

CEO CORNER



Ryan Bartlett,
President / CEO

Giving Thanks to Those Who Serve

November, as you undoubtedly know, is a month in which Americans give thanks.

Naturally, what comes to mind is the holiday at the end of the month, when many gather with family and friends to count their blessings and enjoy a shared feast. I can think of many reasons to be thankful, including the fact that I am a member and employee of Taylor Electric Cooperative, a business that exists to serve others. Spending every day alongside our talented employees who are focused on providing the best possible customer service to our members is truly a blessing.

However, there is another opportunity in the month to give thanks, and this one involves thanking others for making sacrifices on our behalf. This day falls on November 11, and it recognizes the men and women who have protected the freedoms we all enjoy.

This Veterans Day, I encourage you to thank the people you know—family members, friends or acquaintances—who have worn the uniform and served this country in the military. Please take a moment to reflect on what this day is truly about: to appreciate and recognize those who serve today and who served in the past and to remember their sacrifices, service with honor and dedication—and those who love and support them. It is because of veterans and their families that we as Americans can enjoy the freedoms that we often take for granted.

No matter the branch of service or the conflict, we all owe these people our gratitude for preserving and defending our great nation. It's a debt that we cannot repay but one that we can honor by sharing with them our thanks.



CEO CORNER



NIKOLA STOJADINOVIC | ISTOCK.COM

Plant Trees Away From Power Lines

THE RIGHT TREE PLANTED in the right place can add natural beauty to any landscape, but a tree in the wrong place can become expensive to maintain and even dangerous—especially if it grows too close to power lines.

Arbor Day presents the perfect opportunity to learn more about the benefits of tree planting and selecting the perfect tree for the right place in your yard. National Arbor Day was celebrated in April, but many states observe the holiday at other times of the year: In Texas, it's celebrated the first Friday in November—this year, November 4.

When considering tree placement, select a planting location that doesn't interfere with utility lines in the air or underground. Tree branches can interfere with overhead power lines, and roots can do the same with underground utilities.

Power outages or interruptions can occur when trees and branches come into contact with overhead lines. Electrical arcing and sparking from a wire to a nearby branch can cause fires and injuries.

Tall trees with a mature height of more than 40 feet should be planted at least 50 feet away from lines to avoid the need for pruning around electrical infrastructure. A mature height of less than 25 feet is recommended if planting nearer to lines. Keep in mind that trees should never be planted directly under—or even less than 10 feet on either side of—power lines, poles or electrical equipment.

Trees growing near power lines must be pruned to maintain a safe distance from the wires. If you have trees that are growing into power lines, contact your electric provider.

Before any tree planting begins, call 811. The 811 Call Before You Dig program is a free service that locates and marks your public underground utilities so you can avoid buried lines when you dig. ■

Taylor Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Be an Energy Owl—Not a Turkey—This Thanksgiving

YOU CAN ALMOST smell it, can't you? A golden brown, perfectly roasted turkey with stuffing. Mashed potatoes with gravy. Zesty cranberry sauce and green bean casserole. Pumpkin pie. Pecan pie. Cherry pie.

It's almost Thanksgiving, and that can mean a big jump in your electric usage. It can mean dishwasher load after dishwasher load of plates and an oven that's constantly on. It could mean your refrigerator door is often open as family members search for hidden goodies. If you have company, more people in the house means your water heater may struggle to keep up with all the showers and laundry.

Yep, Turkey Day can be a strain not only on your beltline but also on your electric bill. This holiday season, opt for these tips when you're cooking your feast—you'll enjoy a meal and some energy savings.

Oven Tips

Turkey is traditionally roasted for hours. Because it's a long, slow cook, there's no need to preheat your oven—even when the recipe suggests it. This also holds true for a holiday ham. In fact, unless you're baking breads or pastries, you may not need to preheat the oven at all.

Don't open the oven door to peek inside. Instead, use the oven light and check the cooking status through the oven win-

dow. Opening the oven door lowers the temperature by as much as 25 degrees, increasing cooking time.

