

Bottom line

Less debt equals lower rates

Less debt and lower distribution costs mean lower rates, which is what Holston Electric Cooperative has delivered to our members throughout our 68-year partnership with the Tennessee Valley Authority. We're proud of that partnership, which has helped Tennessee maintain one of the most dependable electric transmission and distribution networks in the world with some of the lowest rates. Even with the cost of fuel rising quickly, we've still been able to keep rates lower than other parts of the nation.



Larry Elkins
General Manager
Holston Electric
Cooperative

In July, 4th District Congressman Jim Cooper of Nashville lashed out at the nation's electric cooperatives at a hearing in Washington, D.C. The hearing centered on the misdeeds of a co-op in Texas where members have since ousted board members and a manager who abused their trust. Cooper used the opportunity to attack electric cooperatives. He was pointed in his criticism of member-owned co-ops, saying that "a minimum of 10 percent, and I believe more than that," of the nation's cooperatives have similar scandals just waiting to be discovered. There's no evidence to support that, but he's willing to tarnish Holston EC's reputation to promote his assertion.

I was deeply offended when I heard his unsubstantiated accusations. It was sort of like hearing some stranger telling lies about your family and calling your mother ugly names. I know

that the board of directors and employees of Holston EC work to ensure that this cooperative remains above reproach and don't appreciate being generalized as a scandalous bunch that's "just waiting to be discovered." Cooper's generalizations and accusations are nothing less than bigotry.

The urban legislator's latest efforts are focused on a subject that he brought up in 2004. He wants TVA to change its longstanding policy of requiring that available excess revenues be used to maintain low rates. Instead, the congressman wants TVA to adopt capital credit refund policies that would weaken the financial well-being of Tennessee's rural electric cooperatives.

I believe that the decisions about Holston Electric Cooperative ought to be made right here in our community by members of Holston EC — not by a politician who seems to have spent too much time in Washington, D.C.

Here are some very important statistics that show the benefit of our partnership with TVA. As of July 1, Holston EC's residential rates are more than 15 percent lower than the other 900 cooperatives nationwide and are below the national average for all residential rates.

By any financial, economic or operational measure, the partnership between TVA and Holston EC is a proven winner. Some 98 percent of Tennessee's residents are served by locally owned and controlled public power systems. Let's keep it that way.

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Serving more than 30,000 customers in Hawkins and Hamblen counties.



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Larry Elkins

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To report an outage or electrical emergency, call 272-8821 or 235-6811 day or night.



The Birdsong family

The Birdsongs will be featured entertainers at Holston EC's 68th Annual Meeting

Schools are back in session, the outdoor temperatures are moderating and the daylight hours are slowly decreasing. Yep, it must be about time for the Holston Electric Cooperative annual meeting. Make the note on your calendar for Tuesday, Oct. 14, so you won't miss out on the fun.

The Birdsongs, a young, multi-talented, family band of nine who reside in East Tennessee, will provide the featured entertainment this year. The Birdsongs have been warmly received by crowds at the Dollywood family theme park in Pigeon Forge and Silver Dollar City in Branson, Mo. They've played on Gospel Music Television and at many churches and concert settings all over the U.S. and Canada.

The Birdsongs are becoming widely known for their versatility. They incorporate an extensive range of musical styles from traditional to contemporary, Southern gospel, bluegrass and country to modern praise and worship. Members of The Birdsongs are Matthew Birdsong, bass, banjo and vocals; Benjamin Birdsong, vocals, guitar, fiddle, mandolin; Coleene Birdsong, vocals, acoustic and bass guitar and fiddle; Timothy Birdsong,

piano/keyboards, fiddle and programming; Philip Birdsong, drums, guitars and vocals; Priscilla Birdsong, vocals and fiddle; Joshua Birdsong, vocals and guitar; Wendell Birdsong, guitar and vocals; and Linda Birdsong, vocals, guitar and flute.

Also included on the entertainment agenda will be the multi-talented Robby Spencer, a gifted comedian, musician, singer and storyteller from right here in upper East Tennessee. His banjo-playing and singing are mixed with a bit of "Hee-Haw"-style country humor, with Teddy Helton backing him up on the bass and usually ending up as the target of his jokes. If you've ever had the opportunity to see Robby Spencer's 30-minute TV show that airs on weekends in East Tennessee, you know the fun he brings to the stage.

Don't miss the annual meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 14. We hope to see you there!



Robby Spencer

Electricity Meters: A Field Guide

Meters have evolved beyond spinning dials, and electric co-ops are leaders in deploying new meter technology. While the device on your home could be a classic, you may be surprised at what it can do.



Electromechanical Meter

Invented in 1888, this meter tracks electricity use with spinning dials.

Pros: *Inexpensive*

Cons: *Dials slow with age and require testing every few years*

Can only be used for measuring kWh consumed



Solid-State Electronic Meter

An LED screen displays electricity use on this digital meter.

Pros: *Accurate, without a need for testing, and inexpensive*

Cons: *May not include advanced features*



AMR Smart Meter

Supports **Automated Meter Reading**, which sends use information to a central database.

Pros: *Can record and analyze electricity use, and be upgraded to support AMI (see below)*

Cons: *Expensive*



Advanced (AMI) Smart Meter

Supports **Advanced Meter Infrastructure**, which allows for two-way communications with the utility.

Pros: *Co-op can offer consumers enhanced options, such as variable time-of-use rates*

Cons: *Expensive*



It doesn't matter what day it is.

It doesn't matter what time it is.

