

# Share your energy concerns in the Our Energy, Our Future campaign

When electric cooperatives began to spread across America 75 years ago, President Franklin D. Roosevelt made the point that electricity in this country was no longer a luxury. It had become, as it is today, a necessity.

In these difficult economic times, a lot of Americans are struggling to make ends meet. As not-for-profit, consumer-owned and -controlled electric co-ops, we want to make certain that each and every citizen in this country can continue to receive affordable electric power. We want to be sure that we don't step back from the commitment that FDR made.

Congress is currently working to address issues related to climate change and debating federal mandates regarding renewable energy development and energy efficiency. Even if Congress doesn't act, the U.S. Supreme Court has given the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency a green light to put in place

new rules curbing emissions of carbon dioxide from power plants.

As a result of these efforts, there's little doubt electric bills are going to rise. The only question is whether higher electric bills will be kept affordable.

Electric co-ops are dealing with a very different situation than we have in the past. Electric bills will go up because of the

climate-change and energy policy decisions of U.S. senators and House representatives on Capitol Hill — or worse, unelected federal bureaucrats. Higher electric bills will become the norm as we are all forced to comply with these government mandates.



**Larry Elkins**  
General Manager  
Holston Electric  
Cooperative Inc.

At Holston Electric Cooperative, we're talking to our members of Congress, trying to convince them to work with us to make sure that we not only deal with climate change but do so in a way that keeps electric bills affordable. To accomplish this goal, we need

your help.

Nationwide, 42 million consumers are served by electric cooperatives. If all co-op consumers contacted their senators and representatives, we could make a real impact on the final

shape of any energy or climate-change legislation.

Over the last year, electric co-op consumers have made their voices

heard on keeping electric bills affordable through the Our Energy, Our Future grassroots awareness campaign. More than 1.6 million messages have been sent to Congress so far — you can add to that list by visiting [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop).

Make certain that those who lead us in Washington, D.C., hear from you today.



**Our Energy, Our Future**  
A Dialogue With America



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



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**To report an outage or electrical**

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**day or night.**

# Don't let the air out!

## Get back to efficiency basics with weatherization

By Megan McKoy

Children running in and out of the house on a hot summer's day may hear a common warning: "Don't leave the door open — you'll let the air out!" But how many adults do the same thing without realizing it?

While you may not leave your front door open, air leaks in the attic and basement let valuable air in — and out — of your home.

Laura Matney, a Building Performance Institute-certified building analyst, advises electric co-op consumers to look into weatherization before investing in other energy-efficiency measures. "I certainly encourage the selection of energy-efficient appliances, but they don't provide the amount of savings that proper sealing of air leaks can. We're trained to look at the basics of building science — seal, insulate and then look at the equipment. If a homeowner only has money for one area, then nine times out of 10 I recommend sealing."

For example, the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Star program advises addressing air leaks and ductwork in your home before investing in a new heating and cooling system; sometimes, those are the real sources of problems rather than your equipment.

If air leaks are generally hidden, where do you start?

Most leaks occur in the basement and attic. Starting in your basement, look for gaps and cracks where your cement or block foundation meets the frame of your home. Joists (building supports that are smaller than beams) between the floor and the foundation (called rim or band joists) create cavities, small empty spaces that are hard to insulate and may leak. Not all of the gaps are visible, so Energy Star suggests sealing the top and bottom of cavities around rim joists. Use caulk to seal cracks that are 1/4 inch or smaller; spray foam works best to fill gaps from 1/4 inch to about 3 inches.

It's also a good idea to seal gaps like holes for wiring and water pipes between the basement ceiling and the floor above.

In the attic, there are many small areas where air may come in, but focus on large spaces. For example, if your home has

dropped soffits — part of the ceiling that has been lowered for lighting design — be sure they've been properly sealed. These design elements, common in bathrooms and kitchens, are often built before your home's drywall is installed, leaving part of your wall open to air from wall or floor cavities.

