

# CEO CORNER



Ryan Bartlett,  
President / CEO

## Staying Safe Around Power Lines and Equipment

As the weather begins to warm, my family and I enjoy spending more time outside. Backyard barbecues with family and friends signals the beginning of summer. Although we are all ready to enjoy Spring, we've had an active winter season with ice and storm damage which can damage equipment that may not cause an immediate outage. As you find yourself spending more time outdoors, I encourage you take a few extra moments to identify potential hazards in and around your yard that may have recently surfaced.

As we all thaw out and begin to spend more time outside, please be aware of power lines and other electrical equipment that are found in backyards, pastures, right of ways and in various different forms of underground and overhead. All power lines, whether visible or not, carry high voltage and current, and if contact is accidentally made, the results can be dangerous or even deadly. Recognize that trees and tall vegetation may have grown interfering with the lines. Assume anything that is touching a power line could result in a fault and cause serious injury. Please stay away from anything interfering with power lines, do not approach or attempt to remove anything interfering with the lines.

Does your neighborhood have large green metal boxes along the lot lines, typically located in the backyard? These boxes are called pad mount transformers, which house equipment for the underground lines in your area. They are connected to primary

high-voltage lines, and secondary lines can extend in several directions to distribute power to homes and businesses. It is important that landscaping and other barriers be kept clear of these pad mount transformers. Our crews need at least 10 feet of clearance around the equipment to be able to safely access them if needed. As always, call 811 before you dig. This can save a potentially dangerous and expensive outage due to cutting underground power lines.

Having fun outside as a family is the best part of Summer. At Taylor EC, we want you to enjoy every moment SAFELY. If you have any questions regarding equipment in or around your yard, please give one of our member service representatives a call. Your safety and wellbeing are important to us. I hope you get a chance to enjoy this summer outside appreciating the Texas sun, while being aware of power lines and equipment.



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## The Lint Trap Isn't the Only Fire Trap

IF YOU SCRAPE THE LINT out of your clothes dryer's lint trap after every load, you're doing a lot to prevent the appliance from catching on fire. But you could do more.

**Here are safety tips for keeping your dryer safe and energy efficient.**

**Are your clothes getting dry?** Time the cycle. Is it taking a long time for your laundry to dry? Are large items still damp when the machine turns itself off? This is a sign that your lint screen or exhaust duct is probably blocked.

**When is the last time you snaked your dryer vent?** You should do it yearly. It's a pretty easy job, but if you're not a do-it-yourselfer, any handyman or electrician can do it for you. The duct is the coil that sends the hot air from the dryer to the outdoors. The vent is the opening where the hot air leaves the house. Both can get clogged with lint. Once that happens the dryer can overheat; send dirty, moist air back into your home; or even catch on fire. You might have to disconnect the exhaust duct from the dryer and from the vent to remove a blockage.

**What's lurking behind your dryer?** Pull it out and take a look. Lint can accumulate there and also underneath the dryer. Clean the floor behind the appliance and wipe down the back of it. Call a service tech for this job if you can't manage it on your own.

**What's inside?** If you throw gasoline-, oil- or chemical-soiled clothes and towels into the dryer, even after thoroughly washing them, they can ignite. Dry them outside on a clothesline instead—after washing them several times. If your dryer is the only option, use the lowest setting and remove the items the minute the cycle is finished. ■

## Taylor Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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## Don't Let Pets Drain Utilities

**YOUR ADORABLE PETS** might be adding to your home's electric bill.

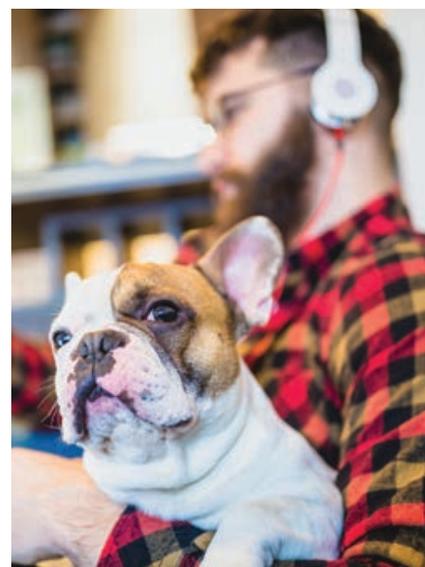
Households with pets tend to spend more money on energy than those without furry or feathered friends at home because they try extra hard to keep their companions comfortable.

In an effort to keep their dogs, cats and birds from getting lonely, pet owners sometimes leave TVs, lights, radios or other electronics running. Some leave fans, air conditioners and heating turned to a comfortable level when nobody's at home except the animals.

