

EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Echoes of the Empire

DECEMBER 2019



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GOOD NEWS FOR 2020

BY JOSH DELLINGER GENERAL MANAGER

Empire Electric Association was created by our consumer-members, is owned by our consumer-members, and exists to serve our consumer-members. Our consumer-members consistently tell us that cost and reliability are their top two concerns. Therefore, EEA's board and staff work hard to ensure we deliver reliable and affordable electric service. Each year, EEA's staff develops a budget to present to the board. The board then considers the budget, requests changes if it so desires and then ultimately approves a final budget that guides our spending for the next year. The goal during the budgeting process is always to develop a budget that allows us to operate and maintain a reliable system while staying financially strong without requiring a rate increase. I am pleased to announce that we have once again achieved this goal. The board recently approved EEA's 2020 budget and there are no proposed rate increases. This marks the third year in a row and sixth time in the past seven years that there has been no general rate increase for the vast majority of our members. As a member of EEA, this is good news for me, and I hope it is good news for you as well.

On a different note, the board recently voted to amend two important documents: our Rules and Regulations and our Facilities Extension and Modification Policy. The Rules and Regulations is an important document that sets the basic terms and conditions under which EEA provides electric service to its consumer-members. Being a foundational document, it is not something that changes often, but it does need to be reviewed every now and then to ensure it accurately and appropriately states how we



JOSH DELLINGER

conduct business with our consumer-members. The document was last updated in 1988. While the amendments will have little effect on our consumer-members' day-to-day experiences with EEA, they do modernize the document to reflect best business practices and current regulations.

The Facilities Extension and Modification Policy sets forth the terms and conditions under which EEA will extend service to a new location or modify an existing service. The major change in this document involves EEA's contribution toward new services. Previously, EEA donated the transformer, meter and meter base to new single-phase permanent services. The board decided to move from donating equipment to contributing a fixed dollar amount. The board also decided to expand the eligibility for the contribution to include three-phase services. Under the new policy, new permanent services served under a residential, general service or irrigation rate tariff will be eligible for up to a \$2,500 contribution from EEA.

The amended Rules and Regulations and Facilities Extension and Modification Policy becomes effective on January 1, 2020. Should you desire to review the amended documents, they are available during regular business hours at EEA's main office or anytime on EEA's website at www.eea.coop/governing-documents. If you have questions about these documents, about our rates or about any other cooperative business, please don't hesitate to contact us. Thank you all for continuing to support your local electric cooperative.

Co-op Calendar

December 2

Scholarship applications available; visit Co-op & Community/Scholarships at www.eea.coop.

December 7

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

December 13

Empire'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.

December 13

Youth Tour applications DUE

December 21

First day of winter

December 24 & 25

Christmas holiday; EEA offices are closed.

Photo Contest Winner for December



 Northern Saw-Whet Owl
by Stephanie Stuckman

If you are a High School Junior You could
Win a FREE Trip to
Washington DC or a resort in Clark, CO

Fill out your application on-line at

www.eea.coop
by December 13th.



Don't miss out, there is still time to apply!

Washington DC Youth Tour • June 18-25, 2020
Youth Leadership Camp • July 11-16, 2020



The Great Pumpkin Drop of 2019

Protecting pumpkins dropped from 30 feet in the air is extremely challenging. The Dolores Elementary School sixth-graders have taken on that challenge for the past three years. Science teacher Juan Vega helps prepare the class for the annual Pumpkin Toss by letting them experiment with different techniques to keep their pumpkins safe throughout the long fall from an Empire Electric bucket truck. They learned things like G-force, or gravitational force, and studied crash dummies to help them come up with their pumpkin safety designs. Students packaged their pumpkins using popcorn, pillows, parachutes, aluminum cans, Styrofoam and other materials, letting their imaginations run wild. The entire school came out to cheer the sixth-graders on and watch the drop. Through their hard work, five pumpkins escaped damage, making this year the best yet.



Stan Schafer, EEA senior meterman, lets a pumpkin package drop.



Pumpkins are packaged to survive the Pumpkin Toss.



Student Abby Hurst tracks the pumpkin packages on their way down to the ground.

My Co-op Employees

EEA welcomed three new employees on October 14, 2019: two part-time consumer service representatives and a part-time custodian.

