

# InTouch

WITH MEMBERS OF PRAIRIE ENERGY COOPERATIVE

November 2021 Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



## Tips for your generator

*Darren Johnson, Member Services*

As fall is upon us and winter is approaching, Prairie Energy wants to remind you to test your generator and ensure that you have the appropriate hookup.

Never back feed your home or business by plugging your generator into a standard outlet or welder plug receptacle. Back feeding is a dangerous practice and can cause personal injury as well as damage to your generator and/or appliances.

If you have a portable generator and want to run equipment wired to your breaker panel, be sure to install a transfer switch. This will isolate the utility feed before it connects power from the generator. When utility power is restored the transfer switch protects your generator and equipment from damage.



*Be safe and avoid future problems by installing a proper transfer switch and receptacle.*

## Students learn about electrical safety

In early September, Wright County Farm Bureau and the Wright County ISU Extension held a Safety Day Camp for a little over one hundred third-grade students at the Wright County Fairgrounds.

The students learned about many different safety situations they could encounter including fire safety, first aid, weather safety, boating, electrical, and more. Prairie Energy's Member Service Representatives Darren Johnson and Chad Chapman presented Neon Leon, a program that teaches electrical safety and the associated hazards. Electric safety is extremely important, and early childhood training is essential.

To learn more about the Neon Leon safety demonstration or to schedule an electric safety demonstration, please contact our office at 515-532-2805.



*Prairie Energy Member Service Representative Darren Johnson demonstrates electrical safety to Safety Day Camp attendees.*



## To our snowbirds

If you are planning to leave your home for an extended period of time this winter, remember to make billing arrangements while you are away. Prairie Energy has a number of options to offer:

- **ACH:** Having your bill deducted automatically from your checking account is simple, reliable and it can help you save time and money. There are no checks, stamps, or trips. We offer this service free of charge. To sign up call our office or complete and return the form on our website.
- **Electronic Bill Pay:** Offers the member the ability to use your credit/debit card or checking/savings account to pay your electric bill online. This is a free and easy to use service. Visit the Prairie Energy homepage and click on "Pay My Bill." You will need your Prairie Energy account number, to create a password, and to register your information.
- **Pay by Phone - IVR (Interactive Voice Response):** Call 1-844-241-0265 24/7 to make your payment. This is an automated system, and you will be prompted to choose the option you wish to complete. You will need to have your account number and can pay by credit/debit or check. You are not required to create a password or register.

# Cold? Use your space heater safely

Electric space heaters can help quickly take the chill off, but they can be dangerous if used incorrectly. Your Touchstone Energy cooperative urges everyone in your home to understand the importance of using space heaters safely:

- Purchase only space heaters that have been safety tested and UL approved with an emergency tip-over shut-off feature and heating element guards.
- Before using a space heater, make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are in good working condition.
- Make sure the heater is clean and in good condition, and have all problems professionally repaired.
- Place the heater out of high-traffic areas and on a level, hard, non-flammable floor surface—NOT on carpets, furniture, or countertops.
- Space heaters have one purpose—to provide supplemental heating. Never use them to thaw pipes, cook food, or dry clothing or towels.
- Remember to keep space heaters at least three feet from combustible liquids and flammable items.
- Never allow pets or children near an electric heater.
- Do not overload circuits. Never use extension cords or multiple plugs with a space heater.
- If your space heater is plugged into a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) and the GFCI trips, immediately stop using the heater until a professional can check it.
- Turn off your space heater and unplug it before leaving the room or going to bed.
- Replace older space heaters with newer, safer models.

In addition, space heaters are not inexpensive to run. Be sure to contact us to find out how much using your space heater might add to your electric bill.



## Our Touchstone Energy Values



Integrity | Accountability | Innovation | Commitment to Community | Teamwork

## Save with rebates!

Your electric cooperative offers members a variety of incentives for new electric heating and cooling systems, including air source and geothermal heat pumps.

Rebates are also available for insulating and weatherizing your home, appliances, LED lighting, and additional options to help you save.



Contact us for details and rebate forms



During this season of giving thanks, we want to share our genuine appreciation for you. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve you!



## Cook up a new recipe for the holidays

**Looking for a new recipe for the holidays?** Visit the *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* website at [IECLmagazine.com](http://IECLmagazine.com) for a searchable recipe archive.

