



October 2013

RURAL
MISSOURI

Sac Osage Electric Cooperative

News

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SAC OSAGE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONTINUES TO EXCEED MEMBER SERVICE EXPECTATIONS

by Aaron Ash, Member Service Representative

Three years ago members said Sac Osage was an excellent cooperative. This year you said we were even better, with our customer service scores beating the national average for cooperatives and investor owned utilities.

Every three years our power provider, Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. (AECI), contracts with an independent company to survey member satisfaction. In 2013 Sac Osage Electric and forty-six of AECI's other member cooperatives participated in the survey. 250 Sac Osage members were called randomly and participated in the in-depth survey, and their answers were accumulated into a Satisfaction Index score. The other member cooperatives also received their own scores and other electric utilities and other service industries across the nation perform similar surveys to get scores that consumers can compare.

The survey revealed some things about our membership that backs up 2010 census data. Our members are older on average than the membership of other Associated cooperatives. 45% of Sac Osage members are 65 years or older and 69% are over 55. Going along with the age, we have more retirees and 13% fewer members who are currently employed. Our homes tend to be older and we have 8% more mobile homes (which tend to be homes that are less energy efficient) than the average of the 47 cooperatives surveyed.

These findings highlight some of the struggles and needs of our membership. To do well with our consumers we must provide value for a service that is vital to our communities. We are encouraged by the answers our members provided.

Sac Osage Electric Cooperative's Satisfaction Index score was 87. This is 4 points higher than the TOP investor owned utility, and 10 points higher than the energy utility sector average.

We scored above average in all the key service areas:

- Provides reliable service
- Handles problems promptly
- Outage restoration
- Improves quality of life in community
- Keeps momentary outages to a minimum
- Good value for the money
- Gives money back
- Informs you when working in area

Sac Osage is proud to serve our member-owners and we work hard to provide superior customer service at every opportunity. Over half the membership has contacted Sac Osage in the last twelve months. Overwhelmingly, members reported positive interaction with employees, giving us a 9 out of 10 in that area.

We are pleased with these scores and gratified that our members, regardless of the difficulties our communities are facing, are pleased with the job the cooperative is doing. From our boardroom, management and employees, Sac Osage is committed to serving our members. SOEC will continue to perform at this high level as long as boardroom leadership remains to set the standard of excellence. The board is proposing to extend their service terms from 9 to 15 years. It will be in the members' hands to make that happen.

One more bit of information stood out from the survey. Members reported on their reading habits regarding the Rural Missouri. Over 60% of you ALWAYS read this paper and less than 3 percent said they never do. Of those who read the paper more than 30 percent read it cover to cover, and 80 percent do more than just scan a few pages. We are glad to know this is a good way to pass along information. We hope to never waste your time.

OCTOBER
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C O O P

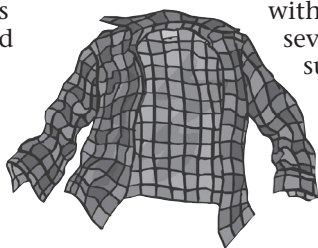
M O N T H



October 2013

Winter flannels

The first flannel underwear was used in Boston, Mass., by Lord Percy's regiment when they were encamped on the Common in October 1774. There was barely enough flannel cloth in the town to cover that one regiment. Eventually, flannels came to be almost synonymous



with long underwear, thanks to the severity of New England winters. Union suits followed shortly, being the same idea in a united shirt and pants. These days, flannel is more often seen around town as a plaid or striped shirt, and flannel sheets provide extra warmth when the temperature drops.

Happy Birthday, Libra!

Libra rules from Sept. 23 to Oct. 22, and Venus rules Libra. As befits the scales of justice, Libra is said to govern diplomats, lawyers, relationships, partners and politics. Libras are idealistic and tactful. They don't like arguments, and they tend to be gracious and understanding,



but sometimes stubborn. This month's birthdays include actress Sigourney Weaver (8th), musician John Lennon (9th), filmmaker Ed Wood (10th), first lady Eleanor Roosevelt (11th), and opera singer Luciano Pavarotti (12th).

