special meetings, such as budget meetings, labor negotiation meetings, periodic Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association meetings, and various meetings as they arise. A new director is expected to take advantage of educational opportunities that would enhance his or her understanding of Taylor Electric Cooperative's operations.
3. Read and be familiar with information, reports, and other data received from national, state, and local associations.
4. Establish contact with the members of the co-op.
5. Work in harmony with other board members for the good of all members of the cooperative.
6. Sign a statement and follow standards of ethical conduct.



ENERGY STAR Buyers Guide

Purchasing **ENERGY STAR**-certified appliances and electronics is a great way to save energy in your home. But how do you choose the right product? It depends on your energy-saving goals and how you use energy in your home.



Do you wash multiple loads of laundry each week? Investing in an ENERGY STAR-certified washer could save you around \$45 on your utility bill each year. Some of the top-rated ENERGY STAR-certified large washers come from LG and Samsung. Visit ENERGY STAR's "Most Efficient 2017" page to learn more.



Home computers can use a shocking amount of energy each year. If all computers in the U.S. were ENERGY STAR certified, we would save more than \$1 billion in energy costs per year. If you can't buy an ENERGY STAR-certified computer, consider updating the power management setting on your computer. Visit energystar.gov/products/office_equipment/computers.



The larger TVs get, the more energy they use. But ENERGY STAR-certified TVs are, on average, 25% more efficient than conventional models. LG, Samsung and Vizio make the list of ENERGY STAR's most efficient 2017 TVs.

There are many different types of ENERGY STAR-certified products, including:

- Air purifiers
- Roof products
- Set-top boxes and cable boxes
- Decorative light strands
- Data center storage
- Pool pumps
- Vending machines
- Dehumidifiers

Learn more about **ENERGY STAR** products.
Visit energystar.gov/products



Happy Valentine's Day

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