EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Echoes of the Empire

JULY 2022

MAILING ADDRESS
P.O. Box K
Cortez, CO 81321-0676

STREET ADDRESS
801 North Broadway
Cortez, CO 81321

ph 970-565-4444
tf 800-709-3726
fax 970-564-4401
web eea.coop

facebook.com/EEACortez

BEATING THE HEAT

BY ANDY CARTER MEMBER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

ANDY CARTER

Keeping your cool in July can be a challenge, especially if we don't see our normal monsoon season with afternoon rain showers in southeastern Utah and southwestern Colorado. My favorite solution is to hitch up the camper and head for the mountains, but that only works for the weekends.

Fortunately, there are a variety of things we can do that can help keep indoor temperatures comfortable, and some of them only take a little planning and a few minutes to implement. Make sure to close window coverings to block out the sun and avoid solar heat gain. Another advantage in our dry climate is the large swings in daytime high and nighttime low temperatures. Opening your windows in the evening to allow cooler air in and then closing them in the morning will help keep your home cooler.

We often think of checking caulking and weather stripping as a fall chore, but it is important in the spring as well. Make sure your home is sealed well to keep the heat outside in the summer. Another similar item to check if you have central air conditioning is to make sure your filter is clean and that the outside condenser unit is free from debris and has plenty of air space around it for good airflow. Air-source heat pumps are included in this. Each individual head has filters that need to be inspected and cleaned if necessary, and the outside condenser unit should also be clear of debris.

Our dry climate also makes it possible to cool your home with an evaporative cooler (swamp cooler). Evaporative coolers have their own set of maintenance needs including making sure the water circulation pump is in good shape; cleaning the mineral deposits from the evaporation pads; ensuring there are no leaks; and inspecting the water level float valve for the proper level of water. Swamp coolers typically have less than 1 kilowatt of demand and are an economical way to cool your home. It is important to

A dirty air conditioner condenser unit works harder to cool your home. Keep it clear of dirt and debris and the unit will have better airflow and work more efficiently.

make sure the evaporative pads fit correctly to keep dust and insects from being introduced into your home.

An important difference between traditional single-stage air conditioners and air-source heat pumps is how they are controlled. A member with a single-stage air conditioner can use a programmable thermostat to help them save money by increasing the set point temperature when they are not home or at night. Changing to a higher temperature setting on an air conditioner can save money by reducing the run time for the compressor.

A single-stage compressor always runs at its maximum capacity, so whenever cooling is called for, it is creating its maximum demand (kilowatt) and using a lot of energy (kilowatt-hour). A rule of thumb to determine air conditioning demand is 1 kW per ton of cooling. If your home has a 3-ton air conditioning capacity, it is estimated to create 3 kW of demand, plus 0.5 kW – 1 kW for the blower motor, for a total of 3.5 kW – 4 kW. It is important to keep this in mind when running other appliances because your distribution demand is determined by your highest 15-minute kWh energy usage. If you are using your electric clothes dryer in the afternoon when your air conditioner is running, you are increasing the demand placed on the Empire Electric Association grid and that will increase your distribution demand charges.

Air-source heat pumps are a good option for energy-efficient summer cooling.

Heat pumps use the same mechanical method to cool your home, but they are much more efficient at doing so. Most heat pumps have variable speed compressors that produce only the cooling needed to keep your house near the temperature set point. Because a heat pump operates so much more efficiently, it will use less energy keeping your home cool if you set the temperature you prefer and leave it there. Increasing the heat pump temperature set point higher when not at home during cooling season can cause your electric bill to increase because the heat pump will use more electricity to cool your home back down when you return than it would have used to just maintain your preferred temperature.

Another important piece for controlling a heat pump is to change the mode for the season. Setting a heat pump in the auto mode can waste energy because the heat pump will heat or cool to be within a few degrees of the temperature set point. For example, if we have a very cool night during the summer where your indoor temperature drops below 67 degrees and you have the temperature set point locked in at 70 degrees, the heat pump will switch to heat mode and heat your home back up to 70 degrees. If the heat pump were set to cool mode, it would not turn the heat cycle on and instead would let your house naturally cool off and wait until the next day when the temperature reached 73 degrees to operate and cool the house back to the 70 degree set point.

Beating the heat runs the complete gamut from manually opening and closing blinds and windows to spending time studying owner's manuals, and meeting with your local heating and cooling expert to determine the best way to operate your heat pump or air conditioner. No matter what methods you choose to keep the heat off, we hope you can keep your cool this summer.

Monthly **Calendar**

July 4 – Independence Day – EEA office closed
July 8 – EEA's board meeting begins at 8:30 a.m. at its headquarters in Cortez. The agenda is posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at eea.coop. Members are reminded that public comment is heard at the beginning of the meeting. Meeting restrictions due to health concerns may require the meeting to be held remotely.

