

CEO CORNER



Ryan Bartlett,
President / CEO

Summer Saving Tips

In Texas, we expect summers to be hot, and most of us do all we can to keep our homes as comfortable as possible while outdoor temperatures edge upward. When it comes to electricity, each of us has the power to help control our costs—we just have to make thoughtful choices to make energy savings pay off in dollars and cents.

If you don't have trees, a porch overhang or awnings that shade windows exposed to the afternoon sun, there's a good chance radiant heat is driving up indoor temperatures in your home and adding to your cooling costs.

Window coverings can help. Blinds or shades can deflect intense sunlight, and draperies lined with a thermal radiant barrier can block up to 95% of sunlight and 100% of ultraviolet rays.

Comfort and cooling are easier to maintain when you take advantage of airflow. A ceiling fan can pull warm air up above your living zone, making a difference during summer months. The evaporative effect of circulating air blowing across our skin makes us more comfortable, but that benefit disappears when we leave the room. So turn off fans in unoccupied rooms to conserve energy.

Air conditioner filters have a lot to do with airflow through your AC system. Dirty filters restrict circulation through your returns, making your AC work harder. If you can see dirt in a filter, it's likely at least 50% clogged. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations on replacing disposable filters or cleaning permanent ones, and consider checking them more frequently if you have pets.

You can achieve a 10% savings on cooling costs by turning up your thermostat 7-10 degrees from its normal setting for eight hours a day—while you're sleeping or away

at work or school, for example. Turning off the air conditioning or raising the thermostat setting 20-30 minutes before you leave home can add to those savings.

You can save more money and electricity by shifting some of the most energy-intensive activities away from the hottest hours of the day. Cooking, doing laundry and using power tools can increase heat and humidity inside your home, making it harder to reach or maintain a comfortable temperature.

Remember, controlling energy costs always works better with buy-in from everyone in your household.

- One open window anywhere can be like an uncapped chimney, pulling outdoors the conditioned air you pay to cool.
- A gaming system, computer or TV left on but idle produces nearly as much heat as it does when it's actually in use.
- Lighting and ventilation fans add convenience and comfort when they're needed, but when left on and unattended, they waste energy.
- A bag of ice poured into a cooler will chill summer beverages as effectively and less expensively than an aging refrigerator in a hot garage.

Check with us for more ways to control costs and avoid seasonal billing spikes this summer.



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MARIA ARGUTINSKAYA | ISTOCK.COM

Energy-Saving Projects for the DIYer

ARE YOU A weekend warrior? If you're considering home improvement upgrades that save energy and money, we've got a couple of project ideas for you—both of which can be completed in a day or less.

Get Smart About AC

Cooling and heating your home typically account for a large portion of energy bills. Smart thermostats can help keep those costs in check; Energy Star-certified models can save you 8% or more on annual energy costs.

Smart thermostats are becoming more affordable and allow you to set custom schedules and adjust the settings from anywhere using your phone. They'll also learn your cooling and heating preferences over time.

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

Dry the Old-Fashioned Way

If you have enough outdoor space, a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on the electricity the dryer would have used, but you'll also save on cooling costs in the summer since unwanted heat from the clothes dryer won't be added to your home and make 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, some wire, and hook-and-eye turnbuckles. Depending on your soil, you may need some rapid-set 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.

If an outdoor clothesline isn't an option for you, no sweat! You can buy or easily create an indoor drying rack that folds to save space. Websites like thespruce.com and hgvtv.com offer step-by-step tutorials for various indoor clothes racks. ■

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DROP BOX

Merkel office located near the entrance of the building.

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- Check Express, 906 E. Broadway Ave., Sweetwater

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NOTICE

Effective June 1, 2023, all credit/debit card transactions will be assessed a 2.45% convenience fee.

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TexasCoopPower.com/taylor



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Celebrate America Safely

TAYLOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE wishes you a safe and happy Independence Day!

To ensure you have the best holiday possible, we'd like to remind you about a few important safety tips from the American Red Cross.

