



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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**TWIN VALLEY  
ELECTRIC CO-OP**

# NEWS

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## FROM THE MANAGER

# What is Beneficial Electrification?



**Angie Erickson**

If you're like most Americans, you're interested in saving money on energy costs and in doing your part to help the environment. But wouldn't it be great if you could

do both? Well, you can! It's through a concept called "beneficial electrification." This utility industry term means the innovations in energy technologies are creating new ways to use electricity instead of on-site fossil fuels, such as propane, natural gas and fuel oil, in a way that reduces overall emissions and energy costs.

In essence, by virtue of being plugged into the grid, the environmental performance of electric devices improves over time. As Twin Valley Electric and other utilities shift to more options that include renewable energy sources to make existing generation technologies cleaner, electricity will require less fossil fuel per kilowatt-hour of energy produced.

So, here's how this concept impacts you. It means that electric appliances such as your water heater, clothes dryer, oven and even your lawn care equipment have the potential to become greener. When Twin Valley takes advantage of advances in technology and the market at the generation point (how the electricity is pro-

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# Twin Valley Recognized for 107,989 Hours Accident Free



Twin Valley linemen were recognized for working another year without a lost-time accident. From left: Stacey Marston, Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. safety instructor; Kendall Manners and Tyler Kennett, linemen; Lee Tafanelli, CEO KEC; Jordan Robison and Kelly Walker, linemen; Adam Myers, line superintendent; Ty Lahey, Eric Cornell and Joe Brooks, linemen. Not pictured, Seth Strasser, lineman.

## What is Beneficial Electrification? *Continued from page 16A ►*

duced), it means those efficiencies are inherently passed along to you, the consumer-member.

### Electricity is Getting Cleaner

Because large appliances have a typical lifespan of about 10 years, it means you are able to benefit from the flexibility of the grid in addition to the increased efficiency of the particular appliance. In other words, the high efficiency electric oven you have today could be powered by renewable sources in the near future. This would not be the case with gas appliances where you are essentially locked into the technology of that gas appliance for the 10-year lifespan.

As Twin Valley is able to tap into more renewable options in the future, your electric appliance has the potential to become greener and more energy efficient. The only way you would be able to benefit from this trend is through an electric appliance.

### Small Steps to Help the Environment

For consumers and homeowners looking for more environmentally friendly options, choosing electric appliances, tools and cars over those powered by fossil fuels is an easy solution. Whether through electric lawn mowers, blowers and weed whackers (plug-in or rechargeable) or through electric water heaters and other appliances, beneficial electrification is a means to reducing greenhouse gases and helping our environment. It can also translate into a better

quality of life. For example, when you can trade the loud rumble of a gas-powered mower or blower for the quiet efficiency of electric versions, you eliminate the exhaust emissions and the unpleasant noise.

### Doing Our Part to Help the Environment

As the overall energy sector continues to evolve, Twin Valley is striving to take advantage of the advances in technology and the opportunities of the market as they become available. This means Twin Valley can leverage the flexibility of the grid to offer a wider range of renewable power selections as we continue to bring safe, reliable and affordable power to our community.

In addition, through our SmartHub app, we offer our members the convenience and ability to manage and monitor their energy use. To save you money, we also offer rebates on heat pumps and electric water heaters.

We care about our community because we live here too. I hope you'll reach out to Twin Valley, your trusted energy partner, to discuss available renewable energy options and to learn about more ways to reduce your energy use. Because when you participate in the energy efficiency programs and incentives we offer, you're doing your part to save energy and better our environment. While each member's reduction might be small, together, they can lead to significant savings of money and emissions. And that means a brighter future for all of us.

## REMEMBER ELECTRICAL SAFETY

As you prepare for planting season don't forget to plan for safety. There are many aspects to safety on the farm, but electrical safety is often overlooked. Keep these safety tips in mind as you prepare for planting.



**TRAIN OTHERS:** Train anyone working on your farm, including family members and seasonal workers, on electrical hazards.



**SAFETY FIRST:** Have daily meetings to review the day's work and discuss safety implications. Know and review where the power lines are, the clearance required, and the proper position of extensions as they are transported.



**WAIT TO UNFOLD:** Remind workers to fold or unfold extensions well into the field, not close to the field's edge where power lines are typically located.



**USE A SPOTTER:** When working near power lines, always have a spotter on the ground who can direct you away from power lines or poles if you are getting too close.



**DO NOT EXIT YOUR CAB:** If your machine or truck makes contact with a power line, pole or guy wire, you could become electricity's path to ground and become electrocuted if you step out of the cab.



**CALL 911:** Call 911 to have your electric utility dispatched to deenergize the power source. Only exit the cab if your equipment is on fire. If that happens, make a solid jump out and hop away with feet together as far as you can.



# Smart Home Tech for Your Budget

Smart home devices can add comfort and convenience to your life, but the price tag for some can be another story. Since many smart home technologies are cutting-edge, the cost of owning one can sometimes be a major barrier. Luckily, there are inexpensive options for smart home devices that won't break the bank, while still offering nearly all the same benefits. Here are three inexpensive options to get you started.

