

Energy Efficiency Offers Rich Rewards for Farmers

Every dairy cow carries an energy price tag. Farmers pump water—and \$2.6 billion in energy dollars—to boost crops.

At the end of the day, energy, both direct and indirect, accounts for 13 percent of the average farmer's production expenses. To enhance their bottom lines, more farmers are turning to energy efficiency.

Electricity powers a farm's heating (water, space, heat lamps), pumping (irrigation, water wells, manure lagoons), refrigeration, ventilation, lighting, and fans (drying grains, aeration). Material handling—such as feed augers, manure conveyors, milking, and egg conveyors—also drain

resources.

The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy estimates farmers could save \$88 million annually by investing in efficient motors and lighting. How can Kansas farmers reap efficiency benefits?

The greatest savings come from deploying more efficient equipment, although behavioral changes and a simple analysis of how energy is consumed can result in significant savings, too.

Equipped to save

Each farm—dairy, poultry, beef, hog, or crop—offers opportunities for efficiency improvements. For example:

- ▶ **Clean equipment:** Removing dust, soot, and debris from equipment will allow it to do more work with less effort, extending its life and reducing energy use.
- ▶ **Inspect regularly:** Equipment should be checked regularly. Replace parts that are showing excessive wear before they break and cause irreparable damage.
- ▶ **Plug leaks:** Be it a pinprick hole in a hose or a drafty barn, leaks waste money, fuel, and electricity.
- ▶ **Remove clutter:** Hoses should be regularly flushed to clear debris. Ensure fan and motor intakes and exhausts remain clutter-free for maximum circulation and efficiency.

Light lessons

After tuning up equipment, check lights. Light work areas, not entire buildings. Use daylight when possible. Install dimmable ballasts to control light levels.

The type of light used makes a difference. Although useful as a heat source in limited situations (to keep water pumps from freezing in winter, for example), incandescent lightbulbs only convert 10 percent of the energy used into light. The rest of the

energy is given off as heat. Consider these energy-saving lighting options, as compared to incandescents:

- ▶ Halogen incandescents use 25 percent less energy and last three times longer than traditional incandescent bulbs
- ▶ Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) use 75 percent less energy and last up to 10 times longer
- ▶ LEDs use between 75 percent and 80 percent less energy and last up to 25 times longer
- ▶ Cold cathode fluorescent lamps (CCFLs) last up to 25 times longer and offer the same efficiency as CFLs.
- ▶ T-8 and T-5 fluorescent lights with electronic ballasts generate less noise and produce more light per watt. These bulbs also offer better color rendering, minimal flickering, cooler operation, and energy savings.

Seeds of change

For regional or crop-specific efficiency methods, use the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service energy calculators, energytools.sc.egov.usda.gov. Assess how much energy a farm needs for animal housing, irrigation, and tillage and discover ways to cut costs.

Funding for efficiency upgrades is available through the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). Get details at www.rurdev.usda.gov > Energy > Rural Energy for America Program.

Farmers can also apply for financial and technical help through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), a program from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. EQIP supports energy initiatives to manage and reduce agricultural energy needs. Learn more at www.nrcs.usda.gov > Programs > Financial Assistance > Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

Climate-change Plan will Harm Rural America

In late June, President Obama announced a series of actions to combat climate change. For electric co-ops, the outline hammered one point that has us ready to do battle: reducing the volume of greenhouse gases—primarily carbon dioxide—emitted from fossil fuel-burning power plants, both new and existing.

To that end, the President has instructed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate carbon emissions under the federal Clean Air Act, a law last updated in 1990 that contains not a single line mentioning carbon dioxide. Under the sweeping mandate set forth, the White House risks shuttering the nation's entire coal fleet—roughly 37 percent of generation capacity—and driving up electric bills for all consumers.

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and its member co-ops oppose using the Clean Air Act to regulate greenhouse gases and will engage the administration at every turn to inject common sense back into policy discussions. Whether you agree with the President's underlying concerns about global warming or not, the basic fact is that short of closing all coal-fired power plants there are no economically viable tools currently available to accomplish his goals.

