

# COLUMBUS<sup>®</sup> CURRENTS

## Reliability Requires Investment

As your local power provider, Columbus Electric Cooperative's mission has always been simple: keep the lights on and support the communities we serve. But behind every switch, every warm home and every business that opens its doors is a complex system that requires constant care. Reliable electricity doesn't happen by accident. It requires ongoing investment in our local grid—through system repairs, maintenance, upgrades and the integration of new technologies that help us operate smarter and more efficiently.

Much of the energy system we rely on today was built decades ago. While it continues to serve us well, age alone means that components must be repaired or replaced to maintain performance and safety. From poles and wires to transformers and substations, every part of the grid has a lifespan. Routine maintenance helps extend that lifespan, but eventually equipment must be updated to meet modern standards. These proactive investments reduce the likelihood of outages, shorten restoration times when disruptions do occur and create a stronger backbone for our growing community.

The demands on the electric grid are also evolving. Homes and businesses today use more electricity than ever, and that trend will only continue. Electric vehicles, advanced HVAC systems, smart appliances and new commercial facilities add load to the local distribution system. As these technologies take hold, the grid must be able to support increased demand while maintaining the reliability our members expect. Strategic upgrades are essential to ensuring we can meet these needs both today and in the decades ahead.

At the same time, new technologies are reshaping how we operate. Tools such as automated switching devices, smart meters, drones and advanced monitoring systems allow us to detect problems faster and respond more effectively. These technologies can isolate problems, reroute power to minimize outages and provide real-time data that helps us plan and maintain equipment more efficiently. Implementing innovative technologies into the grid is not just a convenience—it is a necessity for ensuring reliability in an increasingly complex energy landscape.

While these improvements require thoughtful planning and financial investment, the return is significant. A stronger grid supports economic growth, improves service quality and enhances safety for our crews and community. Most importantly, it ensures that the essential power you rely on is available whenever you need it.

Our commitment to reliability runs deeper than infrastructure alone. It reflects our responsibility to the people and communities we serve. Every upgrade, every repair and every technology we deploy is an investment in your daily life—from the comfort of your home to the success of local businesses and schools.

We know that powering our community means preparing for the future, not just maintaining the present. By investing in our local grid today, we are building the foundation for a brighter, more resilient tomorrow.

January 2026 [www.columbusco-op.org](http://www.columbusco-op.org) Vol. 38. No. 1

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A Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup> Cooperative





## 5 Ways to Save During Winter

Winter weather typically means increased energy use at home. Keep your bills in check with these tips to save energy—and money!

**Mind the thermostat.** If you have a traditional heating and cooling system, set the thermostat to 68 degrees or lower. Consider a smart or programmable thermostat for additional savings.

**Get cozy.** Add layers of clothing for additional warmth, and snuggle up under your favorite heavyweight blanket.

**Don't block the heat.** If your air vents or heating elements (like radiators) are blocked by furniture or rugs, your home isn't being adequately heated.

**Take advantage of sunlight.** Open window coverings during the day to let natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to block the chilly night air.

**Block air leaks.** Seal windows and exterior doors with caulk and weather stripping to improve indoor comfort and decrease the amount of energy used to heat your home.



## Operation Round-Up

Make the commitment to give back to your community this year by signing up for Operation Round Up with Columbus Electric Cooperative. Operation Round Up rounds up your monthly bill to the next highest dollar amount making a donation to our scholarship fund. All donations are tax deductible. Sign up today at [columbusco-op.org/operation-round](http://columbusco-op.org/operation-round) or call us at 1-800-950-2667.



## Board Highlights

The Board of Trustees met on December 23, 2025. They approved the 2026 operating and capital items budget as well as the organizational chart. They also reviewed and approved the November financial and operations reports.



February 14<sup>th</sup>



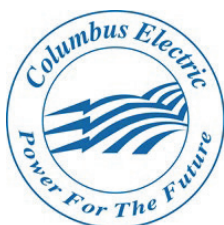
## Power Your Future! Apply for the Columbus Electric Cooperative Scholarship Program

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). If you are currently receiving a CEC scholarship, you must reapply to be considered for the next academic year. **The deadline to apply for new and renewal applicants is March 4, 2026.**

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

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Winter weather can cause your home heating system to work overtime. Check for air leaks and drafts around doors and windows, then seal them with weatherstripping or caulk. Close fireplace dampers when not in use, and consider installing insulating curtains to help keep warm air inside. You can also save energy by lowering your thermostat a few degrees. Even small adjustments like these can reduce heating costs and improve comfort during the coldest months.



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)