

Why Energy Efficiency is Important

Have you ever heard the fable about the ant and the grasshopper? On a sunny summer day, a grasshopper was flitting about, and came across an ant toiling under the weight of a kernel of corn.

“Why all the hard work?” the grasshopper asked.

“I’m collecting this corn for winter, and recommend you do the same,” the ant replied.

“Why bother storing corn now? There’s plenty to go around!” the grasshopper scoffed, hopping off into the sun.

Well, we all know how that winter went for the grasshopper, who never did get around to storing any corn.

That valuable lesson also applies to the electricity we use every day. Charles Mix Electric and electric co-ops across the country stand at a crossroads. At the moment, we are able to power our homes with the mere flip of a switch, as safe, reliable, and affordable electricity remains readily available. The grasshoppers of the world are happy.

But in recent years, several factors—increasing demand for electricity, rising fuel and construction costs, and decisions limiting what types of power plants we can build—place our energy future in limbo. The U.S. Energy Information

Administration (EIA) predicts that our need for electricity will climb by 30 percent between now and 2030. Unfortunately, the power available may not be able to keep up with this growth as construction of new generation capacity is being put on hold while Congress reworks national energy policy.

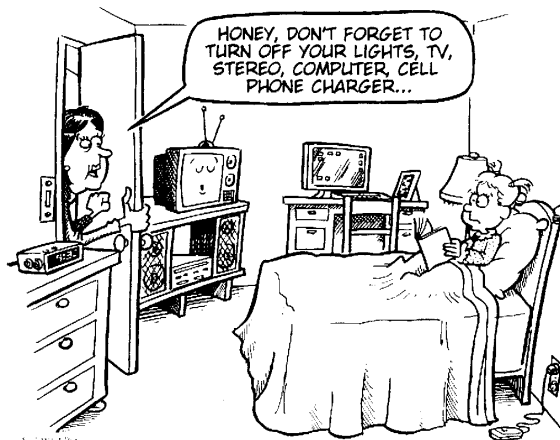
However, we do have a powerful resource to tap in the meantime: energy efficiency. With widespread energy efficiency measures in place, including those we’ve implemented on our distribution lines as well as measures you can take at home, annual growth in electricity demand could drop by almost half of 1 percent, to 2.2 percent, according to the Arlington, Va.-based Cooperative Research Network.

In other words, saving electricity now will both reduce your current utility bills and soften the blow against future power supply shortcomings. And being energy efficient doesn’t mean being flat-out stingy with energy use. It means doing things in your home you normally would, but in a smarter way. Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) are a great example. By simply changing an

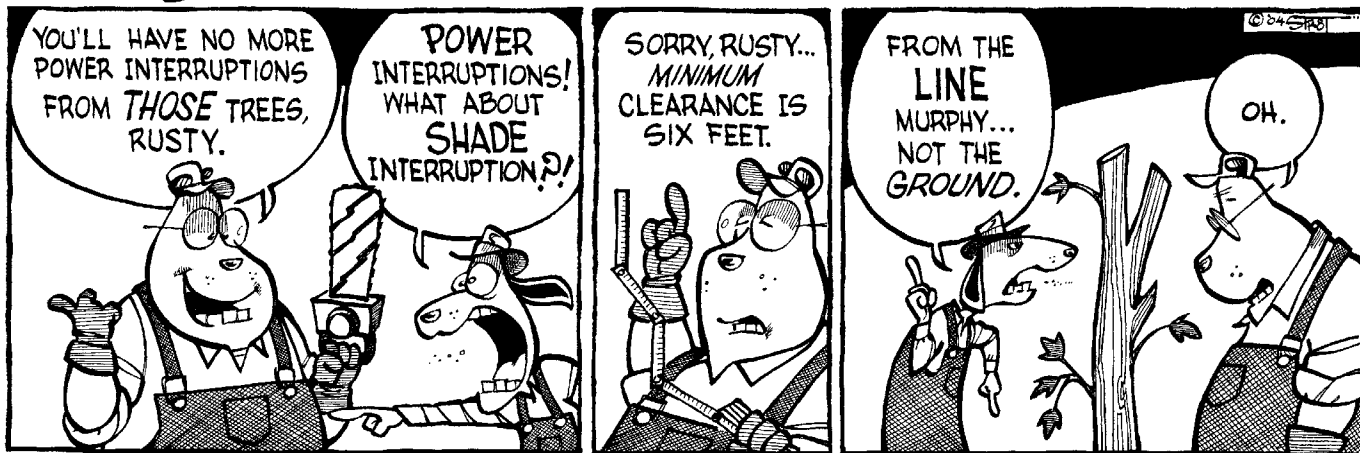
old incandescent bulb to a swirled CFL equivalent, you can get the same light while using 75 percent less electricity.

