

WATTS *Current*

For Our Customers • December 2005

WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER

Today's high-energy costs concern everyone. As a Cooperative, our focus is on how we can keep electric rates as low as possible. For reasons that your cooperative and each of us as consumers cannot control, gas suppliers have increased costs because of supply and demand and higher transportation costs. We have no interest in the bottom line of far-away investors, but we do have your interest in mind.

You have the power to lessen the impact of rising prices by installing energy efficient appliances and furnaces, and weatherizing your home. MVEC offers rebates on several energy saving appliances and equipment. You can view our current rebate schedule on our website at www.mvec.coop or call Gary at our office at 800-927-6068

This issue is dedicated to providing you with information on energy efficiency. Additionally, you can look for this new logo in future issues to point out energy efficient practices you can put into place today.

Make
Very
Efficient
Choices

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APPLIANCE ENERGY SAVINGS

Every appliance has two price tags. The first one covers the purchase price, think of it as a down payment. The second price tag is the cost of operating the appliance during its lifetime. ENERGY STAR® , branded appliances focus on reducing the second price tag that continues saving energy as long as you have it.

The way you live and the way you use your electrical appliances have a greater impact on your consumption of electricity than the number of appliances you have.

About 80% of the energy used for washing clothes is for heating the water. There are two ways to reduce the amount of energy used for washing clothes, use less water and use cooler water. Most people under-load their washers. Remember that washing one large load will take less energy than washing two small loads. Washing clothes in warm water or even hot water will not get your clothes any cleaner.

Save energy when using the clothes dryer by practicing these simple ideas. Don't add wet items to a load that is partially dry. By drying two or more loads in a row you take advantage of leftover heat. Make sure to clean the dryer vent after each use and to check the outside vent frequently. Small loads waste energy, but loads that are too large cause uneven drying. Hang your clothes outside if weather permits. Solar energy is free.

Don't keep your refrigerator and freezer too cold. Recommended temperatures are 37 to 40 degrees for the fresh food compartment of the refrigerator and 5 degrees for the freezer section. Keeping your freezer full will help it run efficiently. You can freeze plastic containers filled with water to use up space in your freezer. Make sure the door seals are air tight on both of these appliances. Test them by closing the door over a dollar bill so it is half in and half out of the appliance. If you can pull the bill out easily, the seal may need replacing. If your refrigerator or freezer is very old consider replacing it. Models 20 years old use nearly three-times as much electricity as an ENERGY STAR®, model sold today.

Do you have a dishwasher? Using a dishwasher once a day will use less energy and water than washing dishes by hand. Be sure your dishwasher is full and properly loaded but not over loaded. Let your dishes air dry; if you don't have an automatic air-dry switch, turn off the control knob after the final rinse and prop the door open a little so the dishes will dry fast.

There are four ways to cut your water heating bills: use less hot water, turn down the thermostat on your water heater, insulate your water heater, or buy a new efficient water heater. While it may cost more initially than a standard water heater, the energy savings will continue during the lifetime of the appliance.

Lastly, there are a surprisingly large number of electrical products, from VCR's to big screen televisions, that cannot be switched off completely without unplugging the device. These products draw power 24 hours a day, often without the knowledge of the consumer. This power is called standby power. One easy remedy for this is to unplug appliances when you are out of the house or away. Plugging devices into a single power strip makes it easier to turn off all the devices with one switch.



PREPARE HOMES FOR WINTER

Energy Saving and Safety

Before Iowa's winter arrives in force, along with predicted higher heating bills, MVEC and the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives encourage people to take steps now to improve both home energy efficiency and safety.

Energy dollars can pour out of homes through drafty doors, windows, uninsulated attics, walls floors and basements, while safety risks often go unnoticed. A small investment of time now, can pay big dividends in keeping your home safe and warm this winter.

“Your Mother taught you to brush your teeth each morning and evening. Add another task to your routine: Close the blinds and/or curtains each winter night, and open them again in the morning. Better yet, make this one of your children's chores, so they learn good energy habits!” suggest Pat Higby, board member for the Iowa Association for Energy Efficiency (www.iowaenergy.org).

Approximately one-third of all house fires nationwide occur during the cold, home-heating season. Many of these winter fires can be attributed to faulty or improper use and maintenance of heating equipment. Here are a few tips to keep your family safe and warm.

