



NINNESCAH RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# Watts Ahead

## Ninnescah Rural Electric Co-op, Inc.

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### In Case of an Outage

If your electricity is off for more than a few minutes, please call 800-828-5538. The office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday–Friday. After hours, calls will be answered by dispatch and forwarded to our on-call personnel.

## Energy Efficiency in Your Home

Energy Efficiency continues to be a major factor in home design, and will continue to be, experts say.

“Energy efficiency has so many benefits that go beyond just paying the bills,” explained Todd Abercrombie, owner of Midwest Building Performance in Peoria, Illinois. “It helps make the house more comfortable, provides more even temperatures and has a lot of societal benefits as well.”

To accomplish energy conservation, contractors and consumers take a variety of approaches.

“We are all looking for higher efficiency appliances, using LED lighting throughout homes and implementing water-saving features as well as tankless water heaters so that homeowners don’t have to pay to keep a big tank of water hot all of the time,” said Andrew Brindley, a home builder from Indianapolis.

“People want better windows, better

insulation, better roofs. We are doing two-by-six walls all of the time now.

They want very efficient furnaces and air conditioner systems and even want zone systems on their units to control the temperature in different rooms, so that a room that may not be used all of the time is not heated or cooled as much as rooms which are utilized more often,” added Donna Youngquist of R&D Custom Homes in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Often, especially in remodels, the goal is not necessarily about saving money, said Carl Kuchar of Woodchukar Carpentry in Payette, Idaho. “Sometimes, residents will just want to get their homes tightened up so that they are easier to heat and cool. It’s a comfort thing, not always something they approach from a return-on-investment angle,” he said.

Abercrombie said energy efficiency is multifaceted. “Energy efficiency

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## ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Looking for additional ways to save energy this summer? Your laundry room is a great place to start. Wash clothes with cold water, which can cut one load’s energy use by more than half. Your washing machine will use the same amount of energy no matter the size of the clothes load, so fill it up when you can. When drying clothes, separate the heavier cottons. Loads will dry faster and more evenly if you separate heavier cottons like linens and towels from your lightweight clothing.



## Ninnescah Welcomes New Employee



**Gage Taylor**

We would like to welcome **GAGE TAYLOR** to Ninnescah. He joined our linemen department on March 27 as an apprentice.

Taylor grew up in Pratt and graduated with an associate's degree in the Electrical Power Technology Program from Pratt Community College in 2022. He worked as a summer intern with us in 2021. We're glad to have you on staff, Gage!

## Journeyman Course Completed



**Trevor Hassler**

**TREVOR HASSLER** has successfully completed one of the most comprehensive training programs for power line personnel through the Merchant Job Training and Safety Program. Ninnescah Electric congratulates him on completing

this program and his promotion to journeyman lineman.

## Welcome New Members

- Queal Enterprises Inc – Pratt
- Berry Brothers Partnership – Pratt
- Angela McDonald – Medicine Lodge
- NEC Operating - Kansas LLC – Southlake, TX
- Karla Y Vargas – Pratt
- Nathan &/or Ashley Arp – Pratt
- Ryan T &/or Sierra P Aschenbrenner – Medicine Lodge
- John T Langford – Medicine Lodge
- Riley D Wadel – Saint Ignatius, MT

## Energy Efficiency in Your Home

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upgrades go beyond just what you would see on your utility bills," he said. "There are a lot of beneficial unintended consequences that can happen when you improve the efficiency of a home. For instance, moisture management, prevention of mold, improvement of indoor air quality and more."

To make any residence — new construction or existing home — more energy-efficient, he suggests a full energy audit which looks at a variety of factors that unnecessarily cost consumers money. "It looks at the big picture and analyzes things such as insulation in the attic and walls to pinpoint all of the various gaps and cracks that might need to be sealed," Abercrombie explained. "It's helpful to have diagnostic equipment such as a blower door and infrared cameras."

Additionally, an audit will look at heating and cooling systems as well as other systems including lighting, appliances and electronics.

He added that energy efficiency needs to be kept in mind even during new construction. "I've done blower door tests even before insulation is installed

to make sure we're getting things right; there are certain things you just cannot get to after the house is buttoned up with drywall, windows and doors."

