

*Your energy provider yesterday, today and tomorrow."*

# NEWSLETTER

Chippewa Valley Electric Cooperative

December 2011

## HAVE A HAPPY (ENERGY-EFFICIENT) HOLIDAY SEASON



**A**lthough holidays are a time for family, friends, and celebrations, the hustle and bustle means lots of power gets used. So don't let a higher-than-normal January electric bill be the last gift of the season. With a few simple tricks you can still celebrate and save money at the same time.

### THE BRIGHTEST HOUSE ON THE BLOCK

Start with energy-efficient light-emitting diodes (LEDs) (pictured upper right). While a string of traditional incandescent mini-lights uses 36 watts of power, LEDs only consume 5 watts and last up to 10 times longer. LEDs are typically made of plastic and will not break, and many are brighter than traditional mini-lights.

However, a string of LEDs can cost two to three times more than traditional string lights, and many homeowners have reported mixed results with performance. Unlike traditional incandescent bulbs, LEDs use computer chips to create

light. Depending on the quality of the manufacturing process, the brightness and life may not be what's expected.

A good rule of thumb: cheaper is not always better. When looking for LEDs, view the lights plugged in at the store, or make sure you can return them if they do not meet your expectations.

All holiday lights, whether LED or incandescent, should be placed on a timer. Simple timers cost \$20 and can be set to turn on at sunset and off after a set number of hours. It's usually best to have lights on from sunset until bedtime.

### GIVING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Many electronic gifts are "energy vampires" sucking electricity 24 hours a day, even when switched off. Cell phone chargers, computers, video game consoles, and any device that comes with a large square plug are likely energy vampires.

When possible, unplug electronics that are not being used, or plug them into a smart power strip. A smart power strip controls the flow of electricity to specific devices plugged into it. For example, it may cut the flow of electricity to unused devices such as DVD players, video game consoles, and stereo systems, while allowing TVs and satellite or cable boxes to remain operational. To keep your home entertainment center running efficiently, look for ENERGY STAR-rated televisions and ask satellite or cable providers for energy-efficient boxes.

Prevent post-holiday electric bill shock by thinking creatively and shopping carefully this year. The money you save can be used for the most dreaded January bills of all: credit cards.

Brian Sloboda is a program manager specializing in energy efficiency for the Cooperative Research Network, a service of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

### CEC WISHES YOU A VERY MERRY CHRISTMASS

Our offices will be closed Friday, Dec. 23, and Monday, Dec. 26., for Christmas and Monday, Jan. 2, for New Year's.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

With more and more people transitioning from traditional "land-line" phone service to cell phones, we are finding a significant number of phone numbers for our Members that are outdated. It is imperative we have current phone numbers for our Members for two reasons; If you call in after hours, your phone number(s) helps connect the support team to the correct account. Secondly, if we need to reach you for a planned outage notification, or line maintenance.

In addition, if you choose to provide us with your e-mail address that provides an additional option for reaching you. Any contact information you provide is kept confidential, and is never shared or sold.



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