- Before firing up your heating system, make sure furnace and heaters are in good working order, and check ducts, flues and chimneys.
- Have a professional inspect and service your furnace each fall for safety and efficiency.
- Regularly clean or replace furnace filters during high winter use. Keeping heating equipment clean and in good repair will ensure peak efficiency and safety.
- If an electric space heater is used, make sure the wiring is adequate and check for fraying cords, splitting wires and overheating. Do not place a portable heater in high-traffic areas, and keep it clear of flammables such as curtains, bedding, clothes and furniture. Never use extension cords with electric heaters.
- Check around fixtures that penetrate walls, such as exhaust fans and electrical outlets, and look for gaps near dryer vents, chimneys and faucet pipes. Seal them all with caulking or weather stripping.
- Replace screens with storm windows and doors. Double-paned glass plays an important role in reducing heat loss. Double-pane windows with low-E coating can reduce heating bills by 34 percent in cold climates compared to uncoated, single-pane windows.
- If you are shopping for new windows, glass doors or skylights, look for the ENERGY STAR® logo. Today's high-efficiency windows are 40 percent more energy efficient than standard windows and can cut heating and cooling costs by 15 percent.
- If your furnace is over 15 years old consider replacing it with a more energy-efficient unit.
- Install an automatic thermostat. An easy-to-install clock thermostat can automatically raise and lower home temperatures for energy savings day and night. By using a programmable thermostat, and setting it back at night while you are sleeping and again while you are away, you will enjoy considerable savings.
- Also check the vent hood on your dryer to make sure the damper is closing all the way to prevent back draft through your dryer. The damper is located inside the hood on the outside of your home.

MVEC and the Safe Electricity program offer information year-round to help consumers use electric energy efficiently and safely. Visit www.mvec.coop and www.SafeElectricity.org for more information and tips.



FARRIER BUDDIES UNITE

Grace Zimmerman, Anamosa

What is one of the most unusual ways that you can recall as to how married couples have met? Well, this is one for the books! Dennis (Duke) Snyder of Wyoming, Iowa, met Lynn (Alynn) Woods as horse-shoeing buddies. When it was one of her customer's being shod, Lynn was the boss and when it was Duke's customer, he was the



boss. The system must have worked because they married in 1993.

After graduation, Dennis was in the Marine Corps, stationed at Palms California. It was here that the Marine Corps owned 35 horses and had a riding stable used by officers and their wives. One day the Gunnery Sargent-in-Charge asked Dennis if he'd like to try his hand at shoeing a horse. Dennis laughingly relates, "It took me 6 hours that first time to shoe a horse. Here, too, I got my nickname "Duke" because it turned out that a few marines didn't like cowboys, so after a few words and altercations, I earned the title "Duke". After my discharge, I went to horse-shoeing school in 1969 at Sperry, Oklahoma, for 4 months. I later apprenticed with an old shoer, Tom Rand, for six years, 'til he died. In the early 1980's, I

heard about a farrier contest at Elk Horn, Wisconsin and went to see what was goin' on. They were just startin' a state association, the Upper Midwest Association. Later, Ray Legel of Waterloo and I started the Iowa Professional Farriers Association."

Lynn informs me, "I'd always been around horses and went to horseshoeing school in Macomb, Illinois. I wanted to be self-employed. I loved it and the challenge. Every day was something new. That's part of why Duke loves to do it, too."

Now they reside in a stone home accurately named, "Stonehaven", which was built in 1857. The couple worked with only a shell. Much of the inside of the house was gone-no molding, no stair railing, etc. The well had to be re-dug. They worked for years, on weekends, etc. redoing mortar.

Lynn's touch is very much in evidence, as her decorating touches have made the home a real show place. Lynn adds, "I've come to the conclusion that it will never be finished," as they explain their plans for the future. Three parrots: a cockatoo, conure and an African Grey add a brilliant touch of color and atmosphere.

Also, Lynn's musical talents come to the forefront as musical instruments are attractively arranged, including a Native American flute, which Lynn also plays. She plays clarinet and sax in two jazz bands and enjoys playing with the Oxford Junction Polka Band. The tasks of re-doing the home and her music explains why Lynn tells me, "I haven't shod



Duke & Lynn Snyder



The new Stonehaven

horses for years.”

Duke, when they added building on the property, right in connection with the house, explains, “We studied the European style where you never have to go outside, so the garage, shop and horse barn are all attached. We have two horses, a Holsteiner (which he explains to me is a European breed) and a quarter horse. After joining, I served on the board of the American Farrier Association and we now have over 30 members in the Iowa Professional Farriers Association. Most of my horseshoeing is done in the Cedar Rapids, Iowa City

and West Branch area. I also go to the southern part of Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas, about every five weeks to shoe horses.”

Lynn adds, with a touch of pride as she tries to coax Duke to inform me, “Duke has worked with veterinarians over the years, taking off hoof wall, which has been damaged or injured. He also makes therapeutic shoes if horses hooves have been damaged. And, if he’s not shoeing horses, he’s working on this place.”

You may have seen Duke demonstrating his skills at Edinburgh Days at the Edinburgh Museum.

Meeting REC customers is always such an enjoyable time for me. I have to add that I’m amazed as to how two horse-shoeing buddies have worked so harmoniously, (it shows) and with lots of hard diligent work have achieved such an outstanding transformation of the old stone house to such a beautiful abode. And, meanwhile, Duke also achieves a well-known reputation as a farrier and Lynn for her performance of her artistry in music.