Cindie Miller accepted a part-time CSR position and has a banking background. Her most recent position was administrative assistant for VanDeventer & Associates, P.C. Cindie has lived in Colorado for 51 years and enjoys watching motocross and supercross racing with her husband, Shawn.



Cindy Coulon accepted a part-time CSR position. She is a lifetime resident of the area and was previously employed by Waste Management and Baker Sanitation. Cindy and her husband, Doug, enjoy farming and camping. They share two married children and a new grandbaby whom they adore.



Julie Roe accepted the part-time custodian position. Julie was self-employed, cleaning both residential and commercial properties. She and her husband, Grant, are long-time residents and enjoy many outdoor activities. Julie loves spending time with her grandchildren and riding her bike.



Keep your furry, four-legged friends
SAFE DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Learn more at: **SafeElectricity.org**

Four Gift Ideas for Your Favorite Energy Nerd

BY MARIA KANEVSKY

The holiday season is a time for gift giving, but knowing what to get your loved ones isn't always easy. Here are some gift ideas that are perfect for the energy nerd in your life. The costs range from \$25 to \$100, so there's something for everyone.

KILL A WATT® METER

The Kill A Watt meter allows you to monitor how much energy your appliances are using. By simply plugging in the meter between the appliance and the power outlet, the device can display the energy use in either volts, amps, watts or hertz. The large monitor clearly shows the electricity use depending on the type of units you choose. The Kill A Watt meter can also calculate cumulative electricity expenses by day, week, month or year, which can help you to plan ahead. This device is perfect to test the efficiency of older appliances, as well as new, efficient appliances to make sure they're meeting the energy savings that they promise. You can purchase a Kill A Watt meter for about \$20 to \$30 online or at local retailers.

ENERGY STAR-CERTIFIED SOUND BAR

Imagine listening to great sound while watching television, but also using less energy when doing so. This is what an Energy Star-certified sound bar can provide. The Energy Star-certified sound bars use about 70% less electricity than regular sound bars, which saves you energy and money. They include volume-leveling technology to ensure that commercials are not louder than the actual shows you're watching, and these lower volumes also save energy. Sound bars create a three-dimensional surround-sound effect, reducing the need for multiple speakers around the room, which also contributes to less energy use.



Energy Star-certified sound bars, like the Samsung model shown here, use about 70% less electricity than regular sound bars. Photo Credit: Samsung

For anyone who enjoys curling up with a good movie or binging the latest show, the Energy Star-certified sound bar is a great gift to give. The costs depend on the brand, bells and whistles, but Samsung and Vizio offer Energy Star-certified sound bars for around \$100.

SMART POWER STRIP

Power strips allow you to increase the number of outlets in your home, but unlike a normal power strip, smart power strips help to reduce "vampire power" — the energy used by electronics even when they're in standby mode.

The great thing about the smart power strip is that you can leave all your electronics plugged in without having to worry about them using standby power, because the smart power strip shuts off electricity to those devices when they are in standby mode. This can help you save a significant amount of



Smart power strips, like the TrickleStar power strip shown here, allow you to leave electronics plugged in without having to worry about wasting energy. Photo Credit: TrickleStar

money over the year and, depending on your home, you can potentially save 10% to 20% of your home energy consumption.

There are three types of outlets in the smart power strip. The first is the "always on" socket, which is meant for things like Wi-Fi or a cable modem; the second is the "main" socket, which is meant for televisions or computers; and the final is the "secondary" socket, which should be connected to electronics like printers, speakers or gaming consoles.

Some smart power strips include additional features like the ability to connect to smart home assistants through voice control or an app, or the ability to set a schedule to automatically turn certain devices on or off. You can purchase a smart power strip for about \$25 online or at local retail stores.

LED HOLIDAY LIGHTS

If you want to celebrate the holidays but also save 80% of the energy you use while doing so, then LED holiday lights should be on your gift list. Get festive this holiday season without taking a toll on your energy bill.

The benefits of LED holiday lights aren't limited to energy savings. They are safer since they don't get as hot as incandescent lights, and they're sturdier since they aren't made of glass. LEDs also last much longer than incandescent lights, and they're easier to install because they're less likely to overload a wall socket. To manage your energy use more efficiently, you can also add a timer that shuts off the lights as you go to bed.

These are just a few gift ideas for the energy nerd in your life. Whatever you decide to leave under the tree, have a safe and happy holiday season!

Maria Kanevsky is a program analyst for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.