CME is on your side in this effort, and we have a long history of helping members get the most out of the power coming down our lines. The vast majority of electric cooperatives across the nation join us in these efforts.

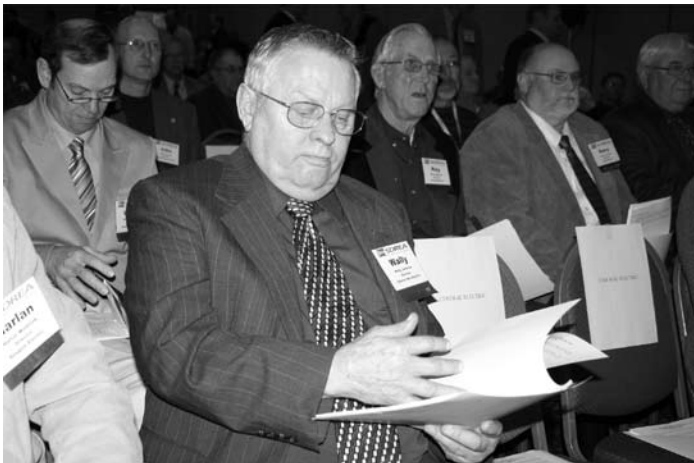
Please contact us if you would like to learn more about making your home more energy efficient. Or go online at www.energysavers.gov, a valuable Web site maintained by the U.S. Dept. of Energy. Together we can save those “kernels of power” for an uncertain future, and reduce our electric bills in the meantime.



Murphy



Directors at Work



CME President Wally Johnson looks over information presented at the SDREA annual meeting. CME directors spend several hours keeping up-to-date on all the issues facing rural electric co-ops, so they can represent your best interests at the statewide and national level.



CME's Youth Council Representative Rebecca Naasz was invited to attend the SDREA annual meeting. Here, she visits with directors from Southeastern Electric Cooperative of Marion. Below: CME director Joe Rysavy, who also serves on the SDREA Board of Directors, accepts an award for participation in the Action Committee for Rural Electrics (ACRE).



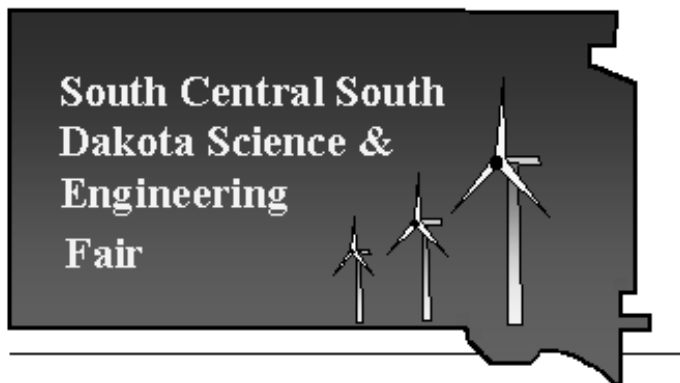
Scientifically Speaking

It's common knowledge that Charles Mix Electric strives to support education in our local area. As part of our "commitment to community", one of the core values upon which we're founded, we've given scholarships, sponsored numerous school-related projects, hosted interns and job-shadowers, and presented demonstrations on safety and energy efficiency, just to name a few examples. This month, we'd like to mention one of the projects that CME regularly helps to sponsor: the South Central South Dakota Science & Engineering Fair.

This science fair is one of five regional fairs held in South Dakota. Students from Charles Mix County schools put in regular appearances each year, after having competed at their local schools. This year's competition will be held on March 24, 2009, on the campus of Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell, SD. The best and brightest young scientists will showcase their projects, each hoping to advance to the national level.

A roster of previous winners found at www.dwusciencefair.com reveals several local winners from the Lake Andes, Geddes, Marty, Armour and Avon schools, assuring CME that its donations are definitely benefitting local youth. Just ask Andy and Jerry Farke, sons of CME's Greg Farke, who have had the opportunity to compete at fairs in Tucson, AZ, Louisville, KY, Philadelphia, PA, and other locations.

Many past participants are now giving back to their communities by serving in medicine, science, engineering, and other fields. Who knows, maybe the solutions for our future energy needs will spring from a science fair such as this one. CME considers its sponsorship an investment in the community and in our future.



CME is proud to help make the South Central South Dakota Science & Engineering Fair possible. This year's fair is set for March 24, 2009, in Mitchell, SD, and will feature projects from many local students.