



SERVING UP SAVINGS

By Steve Lucas, CEO

It's the most wonderful time of the year—or at least we all can agree that the holiday season is just around the corner. Soon, festive music will flood the airwaves, sparkling lights and decorations will adorn homes and businesses, and good tidings will abound. Your co-op is working hard to ensure that your home stays warm and cozy even on the coldest of nights, and we want to help you save money by using less energy when possible.

The holidays can bring a frenzy of decorating, cooking, and family gatherings, and amid the hectic hustle and bustle, you may receive higher-than-usual energy bills.

Keeping this in mind, I thought this month would be a good time to remind Scenic Rivers members of a few efficiency tips to help lower your monthly energy use.

Programs designed to help you save.

Winter months typically bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. Making minor, low-cost improvements, like weatherstripping exterior doors and caulking around old, drafty windows, can make a positive impact on energy bills. If you're not sure where to start, contact Focus on Energy at focusonenergy.myenergyxpert.com to find free products and tips to help.



Be festive without breaking the bank.

My daughter always insisted that I bring the Christmas decorations up from the basement faster than we could finish the Thanksgiving turkey. With holiday lights adorning our home for well over a month, my family decided to make the switch to LEDs to save energy.

LED holiday lights use 88% less energy than incandescent holiday lights. To put that into perspective, the Department of Energy estimates that with standard holiday decorations, LED lights typically increase energy bills by about \$5 to \$7. But with incandescent lights, energy bills will typically increase by \$33 or more. For homes that go above and beyond with incandescent holiday lighting (think Clark Griswold), energy

bills could increase by as much as \$350. Beyond energy savings, LEDs provide additional benefits, such as being shock-resistant, shatterproof, and cool to the touch, making them safer for the home.

You can also lower energy use by conveniently managing holiday lighting. Smart light timers can help you save energy by connecting to a smart phone app or voice assistant to program lights to turn on and off at set times. If you don't use smart home technology, you can still save energy by using traditional timers.

Additional easy ways to save during the holiday season include turning off overhead lights and using your Christmas tree to illuminate your home. If you have a fireplace, remember to close the flue when you're not burning a fire to ensure heat doesn't escape through the chimney.

Cook up energy savings in the kitchen.

If you plan to have family and friends over this holiday season, you can cook up energy savings by using small countertop appliances like microwaves, air fryers, and slow cookers when possible, as they use much less energy than the stovetop or oven.

When using the oven, bake multiple dishes at once for maximum efficiency. After all, it takes as much energy to cook one dish as it does to cook several. Turn the oven off a few minutes before the recipe's end time and allow the residual heat to finish baking the dish. Once the food is done, leave the stove door ajar to allow the residual heat to warm the room. When using the stovetop, match the pan size to the burner to maximize the stovetop's efficiency.

I hope a few of these tips will be helpful as we approach the holiday season. Remember, we're here to answer any questions you have about managing energy use or your monthly bills. With a little planning upfront, you can find efficient ways to save on everything from holiday décor to your favorite soup recipes.

From your friends at Scenic Rivers, we hope you have a wonderful holiday season.



A HERO'S WELCOME

SREC director among veterans taken on Honor Flight

We celebrate many things in November, but none as significant as our veterans. Remembering their sacrifices and triumphs and sharing their stories are ways we honor them. Scenic Rivers has been privileged to have veterans as employees and as board members. Our area has a long tradition of honoring our veterans, and our cooperative is proud to play a part. We are grateful to all veterans and their families for their past service and their continued service to our communities.

Donald J. Schaefer has served as District 6 director since 2010. Those who know him often comment on his big smile and positive attitude.

Dedicated to being available to the members in his district and all those in his community, Don can be counted on to listen and follow up. In May of this year, Don, along with his cousin, Ted Bode, were among the 89 veterans who left Madison on the Badger Honor Flight. Don was honored to travel with his son, Ryan, for what would be an emotional journey.

The Honor Flight program was co-founded by Earl Morse and Jeff Miller in 2005. The first six flights flew just 12 veterans to Washington, D.C., where they were escorted to the newly opened World War II Memorial. Now, nearly 20 years later, there are over 120 Honor Flight Network hubs across

the U.S., which have been instrumental in escorting over 270,000 veterans to D.C. At no cost, veterans of WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War are able to visit the memorials built to commemorate their service and sacrifice.

Don's Journey

Don enlisted in the Navy in December of 1966. After boot camp, he was assigned to the USS Steinaker, a submarine, and sent to sea. Their mission was to protect aircraft carriers. Don, along with 170 other sailors, was at sea for 45 days, on one mission!



