

## Ten New Year's Resolutions for a Slimmer Energy Bill

**N**ew Year's is a time for making resolutions to improve your life. Two perennial favorites are dieting and saving money. Homeowners can combine these two by going on an energy diet. By adopting some easy, low-cost strategies, you can save on energy costs all year long. The following are ten simple resolutions that can serve as your guide for saving energy year-round and living a more sustainable lifestyle:

- 1. Switch to energy-efficient lighting.** Replace burned out light bulbs with energy-efficient compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs).
- 2. Heating and cooling system maintenance.** Clean or replace furnace filters regularly and have the system checked by a qualified technician.
- 3. Plug energy leaks.** Install weather-stripping around doors and windows to ensure that they are properly sealed.
- 4. Heat and cool naturally.** Take advantage of natural sunlight and window shading to provide no cost heating and cooling.
- 5. Conserve hot water.** Maintain water heater temperature at 120°F or lower and take short showers instead of baths.
- 6. Adjust the thermostat.** Properly adjust the thermostat when the home is unoccupied to avoid wasting energy by heating or cooling an empty house.

- 7. Work with a full load.** Save energy by running the dishwasher and clothes washer only when they are fully loaded.
- 8. Air dry the laundry.** Clothes dryers are a big energy user. Air dry clothing whenever possible.
- 9. Power down.** Turn off or unplug computers, battery chargers, or other electronic equipment when it is not in use.
- 10. Focus on energy efficiency.** Whenever possible, replace older appliances and equipment with high efficiency ENERGY STAR®-rated products.

It is no secret that New Year's resolutions can quickly go by the wayside. To help you stay on track, set goals that are specific and measurable. How do you measure your progress? Simply compare your monthly energy bill with those of previous years. The money that you save should provide enough incentive to keep you going all year long.



## Question on the line



***I have electric heat. Last year Dairyland Power Cooperative controlled a lot and I was told it was due to maintenance on one of the old plants and some unexpected conditions with the new Weston 4 plant. Here it is December and again it seems like controlling has come into full force again. What is going on?***

### ***Background***

Dairyland Power Cooperative operates the load management program based on a monthly load limit. The load limit is a number

that is based on demand versus forecast of demand. Once the DPC load reaches the load limit, dispatchers, located in LaCrosse, start to control different strategies within the load management system. Strategies include different water heaters and electric heating programs throughout the entire Dairyland system.

### ***Answer***

'Tis the Season to be bright but yikes, those lights that help us celebrate add a lot to the Dairyland load at the wrong time of the day for load management. Using LED lights significantly reduce the

load; however kilo-watts are still being used. At the same time, a late wet harvest this year has caused grain drying to stretch into December (this typically doesn't happen). Finally, Mother Nature has played her role too with freezing temperatures causing heating elements to run overtime. These three contributing factors increase the Dairyland load capacity and initiates the use of the load management system (dual fuel, water heater, and full load controls). It's important for each of us to consider a New Year's Resolution (page 1) of becoming more energy efficient and conserving energy too!

## ***Welcome to Winter***

Between December 8 & 9, 2009, the first big snow storm hit almost all of Wisconsin. Although SREC was fortunate to only have a few straggling outages, other co-ops weren't so lucky. Rocky Energy Cooperative, which serves Rock, Green, Walworth, and Dane counties in Wisconsin along with Winnebago, Boone, McHenry, and Stephenson counties in Illinois, was not so lucky. Rock Energy had approximately 1,200 members without power during the blizzard. The predominant problem with this storm was the heavy snow that caused tree branches and entire trees to fall on power lines. Crews worked around the clock until all power was

restored, which occurred about 2 a.m. December 10th. In addition to the entire Rock Energy Cooperative crew, Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative sent four linemen to aid in the recovery. "When disas-

ters hit, co-ops pull together to help each other out" stated Rick Kolb, CEO of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative, "one never knows when other co-ops will be able to return the favor."



*From the left- Matt Ritchie, Lucas Ritchie, Chad Olmstead, Andy Kilcoyne*

## Challenge of Greening the Future

*By Megan McKoy*

As congressional debate over climate change legislation continues, the question of how our nation will generate the power it needs in coming decades has taken center stage. Most of the electricity used today gets produced by burning fossil fuels, which emit greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide (blamed as a climate change contributor) or nuclear reactors that emit clean water vapor (steam) but create high-level radioactive waste.

In addition, fossil fuels—primarily coal and natural gas—are non-renewable, meaning supplies are limited. Nuclear energy, fueled by uranium, also relies on a finite resource.

However, renewable sources of energy like water, wind, sun, biomass, earth's heat, and hydrokinetic sources like tides and ocean waves replenish themselves. And when it comes to generating renewable electricity for rural America, electric cooperatives are leading the way. Electric co-ops receive 11 percent of their power requirements from renewable resources compared to 9 percent for electric utilities as a whole.

Renewable energy does have its share of challenges, though. "Green" power resources don't exist everywhere or in sufficient quantity to "keep the lights on." There's a need for more transmission lines to move renewable power from the places where it's generated to population centers. There's also a need for new technology capable of storing electricity produced by wind and solar facilities, making them more reliable forms of generation.

