



[Rural Life]

ELECTRICITY, ELECTRONICS AND EFFICIENCY—SMARTHUB IS THERE FOR YOU

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The ever-changing world of electronics offers many different devices that can be used in such useful ways for our homes and businesses. It's often exciting to hear how the latest gadgets can save time and/or help to save on home energy costs.

Take, for example, smart lighting systems. This energy-efficient technology is fun and easy to use, and you can control many systems through the convenience of a smartphone app. The bulbs used with smart lighting systems typically use less energy than standard incandescent bulbs, and since the system can be controlled through your phone or tablet, you can turn off your lights from anywhere.

However, of all the new technologies out there, the one I think helps Southeast Colorado Power Association members most is our online energy monitoring tool — SmartHub. With this system, you can monitor your energy use anytime from anywhere, and in some cases, you can remotely operate your appliances through a smartphone app. SmartHub can help reduce your energy consumption, which will decrease your monthly power cost.

In addition, you can both review and pay your electric bill with ease. Future



Jack Johnston

developments will enhance the capabilities and features of this app to continuously ensure that your electric cooperative has many options to facilitate your needs.

It seems like there are new innovations in electronics and technology every day. It can be hard to keep up and determine

the systems that are right for your family. To learn more about smart home technologies that will save energy and work best for you, contact your energy experts at www.secpa.com or 719-384-2551. As always, we are here to help.

MORE BLIZZARD HEROES

In addition to the SECPA crews recognized in the July issue of *CCL* working to restore power during the April blizzard in southeastern Colorado, we want to recognize our Lamar and Eads crews: Mike Trumble, Jason Lucius, Troy Eberhardt, Jim Perkins, Garrett Wertz, Justin Bruna, Jacob Barnes, Keenan Davis, Louis Serra, Tom Piner, John Jackson, Kim Harris and Jennifer Yant.

A huge thanks for the fantastic job you do 24/7, "in rain or snow or dark of night" in "keeping the lights on."

Thank You

OFFICES CLOSED
September 4th
for Labor Day!

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Setting your thermostat to a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner will not cool your home any faster and could result in excessive cooling and unnecessary expense.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy



Watch Clearances with Large Equipment

When working with large equipment there are hazards that come with the job. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, of the 4,379 work fatalities in 2015, 8.6 percent were electrocutions. Safe Electricity encourages large equipment operators to look up, look out and follow all safety procedures around overhead power lines.

In September 2016, two construction workers were injured in an electrical accident. The workers were touching a crane's cable when the crane made contact with an overhead line. The two men received electrical shocks, leaving one man in critical condition and the other in serious condition.

While most large equipment requires a 10-foot clearance from overhead power lines, cranes and derricks require an even greater distance for safe operation where overhead power lines are present. In such situations, OSHA requires that individu-

als, their tools and their equipment stay a minimum 20-foot distance away from power lines. The total distance increases as the voltage of the power line increases. Visit OSHA.gov for a full list of regulations, voltages and distances.

When working with large equipment, it is important to follow all OSHA regulations. Conduct a site survey to identify the location of overhead power lines, and take measures to prevent incidents with lines. Make sure you know the maximum height of your machinery's extensions.

Never work with large equipment without first having the proper training. Even experienced large equipment operators must always take protective measures against electrical hazards. Before using large machinery, also make sure that the equipment is mechanically sound. Always use the equipment as intended.

Remember to lower extensions while moving large equipment. When possible,

use a spotter. To help reduce the likelihood of an accident, never store machinery directly under a power line.

If your equipment makes contact with an overhead power line, the safest option is almost always to stay in the cab. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away and wait for utility crews to arrive on the scene and de-energize the lines. Never assume a line is de-energized. The only time you should leave the cab is in the rare case that the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without coming into contact with the equipment and the ground at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, bunny hop away.

For more information on electrical safety, go to SafeElectricity.org.



Never leave a fire unattended, and make sure you completely extinguish the fire when you're done. Drench the fire with water and stir the ashes until cold.



When burning yard waste, follow local ordinances. Avoid burning in windy conditions, and keep a shovel, water and fire retardant nearby to keep fires in check.



Tips to Prevent Wildfires



Play it safe when using fueled lanterns, heaters and stoves. Lighting and heating devices should be cool before refueling. Keep flammable liquids and fuel away from appliances.



Never discard cigarettes, matches and smoking materials from moving vehicles, or anywhere on park grounds. Completely extinguish cigarettes before disposing of them.