As long as your oven is on, cook several items at the same time. Just make sure you leave enough room between items for heat to circulate evenly.

In an electric oven, you can turn the heat off several minutes before your food is fully cooked, as long as the door remains closed.

If you use glass or ceramic pans, you can turn your oven temperature down by 25 degrees.

If your oven has a self-cleaning feature, consider using it immediately after baking your meal to take advantage of the residual heat.

Stovetop Tips

When cooking on top of your range, match the size of the pan to the burner. More heat will get to the pan, and less will be lost to surrounding air. A 6-inch pan on an 8-inch burner will waste more than 40% of the energy!

Clean burners and reflectors provide better heating while saving energy.

Other Ways To Cook

Fast and efficient microwaves use far less energy than ovens, and they don't heat up your kitchen.

Slow cookers are perfect for busy families and can cook a whole meal for about 17 cents worth of electricity.

If you're baking or broiling small items, a toaster oven—a fraction of the size of a traditional range—is the ideal choice.

Electric skillets can do everything a skillet on the stove can do, and they can double as trivets.

Refrigerator Tips

Fridges and freezers can get a real workout at Thanksgiving. If you've already invested in Energy Star-rated versions, that's great, but they still remain one of the largest energy consumers in your house.

Keep the doors closed as much as possible; leaving them open means your fridge or freezer has to work harder to keep food cool.

It's easy to keep your fridge and freezer full at Thanksgiving. It's also more energy efficient. The mass amount of cold items inside will help your fridge recover each time the door is opened and shut; however, don't cram it so full that the cold air can't circulate. ■



PERRY GERENDAY | ISTOCK.COM

Prepare Your Heater for Winter Use

WINTER IS KNOCKING at the door, so now is the time to make sure your heating system is up to the task.

The Department of Energy's heating equipment checklist can help ensure your system is in the best condition to efficiently heat your home before winter's chill settles in.

Chores To Do Yourself

Replace air filters regularly. Inspect, clean or change air filters once a month or as needed to prevent energy cost increases or potential equipment damage.

Check for obstructions. Make sure vents, radiators and baseboard heaters are clear of obstructions like furniture so air can flow freely.

Check the fuel. If you have a propane furnace, make sure your fuel tank is full and ready to go.

Clean the heat exchanger. Remove dirt, soot and corrosion from the system and clean the heat exchanger to maintain heating levels.

Avoid fire hazards. Test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and replace batteries or units if needed.

Test the System

If air vents emit a high-pitched sound, it usually (but not always) indicates a lack of return air. When the system needs to pull more air, the pressure and velocity of air moving through it increases, making for noisy vents.

Vents also might make a rattling or flapping sound, usually due to debris in the duct. A rattling sound coming from the furnace itself might mean a part has come loose and is moving

around inside, while squeals or shrieks can indicate a bad belt. A metal-against-metal scraping sound can mean that part of the blower system is coming loose.

If you smell gas, burning, or an electrical or a musty odor coming from the furnace area, it could be something as simple as an air filter that needs changing or as serious as a gas leak.

If the furnace is not heating, or not reaching the temperature on the thermostat, it could be one of several culprits.

These issues are all best addressed by a professional.

Tasks for a Pro

Inspect equipment. Make sure all connections, gas pressure, burner combustion and heat exchangers are working properly. Check electrical terminals, and clean or tighten connections if necessary. If your equipment isn't working, it could be a fire hazard or cause the system to operate less efficiently.

Remove blockages. Inspect ducts, filters, blowers and indoor coils for dirt and other obstructions. Duct leaks are common and contribute to poor heating throughout the whole home. Holes, gaps and other damage can result in wasted heat, which leads to frustration and higher bills.

Lubricate motors. Parts that lack lubrication cause friction in motors, increasing the amount of energy used and causing equipment to wear out quickly.

While you're at it, get your cooling systems ready for winter. If you have window units, remove them and store them to eliminate air leaks. If you have a condensing unit, clean off debris and dirt to discourage rusting. ■