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation, which oversees reliable operation of the bulk

power grid covering the United States, most of Canada, and part of Mexico, estimates 24,000 miles of transmission lines need to be built by 2018, with 35 percent dedicated to connecting remote renewable resources to cities. Yet getting these lines constructed poses major regulatory and community challenges.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Energy Information Administration forecasts 260,000 MW of renewable energy being added over the next decade—mainly in the form of wind. But less than 25 percent of this renewable capacity will be available when consumers need it most, during peak demand periods, highlighting the need for research into development of advanced storage options.

The Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), a non-profit research consortium made up of electric utilities, including electric cooperatives, calls for a balanced approach. According to EPRI's realistic 2009 analysis of various forms of generation, non-hydro renewable resources will provide 15 percent of America's power by 2030. Water resources should produce another 6 percent, leaving 79 percent of the nation's energy produced by an efficient mix of nuclear, coal, and natural gas.

Since some states boast reliable wind resources while others benefit from more sunshine, a cooperative approach to renewable energy has emerged. Last year, electric cooperatives formed the National Renewables Cooperative Organization (NRCO), [www.renewable.coop](http://www.renewable.coop). The group shares expertise and collaborates on renewable power projects across the nation.

Electric cooperatives are also working closely with other groups

to remind Congress to keep consumers in mind when debating climate change legislation. Through the Our Energy, Our Future™ grassroots campaign at [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop), hundreds of thousands of co-op members are joining this effort, asking lawmakers to keep energy policy fair, affordable, and achievable. A sound approach to renewable energy remains an important element for consideration.

At Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative we want you to understand the potential of renewable energy in the areas we serve. Over the next few months look for a series of stories on how various renewable resources may fit into our nation's energy future.

**Sources:** *U.S. Energy Information Administration, NRECA, Electric Power Research Institute*  
*Megan McKoy writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*

### ***Thank You!***

**Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative would like to send out a huge THANK YOU to 1,678 members who signed the "Our Energy Our Future" campaign cards! Our voice is being heard thanks to your support. For more information visit [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop)**

# Saving with the Stimulus

## The time is now

The clock is ticking on your chance to save money via the federal Stimulus Bill, by making energy efficient changes in your home. Through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act—better known as the Stimulus Bill—the IRS offers a personal tax credit of up to \$1,500 for energy efficiency improvements made to homes during 2009 and 2010. Each state and your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative also have energy saving incentives.



## How can you cash in?

To take advantage of the program, a home improvement must have taken place after Feb. 17, 2009, and products must meet specific energy efficiency criteria. For exterior windows and skylights, rely on the Energy Star label. Please note, however, that not all ENERGY STAR qualified products qualify for a tax credit. For other efficiency upgrades, request what's called a "Manufacturer Certification Statement" that the product or component qualifies for the tax credit. You can also visit [www.irs.gov/recovery](http://www.irs.gov/recovery) to review guidelines for eligible purchases.



## What's included?

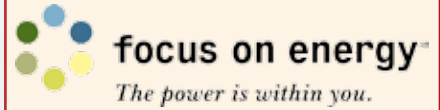
The federal credit covers up to 30 percent of the cost of adding insulation materials and exterior doors, windows, and roofs designed to help reduce a home's heat loss or gain. It also includes efficient central air conditioners, air-source and geothermal heat pumps, hot water boilers and biomass stoves. Certain renewable energy projects



involving solar and wind may also qualify. For weatherization-related work, the credit covers only the cost of materials.



You can file for energy tax credits using IRS Form 5695, with a total maximum value of \$1,500 for improvements made in 2009 and 2010. For more information and for suggestions on how to make your home more energy efficient, call Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative and visit [www.togetherwesave.com](http://www.togetherwesave.com). For details on state or federal incentives, your tax accountant may be your best resource.



Rewards will be available starting January 1, 2010 by completing and submitting a mail-in reward application. Appliances must meet program efficiency requirements. Information on these requirements and the applications for each item will be available at [www.focusonenergy.com](http://www.focusonenergy.com) or by calling 800-762-7077. The following types of appliances are eligible for Cash-Back Rewards through the program.

### Heating and Cooling Equipment:

- Boilers- \$200
- Central air conditioners & Air-source heat pumps- \$75
- Furnaces (oil & gas)- \$200
- Geothermal heat pumps- \$75

### Appliances:

- Clothes washers- \$100
- Dishwashers- \$25
- Freezers- \$50
- Refrigerators- \$75
- Water heaters- \$150 (electric heat pump water heaters- \$50)

### Renewable Energy

- Solar hot water- \$2,000

## Power Your Mind –

Learn who is bringing you power

### Leann Handel

**Title- Operations Assistant**

#### Family-

- Significant other- Archie
- Daughter- Kennedy, 8

#### Hobbies-

Gambling, watching movies, shopping, and hanging out with friends and family.



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Any questions or comments can be directed to Watt's Happening, c/o Megan Graney, Editor, Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative, 231 North Sheridan, Lancaster, WI 53813 or telephone (608) 723-2121 or toll free Lancaster 800-236-2141, Darlington 800-236-6656, and Gays Mills 888-735-4314.

[www.sre.coop](http://www.sre.coop)

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