NEW LOOK FOR ONLINE PAYMENT USERS

Our online bill pay users may have already noticed a new look. For the past two months members have been seeing the SEDC logo instead of Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative on their credit card billing. Starting in November, the SEDC logo has also been appearing on our online bill pay site.

Southeastern Data Cooperative (SEDC) is our secure, third party, payment processor. After confirmation of payment, SEDC will automatically post the payment to your Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative account.

Even though we have a new look, this powerful Internet application still allows you the flexibility and convenience to pay and view your bills, view account history, and update your account information. Check it out at www.mvec.coop.



WATTS HEALTHY

Susan Uthoff, JSU Extension Nutrition & Health Specialist

Slow Cookers Save Time and Energy

Food for the evening meal can be prepared early in the morning and left cooking all day in a slow cooker. When the family members return from school, work and other activities, a hot meal awaits. All you need to add is a salad, bread, beverage and dessert.

The slow cooker is economical, low wattage and thus uses much less energy than a range top or oven would in preparing the same meal. You can also use less tender cuts of meat because the moist slow cooking process tenderizes the meat. There will be less moisture loss and less shrinkage.

Most recipes adapt easily to a slow cooker. Slow can be quick because most recipes have all the ingredients added at one time. There are several things to remember. First, spray the interior of the cooker with a non-stick spray for an easy clean up. Many of the preparatory steps are unnecessary when using a slow cooker. For example, you don't need to brown or sauté vegetables. Slow cooking is like one-step cooking. Many steps in the recipes may be deleted. Do not add as much water as some recipes indicate. The liquids don't cook-off so you usually will have more liquid at the end of cooking instead of less. Time for recipes to cook will be longer. Here is a guide:

If your recipe says to use a Slow Cooker, "High" equals 300 degrees F, low equals 190 degrees F.

Bake Time	Crockpot High	Crockpot Low
15 -30 minutes	1 1/2 - 2 1/2 hours	4 - 8 hours
35 -45 minutes	3 - 4 hours	6 - 10 hours
50 min. - 3 hrs.	4 - 6 hours	8 - 18 hours

Cook with cover on. Every time you "peek" you lower the temperature of the slow-cooker. This will increase the cooking time. Each lid lift can add from 15 to 30 minutes to the cooking time. Lift the lid only when it's time to check for doneness or if stirring is recommended.

For best results, the slow cooker should be filled at least half full, but never more than three-fourths full. Don't put frozen food into the cooker. Vegetables also tend to cook slower than meat. Place the vegetable on the bottom and around the side of the cooker. Place meat on top of vegetables. Also always use hot pads when lifting the lid or when removing the liner.

Try this slow cooker pot roast on these cold wintry days! Beef is an excellent source of protein and iron. When you add potatoes, onions and carrots, you are getting good amounts of vitamins A and C and fiber. The soup and soup mix add sodium, so you may want to use low-sodium versions. Serve with whole wheat bread, apple slices and milk and you have a complete quick and easy meal.



Slow Cooker Pot Roast

Makes 12 servings

- 1 (10.75 ounce) can of condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 1 (1 ounce) package dry onion soup mix
- 1 1/4 cups water
- 2 1/2 pounds pot roast, cut in chunks
- Carrots, potatoes, onions (enough for a meal for your family)

Remove all the fat you can see from the roast. Then cut the roast in chunks. In slow cooker, mix cream of mushroom soup dry onion soup mix and water. Scrub potatoes and carrots. Cut in chunks. Peel onion and cut into quarters. Place vegetables in the slow cooker and cover with soup mixture. Add roast.

Cook on 'low' setting for 7 to 9 hours.

Editor's note:

A slow cooker using 75 watts on the low setting would cost less than six cents if operating for 9 hours. If this recipe were baked in a 350-degree oven for 3 hours, the cost to operate would increase to ninety cents.

WEATHERIZATION SERVICES ARE FREE TO QUALIFIED HOUSEHOLDS

Assistance may be available to weatherize your home through the Iowa Weatherization Program.

These and Other Services may be available:

- INSULATION
- AIR LEAK REDUCTION
- FURNACE REPAIR/REPLACEMENT
- ENERGY AUDIT

Iowa uses the same income level for determining eligibility for the Weatherization Program and for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP.

Contact your local community action agency for more information on Weatherization Program requirements, where and how to apply.

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WATTS THE ANSWER?

Consider replacing your furnace if it is more than _____ years old.

_____ is the name of the home that is being restored by Dennis and Lynn Snyder.

About _____% of the energy used for washing clothes is for heating the water.

Mail your answers in with your energy bill or email them to dreyhons@mvec.com

Two winners will each receive a \$10.00 credit on their energy bill.

Name: _____

Address: _____

November winners:

Elaine Briggman, Manchester
Joe Abitz, Holy Cross

HAPPY HOLIDAYS...

...from the Board and employees of your Cooperative.



The office will be closed December 26th for the Christmas holiday and January 2nd for the New Year.

Visit our Web Site

at www.mvec.coop or

Email direct to the following departments:

- Billing questions: billing@mvec.com
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