

Start Saving with Your DIY Home Energy Audit

As temperatures begin to drop and your energy focus turns from cooling your home to heating it, consider using this time to increase energy efficiency and cost savings for the colder months ahead. Whether your home is old or new, chances are you are spending more on energy costs than necessary.

Armed with some basic knowledge and a little time, you can conduct a baseline energy audit of your home to identify where you are losing energy (and money). Use a checklist and take notes on problems you find as you walk through your home. Remember, the audit itself won't save you money unless you act on your findings.

DIY 101

So, where to start? If your home has multiple levels, work from the top down. Begin in your attic or highest floor, and work your way down to the first floor or basement.

► **Insulation and air leaks (drafts)** – According to the Department of Energy, improving your home's insulation and sealing air leaks are the fastest and most cost-effective ways to reduce energy waste and make the most of your energy dollars. Check to see whether there is sufficient insulation in the attic. Are openings containing piping, ductwork and chimney sealed?

► **Electronic devices** – Inventory all of the electronic devices you have and how often you use them. Computers, printers, DVD players, phones and gaming consoles are notorious "vampire power" users – they drain energy even when not in use. If items can be turned off without disrupting your lifestyle, consider plugging them into a power strip that can be turned on and off (or put on a timer).

► **Lighting** – Note where you still have incandescent lights. Can you replace them with CFL or LED

upgrades? Do you have nightlights? If so, consider replacing them with LED nightlights. Are there places where you can install motion sensor lights in low use areas, such as a closet, porch or garage?

► **Thermostat/indoor temperature** – Do you have a programmable thermostat? When was the last time it was programmed? Is the date and time correct? If they are not, this could throw off the automatic settings. Is it set so the temperature is lower during the day and/or times when no one is home and at night when people are sleeping? Consider lowering the temperature a few degrees.

► **Appliances and cleaning** – Appliances are large energy users, and if yours are more than 10 years old, they are likely not as energy efficient as today's options. How and when you use them also make a difference. Do you wash your clothes in hot water, or can you use cold water instead? Do you use your washer, dryer or dishwasher during the day? Consider running them at night, during off-peak times. Does your hot water heater have a blanket? If not, consider insulating it. Make sure your dryer vent isn't blocked – this will not only save energy, it may also prevent a fire.

Evaluation

Once you have completed the audit, take a look at the findings. Prioritize actions that you can take based on your time and budget, weighing where you can get the most impact for your investment. Increasing your home's energy efficiency will make your family comfortable while saving you money.

Taking savings to the next level

If you would like to take your audit and savings to the next level, contact Victory Electric at 620-227-2139 for an energy evaluation conducted by the energy experts.

Victory Electric is Committed to Electrical Safety



The City of Dodge City crews stopped in to the office for an electrical safety demonstration.

The crews learned about how electricity travels through the body and saw first-hand the potential damage. A topic of discussion also included downed power lines and the best procedure if a city crew encounters a downed line.

Electrical safety demonstrations are available for any group, call us today to schedule one at 620-227-2139.

¿Solo o doble? ¿Cual es la diferencia?

Vivir en las líneas de la Victory Electric lo que significa que tiene un sistema de postes y cables que conectan su casa o negocio a la cooperativa para que pueda obtener energía cuando y donde lo necesite. Si bien estos sistemas de postes y cables todos se ven muy similares, existen diferencias claras.

Todo comienza en la subestación cuando se trata de sistemas de distribución de co-op. Las líneas de transmisión de alta tensión se alimentan en la subestación, donde se reduce a un nivel más manejable y más seguro. En el otro lado de estos transformadores, líneas de alimentación de distribución llevan el poder y en el área de servicio, donde se "alimentan" el poder a un bloque considerable de miembros de la cooperativa. Esta es una manera eficiente de mover una gran cantidad de energía más cerca de su punto de uso. Estos son también lo que se denomina alimentaciones radiales, es decir, sólo un extremo está conectado a una fuente de alimentación.

En ciertos puntos a lo largo de los alimentadores, líneas laterales se ramifican para conectar cargas miembros, que son las cantidades de energía una casa o negocio necesidades. Si nos fijamos en un mapa sencillo del sistema de distribución de la Victory Electric, que se asemeja a las venas y arterias del cuerpo humano. Finalmente, el último miembro de que se alcance y el sistema no va más.

