A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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CMS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

The Enlightener

Lightbulb Winners

Congratulations to this month's lightbulb winners:

- Nicholas Adame
- Charlie Baker
- Andrew Barby
- Nikki Burton
- Lisa Ballout
- Kelly Bender

Contact us today for your free lightbulbs!

Control Your Controlled Burn

Don't let your controlled burn get away from you

It's called a controlled burn for a reason. If you don't plan your controlled burn in advance and keep it under check, it can quickly spread putting life in danger and utility and other equipment at risk.

If you are considering implementing a controlled burn (also known as a prescribed fire) to address vegetation or weed management, be sure to follow several precautions to stay safe:

- Don't start without advance planning.
- Certain groups should be notified: check with your town office, notify your local fire department, let your neighbors know your plans.
- Obtain all necessary permits.
- Check the forecast for weather conditions, such as wind direction and speed, and humidity. As a general rule, relative humidity should be 40% or higher.
- If there are power poles in the planned burning area, clear all vegetation and weeds at least 4 feet around the base of the pole.
- Wet the base of the pole with water before beginning your burn.

Even with the best-laid plans, a utility pole could catch on fire during a burn; however, planning in advance can decrease the chances. Fire damage to a power pole is usually evident by blackening and scorch marks, but even slight discoloration can cause serious problems. Sometimes the poles burn from the inside out, and the damage is not immediately apparent.

Before burning, check the property for electrical equipment and power poles to avoid damage and potential outages.

Take the time to plan ahead or your controlled burn could get expensive. The person who causes damage to a utility pole is responsible for the fees associated with replacing it.

There are many other safety considerations; check with local authorities and fully research all aspects of a controlled burn before setting fire to your land.

To inquire about controlled burns near power lines and poles, contact CMS Electric Cooperative at 800-794-2353.

Saving Money in the Laundry Room

A washer and dryer inside the home is a luxury many enjoy. There's no waiting for a machine, no coin slots, and no one taking out a wet load from the washer if you aren't there when the cycle ends.

Although it's cheaper per load and much more convenient to do laundry at home, there's a somewhat hidden cost to consider, and that's the energy it takes to run your washer and dryer.

What appliances in your home use the most energy? The water heater costs the most to run. Right behind it is the washer and dryer's combined energy use. (Although not considered appliances by many, heating/cooling tops the list, followed by the water heater.)

A dryer requires more energy to run than a washer, but there are ways to reduce your washing costs, too (think hot water versus cold). To save money in your laundry room, consider these tips:

- Select the right amount of water for the wash load — that is, don't select the "extra-large" setting when doing a small load. In fact, consider waiting to do laundry until you have full loads to conserve water.
- Use cold water to save the money you would spend heating water. Some laundry detergents are designed to tackle stains in cold water.
- Use the moisture sensor option on your dryer if it has one.
- Choose warm water instead of hot to cut a load's energy use in half, and using cold water will save even more, according to energy.gov.
- Use dryer balls, which help separate clothes and get more air to them, cutting drying time.
- Dry at lower settings. Even if your dryer runs longer, you'll use less energy and be less likely to over-dry your clothes.
- Clean the lint out of your dryer between loads and scrub the filter once a month to remove buildup.
- Put like items together since lighter-weight clothes take less time to dry. Drying towels and heavier cottons take longer.
- Take a clue from your teenage son and wear clothes more than once between laundering them (although don't wait until your jeans can stand by themselves).
- Consider an Energy Star® version when purchasing a dryer, which uses 20% less energy than a conventional model.
- Energy Star-certified washers use about 33% less water than regular clothes washers.
- Thoroughly clean your dryer's vents and duct system at least twice a year.

To learn more about how much you are spending to run your washer and dryer each year, refer to energy.gov's appliance energy use calculator.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Clothes dryers make up a large portion of your appliance energy consumption. Clean the lint filter after each cycle and scrub the filter with a toothbrush once a month to remove film and increase air circulation. **Source: energy.gov**

FARM SAFETY POWER LINE AWARENESS

Make sure everyone is trained in safe practices around electricity. Use these safety tips for you, your employees, seasonal workers, family members, and anyone else accessing your farm.

- Keep equipment at least 20 feet from lines — at all times, in all directions.
- Know all power line locations on your farm and routes between fields.
- Always use a spotter when moving equipment near power lines.
- Don't completely rely on autosteer or GPS to detect and clear power lines or poles.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, contact your local electric cooperative.

If your equipment does hit a power line, pole or guy wire, do no leave the cab. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.