



TWIN VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

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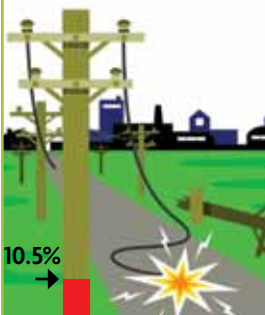
Robert Webster, Jr.
Trustee

Office Hours

Monday-Friday
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

FEMA Rebuild Update

As of November 10, we have completed 10.5% of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) rebuild work.



FROM THE MANAGER

Weatherizing Your Home Could Mean Tax Credits

The economic uncertainty we're facing these days has many of us putting money into something we feel comfortable with: our homes. Making a few upgrades around the house generally pays big dividends. When boosting energy efficiency is one of them, the decision becomes a no-brainer.

For any energy efficiency work made at your residence during the coming year, Uncle Sam will foot 30 percent of the bill—not a bad deal! Through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act—better known as the stimulus bill—the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) offers a personal tax credit of up to \$1,500 for energy efficiency improvements made to existing homes during 2009 and 2010.

The credit covers 30 percent of the cost of adding insulation materials and exterior doors, windows, and roofs designed to help reduce a home's heat loss or gain. It also includes efficient central air conditioners, air-source heat pumps, hot water boilers, and biomass stoves.

For weatherization-related work the credit covers only the cost of materials. With heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems as well as biomass stoves installation costs also count toward the credit.

To take advantage of the program, a home improvement must

have taken place after February 17, 2009, (the day the stimulus bill was signed into law), and products must meet specific energy efficiency criteria. A few rules of thumb will help you determine those criteria.

For exterior windows and skylights, rely on the Energy Star label. For other efficiency upgrades, request what's called a "Manufacturer Certification Statement" that the product or component qualifies for the tax credit.

Many manufacturers post these on their Web sites, but be sure to verify that the product does qualify before making a purchase. You can also visit www.irs.gov/recovery to review guidelines for eligible purchases.

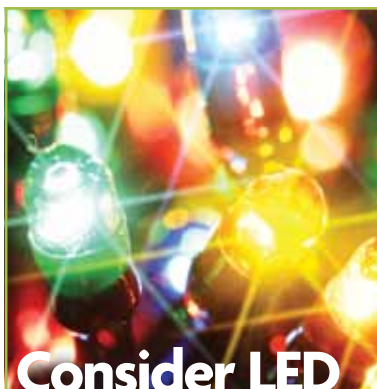
Energy tax credits reduce taxes owed, dollar for dollar, and can be carried forward to following years. While they can help boost any refund you receive, you won't receive a check directly for the credit amount. You can file for energy tax credits using IRS Form 5695, with a total maximum value of \$1,500 for improvements made during 2009 and 2010.

Twin Valley is here to help. For suggestions on how you may make your home more energy efficient while taking advantage of these tax credits, please don't hesitate to give us a call at 866-784-5500.



Ron Holsteen

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Consider LED Christmas Lights

With the holidays just around the corner, now is the time to plan to save energy with ENERGY STAR decorative light strings.

Still relatively new, ENERGY STAR lights use LED technology and run at cooler temperatures offering important safety benefits, as well as energy savings.

LED lights remain cool to the touch. This is an extremely important consideration when these colored strands come in close contact with dry, combustible Christmas trees.

- ▶ Can last up to 10 times longer than traditional incandescent strands.
- ▶ Are cool to the touch, reducing the risk of fire.
- ▶ Are available in a variety of colors, shapes and lengths.
- ▶ Are independently tested to meet strict lifetime and electrical requirements.
- ▶ Some models deliver features such as dimming or color shifting.
- ▶ A traditional light string with 300 lights costs about \$4.50 in electricity costs over the holiday season. In comparison, the LED equivalent costs only \$0.43 to operate. This is an annual savings of over \$4 per string!
- ▶ If all decorative light strings sold in America this year were ENERGY STAR qualified, we would save over 2 billion kWh per year and reduce greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to nearly 300,000 cars!

Keep Out the Cold with Weather Stripping

No mistaking it: winter has arrived. Any drafts around doors and windows that went unnoticed during fall are now downright uncomfortable—and adding to your energy bills.

Weather stripping offers a relatively quick fix for drafty doors. To determine if a door leading out of your house needs new weather stripping look for daylight. If even a sliver of daylight remains visible between the door and its frame or the floor, add weather stripping.

Next, shut the door or window on a piece of paper. If you can pull the paper out without tearing it, you're losing energy.

There are a variety of weather stripping materials available, each good for fitting different types of door and window frames. Most are made of rubber, foam, metal, vinyl, or a combination of materials. To determine the right item for the job, check the area: if any old, worn material has been previously installed, take a sample to your local hardware store or expert like a contractor. If no material exists as a guide, make detailed notes about the type of gap and how the door or window is installed—someone at the hardware store or your expert should be able to make a recommendation for you.