**Have a recipe everyone loves?** *Iowa Electric Cooperative Living* magazine is always looking for recipes to publish. If yours is chosen, you will earn a \$25 power bill credit!

# It's time to deck the halls

Your local Touchstone Energy cooperative can help you decorate AND save money this holiday season with our LED holiday light rebate! Purchase any LED-lighted item and *we will rebate that item for up to \$2*, with no limit on the number of items.

LED lights use less electricity compared to conventional bulbs, their lifespan is up to 50,000 hours outdoors and twice as long indoors, and they are safe.

[Visit our website for a lighting rebate form!](#)



- Dependents of cooperative members are eligible to apply for a \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship for tuition at a two-year or four-year college. Contact your electric cooperative for information.
- Corn Belt Power Cooperative partners with Northwest Iowa Community College (NWICC) in Sheldon, Iowa, to offer four \$500 scholarships. Recipients must be students at NWICC studying Industrial and Commercial Wiring, Powerline, or Powerline Technology. Contact Sheila Van Engen, 800-352-4907 ext. 246, or [svanengen@nwicc.edu](mailto:svanengen@nwicc.edu). Application deadline is March 1, 2022.
- Corn Belt Power also partners with Iowa Lakes Community College in Estherville, Iowa, to offer one \$500 scholarship for students enrolled in the Wind Energy and Turbine Technology program. For more information, contact Institutional Advancement, 712-362-0450 ext. 0491, or [institutionaladvancement@iowalakes.edu](mailto:institutionaladvancement@iowalakes.edu). Application deadline is March 1, 2022.

## BE SAFE DURING THE **HO·HO·HOLIDAYS** 10 TIPS TO HELP YOU STAY JOLLY



*Before you plan out your new holiday lighting scheme or repeat last year's festive design, keep these 10 safety tips in mind when decorating outdoors:*

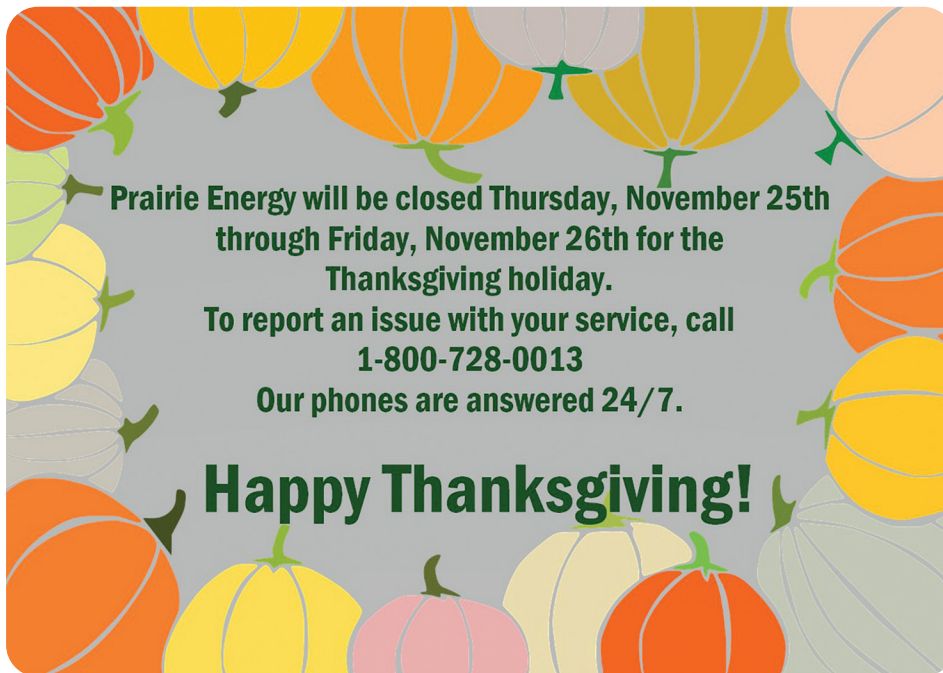
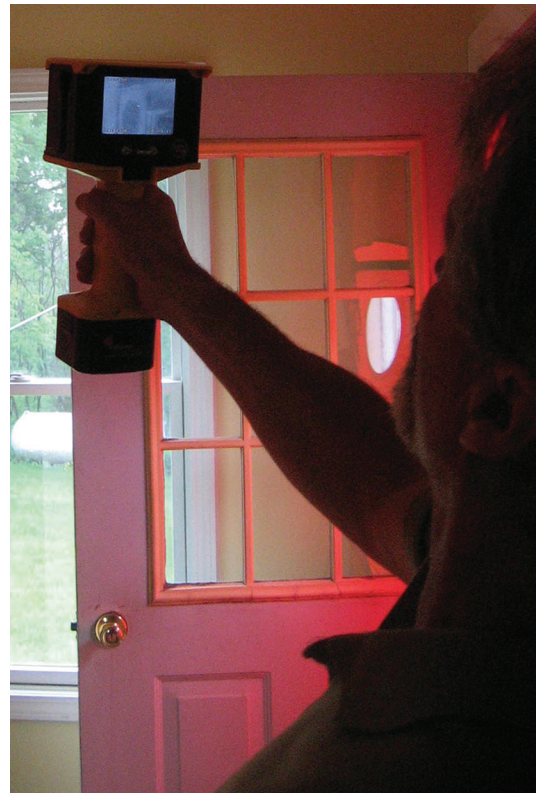
- 1 Do not toss light strands up into the air. They could get too close to or come into contact with a power line.
- 2 Before using a ladder, always look up and assess all power line locations.
- 3 Carry a ladder horizontally when transporting it.
- 4 Keep at least 10 feet between yourself (and any item you are holding) and a power line.
- 5 Do not use staples or nails or tacks to secure light strands, cords, wires or extension cords.
- 6 String together no more than the number of strands recommended by the manufacturer.
- 7 Plug all lights and extension cords into GFCI-protected outlets.
- 8 Use lights and extension cords rated for outdoor use.
- 9 Do not use frayed, cracked or otherwise damaged cords, plugs or lights.
- 10 Use only lights and products certified by a reputable testing lab.

