



MESSAGE FROM  
GENERAL MANAGER  
MARK STUBBS

## Start your winter check list now.

**ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO USE LESS ENERGY** in these cooler months is to prepare your home for winter. A small investment of time to review your home for safety and efficiency weak spots can pay big dividends toward making your home safer, more energy efficient, and ultimately reduce electric bills this winter.

Time spent checking and winterizing heating equipment now can be a worthy investment, saving you money on your monthly energy bill and ensuring your home is safe. It's important to have a professional inspect and service your furnace to make sure it's in good working order before turning the heat on this winter. An efficient heating system means greater comfort at a lower cost.

Clean or replace furnace filters monthly during winter use, and check ducts, flues, and chimneys. Ensure the chimney is clean, clear of wildlife nests, and that there is no blockage in high-efficiency furnaces that vent through the wall. Keeping heating equipment clean and in good repair will ensure peak efficiency and safety.

Consider installing a programmable thermostat to automatically raise and lower home temperatures for energy savings day and night. Set your thermostat to lower temperatures while you're asleep or away from home.

Make sure attics and flooring, especially above unheated spaces such as crawlspaces and garages, are properly insulated. A quick rule of thumb in the attic is to look for the ceiling joists: If you can see the joists, you don't have enough insulation. Ceiling joists are typically 10–11 inches high, at most, and insulation should be a minimum of 12 inches deep. Find air leaks in homes by moistening your fingertips and running them around doors and window frames to feel for drafts. Check around outlets and look for gaps near the dryer vent,



chimneys, and faucet pipes. Seal them all with caulk or weatherstripping.

Another way to save energy is by replacing screens with storm windows and doors. Double-pane windows with low-e coatings can reduce heating bills by 34% in cold climates compared to uncoated, single-pane windows. If you have older or leaky windows that you can't replace, consider temporary fixes such as plastic film kits that approximate the effect of an interior storm window.

Consider replacing incandescent lightbulbs with energy efficient LEDs, which use one-fifth of the energy consumed by a regular bulb and can last 25 times as long or longer.

If you want to learn more about how to reduce your home's electricity consumption be sure to visit [FarmersElectric.coop](http://FarmersElectric.coop) and request our FREE Home Energy Efficiency Guide. We'll show you how to understand the factors that affect electricity use, investigate your situation to find out what might be causing your high bill, resolve the problems, and then how to monitor and manage your use to keep control of your bills in the future.

**TAKE CHARGE. FIND MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO USE ENERGY EFFICIENTLY. DOWNLOAD OUR ENERGY TIPS PDF AT: [FarmersElectric.coop](http://FarmersElectric.coop)**



## MONEY SAVING ENERGY TIPS

With this long list of ideas, you're sure to find plenty of ways to save energy around your house. You'll see quick, simple changes to start saving, plus larger investments that can make a big difference in the long run.

**TAKE CHARGE. GET YOUR ENERGY TIPS PDF AT: [FarmersElectric.coop](http://FarmersElectric.coop)**



## MEMBER HUB

# Giving members the power of options.

## Bill Plans to meet the unique needs of our members.

Farmers EC recognizes our members are different. Their homes are different. And their lifestyles are different. So we offer bill plans designed to meet members' energy needs.

### **Proactive Plan** **Pay-as-You-Go**

Just like cell phone data plans and streaming services, you can monitor, manage, and recharge your account any time by phone or by using your SmartHub account.

### **Traditional Plan** **Month-to-Month**

If you're comfortable paying by the month and can accommodate the higher bills that come with more extreme summer and winter weather, the traditional bill plan might be ideal for you.

### **Budget Plan** **Averaging Month-to-Month**

Avoid extreme swings during the hottest days of summer and the coldest of winter with a consistent monthly bill based on the average of the past 11 months plus your current month's bill.

**TAKE CHARGE. LEARN MORE AND CHOOSE A BILL PLAN  
THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU AT: [FarmersElectric.coop](https://FarmersElectric.coop).**



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**YOU'RE IN POWER.**



# Maximize your HVAC efficiency.

**WHY IS IT SO COLD IN THE HOUSE?** Should the heating system be running like that? What's that weird noise coming from the unit? Didn't we repair it just last year? Why are the utility bills so high this month? The average HVAC system lasts 10 to 20 years, and when your setup is on its last legs the symptoms are pretty clear. Repairs can delay replacement, but maybe it's time to put the ol' system out to pasture. An upgraded unit will not only improve heating and cooling, air quality, and humidity control, but also reduces utility costs. Even if you put off the upgrade, an HVAC checkup by a licensed professional can improve efficiency and safety.

## IS IT TIME FOR AN UPGRADE?

**First things first:** Look at your HVAC unit's housing for the install date. If it's more than 10 years-old, it's time to start planning for an upgrade.