For several years, electric co-ops have warned the Obama administration that employing the Clean Air Act to curb power plant carbon dioxide emissions is badly misguided. Without significant modifications, co-ops feel the President's proposal will jack up electric bills for those who can least afford it—our

consumer-members.

Rural residents already spend a greater chunk of their income on energy than those in urban communities. One of our first missions as not-for-profit electric co-ops remains keeping rates affordable—an important consideration since household income in our service territories runs 11 percent lower than the national average and one person in six served by a co-op lives in poverty.

Forcing electric co-ops to shut down coal plants and switch to other fuels amounts to levying a punitive, regressive tax on rural America. History shows us this bad idea was tried once before, with bad results.

In the late 1970s policymakers were concerned the U.S. would soon run out of natural gas, the main energy source for heating and cooking in many parts of our land. Congress's solution to the issue was passing the ill-conceived Powerplant and Industrial Fuel Use Act of 1978, which prohibited burning natural gas to generate electricity. To meet growing demand for power, utilities were forced to choose either coal or nuclear power facilities.

For electric co-ops the timing couldn't have been worse. The measure kicked in just as generation and transmission co-ops (G&Ts) were in the middle of a major power plant building cycle. In the end, many found themselves shifting generation strategies mid-stream—an expensive proposition—and either partnering with investor-owned utilities in nuclear reactors or constructing state-of-the-art coal stations equipped with scrubbers and

other pollution control technologies.

Thanks to the Fuel Use Act, power costs soared, and with them, co-op electric bills. Realizing its mistake, Congress repealed the act in 1987. Yet because of the legislation, many electric co-ops became deeply invested in coal. Today, coal accounts for about 74 percent of the power produced by G&Ts and 55 percent of all electric co-op electricity requirements.

Just like 35 years ago, the President's call for action has co-ops once again faced with shifting fuels—in this case, choosing natural gas or renewables over coal. However, in regions without access to natural gas pipelines, changing from coal to natural gas isn't feasible. On the renewables front, co-ops have emerged as leaders, adding "clean and green" power systems where it makes economic sense—such as solar photovoltaic arrays in the Southwest and wind farms across the Great Plains and Midwest. But the sun doesn't always shine (clouds) and the wind doesn't always blow, especially during periods of peak demand on hot, humid summer weekday afternoons or cold winter mornings below minus 22 degrees Fahrenheit when power is needed most. Keeping the lights on 24 hours a day, seven days a week requires traditional baseload generation—namely coal, nuclear, and hydro—as well as a full mix of fuels.

NRECA, on behalf of America's electric co-ops, will continue to urge the President and his administration to work with co-ops on a real "all-of-the-above" energy strategy to keep electric bills affordable for rural Americans.

DIY "Bricolaje" Seguridad Eléctrica

La actual crisis económica ha inspirado a los propietarios más para abordar proyectos de bricolaje que nunca. Frente a la caída de valor de las viviendas y propiedades de envejecimiento, los propietarios de viviendas en algunos casos pueden no tener que pagar por los servicios de un electricista.

Sin embargo, la mayoría de nosotros no tiene la formación ni la experiencia necesaria para realizar trabajos eléctricos, que aumentan el riesgo de lesiones y electrocución y potencialmente introduce nuevos peligros. Trabajar con electricidad requiere extremo cuidado y planificación minuciosa, esquinas de corte pueden ser un error costoso.

Por ejemplo, enchufes eléctricos causan lesiones casi 4,000 cada año. Cada año, más de 19,700 personas se lastiman por los ventiladores de techo que son mal montados o el tamaño es incorrecto.

- ▶ Hacer un esfuerzo para aprender sobre el sistema eléctrico de su

casa para que con seguridad puede de navegar y mantenerlo.

