

# COLUMBUS CURRENTS

## Five Ways to Fight the Winter Chill and Save Energy

By Abby Berry

We all have our favorite season. Some people love crisp, cool weather and bundling up under a favorite blanket, while others prefer the warm temperatures summer brings and all fun outdoor activities that go with it.

But there's one thing we can all agree on: high winter bills are never fun. Columbus Electric Cooperative is here to help you find ways to manage your home energy use and keep winter bills in check.

Here are five tips to help increase your home's energy efficiency this winter:

**Mind the thermostat.** This is one of the easiest ways to manage your home energy use. We recommend setting your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower) when you're home. When you're sleeping or away for an extended period of time, try setting it between 58 and 62 degrees; there's no need to heat your home when you're away or sleeping and less active.

**Button up your home.** The Department of Energy estimates that air leaks account for 24% to 40% of the energy used for heating and cooling a home. Caulking and weather stripping around windows and doors is another simple, cost-effective way to increase comfort and save energy. If you can feel drafts while standing near a window or door, it likely needs to be sealed.

**Use window coverings wisely.** Open blinds, drapes or other window coverings during the day to allow natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep the cold, drafty air out.

If you feel cold air around windows, consider hanging curtains or drapes in a thicker material; heavier window coverings can make a significant difference in blocking cold outdoor air.

**Consider your approach to appliance use.** When combined, appliances and electronics account for a significant chunk of our home energy use, so assess how efficiently you're using them. For example, if you're running the dishwasher or clothes washer, only wash full loads. Look for electronic devices that consume energy even when they're not in use, like phone chargers or game consoles. Every little bit helps, so unplug them to save energy.

**Think outside the box.** If you're still feeling chilly at home, think of other ways to warm up—beyond dialing up the thermostat. Add layers of clothing, wear thick socks and bundle up under blankets. You can even add layers to your home! If you have hard-surface flooring, consider purchasing an area rug to block cold air that leaks in through the floor.

If you're taking steps to save energy but continue to see major increases in your bills, give us a call at 1-800-950-2667. Winter months often bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. By being proactive about saving energy, you can increase the comfort of your home and reduce monthly bills. Visit our website at [columbusco-op.org](http://columbusco-op.org) for additional energy-saving tips.

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Our office will be closed on  
December 23<sup>rd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> in observance of the  
Christmas Holiday!  
Wishing you and your family love, peace, and  
joy this holiday season!



## **CEC Scholarship Application Now Open!**

Scholarship Applications are now being accepted for the 2023-2024 school year. Columbus Electric Cooperative offers educational scholarships to active members of CEC and their immediate family members. Scholarship recipients can receive financial assistance for up to eight semesters of undergraduate studies at the college of their choice. Applicants must complete an application and submit letters of recommendation. Applications may be obtained by contacting our office, the student's high school counselor or at [columbusco-op.org/scholarships](http://columbusco-op.org/scholarships). The deadline to submit a scholarship application is March 2, 2023.

For questions, please call our office at 575-546-8838

## **Board Highlights**

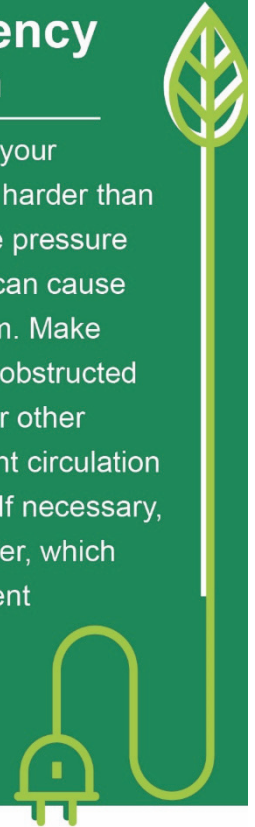
At their regular board meeting in November the Trustees reviewed and approved the operations, financial, and safety reports for the month of October. They listened to reports and updates from representatives of the boards of the New Mexico Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Grand Canyon State Electric Cooperative Association, and Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association.



## **Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month**

Blocked air vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and increase pressure in the ductwork, which can cause cracks and leaks to form. Make sure all air vents are unobstructed from furniture, drapes or other items to ensure sufficient circulation throughout your home. If necessary, purchase a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture.

*Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)*



*Emergency Response Number  
1-800-228-0579*

*Toll - free Office Number  
1-800-950-COOP (2667)*

[www.columbusco-op.org](http://www.columbusco-op.org)