

September 2014

WATT'S HAPPENING

SCENIC RIVERS ENERGY COOPERATIVE

LANCASTER, DARLINGTON AND GAYS MILLS, WISCONSIN



When you need a solution,

innovate
COOPERATIVELY

CO-OP MONTH | OCTOBER 2014

SREC Member Appreciation Celebration

Members can enjoy a dinner on us of BBQ Pork Sandwiches, Baked Beans, Potato Salad, Chips, Relishes, Cheese Curds, Frosted Brownies, and Beverages.

Tuesday, October 14th
Lancaster Office 4-7pm

Wednesday, October 15th
Gays Mills Office 4-7pm

Thursday, October 16th
Darlington Office 4-7pm

- Browse through displays to learn what kinds of services SREC offers.
- Learn how Focus on Energy can help you manage your energy costs.
- Bucket Truck Rides
- Door Prizes and Giveaways

Are you grounded? GFCI outlets can help!

Did you know there are different types of electrical outlets? Each are designed for different purposes; however, there is one specific type that stands high above the rest—the ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlet. GFCIs have saved thousands of lives and cut the number of electrocutions in half since the 1970s. If your home lacks GFCI outlets, don't fret—you can learn how to “get grounded.”

GFCIs are the most efficient outlet in protecting from electrical shock. If it senses a loss of current, the outlet switches off power to that circuit. These devices can either be installed in your electrical system or built into a power cord. The third hole at the bottom of the outlet is known as the “ground” slot, and it monitors electrical currents that flow through the left “neutral” slot and the right “hot” slot on each outlet. A GFCI can react faster than a blink of an eye to any imbalance of power by immediately shutting off the electrical current. These outlets are now a requirement in all places where water could potentially come into contact with electrical products such as bathrooms, garages, outdoors and kitchens. GFCIs are not exclusive to three-prong outlets. They can be installed into standard outlets, and there are even portable devices available when installation is not practical.

GFCIs should be tested at least once a month to ensure they are working effectively. The first step you



need to take is to test an item, such as a lamp, that visibly powers on when plugged in. Push the “reset” button to prepare the outlet then push the “test” button. Did your lamp turn off? If it did, the GFCI is working properly. Now, hit the “reset” button once again to power it back on. If your lamp did not power off, then you should contact a certified electrician to correct the problem.

Next time you have a free moment, take the time to look around your house. If you're not “grounded,” consider updating your electrical outlets to GFCIs.

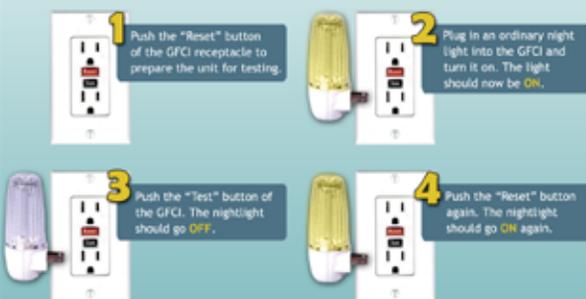
Sources: Electrical Safety Foundation International, Consumer Product Safety Commission

Amber Bentley writes on energy efficiency issues 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. ■

How to test electrical outlets

Since the 1970s ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) have saved thousands of lives, helping cut the number of home electrocutions in half. The safety devices prevent deadly shock by quickly shutting off power to the circuit if the electricity flowing into the circuit differs from the amount returning. The safety devices should be used in any indoor or outdoor area where water may come into contact with electrical products.

GFCIs should be tested once a month to make sure they're working properly. To test a device, follow these four steps:



Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

When it's hot outside, appliances and lighting can actually heat up our homes more than we think. To save energy, minimize the activities that generate additional heat, such as burning open flames, continuously running a computer, or using hot-hair devices like curling irons. This will ultimately keep your house cooler.

Source: Department of Energy

Using energy efficient window treatments

Part science, part style

A recent study by two federal agencies used rigorous science and analysis to dissect window-covering choices—how you use them, where you install them and whether they really save energy. These days, every penny counts, which is why Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative always recommends finding ways to be energy efficient around the house.

“Windows account for 25 to 40 percent of annual heating and cooling costs, especially in older homes,” says Ron Jentz. “Blinds, shades, films and drapes are all good options to consider if old or inefficient windows can’t be replaced.”

According to a joint government and industry research effort (including the U.S. Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and the Window Covering Manufacturers Association), window coverings—blinds, shades, curtains and awnings—could save significant amounts of energy at a relatively low cost to the consumer. Researchers next want to quantify how much energy consumer households could save based on the dominant types of window coverings used, in which climate zones people live and how U.S. households currently operate their window treatments. In the meantime, you may want to give your window treatments a second look when it comes to cooling, heating and comfort in your home.

“It’s important to remember that location, placement and materials are key,” said Ron Jentz. “Windows facing west let in the hottest light and need the most coverage, while windows facing south are the most important natural light source and only need light coverage.”

Drapery. During the winter months and in cold climates, draperies work best. Their ability to reduce heat loss depends on fabric type (closed or open weave), color, the season and other factors. Keeping drapes drawn during the winter, especially at night, could save up to 10 percent of heat loss from a warm room. When hanging draperies, make sure they are placed as close to windows as possible to reduce heat exchange and that they are long enough to fall onto a windowsill or floor.



