



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

Call us and Farmers EC 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.

USE THE MEMBER HUB CONTACT FORM TO SCHEDULE YOUR FREE HOME AUDIT AT: FarmersElectric.coop



903 455 1715 | FarmersElectric.coop



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

YOU'RE IN POWER.

How to halt high bill culprits.



by **MARK STUBBS**
General Manager

In our quest to provide the best possible service to members, Farmers Electric Cooperative employees often need to wear many hats, so to speak. If a member's bill

spikes significantly and they call the co-op for guidance, our "investigator" hats go on to help find the culprit and solve the member's high electricity-use woes. Here are some offenders frequently found in the process.

Space Heaters

Expensive to run anytime, space heaters in "emergency use" during the coldest times create even greater expense.

Members sometimes run space heaters in greenhouses or well houses, or in garages to warm pets. Because these areas are uninsulated, heaters run constantly—and because they're out of sight, they're out of mind.

A much better choice for efficiency is to use a 200-watt heat lamp instead of a 1,500-watt space heater, knocking down costs of 16.5 cents per hour to about 2.2 cents an hour; that's almost \$4 a day versus about 53 cents a day.

Heat Pumps

Members with heat pumps sometimes select the wrong settings. A heat pump typically has settings for cool, off, heat

and emergency heat. When cold weather arrives, members can mistakenly slide the selector all the way across to emergency heat, instead of the regular heat setting. This turns off the blower and turns on heat strips, using three times the regular amount of electricity.

Also, having strip heat without a heat pump can be costly. An air conditioner uses 48–50 cents an hour, but a heater uses \$1–\$1.50 an hour. Because many people believe it costs more to cool in summer than to heat in winter, they are shocked by the price difference. A home energy audit might uncover outside HVAC unit problems, such as when the fan quits working or the unit gets stuck in the defrost cycle. When either happens, the heat strips run nonstop.

Thermostats

Co-op employees often discover a heat pump thermostat installed on a strip heat system. This causes the heating and air-conditioning units to run simultaneously, doubling or even tripling electric bills.

Other Miscellaneous Energy-Wasters

Dog/cat doors: These are simply big holes that let out expensive heated or cooled air.

Block heaters: Used for warming diesel truck engines, tractors and 18-wheeler engines, these units usually draw 1,000 watts and run constantly until unplugged.

Pool pumps: The factory setting on most pool pump thermostats is usually around 38 degrees, so the pump comes on more

frequently in winter to keep from freezing. Many people leave these on all winter, driving bills up.

Hot-water leaks: Water heaters have a pop-off valve to reduce pressure. If the water line near that valve is hot, the water heater is continuously (and needlessly) releasing water then refilling and heating more.

Uninsulated water heater: Members often put their water heaters in an uninsulated area, like an attic or outside building. If the water heater tries to heat water to 120 degrees while the air around it is at 30 degrees, it must work constantly.

Temperature Difference Is the Key

To understand what creates high winter bills, remember that a major factor in home energy use is the difference between the outside temperature and the desired inside temperature. If it's 98 degrees outside and you try to cool to 78, that's a 20-degree difference.

But if it's 30 degrees outside and you want to heat to 68 degrees, that's almost a 40-degree change. In the latter example, your unit works harder, using more energy.

All of us at Farmers EC want to help members detect the causes of high bills and provide the knowledge to prevent them. If you need help or have any questions about your electric bill, please call us at 903 455 1715.

DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN CONTACT US ONLINE?

Use the Member Hub Contact Form.

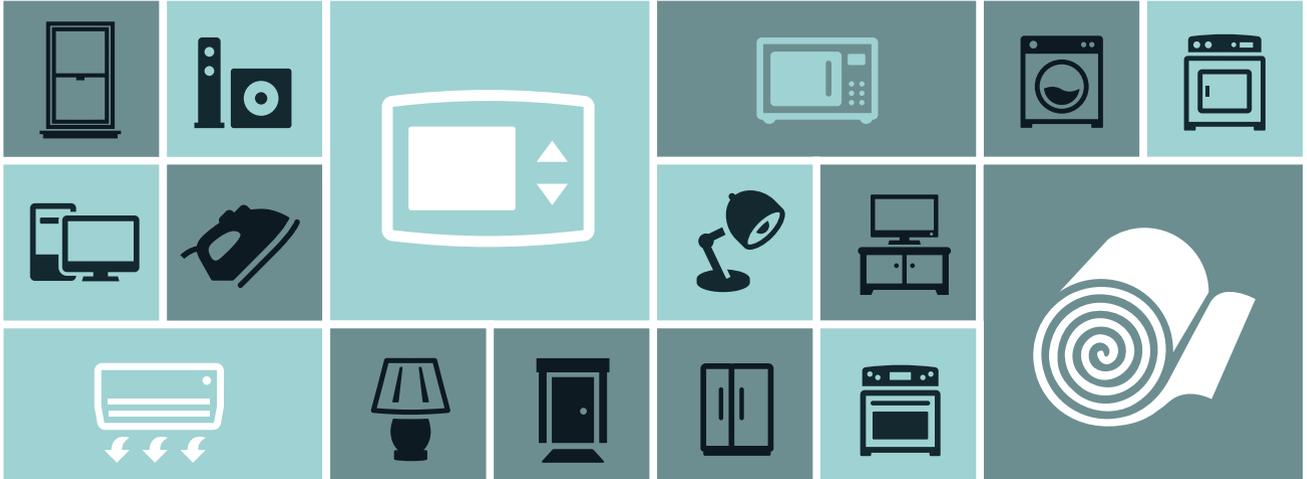
Got a question? Ask. Want to sign up for Budget Billing or request a Free Home Energy Audit? It's easy. We want to hear from you and a member care representative will get back to you quickly.

