

Nine Ways to Cut Energy Bills p. 3

Co-op Grant Programs Help Area Schools, Rural Fire Departments

Applications Available Online; Deadline April 15

Lending a helping hand is the action of a good neighbor, and VVEC strives to be just that type of a friend.

That is why we sponsor the Adopt-A-School, and Rural Fire Department grant programs.

Through these programs, VVEC works with area educators to support and enhance students' learning experiences, and to improve area fire departments' abilities to protect residents' lives and property.

Each year teachers and administrators, and fire department personnel, are invited to submit applications for funds. They are asked to detail what they want to purchase, along with the costs, and to explain how their requests will help them meet their goals and objectives.

The grants are used by school personnel to purchase such items as books, computers, software, or playground equipment. Fire departments use their grants to purchase such equipment as hoses, communication equipment,



and firefighter gear, or to fund personnel training.

By helping area fire departments in this manner VVEC can help them reduce their ISO rating, which in turn helps reduce members' homeowners' insurance.

Applications are currently available on VVEC's Web site - www.vvec.com - under the 'Community Programs' tab.

Once completed, applications need to be sent to program coordinator Kay Rabbitt-Brower at P. O. Box 219, Collinsville, OK 74021.

Deadline to submit applications is 4 p.m. Wednesday, April 15.

After the deadline, all applications will be reviewed and recipients will be notified by letter.

Anyone with questions about the programs, or who would like to have an application mailed to them, can contact Rabbitt-Brower at the co-op by calling (918) 371-2584, ext. 6214, or E-mailing her at KRabbitt-Brower@VVEC.com. Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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Phone number

(918) 371-2584 or 1-800-870-5948

Office hours

7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.,
Monday through Friday

Editor - Kay Rabbitt-Brower

Winter Residential Rates

October through March usage,
November through April billing

Customer Charge \$25.00

Energy Charge

1st 1,000 kWh \$0.0738/kWh

Over 1,000 kWh \$0.0678/kWh

A power cost adjustment (PCA) will be applied to all bills when the actual cost of power purchased exceeds or is less than 55.993 mills per kWh.

In addition, a gross receipts tax of 2% of revenue will be included, plus additional taxes if applicable.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Clean Filters, Vents in Winter

Even if you're waiting until spring to do a floor-to-ceiling cleanup around the house, three important cold-weather cleaning jobs can't wait.

First, clean your clothes dryer's vents. The lint and fluff that accumulate in the vents don't stop just because it's cold outside. And you might not even have to venture outdoors for this task. Simply pull the dryer away from the wall, remove the back vent hose and vacuum it out. If it's especially clogged, find a handyman with a "snake" tool to help you out.

A clogged dryer vent can start a fire. And a clean one will help your clothes dryer use up to 25 percent less energy.

Next, do the same thing with the bathroom and kitchen vents. In the bathroom, remove the vent cover and suction out whatever is in it. The stove vent is a bit trickier: It's more likely to be clogged with grease than with lint and could need to be soaked and scrubbed.



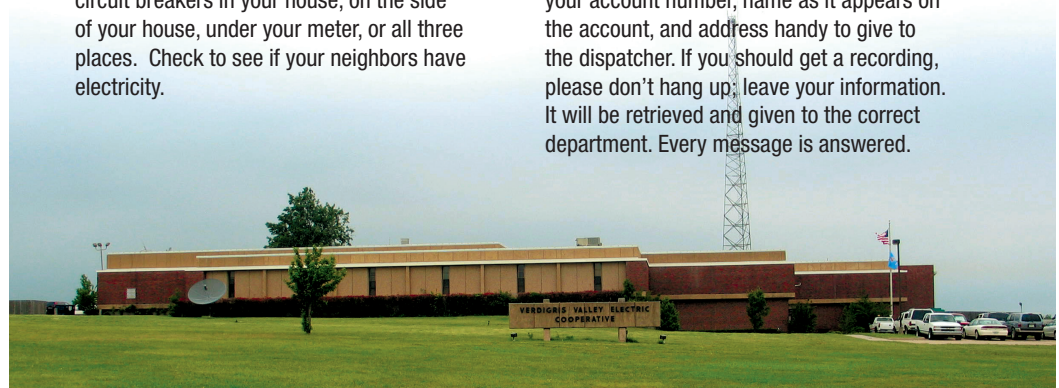
The effort is worth it, though, as it could prevent a grease fire.