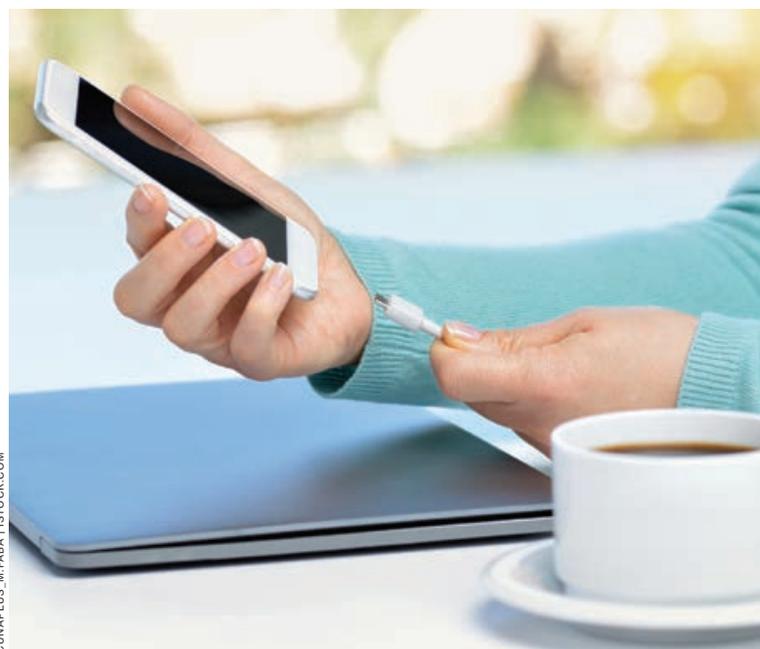
Ask your veterinarian about the appropriate air temperature for your specific breed of pet. Then program your thermostat to set itself to that temperature when you leave the house for the day and adjust to the level of human comfort for your return.

Turn off the ceiling fans. Even when humans are in the house, running a ceiling fan only makes sense when someone is in the same room as the fan. Your pets are unlikely to appreciate the subtle breeze that a fan creates.

Click off the lights when you leave a room. Animals generally don't need artificial light. ■



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## Generic Chargers Can Cause Serious Injury

Don't cut corners when it comes to charging your devices

**PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS LOSING** their phone chargers.

As a solution, many turn to low-cost, generic plug-in chargers and charging cables found in the sea of impulse items that flank checkout lines and are pushed by low-cost online retailers. They're cheap and so convenient—a seemingly great purchase.

Knockoffs can be great, but not when replacing your phone charger—one cost where you don't want to cut corners. Using an authentic replacement charger made by your mobile phone's manufacturer is always a better choice.

Along with a potential burn and fire hazard, cheaply made charging components and devices can cause shock and electrocution. Serious potential dangers aside, they may cost you more in the long run since they can also damage your devices.

### **When using charging gear:**

Check all wires, cords and plugs for signs of damage or fraying.

Always keep charging items away from flammable objects, especially bedding, and do not take them to bed with you. Tell kids and teens to never place any charging device under their pillow. The heat generated gets trapped, which could cause the pillow or bed to catch fire.

Do not touch charging electronic devices with wet hands or while standing in water.

Make sure charging components are certified by a reputable third-party testing laboratory.

Only buy product-approved chargers and cables (those made or certified by the manufacturer). Using cheaper devices can cause damage to the USB charge chip, which can have a lasting impact on how quickly and effectively your device charges in the future.

Be on the lookout for fakes or impostors claiming to be brand approved. If the price seems too good to be true, it probably is. ■



Be sure to follow safety precautions for all the electric appliances in today's kitchens.

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## Remember Electrical Safety This Month

**MAY'S DESIGNATION AS** National Electrical Safety Month makes it a good time to review electrical hazards and think about how to keep common household dangers at bay.

Each year, electrical malfunctions account for 35,000 home fires causing more than 1,130 injuries, 500 deaths and \$1.4 billion in property damage, according to Electrical Safety Foundation International. Because the average American home was built in 1977, many can't keep up with the demands of today's appliances and devices.

To help prevent adding to the sobering statistics about electrical dangers, watch for the warning signs of an overloaded electrical system, which include:

- ▶ Frequent circuit breaker trips or blown fuses.
- ▶ Lights dimming when other devices are turned on.
- ▶ Buzzing sounds from switches.

- ▶ Discolored outlets.
- ▶ Appliances that seem underpowered.

To maintain an electrically safe home, be sure that the following safety devices are installed according to updated codes:

- ▶ Arc-fault circuit interrupters protect against electrical fires caused by malfunctions.
- ▶ Surge protective devices safeguard against surges that can damage or reduce the life spans of electrical systems and devices.
- ▶ Ground-fault circuit interrupters protect against electric shock.
- ▶ Tamper-resistant receptacles have an internal shutter system to prevent foreign objects from being inserted into an outlet.

About 3,300 home fires are started by extension cords every year, so it's important to follow these safety tips:

- ▶ Don't substitute extension cords for permanent wiring.

- ▶ Don't run cords through walls, doorways, ceilings or floors. If a cord is covered, heat cannot escape, which is a fire hazard.
- ▶ Don't use an extension cord for more than one appliance.
- ▶ Make sure the extension cord or temporary power strip you use is rated for the products it powers and is marked for either indoor or outdoor use.
- ▶ Don't use a cord that has a lower power rating than the appliance or tool you are plugging in.
- ▶ Never use a cord that feels hot or is damaged in any way.
- ▶ Ensure your extension cord has a polarized or three-prong plug, which should only be used with a three-slot outlet. ■

# 8 Tips for Summer Savings

**JUST AS YOU CAN CUT** back on driving to save fuel, you also can limit the amount of electricity you use at home by cutting excess. Here are eight ways to reduce your energy consumption this summer.