Even though there may be insulation covering dropped soffits in your attic, be sure all cavities around the soffits have been properly plugged. To do this, place fiberglass insulation inside plastic garbage bags and stuff it tightly into any cavities.

Pay attention to dirty insulation; it's a big clue that air is moving through the area. And just like the basement, be sure to seal gaps between the attic ceiling and the rooms below, including holes for wiring, lighting and the attic door.

Weatherizing your home will save you money down the road — an average of \$358 each year, according to the U.S. Department of Energy Weatherization Assistance Program — but some people may not be able to pay for improvements. As a result of the federal stimulus package, families with household incomes below 200 percent of the national poverty level are eligible for up to \$6,500 in energy-efficiency improvements. For a family of four, that's an income limit of \$44,100.

For co-op consumers not eligible for the program, the stimulus bill provides a homeowner efficiency tax credit of up to \$1,500 or 30 percent of the cost for upgrades, including insulation that meets the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code.

There are many more ways to protect your home, including weatherstripping doors and windows and sealing ducts. For step-by-step instructions on how to weatherize your home and start saving energy dollars today, download "Sealing Air Leaks and Adding Attic Insulation," a do-it-yourself guide to weatherization from Energy Star available at [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).

### Common Household Air Leaks

Most air leaks are hidden in your attic and basement and can significantly raise your energy bill. Here's a list of common hiding places. Seal them with caulk, weatherstripping or other appropriate materials. Thirty percent of your expenses, up to \$1,500, may qualify for an energy efficiency tax credit!

Windows and Doors

Attic Hatch

Wiring Holes

Plumbing Vent

Recessed Lights and Open Soffit

(the box that hides recessed lights)

Furnace Flue or Duct Chaseways

(the hollow box or wall feature that hides ducts)

Basement Rim Joists

(where the foundation meets the wood framing)



Source: Alliance to Save Energy's Guide to Home Sealing

# Another *POWER*ful cleanup at Cherokee Lake

**M**ore than 150 volunteers representing neighborhoods, businesses, civic clubs, churches and school clubs scoured the Hawkins County shoreline of Cherokee Lake on Saturday, April 4, during the Seventh Annual Cherokee Lake *POWER* Cleanup.

Thanks to the efforts of many individuals and groups — including Heritage Lites; Rogersville Kiwanis; Girl Scout Troop 433; Boy Scout troops 143, 146 and 433; Cub Scout Pack 143; Lake View Fire Department; Hawkins County Rescue Squad; Edward Jones Investments; Hope Community Church; and Holston Electric Cooperative — more than 3.39 tons of garbage and litter were collected from the lakeshore. The collection included 160 bags of trash, 124 tires, car parts, propane gas tanks, mailboxes, lawn chairs and a pinball machine.

The *POWER* Cleanup is a regional event sponsored by Holston Electric Cooperative, Appalachian Electric Cooperative and Morristown Utility System and affiliated with Keep America Beautiful and the Great American Cleanup.

“We come together as the Power Cleanup for one energized effort,” said Debi Stevenson, executive director of Keep Morristown-Hamblen Beautiful.

Tennessee was recently honored by Keep America Beautiful as the first state in the nation to achieve 100 percent of its counties participating in the Great American Cleanup.

Thank you to all the volunteers who made the event such a success.



**Holston EC employees and families**



**Trash is bagged and ready to be removed from this cove.**



**Jim Zachary of Hawkins County Today, left, and HEC Board President Otis Munsey**



**Hawkins County Rescue Squad**



**Heritage Lites**



**Volunteers picked up trailer loads of trash from the Cherokee Lake shoreline.**



Holston EC employees and families



Hope Community Church



Cherokee High NJROTC



Lake View Fire Department



Girl Scout Troop 433



Holston EC employees and families



Rogersville Kiwanis Club



Holston EC employees and families



Neighborhood Yankees



Heritage Lites



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