# Is your home's envelope well-sealed?

Most of the time, when we think of the word envelope, we think of the outer covering that our mail comes in. Or, to irritate our kids or coworker, we might push the envelope. However, your home's envelope consists of its outer walls, windows, doors, and other openings. A well-sealed envelope, coupled with the right amount of insulation, can reduce your energy use — and, in turn, your utility bills. According to EnergyStar.gov, a whopping 9 out of 10 homes in the U.S. are under-insulated. Homeowners can save an average of 15% on heating and cooling costs (or an average of 11% on total energy costs) by air sealing their homes and adding insulation in attics, floors, over crawl spaces, and basements.

As a member of Prairie Energy Cooperative, you are in a unique position to take advantage of our energy-efficiency programs. Because we are a not-for-profit organization, our goal is to provide safe, reliable power at the most affordable price for our members. This means helping you save money on your monthly electric bill. So, how can practicing efficiency habits save you money? It's common sense that if you use less electricity, your bill will be lower. Basic energy-efficiency practices, like caulking around windows and doors, turning off lights when you leave the room, and using a programmable thermostat, are great ways to start saving.

If you'd like to have an in-depth look at your energy usage, contact us about a free home energy assessment. Our energy experts can assess air leaks, insulation gaps, and other common problems that cause homes to use more energy than required. We can tell you more about the latest technologies for heating, cooling, and lighting in a home. This includes heat pumps, LED lights, and more. Contact our Energy Efficiency Department at 515-532-2805 or 800-728-0013.



**Prairie Energy will be closed Thursday, November 25th through Friday, November 26th for the Thanksgiving holiday.**

**To report an issue with your service, call 1-800-728-0013**

**Our phones are answered 24/7.**

**Happy Thanksgiving!**



## Scholarship applications now accepted

Dependents of co-op members are eligible to apply for a \$1,000 scholarship. Contact Sarah Olson-McLaughlin (solson@prairieenergy.coop) at Prairie Energy for an application or with any questions. Applications are due by Feb. 18, 2022.

**iNtouch**® is the official publication of Prairie Energy Cooperative  
2099 Highway 3W • Clarion, Iowa 50525-0353  
Phones answered 24/7: (515) 532-2805 • Pay-by-Phone: 844-241-0265  
Offices hours: Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Tim Marienau, CEO



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**smart choices** 

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.