- ▶ Nunca trate un proyecto que está más allá de su nivel de habilidad. Saber cuándo llamar a un profesional puede ayudar a prevenir muertes, lesiones e incendios eléctricos.
- ▶ Siempre apague el circuito que se va a trabajar en apagando el interruptor en el panel principal de servicio.
- ▶ Asegúrese de desenchufar cualquier lámpara o aparato antes de trabajar en él.
- ▶ Pruebe los cables antes de tocar a asegurarse de que la luz ha sido apagada.
- ▶ Nunca toque los tubos de fontanería y gas cuando realice un proyecto bricolaje de electricidad.

Para más consejos sobre el tratamiento de electricidad con cuidado en el hogar y el lugar de trabajo, visite www.esfi.org.

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THE VICTORY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

electronews



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FROM THE MANAGER

Co-op Members Can Save Big with the Co-op Connections Card

There have always been benefits for being a member of your electric cooperative.

You're about to get more with the Co-op Connections Card program. You can find more details about the program at www.connections.coop.

Our members, like you, will start saving and enjoying cooperative member benefits more than ever before, because you are receiving your own Co-op Connections Card in this issue of the *Kansas Country Living*. We have signed up for the program, so we can better partner with you to save money and provide more cooperative membership benefits.

One immediate benefit—collectively saving cooperative members just like you more than \$1 million a month nationwide—is the pharmacy discount that allows you to start saving money on prescription medicines.

The pharmacy discount has been widely used by members of Touchstone Energy co-ops across the country, resulting in combined savings of nearly \$20 million on prescriptions. The Co-op Connections Card will get you discounts of 10 percent to 60 percent on

prescriptions at more than 60,000 pharmacies nationwide, including CVS, Walgreens, Walmart, Target and more.

What else does the card offer? Plenty! The question is, where do we start?

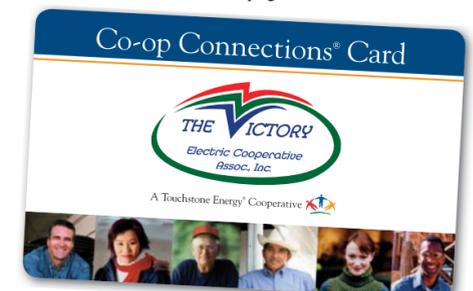
The Co-op Connections Card will get you discounts on merchandise and services with local retailers and merchants who join the program, as well as discounts and other incentives with almost 100 national retailers like Barnes&Noble.com, Hertz Rental Cars, Best Western hotels and ProFlowers.com and many more.

Need appliances like a new washer and dryer? Your Co-op Connections Card could save



Terry Janson

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Victory Electric Bill Payment Options



Pay your bill online at www.victoryelectric.net, at our office, by mail or at any of our pay stations.

Victory Electric has several convenient options for you, the member, to pay your bill.

In addition to paying in our office or by mail, options include online bill pay at www.victoryelectric.net, drop boxes at Victory Electric and City of Dodge City, and a pay station at Mr. Payroll, 400 E Wyatt Earp.

CFL Charlie Says "Come Get Your Free CFL!"



This month's lucky winners are...

Curt Adams, Halimo M. Ali, Bill J. Lopp, Anna Tanore, Sabra L. Werner, Karen Zamarron, Maria Zuniga, Dennis Cork, Earl Quint and Jose Hipolito. Come by Victory Electric Cooperative to get your free compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL). Every month Victory Electric will be giving members free CFL light bulbs. Congratulations winners!

Join Victory Electric Online!



Visit us at www.victoryelectric.net to pay your bill and find energy calculators—just to name a few tools! Find us on Facebook at facebook.com/victoryelectric for updates and energy efficiency tips.

Co-op Connections Card Continued from page 16-A

you 40 percent or more. If you're shopping for new furniture, use the Co-op Connections Card and save hundreds depending on what you buy.

How about insulation or energy-efficient windows? Are you thinking of remodeling the kitchen or weatherizing your home? Want to save money at your favorite restaurant?

By now you get the picture: The list of discounts and incentives offered not just by national retailers but by businesses in your area goes on and on.