Finally, clean or replace your furnace filters at least every three months. Filters get clogged with airborne debris, like dust, dirt and even bugs. A dirty filter forces your furnace to work harder to keep your home comfortable. And the harder it works, the more energy it uses.

Most filters are disposable, but if yours is not, rinse it with water and brush away the dirt. Avoid using chemical cleaners, as the furnace fan could push residual toxins on the filter into the indoor air you breathe.

What to do if Your Power Goes Off

1. Check your fuses or circuit breakers. Every service is different. You may have fuses or circuit breakers in your house, on the side of your house, under your meter, or all three places. Check to see if your neighbors have electricity.
2. Call the Co-op at 371-2584, or 1-800-870-5948 if the call is long distance for you. Have your account number, name as it appears on the account, and address handy to give to the dispatcher. If you should get a recording, please don't hang up; leave your information. It will be retrieved and given to the correct department. Every message is answered.



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New Year Brings Retirement for Three Employees

January is the beginning of a new year, but for three VVEC employees it was also the beginning of the next great chapter in their lives.

Kathy Calico (left to right), Randy Parsons, and Jane Van Sickle have retired.

Calico began her career at the co-op in 1989, and Parsons began in 1990. Van Sickle worked at VVEC for about three years in the 1990s before moving out of state. She returned to the co-op in 2008.

9 Ways to Cut Energy Bills

Changing light bulbs, adding insulation and caulking are ways to improve efficiency

It costs more than \$2,000 a year in energy bills to run the average American home, and more than half of that is for heating and cooling.

Here are some tips for lowering those bills:

1. Get an energy audit. You'll have an easier time sealing an energy leak if you know where it is, and an auditor can show you.

2. Replace all of your incandescent light bulbs with LEDs—even if they're not burned out yet. They're wasting more money in energy costs than you'll waste by replacing them before they're spent.

3. Use caulk to seal cracks and gaps around windows.

4. Add attic insulation and make sure it's properly attached.

5. Learn about the energy use of your appliances. The more you understand about energy, the less of it you'll waste.

6. If you're planning to move to a newly built home, choose an architect or builder who is committed to "green building" and energy efficiency. Many green building strategies don't cost any more when they're incorporated during construction—like making energy-efficient choices for the direction the house faces and where the windows are placed.

7. Replace outdated furnaces and air conditioning systems

with updated models designed to work more efficiently, waste less energy and save you money.

8. When replacing appliances, look at more than the price tag. Consider how much it will cost each year to operate the equipment. Often, the savings on your energy bill will more than make up for the slightly higher price you pay for more efficient models.

9. If you're remodeling your home, make energy efficiency as high a priority as more visible upgrades like a beautiful granite countertop or new cabinets. You can't "see" energy efficiency, so it's too often out of sight, out of mind.

CO-OP CONNECTIONS
Fast Facts 2014

 **30,000** local retail offers where members can shop and save in their neighborhoods

 **1.37 million** page views on Connections.coop

 Cardholders have saved more than **\$ 82 MILLION** on prescriptions since 2007

 Average savings on prescriptions reached the highest level ever at **45% off**



“I Now Pronounce You...”

Has Your Status Changed?

Have you recently tied the knot, gotten divorced or been widowed? If so, we need you to call us so we can update your account.

We need up-to-date, accurate information for your capital credit account, but also to make it easy for you to conduct your business with us. Federal legislation enacted after Sept. 11, 2001 prevents us from discussing the account with anyone not listed on it.

If you have been widowed, your account will be placed in your name, but we need you to update your application. If your parents, or another family member, were VVEC members and have passed away, we need to be aware of that because we cannot have an account in the name of a deceased person.

We will be glad to work with you on updating your account. Just call our consumer service representatives at 918-371-2584.

RECIPE

Pork Chops with Mustard Cream Sauce



February is American Heart Health Month.

- 4 (4-oz.) boneless center-cut loin pork chops (1/2 inch thick)**
- 1/2 tsp. salt**
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper**
- Cooking spray**
- 1/2 cup fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth**
- 2/3 cup fat-free half-and-half**
- 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard**
- 2 tsp. lemon juice**
- Chopped fresh parsley (optional)**

Sprinkle both sides of pork with salt and pepper.

Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add pork, and cook 4 to 5 minutes on each side or until lightly browned and done. Transfer pork to a serving plate, and keep warm.

Add broth to pan, scraping pan to loosen browned bits. Stir in half-and-half, mustard, and lemon juice. Reduce heat, and simmer, uncovered, 6 minutes or until sauce is slightly thick. Spoon sauce over pork; sprinkle with parsley, if desired.