Shades. Shades—pleated or cellular, quilted roller and dual—are one of the simplest product choices for insulating rooms. But depending on the material, some are more energy efficient than others. Cellular or pleated shades are one example of an energy efficient choice.

They can help keep air from either entering or escaping your home. Dual shades—highly reflective (white) on one side and heat absorbing (dark) on the other side—are also energy efficient and can be reversed with the seasons. In the summer, lower shades on sunlit windows. Shades on the south side of a house should be raised in the winter during the day, then lowered at night.

Interior blinds. Because of their spacing and openings, blinds tend to be more effective at reducing summer heat gain than winter heat loss. But the level of cooling and heating can also be influenced by the position of the slats. When completely closed and lowered at a sun-filled window, for example, heat gain can be reduced by around 45 percent, according to industry estimates. Slats can also be adjusted to block and reflect sunlight onto a light-colored ceiling.

Window film. Residential window films can be high-end and permanent or inexpensive and temporary solutions to improve the energy efficiency of windows. Clear solar-control window films can block up to 84 percent of the solar energy that would normally enter through windows, according to the International Window Film Association, a nonprofit organization of window film dealers, distributors and manufacturers. When installed well, you may not even know some types of film have been applied to your interior windows, manufacturers say, but they’re working year-round to block ultraviolet light in summer and retain warmth in the winter.

With these and other carefully selected window treatments, you can reduce heat loss in the winter and heat gain in the summer – keeping your house comfortable and your energy bills lower. To find out more ways to save, contact Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative’s energy experts at rjentz@srec.net or 1-800-236-2141 ext. 563.

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy, [Energy.gov](http://energy.gov), and “Residential Windows and Window Coverings: A Detailed View” September 2013 Report (http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2013/11/f5/residential_windows_coverings.pdf)

B. Denise Hawkins writes on energy efficiency issues 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. ■



Recipes

Rita Kruser (Cuba City) said "I'm sharing my recipe using green tomatoes. The pureed green tomatoes add extra moistness to this devil's cake." Thanks Rita!

Green Devil Cake - green tomatoes in hiding

- 2-1/2 c. All Purpose Flour
- 1-3/4 c. Brown Sugar, packed
- 1 tsp. Baking Powder
- 1 tsp. Baking Soda
- 1 tsp. Ground Cinnamon
- 4 oz. Unsweetened Chocolate, melted
- 1 c. Sour Milk (Note: To make sour milk, mix 1 Tbsp Vinegar with milk. Stir. Let stand for 5 minutes.)
- 1 c. Pureed Green Tomatoes
- 3/4 c. Butter, softened
- 2 Eggs

In a large mixing bowl, combine flour, brown sugar, baking powder, soda and cinnamon. Add melted chocolate, sour milk, tomatoes, butter and eggs. Beat with an electric mixer at low speed til combined. Beat on medium speed for 2 minutes. Pour into a greased and floured 13x9x2 inch baking pan. Bake at 350 degree oven for 35-40 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool cake in pan on wire rack. Drizzle glaze over each serving; serve with cool whip. Makes 16 servings.

Chocolate Glaze for Green Devil Cake

Melt 4 oz semisweet chocolate with 3 Tbsp butter over low heat, stirring frequently. Remove from heat. Stir in 1-1/4 cups sifted powdered sugar and 3 Tbsp hot water. Stir in additional hot water, if needed, to make a drizzling consistency.

These recipes come from Leila Schmitz's daughter, Barb Millard of Lancaster. She shares that these recipes are simple and very tasty!

Beef Taco Skillet

- 1 lb Ground Beef
- 1 (10-3/4 oz) can Condensed Tomato Soup
- 1/2 c. Picante Sauce
- 1/2 c. Water
- 6 - 6" Flour Tortillas, cut in 1" pieces
- 1/2 c. Shredded Cheddar Cheese

Cook beef in skillet until brown. Drain off fat. Stir in soup, picante sauce, water and tortillas. Heat to boil then reduce to low for 5 minutes. Stir. Top with cheese. Cooking/prep time is about 20 minutes and makes 4-6 servings.

Lynn's Sawdust Spread

- 8 oz Sharp Cheddar Cheese Spread
- 1/4 c. Cream Cheese, softened
- 1/4-1/2 c. Horseradish (Add just to your taste)
- 2 Tbsp Ranch Dressing

Mix till well blended. Chill. Serve with crackers or veggies.



Vegetation Management

Zielie's Tree Service, Inc. will be working on the south circuit of the Prairie du Chien substation in Grant County.

It is important for SREC to maintain its rights-of-way for the following reasons:

- Accessibility for field crews, vehicles and equipment
- Fire prevention
- Reliable electric service
- Quality service with the reduction of outages and blinks
- Safety for workers and the public
- Meeting state and federal code requirements

On a daily basis, SREC employees and contractors are working throughout the area, at times on your property, to operate and maintain the electric system and our rights-of-ways. We appreciate your cooperation. If you have questions, please contact Jay at jgardner@srec.net or call 800-236-2141, ext. 566.



Watt's Happening is published monthly as an information service to the member-owners of Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative.

Any questions or comments can be directed to *Watt's Happening*, c/o Heidi Pierce, 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

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