

Right-Size Your Home's Heating, A/C

When it comes to heating and cooling your home, you can get too much of a good thing.

In fact, if you live in an older home and haven't replaced your heating or air conditioning systems, there's a good chance they're both way too big.

Used to be that homes were so energy inefficient that much of the heated or cooled air would leak right out of the house through windows and through tiny holes and cracks around windows, doors and the roof.

New homes are built so "tight" that that's not such a big problem anymore. And even if you live in an older house, chances are, you or a prior owner has replaced the single-pane windows with energy-efficient double-pane models; added insulation to the attic; and caulked around the windows and doors

to prevent heat loss and gain.

So the A/C or heating system that was installed to compensate for that loss could be up to four times bigger than what you need now.

That's a problem because a system that's too big will cycle on too often, which can leave too much humidity in the air and make your house too hot, too cold or too humid.

When you're ready to replace your oversized, out-of-date systems, choose energy-efficient models. And insist that your service technician correctly "size" the system for your lifestyle and the efficiency of the house – not on its age or size. 

Changes to Rebate Program Now in Effect

Changes to the SEER/EER ratings on heat pumps eligible for rebates are now in effect.

Air-to-air and dual-fuel heat pumps are required to have a minimum of a 16.5 SEER to qualify for rebates. The former SEER was 15.5.

Ground source (geothermal) heat pumps must be a minimum of 19.1 EER. The former EER was 17.1.

Clothes washer and dishwasher rebate programs will end June 1.

If you have questions about our rebate programs, heat pumps or other energy-efficient appliances, please call our member services department at (918) 371-2584, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

RECIPE

Savory Oven Beef Stew with Mashed Potato Topping

- 2 lbs. beef stew meat, cut in 1-inch cubes
- 3 Tbsp. butter
- 12 small white onions, peeled
- 12 baby carrots
- 5 Tbsp. flour
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper
- 1 Tbsp. prepared mustard
- 1 small bay leaf
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup tomato juice
- 2 cups seasoned mashed potatoes

Melt butter in a heavy skillet over medium-low heat; add beef and brown, turning frequently. Remove beef to a large casserole. Add onions and carrots to meat in casserole. Combine the flour, salt, pepper, mustard, bay leaf, water, and tomato juice in a skillet over medium low heat; simmer for 10 minutes. Remove bay leaf. Pour sauce over meat and vegetables. Cover casserole and bake at 325° for 2 1/2 hours. Remove from oven and arrange mashed potatoes around edges. Increase oven temperature to 400° and bake for 15 minutes longer, or until potatoes are browned.



POWER CIRCUIT

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[Use Your Space Heater Without Increasing Your Electric Bill p. 3](#)

Youth Tour is Ticket to Trip of a Lifetime

Visiting the nation's capital is a great way to start summer vacation, and VVEC can be your ticket to the trip of a lifetime. Two high school juniors could spend a fun-filled week in Washington, D.C. in June with young people from across the nation as winners of VVEC's annual Youth Tour essay contest.

To compete, students must be juniors this year, single, and attending high school in VVEC's service territory. Their parents do not have to be members of VVEC for them to participate in this program.

Students are required to write an essay of between 350 and 500 words on a specific co-op related topic. The topic, along with the program's rules and regulations, are detailed in the Youth Tour Information Packet, which is available this month from schools' English teachers or on VVEC's Web site at www.vvec.com.

"This year's topic incorporates recent events," explains VVEC Youth Tour Coordinator Paula Lanni. "We want students to consider the future of nuclear energy in our country following the threat to Japan's nuclear power plant after the devastating Tsunami last year. The topic is 'Should America Expand Further into Nuclear Energy to Provide for Future Electricity Needs?'"

Deadline to submit essays to the co-op is 4 p.m. Friday, March 2.

Essays are judged on command of subject, strength of ideas, style, and writing convention and grammar by a panel of independent judges. Youth Tour judging determines four finalists who compete in the final level of competition where they give oral presentations of their essays.

The two highest scoring finalists win the all expense-paid trip to Washington, D. C. and the two alternates will each receive a \$500 scholarship.

If you have questions about Youth Tour or to want obtain an information packet, please contact Lanni at (918)371-2584, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. 



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Office hours

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

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Winter Residential Rates

October through March usage,
November through April billing

Customer Charge \$20.00

Energy Charge

1st 1,000 kWh \$0.0731/kWh
Over 1,000 kWh \$0.0671/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.

Co-op Begins Collecting Dues for Area Fire Departments This Month

New Program is 'Win Win' for Members and Emergency Agencies

Beginning this month, VVEC begins collecting monthly dues for members of the Wann, and Owens & Co. fire departments, and Oologah-Talala EMS. The dues appear on VVEC's monthly electric bills and are paid to the fire departments once a month.