Co-op Photo Contest Winner July 2022 – *"Lizard Head" by David Lee Reineke*

Help Us Help You

Have a new phone or a new email address? If you do, please let Empire Electric Association know. EEA periodically calls members to inform them of planned outages in their area or emails important information to members who are on paperless billing. If we don't have accurate contact information, you may miss out on something you need to know. You can update your information using SmartHub or by calling EEA at 970-565-4444 or 800-709-3726. Thank you.

Congratulations!

2022 EEA Scholarship Winners


Kiersten Anderson
Monticello - Adult

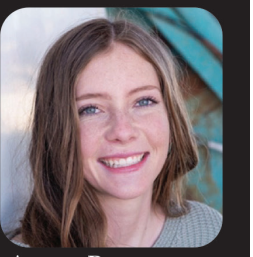

Mariela Avalos
Mancos HS


Jessica Ayers
Dove Creek HS


Talissa Bahr
Mancos - Adult


Erin Brown
Dolores HS

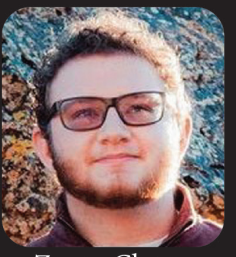

Tara Buffington
Dove Creek HS


Aspen Bumgarner
Mancos HS


Shiloh Burger
Dolores HS


Courtney Cashner
Cortez - Adult


Cheyenne Castillo-Calvillo
MCHS


Zayne Clappe
MCHS


Mason Goodwin
Mancos HS -Tri-State


Gina Hollen
Cahone - EEA Dependent


Koral Jackson
MCHS


Ryan Jarmon
Dove Creek HS


Madi Keyes
Monticello HS


Allie Kibel
Dolores HS


Andres Moreno
Mancos HS


Allison Porter
Yellow Jacket - Adult


Kylie Rogers
Monticello HS


Trinity Samora
Mancos HS -Tri-State


Evan Sehnert
Mancos HS


Jessica Slack
Monticello HS


Natasha Spencer
Mancos - Adult


Brighton Torgerson
Monticello HS


Makayla Wayman
Mancos HS - Basin


Mersadez Wilcox
Monticello - EEA Dependent


Avery Wright
MCHS


Arlina Yazzie
Cortez - Adult

Brian Balfour

Your Co-op Employees

We at Empire Electric Association are excited to welcome Brian Balfour as our new energy management advisor. He will be assisting members with billing questions, advising on how to reduce your energy use and explaining the process for installing renewable generation at your home. Brian is a lifelong resident of Cortez and recently retired after 20 years of service with the Farmington Fire Department. His last position was battalion chief. His experience in working with the public and critical thinking skills gained as a fire engineer and investigator will make him a great asset for our co-op. Brian is an outdoor enthusiast and is active in his church, but his favorite pastime is spending time with his wife Sarah and five children. Join us in welcoming Brian to the co-op family.

5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Working on an outdoor project? Careless digging poses a threat to people, pipelines and underground facilities. Always call 811 first. Here are five easy steps for safe digging:

811

1. NOTIFY

Call 811 or make a request online two to three days before your work begins. The operator will notify the utilities affected by your project.

2. WAIT

Wait two to three days for affected utilities to respond to your request. They will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.

2-3

3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded to your request by comparing the marks to the list of utilities the 811 call center notified.

WARNING

4. RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. The markers are your guide for the duration of your project.

4. DIG CAREFULLY

If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project location.

Source: call811.com

ELECTRICITY 101

To stay safe around electricity, start with these SEVEN basic tips:

1. **DON'T OVERLOAD OUTLETS OR CIRCUITS**
Plugging in too many items or drawing too much power on a circuit can cause overheating, fire, and damage to devices.

2. **DON'T USE FAULTY ELECTRICAL CORDS OR PLUGS**
Do not use cords that look frayed, worn or cracked. Do not use broken plugs. Never remove the grounding pin from a three-pronged plug.

3. **HAVE YOUR ELECTRICIAN'S NUMBER IN YOUR PHONE**
Most electrical repairs or installations are not DIY projects. Hire an expert to avoid serious injury or wiring problems.

4. **BE CAREFUL AROUND H_2O**
Never use electricity while standing in damp or wet conditions. Keep all electrical devices away from water, including cell phones that are charging.

5. **EVALUATE YOUR APPLIANCES**
Do not use appliances in disrepair. Older or broken appliances can overheat, start a fire, and cause serious injuries.

6. **TEST YOUR GFCIs**
Outlets near a water source should be equipped with GFCIs, which help prevent shock and electrocution caused by ground faults. Test monthly to make sure they are working.

7. **MAKE SURE YOUR HOME IS UP TO CODE**
Your home should be properly wired and electrically sound. Contact a reputable electrician to evaluate your home.

SafeElectricity.org®