**Don't wait for your HVAC to die:** Smart homeowners take time to research their options and adjust their budget long before their HVAC conks out, and they're better off for planning ahead. Take care of your system now: Are the ducts sealed tight? Is the insulation in good shape? Is the thermostat working correctly?

**Get a proper assessment:** You don't want to start an upgrade until you've had an energy audit performed by a skilled technician. A professional HVAC technician can pinpoint problems beyond the unit – like leaky ducts or poor insulation – and can recommend repairs to prolong the life of the system. After an energy assessment, a homeowner has a much better idea when to invest in an upgrade.

## IT'S TIME – NOW WHAT?

You've already invested in a professional HVAC assessment and implemented the technician's recommended repairs, but more work is needed to get your home's HVAC operating efficiently and safely.

**One step at a time:** Depending on the age of your system, it may be possible to replace just portions now, upgrading select components while setting money aside for a larger update later.

**Get the right sized HVAC system for your home:** One HVAC upgrade's too big, another's too small. When you're investing in major home appliances, make sure the model you choose is just right. Your HVAC technician should perform a load calculation to ensure any new equipment is properly-sized for your home based on a variety of factors like the size of the house, weather, insulation, etc. HVAC upgrades almost certainly lead to improved air quality – doubly-important if your current unit is past its prime.

**Do your research:** Consider Energy Star models (often more efficient than standard units by a 10 or 15 percent margin) and work with your HVAC pro to determine the appropriate setup for your home.

**Stick with a professional:** A system that's installed improperly loses efficiency, eliminating potential savings. Use a licensed, insured contractor – poor installation and poorly-chosen equipment can create health hazards in your home like carbon monoxide leaks and mold growth.

A solid HVAC system doesn't come cheap. You'll be looking at a sizable upfront cost, of course, but a professional's properly-installed, energy-efficient upgrade can reduce monthly expenses for years to come.



**TAKE CHARGE. SAVE ON YOUR WINTER BILL AND REQUEST OUR FARMERS EC HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY GUIDE IN THE EFFICIENCY HUB AT: [FarmersElectric.coop](http://FarmersElectric.coop)**





# Less energy for the holidays.

Use LEDs for decorations to keep your holiday's bright.

**LEDs ARE THE UNDISPUTED CHAMPS** of holiday lighting. There is no reason to let concerns over cost of operation limit your decorating genius. You could wrap your home in LED light strings, become visible to the International Space Station, and still have a pleasantly manageable power bill at the end of it all.




LEDs are also showing up in other forms and places. They are available in clear tubes that you can wrap around objects for extra interest, and many yard figures are constructed with these as the main lighting element.

How about wearing some holiday LED bling? Yes, the tacky (but ever so popular) holiday tie with tiny lights has been around for years. But, combine the advances in LEDs with conductive paints and microcontrollers, and you can create some truly memorable fashions for the holidays.

You have worked hard all year to reduce your energy consumption to save money and slim down your carbon footprint. Now reward yourself with a splendid holiday display that will be the envy of all who see it—while still conserving electricity.

## HOLIDAY LIGHTING COMPARISON

Holiday lighting options have come a long way over the past few decades. The chart below shows three types of lighting options, including wattage and operating cost comparison

Type of Lamp		WATTS PER LAMP	WATTS PER 50 Lamp	SEASONAL OPERATING COSTS*
 C9 Incandescent		7	350	\$13.33
 Mini Incandescent		0.425	21.25	\$0.81
 LED		0.069	3.45	\$0.13

\*Based on 40 days of operation, eight hours per day, \$0.119 per kilowatt-hour (Department of Energy average). In addition, the LED will last as much as 40 times longer than the incandescent lamps. Source: [energy.gov](#)

**TAKE CHARGE. USE SMARTHUB TO MONITOR YOUR WINTER ENERGY USE.**  
**DOWNLOAD THE FREE APP AT: [FarmersElectric.coop](#)**

# ODDS & ENDS

## Holiday Hours

Farmers EC office will be closed for the following holiday. Crews will be on standby in case of outages:

**Dec. 24-25 Christmas**  
**Jan. 1 New Year's Day**

## Text Alerts

Even when the power's out, you can keep in touch with your co-op by text. Sign up by texting FEC to 85700 to register your cell number. Then you can text OUT to report an outage or STATUS to get an update. For help, text HELP. To end your text exchange, text STOP. (Message and data charges may apply.)

**Report an outage.** TEXT: OUT  
**For outage status.** TEXT: STATUS  
**For outage help.** TEXT: HELP  
**To stop updates.** TEXT: STOP

## Did You Know?

President Calvin Coolidge began the country's celebration of Christmas by lighting the first National Christmas Tree decorated with electric lights on Christmas Eve in 1923.

## Power Tip

Spending more time in the kitchen during the holiday season? Here's one way to be safer and more energy efficient: Unplug small kitchen appliances, like toaster ovens and microwaves, when they're not in use.