Líneas laterales son las líneas "individuales" que se hace referencia en el título de este artículo. Cuando los sistemas de distribución de la cooperativa se construyeron primero, la solución más rentable en muchos casos fue el abordaje lateral. Esto fue especialmente cierto para los lejanos, los miembros de fin de línea. Hay un inconveniente a un enfoque de la línea lateral o individual, sin embargo. Cuando hay un

fallo (algo que causa el flujo de electricidad a parar, como un árbol en las líneas o un poste está roto por un coche) en el sistema, cada miembro más allá de ese punto se queda sin alimentación hasta que el problema se encuentra y se corrige.

Introduzca el enfoque de doble línea. Una evolución normal en el crecimiento del sistema de distribución es reemplazar las líneas radiales con conexiones de bucle. El bucle está conectado a una fuente de alimentación en los dos extremos en lugar de uno. Esta fuente de energía puede ser otra subestación u otro alimentador de la misma subestación. Con este enfoque, cuando la energía se interrumpe, tenemos la oportunidad de restaurar rápidamente el poder a una gran parte de los miembros afectados.

Digamos que un árbol rama se rompe y cae sobre los cables. Equipos en las líneas detecta la falla y opera los dispositivos de protección inmediata frente a la culpa, al igual que los interruptores pueden hacer en su propia casa. No hay energía fluye más allá del dispositivo de protección, y todos los miembros más allá de este punto de perder el poder.

Los equipos son enviados a la zona para encontrar y solucionar el problema. Si la línea es una sola, una radial, energía para todo el mundo está fuera hasta que se corrija el problema. Pero, si un circuito está en su lugar, los operadores de la cooperativa o tripulaciones en el campo pueden dar la vuelta interruptores y redirigir la energía alrededor de la culpa. Esto significa más rápido restablecimiento de energía para muchos miembros. El propósito del bucle está restaurando el poder a los miembros más rápido que en una sola línea está en su lugar. Victory Electric mantiene 2.795 millas de la línea, trae poder de 13,219 miembros.

Regla de Clima Frío: Efectivo 15 de Noviembre al 15 de Marzo

Los miembros cooperativos que no pueden pagar sus facturas de electricidad durante el periodo de clima frío pueden calificar para este programa, siempre que cumplan con ciertos requisitos de buena fe al intentar pagar.

Los miembros deben cumplir con requisitos para calificar para el programa se resumen a continuación.

Los miembros deben notificar a la Cooperativa indicado su incapacidad de no pagar sus facturas de servicio en su totalidad.

Los miembros deben aplicar a programas de asistencia financiera federal, estatal o local que pueden ser elegibles

para recibir ayuda en el pago de facturas de servicios públicos.

Los miembros y la cooperativa llegarán a un acuerdo de pagos mutuamente aceptables.

Tenga en cuenta que si no se siguen los requisitos, desviar ilegalmente servicio de utilidad, recibiendo servicio por manipulaciones o incumplimiento de un acuerdo de pago, le descalificará de recibir las prestaciones en virtud de la regla de clima frío.

En ningún caso la cooperativa desconecta un servicio si la temperatura es

pronosticada por el servicio meteorológico local a caer por debajo de 35 grados F, dentro de las 24 horas siguiendo el tiempo de desconexión.

Victory Electric reserva el derecho a la desconexión entre 8 y 5 del Lunes al Viernes cuando la temperatura está en o por encima de 35 grados.

La regla de clima frío es garantizar la salud y seguridad no están amenazadas injustificadamente durante los meses de frío.

Si tiene preguntas sobre la regla de clima frío, póngase en contacto con Sandy en 620-227-2139.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
P.O. Box 1335, 3230 N. 14th Ave.
Dodge City, KS 67801
620-227-2139
www.victoryelectric.net

THE VICTORY
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

electronews

The Victory Electric
Cooperative Assn., Inc.

Board of Trustees

Kenny Wehkamp
President

John Leis
Vice President

Pat Morse
Secretary/Treasurer

Cedric Drewes
Trustee

Jim Imel
Trustee

Gary Gillespie
Trustee

Terri Larson
Trustee

Richard Lightner
Trustee

James Ochs
Trustee

Randy Quint
Trustee

Ken Schulte
Trustee

Daryl Tieben
Trustee

Staff

Shane Laws
CEO

Amy Grasser
Manager of Corporate Services

Angela Unruh
CFO

Greg Underwood
Manager of Engineering

Jerri Imgarten
Manager of Marketing and Communications

Michael Clark
Manager of Purchasing

Ryan Miller
Supervisor of Operations

Tom Lowery
Manager of Operations

FROM THE CEO

New EPA Regulation Proves Challenging for Electric Cooperatives

One of the biggest challenges for not-for-profit electric cooperatives is keeping electric as low as possible for our cooperative members. Every day the employees and trustees of Victory Electric work to ensure you have safe, reliable power when you need it most. When issues arise that have the potential to affect your cost of power, we diligently work to resolve the problem or find a solution that works for everyone. One of the biggest areas we monitor and address is government environmental regulations. While we are committed to protecting the environment, we feel new regulations should not make power cost-prohibitive for our members.