The easiest way to learn about the advantages of membership and the Co-op Connections Card is to visit the website at www.connections.coop and browse the offers, incentives and discounts.

A search feature lets you enter your zip code and the product or service you are looking for and gives you a list of participating retailers.

The card is free, it doesn't expire, there are no charges or fees, and any member of your family can use it. It almost sounds too good to be true, but in this case it is for real.

It is just one more way your Touchstone Energy cooperatives are partnering with you to make life better.

We're eager to answer any questions you have about the card and how to take advantage of the discounts it provides. Call us at 620-227-2139 to find out more, or log onto www.victoryelectric.net.

Til Next Time, T

Check out these Local Discounts with the Co-op Connections Card

- ▶ **4 ANGELS BOUTIQUE**—10% off jewelry
- ▶ **ACKERMAN COMPUTERS**—10% off labor
- ▶ **BAILEYS BODY SHOP**—5% off parts and labor
- ▶ **BELLA ITALIA**—10% off
- ▶ **BOOT HILL BED AND BREAKFAST**—15% off
- ▶ **DULCE LANDIA**—5% off piñatas and bouce houses
- ▶ **FLATLAND GRAPHICS**—Free digitizing on pocket sized embroidery
- ▶ **FLOWERS BY IRENE**—20% off (excluding wire orders)
- ▶ **HARDROCK SAND & GRAVEL, LLC**—10% off materials, excluding delivery
- ▶ **JIM'S AUTO SALES & SALVAGE**—5% off towing services
- ▶ **K. MARTIN JEWELER**—20% off regular priced merchandise (this does not include items already on layaway)
- ▶ **LA QUINTA INN AND SUITES**—10% off the BAR rate. Not

- discounts for 3i Shows/Roundup Rodeo events
- ▶ **LANG DIESEL, INC.**—10% off parts
- ▶ **MY-D HAN-D, INC.**—10% off grain, hay and cattle equipment
- ▶ **SCOTT'S AUTO SHOP**—10% off oil, filter and lube. 10% discount on Traxxas radio controlled vehicles and Traxxas parts.
- ▶ **STARR COMPUTER SOLUTIONS**—Three months free for new alarm monitoring contracts (standard service)
- ▶ **SUNFLOWER CREATIONS**—7.45% off any new BERNINA sewing machine or 10% off regular fabric, books, notions, patterns, and embroidery supplies
- ▶ **THE MATTRESS HUB**—20% off bed sets \$399 and up. Not valid with any other rebates, discounts or special offers. (Offer excludes Tempur-Pedics) Dodge City and Garden City locations only
- ▶ **TROPICAL ISLAND TAN AND FITNESS**—No enrollment fees on fitness
- ▶ **WATERS TRUE VALUE**—\$5 off a \$30 purchase

Axtell, Khan & Redger Attend Washington, D.C., Youth Tour

MYRANDA AXTELL, Montezuma; **SAIF KHAN**, Dodge City; and **ASHLEE REDGER**, Plains; toured the nation's capitol with 32 other students from across Kansas for the 53rd Annual "Government in Action" Youth Tour, June 13-20.

Kansas is one of the 42 states to send a youth delegation to the annual electric cooperative youth tour this year.

The Youth Tour was inspired by Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson when he declared at a national electric cooperative meeting in 1957, "If one thing goes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents."

"Victory Electric is proud to support the Youth Tour program and send our youth to experience government in action," said Terry Janson, CEO of Victory Electric. "Our hope is that local students will gain some awareness of how our political system works and how important it is for the youth to be involved in our community."

The students began their trip by visiting Kaw Valley Electric Cooperative in Topeka before flying to Wash-

ington, D.C. The group learned about the U.S. government through visits with Senators Moran and Roberts, as well as Representatives Huelskamp, Jenkins and Pompeo. They also met with youth from other states and tours of museums, Capitol Hill, Arlington National Cemetery and the National Archives.

