

CEO CORNER



Ryan Bartlett,
President / CEO

The Difference Between Conservation and Efficiency

These days the terms energy conservation and energy efficiency are often used interchangeably, but they have distinct definitions. I like how the U.S. Energy Information Administration differentiates the two based on behavior and technology.

Energy conservation is a behavior—using less energy. To achieve it, members have to change their habits: Turn off lights, unplug appliances or opt to use a clothesline instead of a clothes dryer. Conserving energy often requires effort.

While there is merit in adopting conservation habits to avoid waste, we have the option to use less energy without having to give up comfort or convenience.

That brings me to energy efficiency, which involves applying technology to use less energy while getting the same result or service.

Technological advances also allow us to automatically perform some actions we used to have to do manually. Because new electric products are able to do the same tasks with less energy, energy efficiency does not necessarily come with the trade-off of going without.

LEDs are considered energy efficient because they use less electricity to produce the same amount of light as an incandescent bulb.

In the same way, Energy Star-rated products are intended to deliver the performance consumers expect while using less energy. Energy Star-rated refrigerators, for example, keep food cool with about half as much energy as older models.

Ultimately energy efficiency may result in energy conservation—or using less energy.

Smart electricity usage is important to Taylor Electric Cooperative because it's beneficial to you, our members.

For one, using less electricity saves you money on your electric bill simply because you

consume less. But it also benefits the co-op as a whole because our wholesale power costs fluctuate depending on the time of use.

The cost of power increases during peak hours—typically 3–7 p.m. during the summer. If we can diminish the use of power during those hot afternoons, then the cooperative's total wholesale power cost decreases. Those savings are passed along to you. Establishing energy conservation and energy-efficient habits now will help us use electricity more wisely down the road.

I encourage you to use the principles of energy conservation and energy efficiency together. Just because you install an energy-efficient LED in the light fixture on your front porch doesn't mean you should leave it on 24/7. And even if you have an Energy Star-rated clothes dryer, be a good steward and think twice about running it with anything less than a full load. For more helpful tips, visit our website at TaylorElectric.com.

By combining energy-efficient technology with conservation-minded behavior, you can save electricity and money.



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Electrical Safety Basics for Children

PARENTS SHOULD TEACH children a valuable, potentially lifesaving lesson: Respect electricity.

Here are electrical safety basics every child should know:

Mixing water and electricity can kill you. Teach children not to use electric toys or other devices near water or in the rain.

Plugging multiple devices into a single outlet or power strip can create sparks and even cause a fire if that outlet can't handle the load. Teach kids to plug into surge-protected power strips or to use one device at a time and unplug the rest.

When they unplug those devices, they should grab them by the plug, not the cord. Yanking a cord can damage the appliance, the outlet or the plug itself.

Electrical cords can be strangling hazards and might cause electrical burns if they are misused. Make sure youngsters keep cords away from their mouths and necks. It's best to hide cords so they aren't a temptation.

Electrical outlets are receptacles for electrical plugs only. Children should know from an early age that it's a no-no to put foreign objects or fingers into plugs. Sticking other items into an electrical socket can lead to electric shock or death. Use childproof outlet covers.

Flying kites and climbing trees are never safe activities near power lines. If a tree has a power line running through it—or if it's even within reach of the line—it's not a safe place to play. If a kite gets caught in a power line, do not tug on it to get it loose. The string could conduct electricity and seriously hurt anyone on the other end.

Electrical substations are fenced off to keep children and animals out. If a toy or small pet gets inside the fence, tell a parent or teacher, who can call a trained worker to come and retrieve it. ■

Taylor Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Simple Tricks for Sealing Success

A HOME WITH air leaks can't resist the elements so long as gaps and cracks are keeping the building from operating at maximum energy efficiency. You can seal gaps and cracks inexpensively by using caulk. Here are some tips to help you get the best results when caulking around the home.

Selection

You can find caulk for a wide range of applications. Acrylic latex caulk is good for general uses, indoors and out. It's also easy to clean up if you make a mistake. Silicone caulk is more challenging to use but is best for sealing tile, glass and metal. Check the manufacturer's recommendations on the label to make sure you're buying the right sealant for the job.