For example, on Aug. 3, 2015, Gina McCarthy, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), signed the Clean Power Plan. The 1,560-page document provides guidance to the states to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emission standards.

Under the provisions of the Clean Power Plan, by 2030 affected generating facilities must reduce nation-wide GHG emissions levels by 32 percent compared to 2005. To achieve this reduction, EPA established for each state interim and final targets based on each

state's current emission levels and mix of generation resources. The final rule requires Kansas to make a 44 percent reduction in GHG emissions, almost twice the 23 percent reduction in the proposed rule.

Kansas has until September 2016 to submit an initial compliance plan detailing how Kansas electric utilities will respond in order for the state to meet the required 44 percent reduction. A final compliance plan must be submitted by September 2018. While it's still too early to determine exactly how the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) will incorporate all of the potential tools available into a plan, it is clear that the plan will require significant shifts in operational strategies to meet the required 2030 targets.

Victory Electric's members will certainly be affected by the rule. All electric utilities—including Sunflower Electric Power Corporation and Mid-Kansas Electric Company, Victory Electric's wholesale energy providers—must consider how the changes brought about by the Clean Power Plan might alter generation and transmission operational strategies

Continued on page 16-B ►



Shane Laws

Non-Domestic Bills Mailed

Victory Electric will collect meter data in October for the fence chargers and small watering loads (among other small rural electric loads), which we classify as non-domestic services.

These bills are mailed annually and consist of the kilowatt-hours consumed in the previous year from November 2013 to October 2015.

If you have any questions call us at 800-279-7915.

Time Change Begins Nov. 1

On Sunday, November 1, remember to turn your clocks back one hour. This is also a great time to do the following:

- ▶ Change the batteries in smoke detectors.
- ▶ Have a professional check your fire extinguishers.

CFL Charlie Says "Come Get Your Free CFL!"

This month's lucky winners are...

Elizabeth Rodrigus, Lacey Rogers, Abera Tesfaye, Gustavo Terrazas, John Wagner and Troy Weiss.

Come by Victory Electric Cooperative to get your free compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL). Every month Victory Electric gives members free CFL light bulbs. Congratulations to this month's winners!

Efficiency Tip of the Month

Unplugging unused electronics can save you as much as 10 percent on your electric bill.

Continued from page 16-A

that will impact both cost and reliability into the future. These strategies may include retrofitting generation units; relying less on more affordable and reliable fossil fuels; incorporating large amounts of more renewable resources; and building transmission infrastructure to accommodate the increased requirements for renewable energy. Unfortunately, the costs associated with these operational changes will be shouldered by electric ratepayers.

The Clean Power Plan is

just one of many environmental regulations Victory Electric is monitoring. We also spend time lobbying on your behalf, ensuring our state and federal legislators realize the importance of affordable power for our members. Although the Clean Power Plan will bring changes to the electric industry and, consequently, to Victory Electric's member-owners, rest assured that Victory Electric's staff and our partners will do everything possible to mitigate the impacts of the rule.

Thanks, Shane Laws

Cold Weather Rule Begins Nov. 14

As November approaches, the cold weather rule will take effect, the list to qualify is below.



Co-op members who are unable to pay their electric bills during the cold weather period may qualify for this program, provided they fulfill certain good faith requirements when attempting to pay.

The requirements members must meet to qualify for the program are summarized below.

- ▶ Members must notify the co-op and state their inability to pay their service bill in full.
- ▶ Members must apply to federal, state, local or other financial assistance programs for which they may be eligible to receive aid in paying utility bills.
- ▶ Members and the co-op will reach a mutually agreeable payment arrangement.

Please note that failure to follow the requirements, illegally diverting utility service,

receiving service by tampering, or defaulting on a payment agreement, will disqualify you from receiving the benefits under the Cold Weather Rule.

In no event will the co-op disconnect a service if the temperature is forecasted by the local National Weather Service to fall below 35 degrees F, within 24-hours following the time of disconnection.