Abercrombie said energy efficiency is all about paying attention to details. "We're not looking at adding products that would not already be in the scope of the new construction," he explained. "While sometimes it is about product selection, it is more about how things are installed and not missing other factors which often get missed during the rush to construct a home."

One place that often gets overlooked when it comes to efficiency is insulation in the ceiling of the home. "Leaky ceiling syndrome," he calls it. "Often when builders think of building an efficient house, they think about what they can do to make the walls more airtight, whether it is with house wrap or weather resistant barriers or spray foam, but they often ignore the ceiling plane — the area between the ceiling and the attic that doesn't get sealed as well as it should. It's the most important boundary in the home and we have more leakage there than we do in the walls," he said.



# Carbon Monoxide: A Silent Killer

Colorless, odorless and tasteless, carbon monoxide (CO) is a silent and dangerous gas responsible for killing at least 420 people in the United States each year, causing 100,000 visits to the emergency room and 14,000 hospitalizations, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Of these deaths, approximately 85 are caused by portable generators. Some of the potential consequences of CO poisoning include permanent brain and heart damage, fetal death and miscarriage.

## Symptoms of CO Poisoning Include:

- ▶ Headache.
- ▶ Weakness.
- ▶ Dizziness.
- ▶ Nausea or vomiting.
- ▶ Shortness of breath.
- ▶ Confusion.
- ▶ Blurred vision.
- ▶ Loss of consciousness.

Knowing the symptoms is important (especially when a non-CO-exposed person is assessing someone who has been exposed). However, many times, CO poisoning overtakes a person before he or she realizes what is happening.

CO can be present anytime an appliance or motor vehicle uses combustion fuel sources, such as gasoline, natural gas, oil, kerosene, propane, charcoal and wood. Usually, the amount of CO produced by these commonly used items is not hazardous. However, when they are used in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, CO can quickly build up, resulting in harmful levels in a matter of minutes.

The good news is that CO poisoning is preventable. To arm yourself against this deadly killer, follow these tips:

- ▶ Install battery-powered CO detectors on every level of your home and check them monthly to ensure they are working.
- ▶ If a CO alarm goes off or if someone is exhibiting symptoms of CO poisoning, call 911 immediately and take everyone outdoors to fresh air as quickly as possible.
- ▶ Consider installing a CO ventilation system, which combats carbon dioxide and CO by replenishing oxygen in the air.

- ▶ Have your heating system, fireplace, water heater and other combustion-run appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year.
- ▶ Read the instructions before using any combustion-powered appliance.
- ▶ Never use a charcoal grill, lantern or portable camping stove inside a home, tent or camper.
- ▶ Always open the garage door before starting or idling your vehicle, and make sure the door leading to your home from the garage is closed.
- ▶ Never use a portable generator with a combustion engine indoors or within 20 feet of your home or structure.
- ▶ Do not use a portable generator in a partially enclosed structure or area such as a basement, crawlspace, garage, porch, carport, tent, shed, camper or recreational vehicle.
- ▶ Carefully read all instructions when using a space heater that runs on gas or kerosene; always follow ventilation requirements.
- ▶ Avoid standing or swimming within 20 feet of generator exhaust while boating.
- ▶ Never leave a boat's engine running if there are swimmers in the water.
- ▶ Use proper fire prevention techniques and avoid smoke inhalation when possible.
- ▶ Carefully read the instructions and follow all safety precautions on the label when working with methylene chloride, commonly found in paint and varnish removers, which can break down into CO when inhaled.

For more information on electrical safety, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).



## Check the **WEATHER** Before You Go

More than 72% of lightning fatalities occur from June through August.

From 2006 through 2021

- ▶ 446 people were struck and killed by lightning in the U.S.
- ▶ Nearly two-thirds of the deaths happened while people were enjoying outdoor leisure activities such as fishing, camping and running.

June, July and August are the peak months for lightning across the U.S.

- ▶ More than 72% of lightning deaths occurred in these months.
- ▶ Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays having slightly more deaths than any other day of the week.

Lightning often strikes away from heavy rain; it can happen up to 10 miles away from rainfall.

