


# Energy Partners

A monthly look at the happenings of and related to:



New-Mac Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner   
The power of human connections

## Bitter January rivals last year's record cold

### New-Mac reminds customers to be efficient and prepared

As was the case last year, when we experienced the coldest January in more than 20 years, 2011's first calendar month brought some bitter temps.

At the time of this publication's press date, 2011's degree-day total was just a shade behind that of 2010's but was still on pace to be one of southwest Missouri's coldest Januaries in the past few decades.

As a reminder: Degree-days are a measurement indicating how much the outdoor temperature will affect space heating or cooling based on a standard temperature of 65 degrees. Heating degree-days are calculated in the winter by averaging the high and low temperatures for a calendar day, then subtracting the result from 65. Cooling degree-days, in the summer, are figured by averaging the high and low temperatures for a calendar day, then subtracting 65 from the average of the high and low temperatures. The higher the degree-days number, the more our heating units are working in the winter and our cooling units in the summer.

You can compare degree-day totals courtesy of the National Weather Service



Certainly, these bitter temps will affect your energy bill, so New-Mac reminds customers to be energy-efficient and conserve energy where possible. Seal cracks and crevices with caulk and weatherstripping, and consider your home's thermostat setting. NEVER risk safety by turning your thermostat down too low, but every degree of adjustment can make a difference on your utility bill, especially if you heat with a forced-air electric furnace. Also, use portable space heaters sparingly, as a single heater running constantly at 1,500 watts will use around \$100 worth of energy in a month's time.

Also, New-Mac encourages you to be prepared for winter's worst. Certainly we can not predict, if or when, ice or heavy wet snows will set in, but something everyone can do is be prepared.

By planning ahead, the hardships of destructive winter storms can be alleviated. New-Mac encourages customers to keep the following items on hand, and be prepared:

- Flashlight (with extra batteries) and candles.
- Battery-powered radio.
- Bottled water and non-perishable food items.
- Manual can opener.
- Extra medicine and baby items.
- First-aid supplies.
- Back-up heating source – NEVER use a charcoal grill to cook or heat inside!
- Fire extinguisher and smoke detector.

New-Mac also reminds everyone to never approach downed power lines as they may be energized.

**In the event of outages, New-Mac customers should have their map number ready and call 451-1515 or 800-322-3849.** Don't assume that someone else has

Weather Forecast Office in Springfield by visiting their website at [www.crh.noaa.gov/sgf/?n=climate\\_index](http://www.crh.noaa.gov/sgf/?n=climate_index). Then select your region and a month of interest and look at the HDD (heating degree-days) or CDD (cooling degree-days) total.

As cold as January has been, it could get worse before it gets better. *The Almanac for Farmers & City Folk* forecasts that February will feature "temperatures a few degrees below normal" for most of Missouri.

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Energy Partners is a monthly publication of New-Mac Electric for the purpose of informing members of the programs, services and happenings of, and related to, the cooperative.

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### Think twice before cutting meter seals

A broken or removed meter seal is viewed as an indicator of meter tampering. Therefore, do not cut a meter seal without authorization from New-Mac. If electrical work needs done, requiring a seal to be broken, such work should be performed by someone with electrical training. Many times, a main breaker switch can simply be flipped to allow for such work.

### Don't miss us at upcoming trade shows

New-Mac Electric will be hitting the road and making its usual stops at three local trade shows in the weeks ahead.

Come by and visit with us and see how you can be more energy efficient around your house.

#### HBA Home Show

- February 25-27
- Holiday Inn Convention Center, Joplin
- Friday & Saturday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Sunday, 1-5 p.m.

#### Neosho Area Business & Industry Review

- March 11-12
- Neosho High School cafeteria
- Friday, 6-8:30 p.m.
- Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

#### McDonald County Business Expo

- March 26
- McDonald High School gymnasium
- Saturday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

# Weatherization assistance available through Economic Security Corporation

New-Mac Electric members with low incomes may be eligible for free weatherization of their homes.