Preparation

Caulk is packaged in sealed tubes. Embossed markings along the nozzle correspond to different bead sizes, which you can match to the joint you plan to fill. To open, snip the tip of the nozzle, cutting at about a 45-degree angle, and pierce the interior seal with a nail or other sharp object. To ensure that the caulk adheres properly, clean the area first, removing any old caulk left over from previous applications and wiping away dust.

Application

While there's no exact science to caulking, you'll get a feel for the consistency of the material and the tension in the caulk gun. Hold the nozzle at a 45-degree angle to the joint and position the tip so the caulk adheres to both surfaces. Pull—don't push—the gun along the seam, applying the caulk 2 to 3 feet at a time. For a clean look, apply the caulk in a single, unbroken bead whenever possible. Caulk is more difficult to remove after it has dried, so keep rags handy to clean up mistakes as soon as they happen.

Finishing

After you've drawn a bead along the joint, finesse the caulk into the seam. This process, known as "tooling," helps the caulk adhere to the surface while removing any rough patches. Press the caulk into the joint by running a moistened finger, paintbrush handle or other object along the surface. Because your work will likely improve as you go, it's best to start with the least noticeable cracks and work up to the more prominent ones. ■

Leave Lawn Ready for Spring

BEFORE YOUR LAWN goes dormant for the season, give it a little pampering so that it will look its best next year. Some care and maintenance now can mean a thick and verdant lawn next spring.

Remove leaves. A layer of leaves blocks light and traps in too much moisture. Your grass will thank you for keeping up with leaf blowing or raking so that it won't get soggy or decay over the winter.

Keep mowing. Grass grows throughout the winter in warm climates and up until the first hard freeze in colder places. Setting your mower deck to a high level will help grass maintain moisture and resist matting. Don't mow it too short because that affects the root system, making it less likely to withstand winter conditions.

Continue watering. Just the rain and dew might not be enough to sustain your lawn, so keep the sprinklers or irrigation system going until there's a risk of a freeze.

Aerate the soil. Using a core aerator every couple of years prevents soil compaction and breaks up debris that blocks sunshine and nutrients.

Fertilize. An extra shot of nutrients found in lawn fertilizer can help your grass get through the winter. Consider a slow-release fertilizer that is high in nitrogen. Fertilizing in the fall helps your turf fight disease, boosts drought tolerance, replenishes nutrients and enriches the soil, and promotes healthy root growth. To maximize the benefits, apply after aerating.

Spread seed. Healthy and prolific grass offers good protection against weeds, so sprinkle some more seed over existing turf. Fall is the ideal time to reseed because the days are not as hot and the nights are cool. Remember to apply seed where it can contact the soil and to keep seeds moist until they germinate. ■



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Beach House Pasta

2 teaspoons dried shrimp
1 pound angel hair pasta or linguine
3 tablespoons olive oil
2 cloves garlic, sliced
Pinch crumbled chile pequin
1 pound rock shrimp or other small shrimp, peeled and deveined, cut into small pieces
Kosher salt
1 tablespoon chopped tarragon
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
Finely grated zest of 1 lemon
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice, plus more to finish
3 tablespoons cold butter, diced
2 scallions, sliced

1. Grind dried shrimp with mortar and pestle; set aside.
2. Cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water until al dente. Drain it, reserving 1½ cups liquid.
3. Meanwhile, heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic and chile and cook, stirring, about 1–2 minutes. Add rock shrimp, season with salt and cook, tossing, 1–2 minutes. Add the tarragon, parsley, lemon zest and juice, pasta, ¾ cup pasta cooking liquid, and butter, and toss to coat. Cook, tossing and adding more of the cooking liquid as needed, until sauce is glossy and coats pasta, and shrimp are cooked, about 3 minutes. Season with salt if needed.
4. Divide pasta among bowls and top with scallions and reserved dried shrimp.

TCP Find this and more delicious recipes online at TexasCoopPower.com.