Below, left to right: SREC Director Don Schaefer with some veterans in uniform; the Badger Honor Flight group poses in the Nation's Capitol; Don with his cousin, Ted Bode, at the WWII Memorial; Don with the "mail call" bag the veterans were given as they boarded the plane for the return home; family and friends greeting Don at the airport upon his return.





“Living in the tin can was not easy for any of us,” Don stated.

Don and his son, Ryan, arrived at Dane County airport at 4:30 a.m. to prepare for the flight to Reagan National Airport in Washington, D.C. The departure area was decorated and there was a send-off after the

TSA screenings and preflight requirements. Upon arriving at Reagan, the plane was greeted by a traditional fire department water cannon salute. Ground crew, airport staff, volunteers, and others were waving flags and signs and cheering as the veterans made their way to the four buses that would take them to their destinations.

First stop was Arlington National Cemetery and the Changing of the Guard ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Near the entrance to the cemetery, they observed the Seabees Memorial. From there they traveled to the Marine Corps Memorial, often referred to as the Iwo Jima Memorial. Next were the Korean War Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial (The Wall), and the Lincoln Memorial. By 4 p.m., they were at the WWII Memorial, where

each state is placed in the order in which it entered the Union.

Don and the other veterans then visited the FDR Memorial and then finally the 9/11 Memorial at the Pentagon. Don was struck by the artist’s creation of this memorial, as the “benches and plaques were all turned to show where the victims had been, either on the plane or in the Pentagon. It was very moving,” Don recalled.

“I am so appreciative of the volunteers and my family who helped make this trip a reality for me and the other veterans.”

—Don Schaefer

Don almost didn’t make this trip. In February he fell in his barnyard and subsequently spent 40 days in the hospital recovering from hypothermia and other injuries. He was determined to make this trip after waiting five years to be selected. Hours of physical therapy and working harder than he ever had before enabled him to get on the flight.

“I am so appreciative of the

volunteers and my family who helped make this trip a reality for me and the other veterans,” he said.

After boarding the plane for home, the veterans were greeted with “mail call.” While at sea, “we never had any mail, so that was a real treat,” Don said. His family, friends, and even area students had sent mail to Don in advance so that he, like the other veterans, could receive a big bag of mail from home.

Hero’s Welcome

The veterans were welcomed home by a band, friends, and family members and others from the community who were cheering and waving banners. The airport was overflowing with joy as these heroes were celebrated. Don’s family had special “fans” with his picture created for this moment. It was an exhausting and emotionally difficult journey, but through it all, Don had a smile on his face.

If you are interested in learning more about the Honor Flight Network, go to www.honorflight.org. The organization is managed by many volunteers and funded by the generous donations made to assist the Honor Flight Network in its mission. **#Neverforget**

—Judy Mims



HELP US BY KEEPING YOUR METER NEAT(ER)

Winter weather will be here soon and that means a chance of heavy snow or ice. Please help us by keeping your electric meter easily accessible and free from snow, ice, or debris. We need to access your meter from time to time to service or inspect it.

Accumulated ice and snow not only make it difficult for utility crews to access meters, but the added weight can also strain them. Snow and ice buildup can also be dangerous since it could cause a gas leak.

Clearing Meters

Heavy snow and icicles are not a meter's friend. After you have finished shoveling or snow-blowing your driveway and sidewalk, take a broom or use your hands to gently brush the snow from your meters. Please do not try to kick off the ice or chisel it with a snow shovel or sharp object since this could damage the meter.

Other meter safety/utility equipment tips include:

- Do not cover meters or pipes with shoveled or blown snow.
- Carefully remove overhead icicles from eaves and gutters so that dripping water does not freeze, fall on, or damage meters or pipes.
- Do not use a shovel or a sharp object to remove snow and ice from meters.
- Do not kick your electric meter, as this could cause damage.
- Keeping meters and vents clear allows for proper ventilation and can prevent deadly carbon monoxide buildup in your home.
- Never try to remove ice from an overhead power line.
- If there is a downed power line, do not approach it or try to move it; instead, stay away and call 9-1-1 or SREC to report it.
- Be aware that snow, ice, and standing water can cover downed power lines.



FROM THE ARCHIVES



These boys look ready to cook your holiday meals – if we can name them and/or find them. All we know about this photo is that it was taken in Grant County. If you know something we don't, call Judy at 800-236-2141 ext 554.

Pave the way



In addition, it is always a good idea to clear a path to your meter. Thank you in advance for keeping your meters clear and accessible.



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