Source: *National Geographic*



BECOME A FAN OF SUMMER EFFICIENCY

Rising temperatures outside can mean increased use of your air conditioner and higher utility bills. With the aid of ceiling fans and ventilation in your home, you can maintain comfort while decreasing the amount of money you spend on utility bills.

Ceiling fans boost efficiency in both hot and cool seasons. Fans create a cooling breeze when moving in a counter-clockwise direction, resulting in a low-level “wind chill” throughout the room. When fans move in a clockwise direction, they force the warmer air that naturally gathers near the ceiling back down into the room.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, installing a ceiling fan will allow consumers to raise their thermostat temperature by approximately 4 degrees and still maintain comfort. By using a ceiling fan along with increasing a thermostat’s temperature by 2 degrees, EnergyStar.gov reports that a person can save 14 percent on air conditioner use throughout the cooling season. Although ceiling fans are effective in lowering energy usage, turn them off when you leave the room. Unless you are sitting directly under the fan to feel the “wind chill,” energy is wasted.

When shopping for a new fan, remember to look for an Energy Star model. These labels indicate that the fans operate with peak efficiency, using the most energy-efficient technology.

Paired with ceiling fans, natural ventilation can also increase energy efficiency by giving the air conditioner a rest. Although ventilation is not an effective cooling strategy for all climates, natural ventilation can work in climates with cool nights and regular breezes. For natural ventilation, close doors, windows and window coverings during the day, and reopen them at night.

Ventilation in the attic can also help reduce your air conditioner use. Attic fans can push hot air that accumulates in the attic out of your home. To maintain airflow, never block attic vents. For further help with your home’s energy efficiency, consider upgrading insulation in the attic.

In addition, seal air leaks with caulk or weather stripping to keep more of the hot air out and the cool air inside your house. Reducing air leaks also helps cut back on any moisture problems.

Even small steps in efficiency can help you reduce energy use and save money. Keep window shades and curtains shut on sunny days, cut back on your use of the oven and range and keep as many lights off as comfortable to help lower the level of heat in your house.

WIN* Everett Hopkins Acct# 805480000 of Towner

For more information on energy efficiency, visit EnergyEdCouncil.org.

FIVE QUICK TIPS TO SAVE ENERGY

AN ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOME WILL KEEP YOUR FAMILY COMFORTABLE WHILE SAVING YOU MONEY. THERE ARE SIMPLE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO SEE LOWER ENERGY BILLS.

Install a programmable thermostat to lower utility bills and manage your heating and cooling systems efficiently.

Plug home electronics, such as TVs and DVD players, into power strips; turn the power strips off when the equipment is not in use -- TVs and DVDs in standby mode still use several watts of power.

Take short showers instead of baths and use low-flow showerheads for additional energy savings.

Check to see that windows and doors are closed when heating or cooling your home.

When washing clothes, a simple switch from hot water to cold water can save a great deal of energy. Consider air drying or even line drying to save even more household energy.

