



# Create an energy-efficient home. Get a FREE Energy Audit today.

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Call us and Farmers Electric Cooperative will send an expert to evaluate your home energy use.

Ready to be more energy-efficient, but confused about where to begin? You're not alone. With Farmers' FREE Energy Audit, our professional auditor will visit your home to assess your situation and show you how to save, now and in the long run. Let us help clear the way to a more efficient home.

Schedule your FREE energy audit to find out where your home is using more electricity than necessary.

Take steps to save immediately, with simple changes like sealing drafts and adjusting home habits.

Consider long-term upgrades like more efficient heating and cooling systems or adding insulation.

**CALL TO SCHEDULE YOUR FREE EVALUATION: 903 455 1715**



# Texas Winters Are Unpredictable.



by **MARK STUBBS**  
General Manager

Cold weather often requires folks to use more electricity than normal to keep the house warm. Consequently, you might already have received a higher-than-normal bill this winter—and you might be wondering how to avoid the next one. As we endure the last of the Texas winter (we hope), you and your family can still adjust your energy behaviors to cut your electric bills.

To help avoid higher-than-normal energy bills, Farmers Electric Cooperative encourages you to use electricity efficiently. Setting the thermostat to 68 degrees when home—and lower when you're away—saves money. The U.S. Department of Energy reports that lowering the thermostat 10–15 degrees for eight hours a day can trim heating bills 5–15 percent.

**Other tips to reduce energy use:** Turn off and unplug nonessential lights and appliances. Close shades and blinds at night to reduce heat loss through windows. Open them on sunny days to capture solar heat. If possible, avoid using inefficient and costly backup electric resistance heating and space heaters. Change furnace filters often.

**Long-term home repairs and upgrades that save energy:** Install and set programmable thermostats. Seal air leaks around doors, windows, plumbing, wiring and any other places where air can infiltrate.

Ensure that exterior walls and attics contain the recommended amount and type of insulation. Farmers EC encourages members to visit the co-op's website at [FarmersElectric.coop](http://FarmersElectric.coop) or our Facebook and Twitter feeds for energy saving ideas. Your co-op publishes energy-efficiency information here in the pages of our monthly magazine, *Texas Co-op Power*.

At Farmers EC, we provide more ways for our members to monitor their usage and prevent high bills. We can review your account to make sure the bill is correct and accurate; examine your meter to determine whether it is working the way it should; conduct an energy audit of your house to make sure the electrical system is working correctly; and we can arrange a payment plan that will fit your budget.

One more important thing to remember: If you wish to take advantage of any of these services, please call the co-op at 903.455.1715 as soon as possible, before your bill is due. That way, we can work through your questions in a timely manner.

## TAKE CONTROL & SAVE

Our 3-Point Plan helps make the most of your power.



### Budget Billing Plan

Average out your monthly bills so you can budget more easily and avoid surprises. We'll help you choose an option that suits you.



### FREE energy audit

Our auditor will come to your home free of charge and assess how you're using energy—then show you the best ways to improve efficiency and save!



### We're looking out for you

We're working to make your co-op experience better every day. That includes helping you manage your electric bill by offering energy-saving ideas, providing flexible billing options, and even working with local assistance organizations if you're experiencing financial hardships.



**TEXT ALERTS:**  
Text FEC to 85700

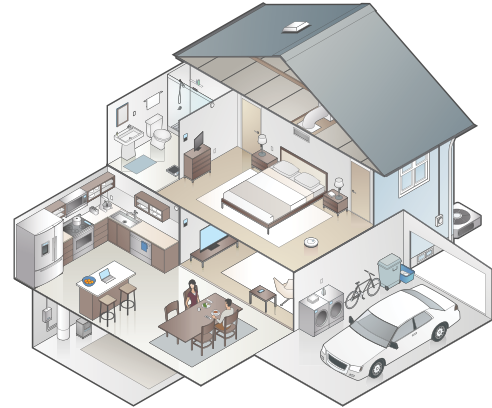
# Is Your Home Using Energy Efficiently?

Unless it was built quite recently and satisfies stringent energy-efficiency standards, there are areas of your home where you can improve efficiency, save money and reduce your carbon footprint.