Fireworks With Forethought

Nothing says Fourth of July like a spectacular fireworks display. The safest way to enjoy this part of the celebration is to head to a local fireworks show presented by professionals. **But if you must put on your own display, be sure to follow these safety tips:**

- ▶ Always follow the instructions on fireworks' packaging and never give fireworks to small children.
- ▶ Keep a supply of water close by as a precaution.
- ▶ Make sure to wear protective eyewear when lighting fireworks.
- ▶ Light only one firework at a time and never attempt to relight a dud.
- ▶ Store fireworks in a cool, dry place away from children, pets and anything flammable.
- ▶ Never throw or point a firework toward people, animals, vehicles, structures or flammable materials.

Guarding the Grill

Cookouts are a great way to bring folks together on the Fourth. Whether you're grilling in your backyard or in a community

space, make sure your feast includes a generous portion of fun topped off with safety. **We recommend the following safety tips:**

- ▶ Supervise the grill at all times.
- ▶ Use the proper tools for cooking on a grill.
- ▶ Never add charcoal starter fluid once the coals have been ignited.
- ▶ Always follow the grill manufacturer's instructions.

Safe Sun Exposure

Fireworks and cookouts aren't complete without a sunny day. **Here's hoping we have good weather—and if we do, make sure you enjoy the sun safely:**

- ▶ Use a broad-spectrum SPF sunscreen and reapply often.
- ▶ Protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses.
- ▶ Drink plenty of water.
- ▶ Be on the lookout for signs of heatstroke (hot, red skin; changes in consciousness; rapid, weak pulse; and rapid, shallow breathing).

However you choose to celebrate, Taylor EC wishes you a safe and happy Fourth of July. ■

Test GFCIs Monthly

NOW THAT EARLY summer showers have passed, it's a good time to check your home's electrical system. The ground fault circuit interrupters that prevent electrocution could be damaged by power surges during storms.

A GFCI, which can be part of an electrical receptacle or circuit breaker, trips the circuit when it detects ground faults or leaky currents. It protects the user of electrical equipment from electrocution by shutting off the path of electricity to that appliance. Since they were introduced in the 1970s, GFCIs have reduced electrocutions by 83%, according to Electrical Safety Foundation International.

GFCIs should be installed in areas where water could come into contact with electricity, including kitchens, laundry rooms, wet bars, workshops, outdoors, garages and basements. The National Electrical Code has specific rules regarding the installation of GFCI outlets in new construction.

GFCIs should be readily accessible for resetting, so they should not be placed behind appliances or heavy furniture.

Nearly 50% of the 400 electrocutions that occur each year could be prevented by using GFCIs, according to ESFI.

Even when homes do have GFCIs, most homeowners don't know how often to test them. They should be tested every month and after every power surge to check for damage.

Here's how to test your GFCIs:

1. Push the reset button on the GFCI receptacle to prepare the unit for testing.
2. Plug a lamp into the GFCI and turn it on. The lamp's bulb should light up.
3. Push the GFCI's test button. The lamp should turn itself off.
4. Push the reset button again. The lamp should turn on again.

If the lamp doesn't turn itself off when you press the test button, that means your GFCI is on the fritz. To fix it, call a licensed electrician. ■



TRAINMANT11



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Three-Bean Couscous Salad (Not Your Mother's Three-Bean Salad)

- 1 box couscous (10 ounces)
- 1 can black beans (15 ounces), drained and rinsed in cold water until water runs clear, then drained again
- 1 can cannellini (white kidney) beans (15 ounces), drained
- 1 can garbanzo beans (15 ounces), drained
- ¼ cup chopped green onion, about 2 stalks
- ¼ cup peeled, deseeded, chopped zucchini
- ¼ cup chopped green bell pepper
- ⅓ cup chopped red bell pepper
- ½ cup chopped parsley
- Juice of 1 lemon, about 2 tablespoons
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- ⅓ cup bottled ginger and sesame salad dressing

1. Cook couscous as directed on the package. Cool and place in a large bowl.

2. Add remaining ingredients. Mix well, cover and let sit at least 4 hours, or even better, overnight.

SERVES 8

 Find this and more delicious recipes online at [TexasCoopPower.com](https://www.texascoopower.com).