Victory Electric reserves the right to disconnect between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday when the temperature is at or above 35 degrees.

The Cold Weather Rule is to ensure human health and safety are not unreasonably endangered during the cold weather months.

If you have questions on the Cold Weather Rule, please contact Sandy at 620-227-2139.

9th Annual Pumpkin PAINTING AND CARVING Festival

SATURDAY

OCT. 24 9 to 11 a.m.

Pumpkin painting and carving
Face painting
Games

3230 N. 14th Ave. in Dodge City

Join us for a couple hours of fun! There will be 800 spots/pumpkins available on a first come, first-served basis. Pumpkin and kits will be provided free of charge. Limited to children age 13 and under. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Sponsored by Victory Electric Cooperative and Ladies Community Outreach

Co-op Lines: Single or Double? What's the Difference?

Living on Victory Electric's lines is a literal expression, meaning you have a system of poles and wires connecting your home or business to the co-op so you can get power when and where you need it. While these systems of poles and wires all look quite similar, there are distinct differences.

Everything starts at the substation when it comes to co-op distribution systems. Transmission lines feed high voltage into the substation, where it is reduced to a more manageable and safer level. On the other side of these transformers, **distribution feeder lines** carry the power out and into the service area, where they "feed" power to a sizeable block of co-op members. This is an efficient way to move a large amount of power closer to its point of use. These are also what are termed **radial feeds**, meaning only one end is connected to a power source.

At certain points along the feeders, **lateral lines** branch out to connect **member loads**, which are the amounts of power a home or business needs. If you look at a simple map of Victory Electric's distribution system, it resembles the veins and arteries of the human body. Eventually, the last member is reached and the system goes no further.

Lateral lines are the "single" lines referenced in the title of this article. When co-op distribution systems were first built, the most cost effective solution in a lot of cases was the lateral approach. This was especially true for far-flung, end-of-line members. There is one drawback to a lateral or single line approach, however. When there is a **fault** (something causing the flow of electricity to stop, like a tree on the lines or a pole being broken by a car) in the system, every member beyond that point loses power

until the problem is located and corrected.

Enter the double line approach. A normal evolution in distribution system growth is to replace radial lines with loop connections. The loop is connected to a power source at two ends rather than one. This power source can be another substation or another feeder from the same substation. With this approach, when power is interrupted, we have the opportunity to rapidly restore power to a large portion of the affected members.

Let's say a tree branch breaks and falls onto the wires. Equipment on the lines senses the fault and operates protective devices immediately in front of the fault, just like circuit breakers do in your own home. No power flows beyond the protective device, and all members beyond this point lose power.

Crews are sent to the area to find and fix the problem. If the line is a single, radial one, power for everyone is out until the problem is corrected. But, if a loop is in place, the operators at the co-op or crews in the field can flip switches and reroute the power around the fault. This means faster power restoration for many members. The purpose of the loop is restoring power to members faster than where a single line is in place. Victory Electric maintains 2,795 miles of line, brings power to 13,219 members. In the event of a power outage, please give us a call at 620-227-2139.



Lateral lines stretch across a Kansas sunset.

CO-OP CONNECTIONS SPOTLIGHT

Ackerman Computers Offers Discount and Upgrade

ACKERMAN COMPUTERS is one of several local businesses providing savings for co-op connection card users at Victory Electric.

As a business specializing in computer and software needs, Ackerman Computers is offering savings and an upgrade.

BRAD ACKERMAN, owner of Ackerman Computers, is offering 10 percent off labor when members use their cards.

Launched in 2008, Ackerman Computers offers virus protection and cleanup, software installation, computer advice and much more. Ackerman said, "Whatever a customer needs, I help with."

Being a part of the Co-op Connections was a decision for Ackerman because "it's a great program. The more businesses who participate in the program, the more Victory Electric members

can save," Ackerman said. "That's what the program is all about. This is one small way I can give back to the community."

Ackerman is also offering a service to help upgrade current Windows 7 and 8 users upgrade to Windows 10. The upgrade is free from Windows and is strongly encouraged from Ackerman.

"I recommend users take advantage of the upgrades to get several years' worth of security updates from Microsoft and a much improved operating system," Ackerman said.

The Co-op Connections Card connects members with discounts, check out the saving opportunities at connections.coop or victoryelectric.net/content/co-op-connections-card. Start saving on local and national discounts today, just use your Co-op Connections Card, which can be picked up at Victory's office.