MEMBER HUB CONTACT FORM: FarmersElectric.coop



Save With a DIY Home Energy Audit

Whether your home is old or new, it's likely you're spending more on energy than necessary.



You can conduct a baseline energy audit of your home to identify where you are losing energy (and money). Use a checklist and take notes on problems you find as you walk through your home. Here are some ways to get started:

Thermostat/indoor temperature: Do you have a programmable thermostat? When was the last time it was programmed? Is it set so the temperature is lower during times when no one is home, and at night when people are sleeping? Consider lowering the temperature a few degrees.

Appliances, timing and maintenance: If your appliances are more than 10 years old, they are likely not as energy efficient as today's options. How and when you use them also makes a difference. Do you wash clothes in hot water, or can you use cold instead? Consider running your washer, dryer or dishwasher at night, during off-peak times. Does your water heater have a blanket? If not, consider insulating it. Make sure the dryer vent isn't blocked; this will save energy and also could prevent a fire.

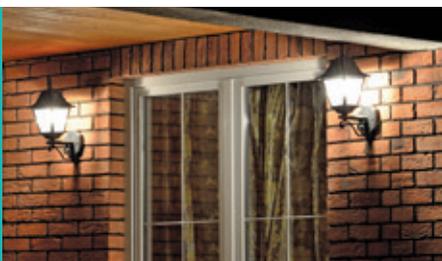
Insulation and air leaks/drafts: Improving your home's insulation and sealing air leaks are the most cost-effective ways to reduce energy waste, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Is there sufficient insulation in

the attic? Are the openings that contain piping, ductwork and the chimney sealed? Are there changes in temperature where walls meet ceilings or floors, or around windows and outlets?

Electronic devices: Take an inventory of the electronic devices you have and how often you use them. Computers, printers, DVD players, phones and gaming consoles are notorious "vampire power" users; they drain energy even when not in use. If items can be turned off without requiring a lengthy reboot, plug them into a power strip that can be turned off.

Lighting: Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs or light-emitting diodes. Install motion-sensor lights in any low-use area such as a closet, porch or garage. Consider replacing night-lights with LEDs.

Evaluation: Once you have completed the audit, take a look at your findings. Prioritize actions you can take based on your time and budget, weighing where you can get the most impact for your investment.



ENERGY SAVING TIP: Outdoor Lighting

Replace outdoor lighting with its outdoor-rated equivalent compact LED bulb. Use motion sensors on security lights.

DOWNLOAD MORE ENERGY SAVING TIPS AT: FarmersElectric.coop

Odds & 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



APPLY NOW

2018 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.

Applications Deadline: February 19, 2018

Power Tip

Save energy and money by lowering your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees. This will also slow mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.

Did you know?

Google operations account for roughly 0.013 percent of the world's electricity use. The company uses enough energy to continuously power 200,000 homes.
—PC Magazine, September 2011

FEBRUARY DATES

Groundhog Day - Fri 2nd

Valentine's Day - Wed 14th

President's Day - Mon 19th



RECIPE

Sweet & Sour Pot Roast

INGREDIENTS

- Cooking oil as needed
- 3** pounds boneless beef chuck roast
- 2** large onion, cut in rings and separated
- 1** can (8 ounces) tomato sauce
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup brown sugar
- 3** tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 3** tablespoons cider vinegar
- 1** teaspoon salt
- 1** teaspoon black pepper

DIRECTIONS

- 1.** In a heavy pot with lid, brown beef in a small amount of oil, then drain and remove. Sauté onion in meat drippings.
- 2.** Add remaining ingredients and stir until sugar dissolves. Return beef to pot and spoon onion mixture over top.
- 3.** Cover and cook 1 hour on low heat.
- 4.** Add carrots and potatoes, if desired, and cook until veggies are tender.