Once you have the proper materials for the job, consult any instructions that may be on the weather stripping package. Installation techniques range from simple to technical, depending on the type of material being used. If replacing old, worn weather stripping, be sure to note how it

was installed as you remove it.

Here are a few basic guidelines:

- ▶ Weather stripping should be applied to clean, dry surfaces in temperatures above 20°F.
- ▶ Measure the area to be weather stripped twice before you cut anything.
- ▶ Apply weather stripping snugly against both surfaces. The material should compress when the window or door is shut.

When weather stripping doors:

- ▶ Choose the appropriate door sweeps and thresholds.
- ▶ Weather strip the entire door jamb.
- ▶ Apply one continuous strip along each side.
- ▶ Make sure the weather stripping meets tightly at the corners.
- ▶ Use a thickness that causes the weather stripping to tightly press between the door and the door jamb, without making it difficult to shut.
- ▶ When weather stripping windows:
- ▶ Apply weather stripping between the sash and frame.
- ▶ The weather stripping shouldn't interfere with the operation of the window.

Weather Stripping Basics

While you should always consult specific instructions on weather stripping packages, here are some basic facts to keep in mind.

- 1 Weather stripping should be applied to clean, dry surfaces in temperatures above 20° F.
- 2 Measure the area to be weather stripped twice before you cut anything.
- 3 Apply weather stripping snugly against both surfaces. The material should compress when the window or door is shut.

Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association



Outage Calls Could Cost You

The Scenario

You come home from a long day at work, flip the light switch and nothing happens. You check to see if the light in the refrigerator is on when you open the door. Nothing comes on, so you go to the phone and call Twin Valley Electric to report you are out of power.

You might be asked if you have checked all your breakers, if your neighbors have electricity, if you have checked the main breaker or disconnect at the meter. You tell the cooperative how long you've been without power and give us your updated contact information.

After you report the outage, a lineman comes to investigate. Then later in the month, you receive an invoice from Twin Valley Electric. You ask yourself, how could I possibly be billed for maintaining the electric line?

Why Did You Receive a Bill?

Remember all those questions you were asked when you called to report your outage? If we haven't had other calls from your area, we are trying to determine if the problem is on "our" side of the meter or "your" side of the meter.

Twin Valley Electric's property stops at the meter. Anything beyond the meter is the responsibility of the property owner.

Our linemen are not always equipped to fix issues on your side of the meter. If our linemen arrive and find that the problem is on your side of the meter, you could be billed for the actual cost of labor and travel

Twin Valley Electric's property stops at the meter. Anything beyond the meter is the responsibility of the property owner.



Determining if an outage is on the member's or the cooperative's side of the meter is critical when reporting an outage.

whether or not we were able to make the necessary repairs. You may still need to contact an electrician.

You will also be charged for any repairs necessary to our property caused by a vehicle or other equipment. If someone damages cooperative property, the responsible party will be billed for the repairs.

The Reason

Twin Valley Electric is not asking our members to go without electricity when an outage occurs. We want to restore your power as soon as possible, so it is important that we determine the source of the problem before we send our crews.

We strive to provide the most reliable electric service to our members while maintaining costs. We want you to be aware of our operational policies up front.

If you have any questions, please contact our office at 866-784-5500.

Practice Holiday Electrical Safety This Season

Twin Valley Electric reminds you to keep electrical safety in mind when decorating for the holiday season:

- ▶ **Before decorating**, read and follow the manufacturers' instructions concerning installation and maintenance of all decorative electrical products.
- ▶ **Use lights** and other electrical decorations certified by a recognized independent testing laboratory such as CSA, UL, or ETL.
- ▶ **When decorating outdoors**, be sure to use lights and other electrical decorations certified for outdoor use.
- ▶ **Inspect each decoration** before plugging into an outlet. Cracked, frayed, loose or bare wires, as well as loose connections may cause electrical shock or start a fire. Replace damaged items.
- ▶ **Unplug electrical** decorations before replacing light bulbs or fuses.
- ▶ **Never nail** or staple light strings or extension cords.
- ▶ **Do not connect** more than three light string sets together.
- ▶ **Do not overload** extension cords – they can overheat and start a fire. Keep all outdoor extension cords and light strings clear of snow and standing water.
- ▶ **Never use electric** lights on a metallic tree.
- ▶ **Do not allow children** or pets to play with electrical decorations. Even small light decorations can produce a fatal shock if they are misused.
- ▶ **Turn off all** electrical decorations before leaving home or going to bed.
- ▶ **Plug outdoor** electric lights and decorations into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Portable GFCIs can be purchased wherever electrical supplies are sold.



I PULLED THE PLUG ON MY ENERGY COSTS JUST BY PULLING A FEW PLUGS.

TVs, gaming consoles, DVRs, cable boxes and almost anything that has a plug uses energy even when it's off. I'm saving around \$200 a year by pulling plugs and turning off power strips. What can you do? Find out how the little changes add up at TogetherWeSave.com.



Touchstone EnergySM
TOGETHERWESAVE.COM