International Night

To celebrate United Nations Day on Oct. 24, host an international potluck dinner at your school, community church or home. Invite each family and friend to bring an international dish. Ask each to include recipe cards with their dishes to share with everyone. Enlist children



to help decorate the tables with various colored flags or collages to represent some of the countries that might be included. Potluck dinners are an exceptional (and delicious) way to celebrate differences in culture and custom.

For recipes, gardening tips and weather forecasts, visit:
www.almanac.com



Recipe for German-Style Potato Salad

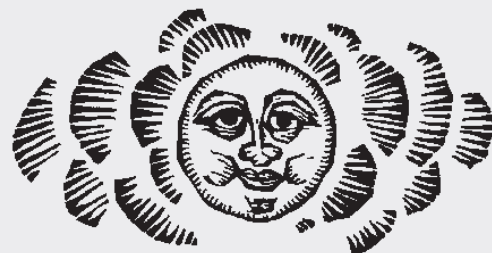


5 strips bacon
2 pounds cooked potatoes, sliced
1/2 cup cider vinegar
1 medium red onion, chopped
1/2 cup fresh parsley, chopped
Salt and pepper, to taste

In a large skillet, fry the bacon until crisp, remove, cut into small pieces and set aside. While the potatoes are warm, sprinkle them with vinegar. Add onion to bacon drippings and cook onion until soft. Toss with warm sliced potatoes. Add bacon pieces, parsley and salt and pepper, to taste. Serve warm. Makes six servings.

www.almanac.com

THE OLD FARMER'S



WEATHER PROVERBS

If the chickens are snug in their coop during a rainstorm, the rain will soon be over.

If October brings heavy frosts and winds, then will January and February be mild.

When squirrels bury nuts early, it will be a hard winter.

If the hare wears a thick coat in October, lay in a good store of fuel.

As the weather in October, so it will be the next March.

When snow falls in the mud, it remains all winter.

Corn is as comfortable under the snow as an old man is under his fur cloak.



HOME COMFORT

Sing about the savings

Low-flow shower heads and other inexpensive devices use less water and heat

Dear Jim: Both my energy and water bills are increasing, so I plan to install low-flow shower heads. I tried them before, but my family didn't like them. Are they any better now? How do I pick a good one? — Pat V.



by Jim Dulley

Dear Pat: Bathing uses a lot of water a month for most families, and hot water drives costs up. Low-flow shower heads can help cut down on both.

For many years now, all shower heads sold in the United States have been limited to a maximum water flow rate of 2.5 gallons per minute (gpm) at a water pressure of 80 pounds per square inch (psi), as mandated by federal energy efficiency standards. Some older shower heads may use as much as 5 gpm without even providing an adequate, forceful water flow.

Many of the new low-flow shower heads provide good water flow using even less than 2.5 gpm. I must have tested more than a dozen low-flow shower heads this year alone, and I found there are significant differences in shower head sprays for ones with identical flow rates. The most efficient ones are as low as 1.5 gpm, and the savings in water and energy use can pay back their cost in just a few months.

There are a number of factors — including personal preferences such as shower spray pattern and force — that determine how much water and energy will be saved. Water savings is affected directly

by the gallons per minute rating for the shower head, while energy savings is determined by both the flow rating and how much hot water has to be mixed with cold water for a comfortable shower.

The type of spray pattern has an effect on how warm the water feels on your skin. Shower heads that create larger water droplets

feel warmer because large droplets have a lower percentage of surface area, so they cool down less before they reach your body.

Some needle-type, low-flow shower heads create tiny water droplets. These might lose more heat as they move through the air. If this happens, people tend to set the faucet handle to a greater percentage of hot water and may actually end up using more hot water — and more electricity — than before. Some shower heads also add air to the spray for more force, but this might also cool the water spray.

It's easy to distinguish a narrow needle-spray design because they are usually small. For a fuller spray, look for shower heads with many holes across a larger face. Some might appear to have a large face with many spray holes. If they have adjustable patterns, not all the holes are used simultaneously, so they may actually create a needle spray if you desire that at times.

A handheld adjustable shower head is very effective. I use one that has four spray settings selected by rotating the head. Water flow can be directed where you want it, which can save water.

There are two inexpensive add-on devices that can help reduce water use on any shower head. One is a tiny push/pull trickle valve (also called a lathering valve) that's mounted between the shower arm and the shower head. When you don't need water, push the button to slow the water to a trickle without having to readjust the temperature at the faucet each time.