**TO PREVENT LIGHTNING-RELATED TRAGEDIES, WHEN THUNDER ROARS, GO INDOORS.**

SOURCE: NATIONAL LIGHTNING SAFETY COUNCIL

## Energy-Saving Projects for the Weekend Warrior

Are you a weekend warrior? If you're considering home improvement upgrades that save energy and money, we've got a few project ideas for you — all of which can be completed in a day or less!

Here are three energy-saving projects that you can easily tackle whether you're a weekend warrior pro or a DIY dabbler.

### Get Smart About Home Cooling and Heating

Cooling and heating your home typically account for a large portion of energy bills. Smart thermostats can help keep your cooling and heating costs in check, with Energy Star®-certified models saving about 8% on annual energy costs.

Now that smart thermostats are more affordable (as little as \$70), this simple upgrade makes for a fun, efficient weekend project. Smart thermostats offer a variety of bells and whistles, but the average model will allow you to set custom temperature schedules, adjust the settings from anywhere using your phone, and over time, learn your cooling and heating preferences.

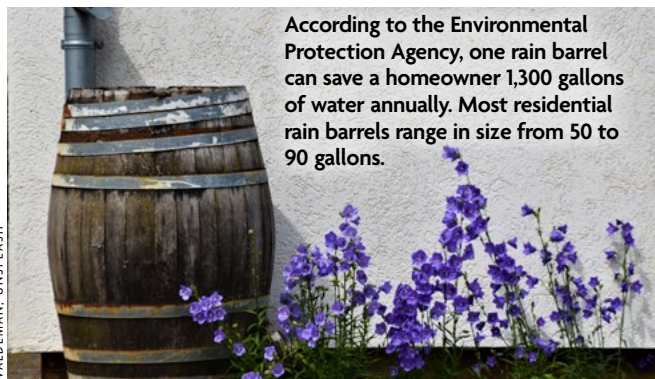
Your new smart thermostat will come with step-by-step instructions, but this project typically involves shutting off your HVAC at the breaker panel, disconnecting/removing the old thermostat, installing the new smart thermostat and connecting it to your home Wi-Fi.

Play it safe: Remember to carefully read the installation instructions before you get started.

### Go Green and Boost Your Greenery With a Rain Barrel

If you've got a green thumb, you already know that rainwater is the best water for your outdoor plants. Rainwater is free of minerals, salts and treatment chemicals found in tap water or groundwater. It also contains helpful macronutrients to foster healthy plant growth.

Installing a rain barrel is an easy way to harvest large amounts of rainwater and reduce home water use — it's a win-win.



According to the Environmental Protection Agency, one rain barrel can save a homeowner 1,300 gallons of water annually. Most residential rain barrels range in size from 50 to 90 gallons.

WALDEMAN, UNSPLASH



Installing a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on dryer costs — you can also save on cooling since unwanted heat from the clothes dryer won't be added to your home.

DANIEL SPASE

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According to the Environmental Protection Agency, one rain barrel can save a homeowner 1,300 gallons of water annually.

Most residential rain barrels range in size from 50 to 90 gallons, so the size you purchase will depend on your watering needs.

The simplest way to install a rain barrel is positioning a plastic or wooden barrel directly under your gutter downspout. Basic piping may be required, but this is an easy way to harvest rainwater, and the barrel won't take up much space. Consider a cover for the top of your rain barrel to keep insects and small debris out of your harvested water.

### Create Fresh Savings With a DIY Clothesline

If you have enough outdoor space available, installing a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on dryer costs — in the summer, you can also save on cooling costs since unwanted heat from the clothes dryer won't be added to your home (which makes your air conditioner work harder). Additionally, air drying is much gentler on fabrics and will keep your clothes and linens looking fresh longer.

You can create your own clothesline with two T-posts, wire and hook-and-eye turnbuckles. Depending on your soil, you may need a small amount of fast-setting concrete to set the posts. Another option is installing the line between two trees. A typical load of laundry requires about 35 feet of line, so keep this in mind as you're determining the best location.

If an outdoor clothesline isn't an option, no sweat! You can easily create an indoor drying rack that folds to save space. Home improvement websites like [www.thespruce.com](http://www.thespruce.com) and [www.hgtv.com](http://www.hgtv.com) offer step-by-step tutorials for a variety of indoor clothes racks.

These are just a few simple ideas to help you save energy and money. So, get out there, roll up those sleeves and tackle a few projects.