



Electric Line Newsletter

SEASON'S GREATINGS FROM CWEC

“The holidays.” We love everything about this time of year. Just the thought of the holiday season brings a smile to our faces and evokes a sense of comfort and nostalgia.

It's a time of reflection. We're grateful for our own families as well as our co-op family. At Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC), we're driven by a sense of mission and purpose. Our team feels a strong connection to our community and our members, because we live here too.

While many of our community-focused programs and activities such as our Toys for Tots program ramp up this time of year, we have several programs and services in place to help our members year-round. We'd like to remind you about some of these offerings in hopes you'll find them beneficial.

We hope you'll take advantage of SmartHub, available through our website at www.cwecoop.com, that empowers you to monitor, manage and pay your energy bill conveniently through various electronic devices. Another service we offer is budget billing, which is intended to help budget your monthly energy costs. We also offer energy conservation rewards to save you money and energy. More information about the conservation rewards programs is available at: www.cwecoop.com/energy-conservation-rewards

Our Operation Round Up program helps members in need and area organizations with monetary help. It also provides scholarships to members seeking a secondary education. By simply choosing to “round up” your energy bills to the next whole dollar amount, you can help others right here in our community.

In addition to helping members save today, we're focusing on the future. In our area, we're seeing increased interest in renewable energy sources. Recent innovations and advances have led to significant cost decreases in renewable energy, making it more feasible and accessible. We would be happy to provide you information about solar arrays.

At the heart of all of these programs is you—the members we proudly serve. Looking back, we're grateful for so many wonderful community partners and for the positive impact we can continue to make.

This holiday season, we wish you and your loved ones peace, joy and prosperity. We know the future will be bright, because of you.

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ARE PORTABLE SPACE HEATERS EFFICIENT FOR YOUR HOME?

Small space heaters are meant to do exactly as their name says: heat a small space. But unfortunately, many people use portable space heaters to heat their entire home, which can really take a toll on your energy bills. The truth is, whether you should use space heaters really depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

If you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like inadequate insulation, drafty windows and exterior doors, or an inefficient heating system, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home. If you're on a tight budget, caulking and weather stripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy. Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a great next step. Loose fill insulation typically costs \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot. Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (CWEC) offers energy efficiency rebates for adding insulation to your home. Taking these proactive energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters for supplemental warmth can reduce your heating and cooling bills for years to come.

Perhaps your home is energy efficient but you're cold-natured and want a specific room to be cozier than the rest. In this case, a space heater may work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling fans; we use ceiling fans in the summer to cool people, not rooms. A space heater can be used in a similar way during winter months. Only use a space heater in small spaces that you're occupying and, if possible, try to shut off other rooms to contain the warmth provided by the space heater. If you decide to use a space heater to heat a small

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area in your home, make sure the heater is properly sized for the space; most heaters include a general sizing table.

A word about safety: the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates more than 25,000 residential fires are associated with the use of space heaters every year, resulting in more than 300 deaths. If you must use a space heater, purchase a newer model that includes the most current safety features and make sure it carries the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label. Choose a thermostatically controlled heater to avoid energy waste and overheating, and place the heater on a level surface away from foot traffic when in use. Always keep children and pets away from space heaters.

Consider alternative ways to stay warm like extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors, lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation (and appeal!) and maintain warmth.

We know it's cold out there, but remember in addition to safety concerns, space heaters can greatly increase your energy bills if used improperly.

If you're looking for alternative ways to save energy and increase comfort in your home, contact CWEC at 715-677-2211. We're here to help you manage your energy use.



TIPS TO DITCH THE SPACE HEATER

Space heaters are energy hogs, and older models can be extremely dangerous. This winter, ditch the space heater and try these alternative solutions to stay cozy.

- Use an electric blanket to keep warm during the night.
- Caulk and weatherstrip around all windows and doors to prevent heat loss.
- Consider adding insulation to your attic and around duct work.