The Economic Security Corporation (ESC) of the Southwest Area has \$3 million of stimulus funds to spend in McDonald, Newton, Jasper and Barton Counties, and currently, the agency's priority is improving energy efficiency in the homes of the elderly, disabled and families with children.

For accepted households, an energy auditor will inspect the home and assess where the greatest gain in energy efficiency can be achieved. Then, a crew will perform those measures, such as caulking and weatherstripping, adding insulation, and cleaning, repairing or replacing heating units. Additionally, ESC will change out the home's light bulbs with CFLs and will possibly even replace an old water heater or refrigerator.

This weatherization program is free for households living at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. In order to qualify, for example, a single-person household must have an income

equal to or less than \$21,600; for a two-person household, the income must be at or below \$29,140; and the limits for four- and six-person households are at \$44,100 and \$59,060 respectively.

Applications for the program are available at the Joplin ESC office, or they can be mailed or emailed upon request. Applicants are required to provide proof of income, copies of Social Security cards, copies of the most recent utility bills, and proof of home ownership or authorization from a landlord. Renters are eligible with approval from their

landlords and an agreement from the property owner to make a \$300 contribution. For more information, or to request an application, call 417-781-4437 or e-mail [weatherizationesc@yahoo.com](mailto:weatherizationesc@yahoo.com).

**Eligibility for weatherization services is based on household income. To determine whether you may qualify, use this table. Your household income must be equal to or less than the income shown for the number of people living in your home.**

Number in Household	Income
1	\$21,600
2	\$29,140
3	\$36,620
4	\$44,100
5	\$51,580
6	\$59,060
7	\$66,540
8	\$74,020
9	\$81,500
10	\$88,980

# Few options for future watts

There are still some folks around who remember the power shortages electric cooperative members faced several decades ago. If you were a member then, you probably were contacted by your electric cooperative and asked to limit your use of electricity.

Because of this shortage, electric cooperatives around the country formed their own power supply cooperatives. These, in turn, built the power plants that gave rural people an affordable and reliable source of power for the first time.

Those who remember those "dark" days advise us never to return there. That's why we are making decisions now to ensure you will always have an adequate supply of electricity.

While there are many uncertainties about anything in the future, one thing is sure: use of electricity is not going to slow down. Our experts pre-

dict that sometime around 2023, demand for electricity in Missouri will top the available supply.

As we look at the options for those "future watts," we can see our choices will be few. Legislation and proposed Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA) rules to limit carbon emissions make investment in new coal-fired power plants unlikely.

That leaves natural gas and nuclear energy as the only two options to meet around-the-clock needs for electricity. It would be tempting to stick with natural gas, because these plants are less expensive to build, and fuel prices currently are low.

However, if all of the electric utilities in the U.S. started building new natural gas plants, it's



**By Barry Hart**  
Executive Vice President  
of the Association of  
Missouri Electric  
Cooperatives



# Standby generators must be set up & ran correctly

A standby generator can be helpful during an extended power outage, but proper installation and operation is critical!

Generators come in a variety of sizes. They can range from 500 watts up to several megawatts of output, and run on gasoline, diesel, propane or natural gas. The size of generator needed can be determined by totaling the wattage of the lights, appliances, devices, etc., and then add about 20 percent for the increased start-up power requirements.

Improper installation of a generator puts people, including electrical linemen, at great risk. A whole-house generator – one that is tied directly into your wiring – must have a double-throw transfer switch installed at your breaker panel by a qualified electrician. Without the switch, a generator can backfeed 240 volts to the transformer, where it is then stepped up to 7,200 volts and sent down the lines, creating a life-threatening situation for the linemen



**Make safety the top priority if you use a standby generator.**

trying to restore your power.

The double-throw switch makes it impossible to have both the generator and the power supplier service connected at the

same time. It opens one to close the other.