"Having experienced it first-hand, I have an overwhelming passion for this program," said Melinda Thomas, Ark Valley Electric Cooperative, who chaperoned the trip in 2013. "Youth Tour brings in some of the finest youth in our nation, refining and honing their leadership skills to produce tomorrow's leaders. I was humbled and honored to witness the spark in our delegates as each one discovered that they are important and that they have the ability to make a difference."

Many of the students expressed how this trip has changed their view on the world, and also their view on themselves. Axtell, Redger and



From left: Saif Kahn, Myranda Axtell and Ashlee Redger pose at the Capitol before meeting with Senators Jerry Moran and Pat Roberts.

Khan were selected from a group of high school applicants by Victory Electric. To win this trip, students were asked to submit a résumé, take a 35 question quiz on cooperatives, and interview with a panel of judges. Victory Electric sponsors the trip of three students each year. For more information, contact Jerri Imgarten at 620-371-7730.

Saif Khan

The 2013 Youth Tour was as experience I will never forget. We, a group of 39 students, had the opportunity to

travel to our nation's capital and behold its greatness. Our eyes bore witness to the massive and intricately designed structures that were the base of America's success, our ears constantly absorbing information that revealed the past of our country.

The trip that I embarked upon this past June was a magnificent experience that has not only strengthened me as a leader and a person, but has also allowed me to truly appreciate the nation I live in today.

Washington is home to many incredible places and in the Youth Tour's visit there we were fortunate to experience as many of them as possible in a one week time frame.

Our Kansas-Hawaii delegation paid homage at several memorials for our fallen soldiers, explored museums, observed historical buildings, and even ate at famous restaurants.

At the end of each day I was exhausted and deprived of rest, but I would never trade the time I spent in the city for sleep. Every second was worth it. I am extremely lucky to have had the chance for this event and thank the all of the people who made it possible.



Seeing our nation's capital helped Khan strengthen his leadership skills.

Myranda Axtell

First, I would like to thank Victory Electric and its members for providing me with this amazing opportunity.

Before we left Kansas for D.C., we had the chance to go up in a bucket truck at Kaw Valley Electric. Despite my fear of heights, I took advantage of the opportunity and I now understand and respect the dangerous work that linemen do to provide us with electricity.

After touring in Kansas, we saw countless memorials, museums, and historic sights in Washington, D.C. I am amazed that we could squeeze as many activities in each day as we did! I was in absolute awe when we watched the Marine Drum and Bugle Corps and the Silent Drill Team at the Iwo Jima Memorial.

Also, seeing the eerie looks on the faces of the soldier statues at the Korean Memorial gave me a new level of respect for the soldiers that fight and die to give us the freedom that many of us take for granted.

All in all, this trip was most definitely the opportunity of a lifetime and an experience that I will never forget, thank you.



Axtell overcame her fear of heights and took a ride in a bucket truck.



The 2013 Kansas-Hawaii delegation included 39 students who couldn't contain their excitement when posing in front of the U.S. Capitol.

Ashlee Redger

"We change the world not by what we say or do, but as consequence of what we have become." This quote is the same one that started my journey with the "Government in Action." I was in awe that I had lucked into having the opportunity to try for a trip to Washington, D.C. In my application essay, I wrote about my belief that as a young adult, we should try to gain as much beneficial experience as possible.

Of the sights, I would say some of the ones relating to our presidents were my favorite: Mount Vernon, Ford's Theater, and the Lincoln Memorial. Arlington National Cemetery and the Iwo Jima Memorial were the things that most had an impact on me, though. These are places that you hear about or see pictures of, but I think that it is impossible to grasp the significance of it until one sees it with one's own eyes.

Our nation's capitol is a city full of so much of our history. The immensity of it all truly makes you realize how difficult it was to create this country, and how much hard work it takes to maintain it. This experience was something I will carry with me for the rest of my life. It has changed me, and as consequence of what I have become, I hope to change the world for the better.



Ashlee Redger says she will carry the Youth Tour experience with her for the rest of her life.