Through this service VVEC members can enjoy the convenience of paying two items with one payment, and fire departments will receive members' dues without doing all the billing and collecting.

More fire departments have been invited to take advantage of this service, and members will be notified by letter when they can begin participating. If you have questions about this service, or how to participate, please contact your fire department. 

Trustees Retain Positions on Board; Officers Remain the Same

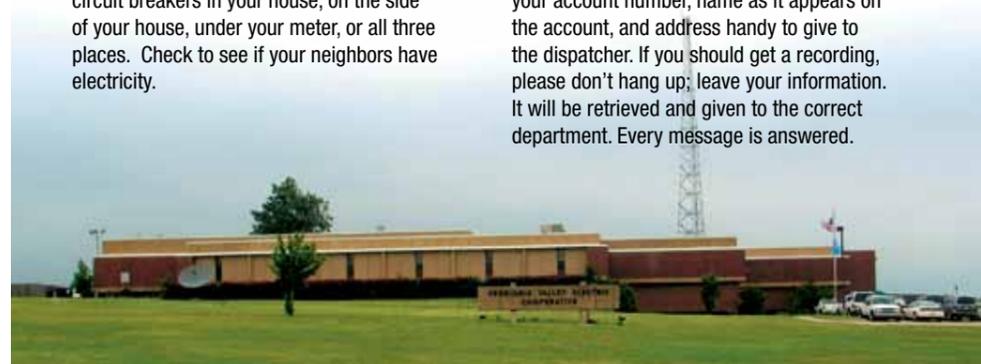
Members in districts 1, 3, and 5 met in November to elect trustees. However, since a quorum was not reached at any meeting, the incumbent trustees retain their positions for another three-year term. Those trustees are Jim Brackett, Vernon Lewis, and Jimmy Lambert, respectfully.

Cooperative bylaws require that at least 5 percent of the members in any district must register their attendance in order for business to be transacted.

During the December board meeting, trustees re-elected the current slate of officers. Ken Howard continues as president, while Dennis Lenox is vice-president and Chuck Huerter is secretary-treasurer. 

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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Don't Heat Up Your Electric Bill with Space Heaters

Using Space Heaters Correctly Keeps You Toasty Without Increasing Your Electric Bill

Winters in Oklahoma can be brutal. Remember last year?

Hopefully, we won't be buried under two feet of snow, or record the coldest temperature in the nation this year. But we know it will be cold, so naturally we want to be warm and comfortable in our homes.

Many people choose to use electric space heaters to stay toasty at home.

VVEC Member Services Representative Chub Brewer says using space heaters can be a good idea if they are used safely and efficiently.

"A space heater can be one of the most expensive ways to heat a home, if it's not used correctly," says Brewer. "Space heaters are designed to work in small areas, such as just one or two rooms. They're not designed to heat a large area or an entire home, and will increase your total electric bill if you try to use them like that.

"You have to lower your thermostat a few degrees if you want to use a space heater properly without increasing your electric bill," he explains. "Place the heater in a regularly used spot, such as your den or living room. Smaller spaces are easy and inexpensive to heat with space heaters, as long as you lower the temperature throughout your home."

Brewer says to maximize efficiency, be sure to check wattage and size rating listed on the space heater and then choose the right heater for the

size of the room where you are planning to use it.

He goes on to suggest looking for a space heater with a temperature control so the room won't overheat and you won't have to constantly switch the unit on and off.

Brewer says there are different types of space heaters; convection and radiant heaters are the most common.



Convection heaters move air to warm a room, and heat quickly. Most space heaters are convection heaters.

Radiant heaters are radiator-type heaters and are most efficient when using a room for a short period because they avoid the energy needed to heat the entire room by instead directly heating the occupant and the occupant's immediate surroundings.

Brewer says doing your homework and selecting a space heater properly can help you stay warm and comfortable during the cold of winter. But if not used properly any potential savings could be offset by additional power use. 

Electric Space Heater Safety Tips

☛ Place the heater on a level, hard, nonflammable surface, such as a ceramic tile floor.

☛ Keep the heater at least three feet away from bedding, drapes, furniture, and other flammable materials.

☛ Keep children and pets away from space heaters.

☛ Turn the heater off if you leave the area.

☛ Plug portable electric heaters directly into the wall outlet. If an extension cord is necessary, use a heavy-duty cord of at least 14-gauge wire.

☛ Buy a unit with a tip-over safety switch that automatically shuts off the heater if the unit falls over.

☛ Never leave a space heater on when you go to sleep.

☛ Don't place a space heater close to any sleeping person.

☛ Don't use space heaters in the bathroom.