This showerhead uses only 1.59 gallons per minute and produces a full spray pattern. The attached device, called a "Lady Bug," slows the water flow to a trickle once hot water reaches showerhead. Pull the string to start the shower.



photo courtesy of ShowerStart



Bathing uses a lot of water a month for most families, and hot water drives costs up. Low-flow shower heads can help cut down on both and give you a reason to sing.

Another water saver is the Lady Bug valve by ShowerStart. People often turn on the hot water and walk away, waiting for the hot water to reach the shower. Gallons of hot water may be wasted down the drain until you actually get into the shower.

With the Lady Bug, when the water temperature at the shower head reaches 95 degrees, the flow is automatically slowed to a trickle so very little hot water goes down the drain. When you're ready to get into the shower, pull the string on the handle, and the warm shower starts flowing at full force.

The following companies offer showerheads and systems:

- Delta, 800-345-3358, www.deltafaucet.com;
- Moen, 800-289-6636, www.moen.com;
- Price Pfister, 800-732-8238, www.pricepfister.com;
- ShowerStart, 480-496-2294, www.evolvehowerheads.com; and
- Speakman, 800-537-2107, www.speakmancompany.com.

Have an energy-efficiency question for Jim? E-mail him at contact@dulley.com or write to: James Dulley, Rural Missouri, 6906 Royalgreen Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45244. Visit www.dulley.com to read past articles on energy efficiency.



Manager's Column —

In June your Cooperative completed its 73rd year of providing safe, reliable, efficient and environmental responsible service to our membership. As interesting as it is to look back on our success over the seventy-three years, I am more excited about the prospects of the future.

The ongoing maintenance and upgrades to our electric plant are an important activity to maintain the reliability we all need and expect. Each year we inspect five percent of our poles, replacing the poles that have reached the end of their useful life. We also maintain our right-of-ways on a five-year cycle. On average, we invest almost a half a million dollars on cutting, trimming and spraying our right-of-ways. In addition to these maintenance items, we are replacing the certain sections of line that were built in the 1950's and 1960's.

While we focus on maintaining and enhancing our distribution system, we now are looking ahead to try and anticipate how we supply the power to meet your growing need for electricity. Seventy three years ago a light bulb and water pump were considered cutting edge technology. It's hard to imagine what

new technologies we will see in the next decade, let alone in seventy-five years, but I am positive they will require electricity in some form. We know our traditional source of power: coal, will continue to be under attack from environmental regulations. These regulations will most certainly increase our rates.



Tom Killebrew
Manager

In the years to come we may change the way we structure our rates. Our rates now are designed to sell you kilowatt-hours based on our average cost, meaning we charge the same rate on a hot summer day as we do in the middle of a nice autumn night. In the future we may have completely different rates based on the time of year or the time of day.

Just as we have met the challenges of providing safe, reliable, efficient and environmental responsible service across southwest Missouri for the last seventy three years, I'm confident that we will continue this mission for the next seventy three and beyond.

HELP US LAUNCH OUR FACEBOOK AND TWITTER



Help us launch our Facebook and Twitter accounts by liking our Facebook page and following our Twitter account. We will be using these communication tools to offer you safety and energy efficiency information, as well as update you on what is happening at your cooperative, including things like outages, events and important legislative issues. We look forward to your participation on our page as well. Please ask questions and offer suggestions for ways we can exceed your expectations for safe, reliable,



To keep your Halloween scary but safe, remember these simple tips:

- Masks should have large eyeholes for good peripheral vision.
- Props that resemble cutting objects should be made of flexible plastic and have rounded tips.
- Treating kids to dinner will make them less likely to eat candy as they collect it.
- Trick or treat with your kids, or find a chaperone. At least know your kids' route and set a time for them to come home.
- To minimize danger during pumpkin carving, it's best for adults to handle the sharp objects. Let the kids draw faces on their pumpkins and clean them out.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Get ready for winter by insulating your attic. Adding 9 inches or more of insulation could pay you back in one season. While you are at it, make sure the attic access door is insulated and that there are no cracks to let heat escape. These tips will save you money in the summer too!