



Efficiency upgrades to help manage your energy this summer

Summer is an opportune time for home upgrades and DIY projects. If you're planning to make improvements to your home, consider upgrades that promote better efficiency.

Here are a few projects that can help you manage your energy and save money—all while increasing the comfort of your home.

Installing a smart thermostat is one of the simplest ways to manage home energy use and keep summer bills in check. Smart thermostats are easy to install and allow you to control your heating and cooling system from your phone. You can purchase an ENERGY STAR-certified smart thermostat for as low as \$100. If it is programmed correctly, you can save about 8% on annual heating and cooling costs. This upgrade will quickly pay for itself, and you'll gain insight into better ways to heat and cool your home. And you may qualify for a rebate through our SimpleSaver program.

While it's not as trendy as incorporating smart technologies, sealing air leaks around your home is a simple, effective way to save energy and lower your bills. Applying new (or replacing old) weather stripping around doors and windows can instantly make your home more comfortable and reduce



energy waste. Applying caulk to fill gaps can also improve the seal of your home. Caulk can be applied to a variety of areas, including windows, doors, bathtubs and sinks.

If your home feels too warm during summer (and too chilly during winter) even after you've sealed with weather stripping and caulk, your home may need additional insulation. Insulation is considered a more expensive efficiency upgrade; however, if your home is under-insulated, additional insulation can make a big impact on reducing energy use and costs. The cost of new insulation depends on a variety of factors like materials, size of the home and whether you use a contractor. Typically, the project costs

can be recouped in a few years and your home will immediately feel more comfortable.

Of course, there are additional efficiency upgrades that can make a big impact on energy use, like replacing old appliances with ENERGY STAR models or replacing old, leaky windows with new, energy efficient windows. But these upgrades can be a bit pricey.

If you're wanting to make your home more energy efficient but you're not sure where to start, give us a call. We will be glad to help you design an energy efficient game plan to identify areas to boost efficiency, and then you can determine the projects you want to tackle first based on your budget and needs.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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AS A SERVICE TO OUR MEMBERS.**

Denise Myers, Editor



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Power with purpose

Supporting hometown businesses and their local owners is not a new concept for electric cooperatives. It's been the standard here at Blue Grass Energy since our founding in 1937. This cooperative is your cooperative. We help power your home and our community, and we're committed to making life better each and every day.

We've always been in the business of not just providing you with safe, reliable power, but also a better way of life that goes beyond the electric lines. By working alongside our fellow Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, we're able to demonstrate our commitment through a variety of high-impact programs and initiatives. Because you're a part of our cooperative, you're also supporting a number of amazing initiatives that make our cities, counties and state a better place to live.

One of the programs we have is our Pennies for Purpose program. It is funded by members who round up their monthly electric bills to the nearest dollar, and provides funding to charitable causes across our 23-county service area.

Our corporate charity program is making life better for our areas as well. Completely led by our employees, we support nonprofits who are doing amazing work. This year, we are working with CASA organizations throughout our service area. They advocate for abused and neglected children.

Local communities are also strengthened by our educational investments. Blue Grass Energy actively supports our schools. Whether it is a career day, talking about electrical safety or reading to elementary classes, we are committed to our youngest members. We also provide ten \$1,500 scholarships for students who continue their education past high school. This year's application is available on our website, and scholarships will be awarded on June 1.

Many things about the electric industry have changed since the first power lines were strung across the hills and valleys of this area. But the purpose of your electric cooperative has remained consistent. Now and always, we are dedicated to making life better, the cooperative way.

*By President/CEO
Michael I. Williams*



Soak up summer savings with Co-op Connections

Summer is the perfect time for travel and fun. The Co-op Connections Program gives Blue Grass Energy members access to hundreds of discounts wherever you choose to play or stay.

Planning a big vacation this year? Use your Co-op Connections for savings on hotels, cruises, vacation rentals, airfare, tours and car rentals. You'll also find discounts on tour packages to destinations in Europe and the Caribbean.

Co-op Connections members also receive exclusive discounts at amusement parks like Kings Island, Walt Disney World and Six Flags. If you're driving to your vacation destination, be sure to note the roadside assistance

offer available to Connections members.

For weekend fun, Blue Grass Energy members can buy discount tickets for Cincinnati Reds games or Kentucky Down Under Adventure Zoo. You can also snag discount movie tickets to see the latest summer blockbuster.

Put the power of Co-op Connections to work for you and save all summer. For easy access to discounts, download the Co-op Connections app from the App Store or Google Play. It's just another benefit of being a



member of your co-op. To find a full list of discounts and instructions to get your card, visit connections.coop.

OVERHEAD LINE SAFETY WHEN IN DOUBT, LOOK UP AND OUT!

Follow these guidelines to prevent the most common mistakes made near power lines.

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When working on an outdoor project, stay at least 20 feet away from overhead lines. If your ladder or piece of equipment touches an overhead line, both you and the equipment can become a path for the electricity. Look up and out in front of you before using a ladder, large machinery or long tools like pool cleaning nets. Even non-metallic ladders and equipment can conduct electricity. If power lines are present, always carry ladders and long poles horizontally.

Using large tools or machinery can make it harder to avoid overhead power lines. Always consider where power lines are before you begin a project. Scanning the area should be part of your plan from the start.

A SPECIAL CASA VOLUNTEER

By Katie Saltz

All of our CASA friends depend on volunteers to fulfill their mission to advocate for children and youth who have experienced abuse and neglect.

But CASA of Lexington has one very special volunteer—a lab/golden retriever mix named Matilda.

The only certified courthouse facility dog in Kentucky, Matilda was trained as a service dog to help children cope with trauma from abuse or neglect. She can attend court, home visits, school visits and treatment facilities to provide comfort and support.

Melynda Jamison, executive director of CASA of Lexington, says Matilda's presence is a calming one for children who need to feel safe.

"If a child has to testify against their perpetrator, Matilda can sit with them on the stand," Jamison says. "She can attend medical appointments, which is helpful for children traumatized by sexual abuse. She is a superhero for our kids."

To find out how you can volunteer with a CASA chapter in your area, visit <https://nationalcasagal.org>.



CASA OF LEXINGTON

Each year, Blue Grass Energy chooses a charity to work with for the year. We partner with a local nonprofit organization that benefits the communities in which we live and serve. Our fundraising efforts for the entire year go to that cause. This year, we are partnering with CASA.

Test GFCIs monthly

Now that springtime showers have passed, it's a good time to check your home's electrical system. The ground fault circuit interrupters that prevent electrocution could be damaged by power surges during storms.

A GFCI, which can be part of an electrical receptacle or circuit breaker, trips the circuit when it detects ground faults or leaky currents. It protects the user of electrical equipment from electrocution by shutting off the electric path to that appliance.

Nearly 50% of the 400 electrocutions that occur each year could be prevented by using GFCIs, according to the Electrical Safety Foundation International.

Even when homes do have GFCIs, the foundation says, most homeowners don't know how often to test them. You should test yours every month, and again after power surges, to check for damage.

Here's how to test your GFCIs:

- Push the "reset" button on the GFCI receptacle to prepare the unit for testing.
- Plug a lamp into the GFCI and turn it on. The lamp's bulb should light up.
- Push the GFCI's "test" button. The lamp should turn itself off.
- Push the "reset" button again. The lamp should turn on again.



THE TODD/SHUTTERSTOCK

If the lamp doesn't turn itself off when you push the "test" button, that means your GFCI is on the fritz. To fix it, call a licensed electrician.