

What Does Being A Member Mean?

Touchstone Energy Territory is a column designed to answer the questions of local cooperative members concerning Touchstone Energy, electric cooperatives and utility issues.

This Month's Question:

When I signed up for electricity at the co-op, they said I wasn't a customer but a member. What does being a member mean?

Dear Brand New Member,

When you requested electric service from this local co-op, you signed a membership agreement. When

anyone agrees to receive products and services from any cooperative, they automatically become a co-op member with a variety of benefits.

A cooperative is a consumer-owned organization dedicated to providing its members with specific

products and services, usually not available from outside organizations at competitive rates. There are many types of member/consumer-owned cooperatives in the nation, including agricultural product co-ops, credit unions and others.

In the corporate world, stockholders throughout the globe can invest in profit-oriented companies. Stockholders receive dividends when the company they own makes a profit and distributes earnings. According to the Cooperative Business Model, the company ownership and earnings belong to the customers. As a consumer-owned organization, the co-op's focus is on providing great service to our member-owners. If you have a question or concerns, staff are here.

As not-for-profit organizations, cooperatives provide services at cost, without seeking a profit. Any surplus revenue above expenses (which we call "margins") is

allocated back to the members and returned on a schedule established by your local board of directors. Also at the annual meeting, you learn how the utility you own is doing financially and vote for a representative on the co-op's board. As the commercial says, "membership has its privileges." We encourage you to enjoy the benefits of being a co-op member.

If you have a question for this column, send it to Touchstone Energy Territory, c/o Member Services at the address found on Page 3.



Home Wiring Hazards

More homeowners are embarking on more do-it-yourself projects than ever before. But sometimes, that newfound confidence is accompanied by a lack of understanding of the risks inherent in working with electricity.

Increasing electrical safety awareness and the use of electrical safety technology are key factors in reducing deaths, injuries and economic losses due to electrical hazards.

Most shocks and fires from electrical systems can be prevented. Have your electrical system inspected by a licensed electrician. Fix dangerous defects, install smoke detectors, arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs), ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and check lighting and home appliances for wear and tear.

What to look for:

The following are some of the signs consumers can look for to address home wiring electrical hazards:

- Power outages – circuit breakers that frequently trip or fuses that need replacement.
- Dim and flickering lights.
- Arcs and sparks – flashes of light or showers of sparks in your electrical system.
- Sizzles and buzzes – unusual sounds from your electrical system.
- Overheating – overheated wires can give off an odor of hot insulation; switchplates or receptacle covers are hot to the touch or discolored from heat buildup.
- Electrical shocks – any shock, even a mild tingle, may be warning of an electrical danger.
- Overrated panel – electrical panels with fuses or circuit breakers rated at higher currents than the capacity of their branch circuits.
- Damaged wire insulation – cut, broken or cracked.

Kids' Corner Safety Poster

"Never curl your hair in the shower!"



Aleah Ceplecha, 6 years old

Aleah is the daughter of Barb Ceplecha, Martin, S.D. She is a member of Lacreek Electric Association, Martin, S.D.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents.

Wild Game Goodies

Pheasant A La Kiev

Pheasant breasts
1/4 lb. butter
Egg

Milk
Cracker crumbs
Salt and pepper

Remove bones from pheasant breasts; flatten as much as possible. Place 1/8-inch cold butter in center of each breast; wrap meat around butter and secure with toothpick. Dip into egg and milk mixture; roll in cracker crumbs. Deep fat fry until golden brown. Remove from oil and bake at 350°F. for 12 minutes.

Darlene Newman, Wagner
Cooperative Connections

Venison Steak Rolls

2 lbs. venison round steak,
1/2-inch thick
1 dill pickle
3 slices bacon, cut in half
1/2 cup flour

1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
3 T. shortening
1 cup tomato sauce
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

Cut steak into six 3x6-inch strips. Cut pickle lengthwise into 6 strips. Place bacon and pickle on venison strips. Roll lengthwise; fasten with toothpicks. Roll in flour seasoned with salt and pepper. Melt shortening in skillet; brown rolls on all sides. Mix tomato sauce and Worcester sauce; pour over meat. Cover and simmer slowly for 1-1/2 hours or bake at 350°F. for 2 hours.

Judy Hansen, Mansfield
Cooperative Connections

Pheasant Too Easy

2 or 3 filleted pheasants
breasts
4 to 6 slices Swiss cheese
1 can cream of mushroom soup

1 cup milk
1 (6 oz.) box Stove Top
dressing mix
1/2 cup sherry, optional

Place pheasant breasts in a 9x13-inch cake pan (the glass types are best) that has been lightly oiled. Cover each breast with a slice of Swiss cheese. In a small bowl, mix soup with milk; pour over pheasant. Place dressing mix over all, either dry or mixed with sherry. Cover pan with aluminum foil, crimped to make a seal. Bake, covered, at 350°F. for 60 minutes. Remove foil and bake an additional 30 minutes.

Dan Dellman, Brandon
Cooperative Connections

Venison Marinade

1/4 cup vinegar
1/4 cup salad oil
1/4 cup ketchup
1 T. Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. dry mustard
1/8 tsp. pepper
1 clove garlic, minced
Venison steaks or chops

Mix together all ingredients except venison. Place venison in marinade for 8 hours or overnight. Grill.

Andrea Whittington, Rapid City
Cooperative Connections

Pheasant Supreme

3 pheasants, cut-up
Flour
1/2 T. butter
1 can cream of celery soup
1 can golden mushroom soup
2 cups milk
1/2 tsp. sage
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. paprika
8 carrots, quartered
2 large onions, chopped
1 pkg. frozen lima beans, optional

Roll pheasant pieces in flour; brown in butter. Place in 4-quart casserole. Blend soups, milk and spices into drippings; add carrots, onions and lima beans. Cover and cook for 20 minutes. Pour over pheasant. Cover and bake at 350°F. for 1 hour and 30 minutes or until tender.

Lenora Pawlowski, Gann Valley
Cooperative Connections

Cheese and Venison Enchiladas

1 can cream of chicken soup
1 small can evaporated milk
1/2 lb. Velveeta cheese
1 (4 oz.) can green chilies
1 small jar pimientos

1 lb. ground venison
1/2 lb. longhorn Colby cheese,
grated
1 cup chopped onions
12 flour tortillas

Heat soup, evaporated milk and Velveeta cheese in top of double boiler until cheese is melted. Add green chilies and pimientos to the sauce. Lightly brown ground venison; drain. Add cheese and onions. Lightly fry flour tortillas according to package instructions. Fill each tortilla with meat mixture. Once filled, secure with toothpick; place in rectangular baking dish. Pour cheese sauce over all; cover with foil. Bake at 350°F. for 30 minutes.

Kathy Hahn, Sioux Falls
Cooperative Connections

Pheasant Nuggets

Pheasant
Flour
1 egg, beaten
1 T. water
1 T. paprika

2 cups dry bread or
cracker crumbs
1 T. seasoned salt
1/2 tsp. pepper

Cut pheasant into 1-inch pieces; dredge in flour. Shake off excess. Combine egg and water. In separate bowl, combine remaining ingredients. Dip pheasant pieces in egg/water mixture and roll in crumb mixture. Place on rack; refrigerate 30 minutes. Deep fry for a few minutes until done. Drain on paper towels. Dip in sweet and sour, honey or barbecue sauce.

Sophia Hoff, Tripp
Cooperative Connections



Please send your favorite favorite holiday treat and soup recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2007. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.