Another reason for having a qualified electrician hook up your generator is for the protection of everything you plan to have powered by it. Improperly connecting to the generator could damage all of your appliances, electronics, etc.

When weather threatens, generators can provide peace-of-mind, but they must be installed correctly. Please also consider the following safety tips involving generators:

- Follow the instructions included with your generator.
- Make sure your generator is properly grounded.
- Never overload the generator.
- Never add fuel while it is running.
- Never use a generator indoors.
- Always keep a fully-charged class ABC fire extinguisher nearby.
- Turn off all appliances powered by your generator before shutting it down.

## ○ Hart

*Continued from page 2*

likely demand would outpace supply, with resulting shortages and higher prices. And while natural gas plants release less carbon dioxide than coal plants, they still have a sizable carbon footprint. There are other emerging environmental concerns with natural gas production that could lead to future problems.

That's why Missouri's electric cooperatives have joined in an unprecedented arrangement among all segments of the state's electric utility industry — cooperative, municipal and investor-owned — to preserve the nuclear energy option for Missouri. And we may need your help to make this option a reality.

New Missouri Sen. Mike Kehoe has introduced a measure that would allow this arrangement to move forward. Kehoe's bill, S.B. 50, would make it possible for investor-owned utilities to recover their

costs in a more timely manner for an early site permit for a nuclear plant next to the existing one in Callaway County.

Without this provision, it's unlikely the investor-owned utilities can invest in the nuclear energy option. And without all the industry players, the cost for building the plant would be out of reach.

Most of Missouri's leaders agree this plant would be a big win for the state. If any opposition emerges, it would be from groups that are only concerned about today and are not interested in the long-term needs of the state's consumers. Reliable electricity is vital to keeping the businesses we have and attracting new businesses — such as data centers and other well-paying high-tech firms — to the state in the future.

Please pay attention as SB 50 moves

through the legislature. And when asked, please help us get this important piece of legislation passed on behalf of all Missourians. As this legislation proceeds, your electric coop will have information you can use in contacting your elected officials.

In the end, this effort is all about diversification and not putting all of our eggs in one

basket. Electric cooperative members, regardless of their business interests, understand this concept. When a large portion of your electric bill pays for generation, we feel it's wise to be diversified.

Preserving the nuclear energy option is vital to ensure you have affordable and reliable power well into the future.

## Energy Partners' Recipe of the Month:

### WAVERLY COOKIES

Submitted by New-Mac member: **Vivian Harper**

- |  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| 1 box <i>Waverly</i> or <i>Club</i> crackers | 1 stick butter       |
| ½ cup sugar                                  | ¼ tsp. vanilla       |
| 1 stick margarine                            | 1 cup chopped pecans |

Line jelly roll pan with foil. Separate crackers and lay on foil. Sprinkle with pecans. Mix sugar, butter, margarine and vanilla; then boil 2½ min. Pour over the crackers and bake 10-12 min. at 350°. Let set 30 seconds and take out of pan and put on foil to cool. Store in airtight container. Must use butter and margarine.

*Send your recipe, along with your name and customer number, to: Recipes, c/o New-Mac Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 310, Neosho, MO 64850; or recipes@new-mac.com. If your recipe is selected, New-Mac will apply a \$15 credit to your bill.*

# Crawl spaces: To seal or not to seal

As Shakespeare might say, “To seal or not to seal, that is the question.” What does sealing a crawl space have to do with energy savings? Actually, a lot, as you’ll soon see. In fact, one of the most asked questions I get has to do with crawl spaces. It goes something like this: “Mr. Rye, how do I prevent moisture, mold and musty smells in my house’s crawl space?”

A common answer to this question is to add more foundation vents.

But nothing could be further from the truth, my friends. If that was the answer you got, then the person who advised you simply didn’t know the facts. Now I’m assuming that you don’t have standing water under your house, which is another serious topic. (Call me if you have that problem.)