If you want to —

- view your electric bill,
- pay your electric bill,
- apply for new electric service,
- complete a home energy survey,
- get information about office locations,
- find out about office hours of operation,
- read current and past issues of
The Tennessee Magazine,
- or learn more about ways to save energy ...

go to your computer and log on for the convenient 'round-the-clock service you need!



www.holstonelectric.com

Labor safely this fall

Late summer and early fall often find many of us working outdoors before the weather turns cooler, but these outdoor chores require caution, especially around electricity. Faulty extension cords are a common source of injury, as are metal ladders coming into contact with overhead power lines.

Here are a few safety tips to follow when working outside:

Extension cords and power tools:

- Check power tools and electrical cords to make sure they are in good repair, and only use power tools outside that are designed for outdoor use.
- Extension cords should also be designed for outdoor use. They are thicker, more durable and have features for preventing moisture damage.
- Use three-wire extension cords with three-prong plugs.
- Check the amperage rating of the extension cord to make sure it's large enough to meet the power demand of the tool.
- Do not plug one extension cord into another. Use the proper length for the job.
- Unplug extension cords when you are finished using them. Never leave an open extension cord plugged into an outlet.

Ladders:

- Use fiberglass or wooden ladders when working around overhead wires or other electrical sources. Metal ladders conduct electricity and can kill anyone who is touching the ladder if it comes into contact with electricity.
- If you must use a metal ladder, carefully check the location of all overhead power lines to avoid contacting the wire or touching the ladder to something like a tree branch that touches the electrical source.
- Lower a ladder before carrying or moving it.
- Never work on a windy day — a gust of wind could shift a ladder into an overhead power line.
- When placing a ladder on the ground, make sure the distance to the nearest overhead power line is at least twice the length of the ladder.
- Make sure to place a ladder on solid, level ground to prevent sliding.

Sources: Consumer Product Safety Commission, www.cpsc.gov; Central Alabama Electric Cooperative, www.caec.com

Fine-tune energy use with the right television

By Scott Gates

Streamlining your home's energy use can make a big impact on monthly electric bills, especially with fuel costs rising. But the devil is in the details, and everyday energy-wasters are sometimes easy to overlook.

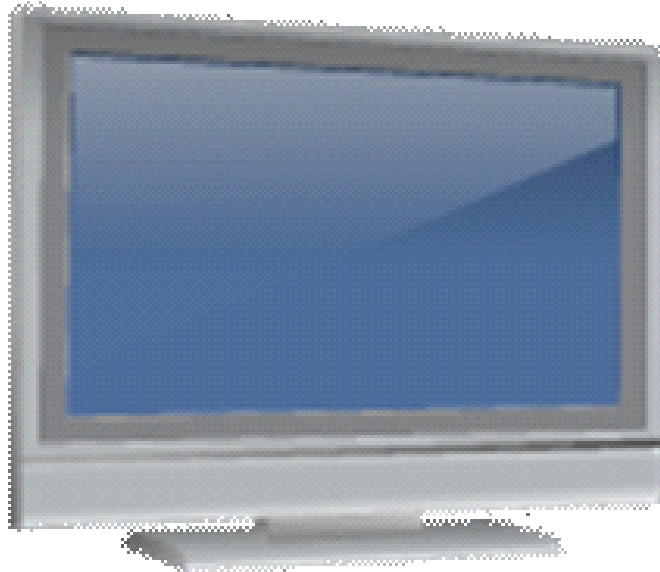
One ever-present culprit lurks in your home right now. When combined with DVD players and video game consoles, television use makes up about 10 percent of an average household's annual electricity bill, according to Energy Star, a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy.

Depending on the technology behind the TV you're watching, your monthly energy costs can vary dramatically. Standard sets use a cathode ray tube, with those smaller than 40 inches drawing roughly 73 watts when on — close to what a 75-watt incandescent lightbulb uses. An average flat-screen LCD television of the same size also requires 70 watts, while a similar flat-screen plasma TV can really suck some power, consuming an average 246 watts when on.

With more families opting for flat screen TVs these days, the choice between LCD and plasma can really make an impact to almost startling levels on a national scale.

Currently, there are more than 275 million TVs in use across the country, with the average household tuning in 4.7 hours a day. It takes more than 50 billion kilowatt-hours a year to keep those sets on, according to the EPA, meaning it costs Americans \$5.2 billion to watch all of that TV.

Of the total electricity generated in a single year, a full 1.2 percent goes toward keeping televisions glowing. And if current buying trends continue, that number could climb to nearly 2 percent in a few years, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council, a New York City-based environmental advocacy group.



The good news is that energy-efficient TVs — LCD, plasma and otherwise — are becoming available. This November, blue Energy Star labels will appear on all TVs that use less energy when turned on. Current Energy Star TV labels only indicate how efficient a set is when switched off — in standby mode.

“Energy Star’s new specifications for televisions are turning the channel on energy-guzzling sets, making them go the way of rabbit ears and black-and-white broadcasts,” quips EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson.

Energy Star estimates that if all of the TVs sold in the United States meet the new requirements, energy savings could grow to \$1 billion a year. Related greenhouse gas emissions, meanwhile, would be reduced by the equivalent of taking about 1 million cars off the road.

If you're not in the market for a new TV, you can still cut back on the electricity your old set uses by adjusting the picture settings. The brighter the screen, the more energy it needs. Also, the small stream of electricity a TV draws while in standby mode can be eliminated by unplugging it or by plugging it into a power strip that can be switched off.

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Energy Information Administration, Natural Resources Defense Council, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Scott Gates writes on technology and energy efficiency for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