1. Replace your old manual thermostat with a programmable model. New thermostats have automatic settings that can change indoor temperatures at strategic times of the day. If you come and go on a regular basis, you can program your thermostat to raise the temperature when you're not home and lower the temperature again just before you return.
2. Schedule a tuneup for your air conditioning system. A licensed technician will check the refrigerant level and determine whether any parts are wearing out or running inefficiently. A well-maintained system will operate more efficiently.
3. Close the blinds when direct sunlight hits your windows. The less sun that shines into your home, the cooler it will remain, saving your air conditioning system from working harder.
4. Run your dishwasher, washing machine and clothes dryer after dark. Most people run these appliances during the day, so demand for electricity soars. Doing chores, particularly ones that produce heat, at night helps lower your electric cooperative's overall peak use, which helps keep costs low for everyone.
5. Better yet, air-dry your laundry. Hang clothes outside on a clothesline when the weather is nice.
6. Turn off lights and unplug computers, TVs and phone chargers when not in use. Don't waste electricity by allowing your appliances to use power when they shouldn't.
7. Replace incandescent lightbulbs with LEDs, which use less energy, last longer and emit less heat.
8. Shop smart. If you're replacing any of your home's appliances this summer, choose Energy Star-rated models. They're guaranteed to be more energy efficient than appliances that don't qualify for the label. ■



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## Crab-Zucchini Frittata

- 8 ounces fresh or frozen crabmeat**
- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter**
- 1 clove garlic**
- ⅔ cup chopped green onion**
- 1 cup zucchini, sliced paper thin**
- ½ cup sliced fresh mushrooms**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- Pepper, to taste**
- 3 eggs**
- ½ cup milk**
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese**
- 1 tablespoon fresh oregano or**
- 1 teaspoon dried**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees, drain crabmeat, and pick out shells and cartilage; set aside.
2. Melt butter in a pan over medium heat and gradually add garlic, onion, zucchini and mushrooms, cooking only until hot. Add salt and pepper.
3. Beat eggs, milk and cheese together and add oregano, sautéed vegetables and crab. Pour into a buttered, shallow 1½-quart casserole dish.
4. Bake 20–25 minutes or until firm. Serve immediately or at room temperature. Will also reheat nicely in a microwave.

**SERVES 8 AS AN APPETIZER  
OR 4 AS A MAIN DISH**

**TCP** Find this and more delicious recipes online at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).



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## Springtime Electrical To-Do List

IT'S TIME TO THROW OPEN the windows and welcome warm weather. It's also time to invest in a few upgrades that will keep your house more comfortable and help you do your part to use energy wisely.

Check off the following chores before it gets too hot outside:

**Inspect and maintain.** Have a licensed heating, ventilating and air conditioning technician come to your home to inspect and maintain your air conditioning system. Paying a little bit now could prevent a big expense this summer if your AC breaks down on a hot day and you have to have it repaired or replaced in a hurry.

**Clear and trim.** While you're outdoors planting and pruning, trim all of the bushes and pull all of the weeds near your air conditioner's outside condenser unit. Remove any fallen tree limbs that landed on it and brush off leaves that have collected on or around it. Anything that touches the unit and prevents air from circulating around it will make it perform less efficiently.

**Plant and shade.** While you've got your shovel and spade out, consider planting some shade trees on the sunny side of your house. As they grow, they will filter the sun's rays that can beat on your windows in the summer and make your air conditioner work harder.

**Replace and upgrade.** Speaking of windows, if your house has single-pane versions, this is a good time to replace them with double-pane models. Single-pane windows are energy inefficient and can drive up your AC bills. You could save several hundred dollars on cooling and heating costs every year if you replace your drafty old windows.

**Clean and shine.** Clean your windows, inside and out. Clean windows let more sunlight into your house, which means you won't have to turn on as many lights. ■

## How To Clean Small Kitchen Appliances

IT'S NOT ENOUGH to wipe off your small kitchen appliances after each use. They need frequent, thorough cleaning to keep them operating efficiently—and for a long time.

Here are five tips for keeping your countertop appliances sparkling and working like new.

1. To clean most electrical kitchen gadgets, all you need is a bowl of warm, soapy water—liquid dish soap will do—and a sponge or rag. Unplug the appliance, then wipe off all outer surfaces, including motor casings and cords.
2. For dried or stuck-on grease and gunk, mix nonabrasive baking soda with a few drops of water into a paste and use that as a scrubbing solution.
3. Dry your appliances right away so water doesn't trickle into the electronic parts and so the outer shell of the appliance doesn't show watermarks—which can appear if you air-dry.
4. Never immerse cords, plugs or motors into water, and never load those parts into the dishwasher.
5. Use the top rack of the dishwasher to clean nonelectrical parts like coffee pots, blender jars, and other plastic or glass bowls that come with appliances. ■



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