Twenty-five years ago, I was working with Steve Hudson, a geothermal system installer who lives in north Arkansas. Steve had previously introduced me to blower door testing of houses, which is the best way to determine the energy efficiency (or inefficiency) of a house. He had also been trying to convince me that we should be totally sealing crawl spaces and NOT installing foundation vents. I thought he was crazy.

I recall that the day was cold and snowy, and he asked me if I would go to his house and look at his crawl space. I really wanted to head back home to Little Rock, but I agreed to go. We trekked through the snow to his house and opened the crawl space access door. Remember, it is cold and snowing, probably about 25 degrees. I will never forget what I saw. I expected to find a dark, damp dirt floor with no telling what growing on the ground, walls and floor joists. Instead, I was pleasantly surprised when he turned on a light, revealing clean white plastic on the ground and white cellulose insulation that had been sprayed on the foundation walls. Most importantly, the crawl space was as warm as toast and as dry as the desert.

My first thought was, “this is wonderful.” My second thought was, “surely I can’t be wrong.” Well, I was wrong. I

started telling everyone about sealing up crawl spaces. And then everybody thought I was crazy.

One day it dawned on me that if a crawl space is sealed at the ground and it has no foundation vents, then it is really like a basement, only not as tall. So why not treat a crawl space just like it is a not-so-tall basement. It also dawned on me that most folks close their foundation vents in the winter. That rarely, if ever, causes a problem.

Then they open the vents in the summer when the outdoor air is most humid. Moisture in the air always goes from warm to cool (like a glass of iced tea). Well, the crawl space is cooler than the hot humid air, which means that the warm moist air is trying to find a cold surface, like ductwork, floor joists or ground for condensation to occur. Read this closely now. Moisture in a crawl space comes from only three sources:

- The ground
- Outside air
- A plumbing leak.

If you place heavy plastic on the ground, it will stop ground moisture (not standing water) from migrating into your crawl space. If you close or seal the foundation vents, that prevents outside moisture from entering the crawl space. And if you don’t have a plumbing leak, you don’t have plumbing leak. BINGO. No moisture. No mold. No musty smell. A warmer floor in the winter.

And, oh yes, as proven by research, a 10 to 20 percent savings on your heating and cooling costs.

Feel free to call me at 501-653-7931 with any energy savings questions you may have.

*Doug Rye, a licensed architect living in Arkansas and the popular host of the “Home Remedies” radio show (as heard on KBTN 1420 AM & KQYX 1450 AM), works as a consultant for the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas to promote energy efficiency to cooperative members statewide. To order Doug’s video, call Doug at 1-888-Doug-Rye. More energy-efficiency tips can also be found at [www.ecark.org](http://www.ecark.org).*



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System Engineer ..... Stan Irsik  
Manager of Operations ..... Alan Loehr  
Manager of Marketing ..... Mark K. Rakes  
Billing Supervisor ..... Vickie Stuart

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## Services Provided to Members

Call our consumer services department for information on the following services:

- Autowithdrawal Payment**
- Levelized Billing**
- Rental Light**
- Meeting rooms available at both locations**
- Credit Card Acceptance**
- Safety Programs (upon request)**
- Surge Protection**
- Green Power**

## Questions? Comments?

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## ○ Winter

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already called for your area.

During extended outages, customers can get updates on the progression of restoration efforts by checking our website, [www.newmac.com](http://www.newmac.com), or through the local media: TV stations (KSNF-16, KODE-12, KOAM-7, Fox-14), radio stations (KBTN AM-1420 and FM-99.7, KMXL 95.1 FM, KNEO 91.7 FM, KZRG 1310 AM, 1230 AM The Talker, Big Dog 97.9 FM, KSYN 92.5 FM, Lite Rock 93.9 FM, KIX 102.5) and newspapers (*Neosho Daily News*, *Joplin Globe*, *McDonald County News Gazette*, *Seneca News Dispatch*).