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Carthage 601-267-5671
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The path to efficiency independence

While fireworks and Independence Day parades are synonymous with the Fourth of July, no such fanfare comes to mind when discussing energy efficiency. Perhaps it should. If you think about it, energy efficiency not only benefits individuals and families, but the country as a whole. Energy efficiency combined with energy conservation and advances in technology in the utility industry, ultimately help our country on a path toward greater energy independence. And that's worth celebrating.

Benefits of efficiency

At its essence, greater efficiency means less energy is used for the production of goods and services. For individual consumers, a reduction in energy use usually translates to a tangible financial benefit – more money in your wallet at the end of the month. If your co-op neighbors are also using less energy, collectively, it means the overall cost of providing that electricity could be lower and may result in reduced costs for co-op members. For many, this is reason enough to strive for greater energy efficiency. On a national level, energy efficiency, sometimes called the “fifth fuel,” has a more profound impact. It can potentially boost the economy by allowing consumers and businesses to invest in other areas. As importantly, greater energy efficiency may slow the rate at which domestic energy is depleted, and therefore reduce or diminish the need for foreign energy.

Strike up the band

There's no need to wait for the first exploding burst of fireworks in the night sky to start your energy efficiency efforts. Every American can take charge of their own energy

use, regardless of the date on the calendar. Small steps can lead to a big difference for you and your neighbors, whether across the road or across the country.

Energy efficiency can generally be achieved two ways. The first is with mechanical change, such as replacing an older HVAC unit or less efficient appliance or with a new ENERGY STAR model or upgrading to new, insulated windows. Less expensive actions include improving the seal of your home's “envelope” by caulking exterior windows and doors and sealing openings where pipes and ductwork meet the outside. Swapping out the last incandescent bulbs (inside and outside) with LEDs also makes a noticeable difference.

Smart control

The second way to realize energy efficiency is through smarter management of your energy use. Leveraging smart thermostat technology is a good place to start. Most smart thermostats contain an app allowing remote control by mobile phone or tablet. Program your thermostat to reflect your family's schedule. Many thermostat programs allow you to view and edit your thermostat schedule and monitor the amount of energy used. Sometimes, however, energy efficiency is simply a matter of changing old habits such as washing clothes in cold water instead of hot or running the dishwasher during off-peak times.

Regardless of the path you take on the road to energy efficiency and independence, Central Electric Power Association can help you on the journey. For information about energy efficiency programs, contact 601-267-5671.



Tip

of the Month



Save on your utility bill by turning your thermostat up!

Setting your thermostat to a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner will not cool your home any faster and could result in excessive cooling and unnecessary expense.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Be efficient in the kitchen with no-bake recipes

Cooking in the summer can be unbearable, and the last thing you want to do on the hottest, most humid days is turn on the oven to make dinner. Your air conditioner works extra hard during summer months to keep your home cool, so why not give it a break with easy, efficient, no-bake recipes. The recipes below are meant to help you make a delicious meal for your family, without breaking a sweat!

Tzatziki

This refreshing dip can be eaten with pita chips or veggies. You can also add it to some grilled chicken or veggies as a sauce, or even add it to a salad to make a creamy dressing! Here's the recipe:

- 2 cups (plus 1 tablespoon) 2 percent Greek yogurt
- 1 cup cucumber, grated
- 1 1/2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons dill leaves (plus extra for garnish)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Add all the ingredients to a bowl, then stir gently to mix.

Pita with Spiced Chickpea Salad and Whipped Feta

Spread the whipped feta into your pita, add the chickpea salad and you have a delicious sandwich. Add grilled chicken or even a couple slices of smoked turkey or chicken breast for a heartier meal. Here's the recipe:

For the Spiced Chickpea Salad:

- 2 cans chickpeas, drained
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 2 teaspoons dill
- 2 teaspoons sumac
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon red chili flakes
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 oz. cherry tomatoes
- 1/2 cup chopped cucumber
- 1 small red onion, finely diced
- 1 tablespoon fresh dill
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro

Add chickpeas, olive oil, lemon juice and spices to a bowl; stir to combine. Allow the mixture to sit for 15 minutes to 1 hour to let the flavors meld.

Add tomatoes, cucumber and onion. Add dill and cilantro, and stir to combine.

For the Whipped Feta:

- 6 oz. feta cheese
- 2 oz. cream cheese
- 1/4 cup olive oil

Add feta and cream cheese to a blender. Slowly drizzle the olive oil into the blender top until the mixture is creamy and smooth.



Frozen Lime Pie

A creamy dessert that's a cinch to make.

- 1 prepared 9-inch graham cracker crust
- 1 (8-oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1 (14-oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- 1/2 cup (about 3 medium limes) fresh lime juice
- 1 tsp. grated lime peel
- Optional garnish: lime slices or mint leaves

Beat cream cheese in a small mixer bowl until smooth. Gradually add

sweetened condensed milk and evaporated milk, and beat until smooth. Add lime juice and peel, and beat on medium speed for 1 minute. Pour mixture into graham cracker crust. Freeze for at least 2 hours or until firm. Let stand at room temperature for 10 to 15 minutes before serving. Garnish, if desired, and serve immediately.



Keep Food Safe Before, During and After a Power Outage

Unfortunately, power outages do occur from time to time. It's important to know how to keep your food safe during an outage. Use these tips from USDA to help minimize food loss and reduce your risk of illness.

Before power outage	During power outage	After power outage
<p>Keep refrigerator at 40° or below. Freeze items like fresh meat and poultry that you won't use immediately. Keep freezer set to 0° or below. Group frozen foods to help items stay colder longer.</p>	<p>Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed</p> <p>If the doors stay closed during the length of the outage:</p> <p>A full freezer will hold its temperature for 48 hours.</p> <p>A refrigerator will keep food safe for four hours.</p>	<p>Check the temperature inside your refrigerator and/or freezer.</p> <p>If the temperatures are safe, the food should be safe to eat.</p>

Foods that should be thrown out after an extended power outage:

- Meat, poultry or seafood products
- Milk, yogurt and other dairy products
- Cooked or sliced produce
- Eggs and egg products
- Soft and shredded cheese
- Opened baby formula
- Dough and cooked pasta

Source: USDA