Smart home speakers provide a wide range of features such as the ability to play music, call friends or family or even locate a misplaced smart phone. One of the most useful aspects of smart home speakers is that they act as a smart home hub for your other smart devices. Each smart speaker comes with a voice assistant, like Amazon Alexa or Google Assistant, which can be used to control additional smart devices in your home. When choosing a smart home speaker, make sure your other smart devices are compatible with the system and with each other. Google Assistant, for example, works best with other Google products, rather than Amazon or Apple products. Several smart home speakers, especially smaller, entry-level types like the Amazon Echo Dot and Google Home Mini, can cost \$30 or less. This makes them more affordable than the larger versions, like Amazon Echo and Google Home, while still offering nearly all the same features.

Another affordable smart home technology is the smart plug. The technology works by directly inserting the smart plug into an outlet, then plugging your device into the smart plug. This can make any device "smart" by connecting it to your Wi-Fi through the smart plug. They can also be used with smart home speakers. One of the best features of a smart plug is that they can help you reduce your monthly energy use. This can be done by programming automatic shut-off times to prevent devices



Smart home speakers can connect with other smart devices in your home to save energy.

from drawing energy when they're not in use. There are plenty of inexpensive and well-performing smart plugs available under \$20.

Smart lightbulbs are among the cheapest and the easiest smart devices to install in your home. They can be controlled through your phone or by voice if connected to your smart home speaker. Some interesting features include the ability to choose different lighting colors and shades, dimness levels and the ability to turn them on or off entirely. There is an extensive market for smart LED bulbs, but some of the less expensive options are the Wyze Bulb, the Lixf Mini and the Ikea Tradfri, with prices ranging from about \$8 to \$20 per bulb. For multi-bulb fixtures, an alternative to buying several smart bulbs is to buy a smart light switch to control the entire fixture. However, this option doesn't allow for different color choices and requires more handiwork to manually change out the switches.

As with any smart home device, access to a secure and stable Wi-Fi connection will be crucial to using the technology properly. Smart home devices will almost always be more expensive than their "non-smart" counterparts, but they provide additional comfort and convenience that traditional devices simply cannot. The value of these devices is up to you, the consumer, to determine if they are truly worth the price.



## HANDLE WITH CARE Irrigation Equipment ON THE FARM

Irrigation watering pipes are often made of aluminum, a great conductor of electricity. When assembling irrigation systems, be extremely careful when handling long sections of pipe.

- ▶ Always consider your location and the length of the pipe you are holding.
- ▶ Make sure the pipe's long reach will not come near or into contact with power lines.
- ▶ If the pipe touches or comes too close to a power line, you could be electrocuted.
- ▶ Do not store, handle or assemble irrigation pipes under or near overhead power lines.

Talk to everyone in your family (including kids and teens) about the dangers of moving pipes. **TEACH IRRIGATION SAFETY TO ALL STAFF AND SEASONAL WORKERS.**

We care about your safety. Please pause and consider all power line locations before starting a job.



## Three Electrifying Kitchen Appliances to Save Time and Energy

Whether your oven and stove top are powered by gas or electricity, it's no secret that they consume more energy than smaller countertop appliances, like slow cookers and toaster ovens. In addition to efficiency, smaller kitchen appliances can provide faster cooking times and less hassle with cleanup.

If you're looking for convenient cooking methods with the added bonus of energy efficiency, here are three electrifying appliances for your kitchen:

**1 AIR FRYERS** are becoming increasingly popular, and consumers have a lot of good things to say about these handy little appliances. Air fryers use convection to circulate hot air and cook the food — this means little to no oil is required, resulting in healthier meals than those from traditional fryers. Air fryers are fairly small, so they won't take up much of your counter space, and with everything cooked in the fryer, cleanup will be a breeze. Air fryers are available in a variety of sizes, and prices range from \$40 to \$200-plus.

**2 ELECTRIC GRIDDLES** have certainly been around for a while, and they offer several benefits for any home chef (beyond bacon and eggs!). Griddles



**Air fryers circulate hot air (convection) to cook the food. This means little to no oil is required, resulting in healthier meals than those from traditional fryers.**

are convenient because you can cook everything at once — like a “one-pan” meal, and the possibilities are endless. From fajitas to sandwiches to French toast, griddles can help satisfy any taste buds. They consume small amounts of energy and provide quick cooking times, so your energy bill will thank you. Prices and sizes for griddles vary, but you can typically find one for about \$30 at your local retail stores.

**3 PIZZA** brings people together, so why not consider a pizza maker for your kitchen? These compact, countertop machines are an inexpensive alternative to a costly brick oven, and they use less energy than your traditional oven. Choose your own fresh ingredients to whip up a faster, healthier pizza at home. Plus, most pizza makers are multifunctional and can be used to cook flatbreads, frittatas, quesadillas and more.



**Pizza makers are compact and inexpensive, and they use less energy than your traditional oven.**

You can purchase a pizza maker for about \$30 to \$150 online or at your local retailer.

These are just a few electrifying appliance options for your kitchen. Remember, when you're cooking a smaller meal, countertop appliances can save time and energy.



**Electric griddles consume small amounts of energy and provide quick cooking times, so your energy bill will thank you.**

## TIPS FOR AVOIDING SOLAR SCAMS

As the popularity of rooftop solar panels increases, so do solar scams. Here are a few tips to consider before you install a solar PV system for your home.

- Talk to your electric co-op first. They can offer guidance and recommendations.
- Get at least three quotes from solar companies, and thoroughly read their reviews.
- Avoid solar companies that use high-pressure tactics.
- Don't believe unrealistic promises.
- Only sign clear, easy-to-understand contracts.