In a perfect world, your best option would be to hire a trained professional to conduct a full-blown, in-home energy audit. This usually involves a detailed inspection of your home's insulation levels, HVAC system, lighting, appliances and landscaping. A professional energy auditor will typically conduct a blower door test to check pressurization and spot hard-to-find leaks to the exterior. In addition, a professional might use a duct blaster to identify leaks in your home's ductwork.

One drawback to the in-home energy audit is finding a time that works with your busy schedule. An energy audit can take several hours when done correctly, which means you might have to take time off from work, farm out the pets or get help with the kids and their after-school activities.

Luckily, there is an alternative: the online or "virtual" home energy audit. These online tools have come a long way over the past 10 years. Today's online energy audits are user-friendly and take only a few minutes to complete. An online energy audit can provide an assessment of your home's energy efficiency and provides helpful tips on how to reduce energy waste. The audits use sophisticated computer models that use local housing types— factoring in local weather data with the age, size, flooring and construction materials of the home.



## Here's where to look for online audits:

Touchstone Energy:

[www.touchstoneenergy.com/together-we-save/overview/](http://www.touchstoneenergy.com/together-we-save/overview/)

The Department of Energy:

[hes.lbl.gov](http://hes.lbl.gov).

If you see phrases like, "Learn what your power company does not want you to know," or if the website looks like a marketing page, move on. Unless you are dealing with a local electric co-op or other trusted provider, do not provide any personal information besides your physical address (for data accuracy) or an email address (for receiving a full report).

**If an online energy audit doesn't interest you, fear not. Farmers Electric Cooperative provides its members with a FREE in home energy audit. Call us today at 903.455.1715**



## HOW TO PREPARE

# YOUR ONLINE ENERGY AUDIT CHECKLIST

Each home energy audit is a little different, and the information required varies. Here are some basic list of what you'll need. Be as accurate as possible.

- ▶ Your home ZIP code—for weather and housing data
- ▶ Average amount of your monthly electric bill
- ▶ Your electric rate
- ▶ Your average monthly fossil fuel bill(s)—oil, propane and gas
- ▶ Your fossil fuel rate(s)
- ▶ Age of your home and general characteristics (size, floors, exterior materials)
- ▶ Age and number of appliances
- ▶ Type and age of heating and cooling systems(s)
- ▶ How many incandescent, CFL and LED lights you have



February 2017

## Odds &amp; Ends

Fair, festival, class or show—share your community event with us and we'll help you get the word out with the Farmers EC Community Calendar.

**SEND TO: [event@FarmersElectric.coop](mailto:event@FarmersElectric.coop)**



APPLY NOW

## 2017 Youth Tour



Government-In-Action Youth Tour Application process is underway. High School students can apply for an all expense-paid trip to Washington DC with 125 peers to see historic sites and meet elected officials while learning about the US Government.

Learn more and apply at: [FarmersElectric.coop](http://FarmersElectric.coop). Applications Deadline: February 3, 2017



## RECIPE

## Honey Cheese Bacon Chicken

## INGREDIENTS

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- ¾ cup honey
- ½ cup Dijon or creole mustard
- ¼ teaspoon lemon pepper, or more to taste
- 4 slices bacon, cut in half
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella or provolone cheese

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Apply cooking spray to a metal baking dish. Pound chicken breast halves to an even thickness.
2. Mix together honey, mustard and lemon pepper in a small dish. Place the breast halves in baking dish and drizzle evenly with the honey mustard mixture.
3. Bake chicken 25 minutes, then top each breast half with 2 bacon pieces and increase oven heat to 400. Continue baking about 7–8 minutes.
4. Top with cheese and bake another 3 minutes or until chicken juices run clear, bacon is crisp and cheese is bubbly. Serve with brown or white rice.

## Power Tip

A crackling fire in the hearth warms the house, but don't let it heat up your electric bill! Caulk around the fireplace hearth, use a fireplace insert and keep the damper closed when no fire is burning.

## Did You Know

Between the years 1886 and 1916, the first electric fan, flashlight, vacuum cleaner, washing machine, radio, phonograph and movie camera were all invented.