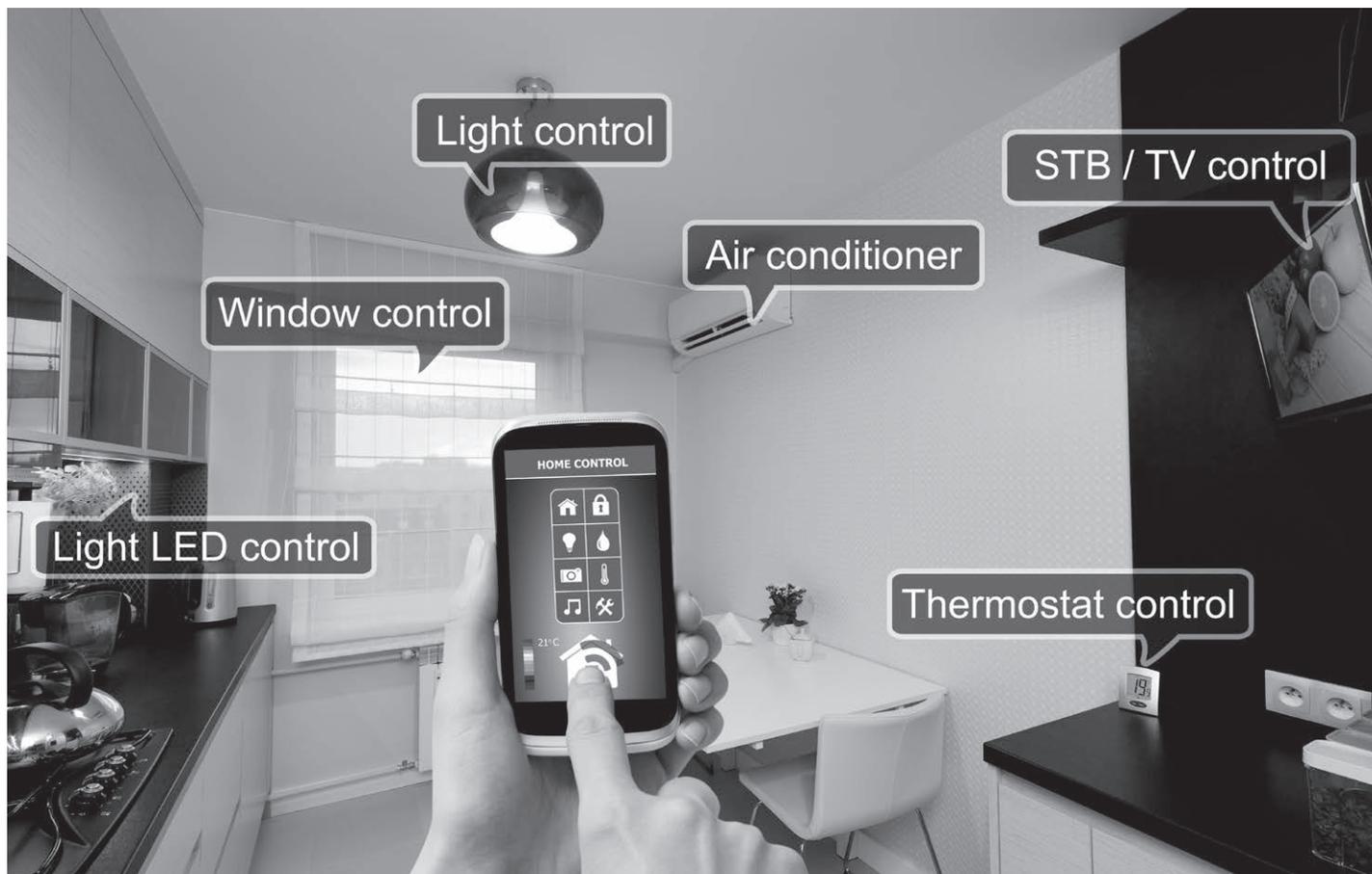
Source: energy.gov



You Could Be A Winner This Month

If you find your name in this issue as follows (WIN* your name, your account number), please contact Southeast Colorado Power Association at 719-384-2551 or 800-332-8634 to receive a credit on your next power bill.

Last month’s winner was Clyde Sanders Acct. #1900320000 of Wiley.



The Smart Home for the Savvy and Not-So-Savvy

BY TOM TATE

The concept of the smart home is not as new as you might expect. In the late 1980s, as a product manager for Honeywell, I saw a real smart home.

Honeywell's smart home contained impressive automation capabilities. Lighting, security, fire monitoring, temperature control and appliance use were all automated to adapt to occupant and environmental inputs.

But the learning curve for the user was steep. In one room, Honeywell engineers filled a closet, floor to ceiling, with programmable logic controllers (an industrial digital computer). Today, more than 30 years later, the world has the advantage of the internet and ubiquitous Wi-Fi. The development of these two communications capabilities spawned a proliferation in the number and type of devices that can be "connected" and used to create smart homes.

For those who feel they are not so savvy when it comes to technology, good news abounds. Most devices offer a simple setup. A typical process goes like this: power up the device, identify your Wi-Fi network from a list the device recognizes and type in your password. You'll be connected and ready for action.

Even easier is the one-button connection using the Wi-Fi Protected Setup (WPS) feature of many routers. Fire up the device, press the WPS button and click the connect button in the device's

program. Best of all, most devices offer an app for your smartphone.

For those who are tech savvy, the sky is the limit. An abundance of inexpensive micro controllers and peripheral sensors and controllers support the creation of a smart home system from scratch. A programming approach termed IFTTT (If This Then That) enables users to connect different devices so an action or output from one generates some reaction in another.

I recommend swinging by one of the earliest purveyors of home automation goodness: Smarthome.com. These days, anything can be automated: lights, curtains, entertainment systems, door locks, garden watering, weather monitoring, appliance use and more. This website is a great place to see what is possible.

Aside from being extremely cool and making life easier, a smart home can dramatically reduce energy consumption, especially for the major energy consumers in our homes like lighting and temperature control. Technically savvy or not, everyone should get their feet wet in the smart home pool.

Be sure to check with the energy experts at Southeast Colorado Power Association about programs related to smart devices.

Tom Tate writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.