

Energy Star laundry machines cut costs

Washing machines perform a fairly simple function, which is cleaning dirty clothes. But prospective buyers can be overwhelmed by the different models and bells and whistles available: top-loading, frontloading, high-efficiency, water saver and wrinkle removing, to name a few.

Energy-efficient machines — identified by the Energy Star logo— should be a priority for cost-conscious consumers.

An estimated 93 percent of American households have a clothes washer, adding up to 102 million across America. Consumers buy about nine million washing machines each year. Efficient models account for one-third of sales.

Energy Star-rated washing machines cost \$400 to \$1,500 more than their less-efficient counterparts, depending on features selected. To determine how much electricity a unit will use, read the yellow EnergyGuide before buying.

An energy-efficient washing machine can save the typical homeowner about \$50 a year, or \$540 to \$600 during the life of the appliance. Efficient machines also save more than 5,000 gallons of water a year.

The energy and water efficiencies of clothes washers are measured according to their modified energy factor and water factor. These criteria generally limit Energy Star qualifiers to front-loading and advanced top-loading models.

Look for the Energy Star logo and shop at a store with knowledgeable staff to find a washing machine that will, over time, pay for itself.

CAPITAL CREDITS

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provider) uses to generate a sizable portion of the wholesale electricity it provides.

Capital Credits will not be refunded again until 2022.

“As COVID-19 began affecting our region in March, we quickly took appropriate steps to reduce the effect on our members,” said General Manager/CEO Ricky Davis. “We suspended disconnects due to nonpayment, and lowered the cost of power in April to ease financial burdens on families. I commend the board for voting to return Capital Credits early and lowering the cost of power again to continue assisting members when it is needed most, around the holidays.”

Capital Credits refunds are available to members of the co-op because Clay Electric is not-for-profit. As a result, at the end of each year when it’s determined how much revenue exceeds total expenses, the difference is assigned to members as Capital Credits based on the amount each member was billed for electricity during the year.

For present members entitled to a pro rata share of the refund (must have received service sometime from 1991 through 2019), they will receive a credit on their December electric bill. Issuing a credit on an electric bill helps the co-op reduce expenses, such as check printing, envelopes, postage, bank fees, etc. Former members will receive a Capital Credits check at their latest address on file.

As a special service for business members, the co-op offers flexibility in the distribution of Capital Credits refunds in order to accommodate the particular needs of a business. For example, a business with multiple accounts may desire to have a single check issued (or perhaps a credit) to a single account as opposed to several accounts. To discuss your particular needs, call 1-800-224-4917 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

3040-26731

The Clay Electric Cooperative, Inc. _____

Power Line

December 2020

Capital Credits & lower power cost included on bill

Clay Electric’s Board of Trustees has voted to issue a \$12 million Capital Credits refund this month for current and former members who received service from the co-op between 1991 and 2019.

Refunds are traditionally disbursed each March. The trustees opted to retire Capital Credits three months early to help relieve the financial pinch that many families and businesses are feeling this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members are also being billed less for power in November and December thanks to a 5.6 percent reduction in the Power Cost

Adjustment on bills, or \$6 in savings. This means members using the industry household average of 1,000 kWh of power will pay \$106.90. The previous cost was \$112.90. The cooperative is able to lower the cost of power due to the decreasing price of natural gas, which Seminole Electric Cooperative (Clay’s wholesale power



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Kick off the New Year by becoming more energy efficient

You can start 2021 right by giving your home an energy efficiency check-up. As your electric cooperative, we pride ourselves on being a trusted energy provider and assisting you with your needs. Here are some tips for evaluating your residence to make sure it is as energy efficient as possible.

First, inspect areas in the house where proper lighting is critical (outdoor/indoor entrances, the kitchen-area, hallways, near stairs) and replace any old incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs. LED bulbs are now available for about \$1 a bulb and have an average lifespan of 25,000 hours compared with incandescent bulbs, which last an average of 1,200 hours. Using these bulbs not only increases your home's safety, but also saves you money by increasing the lifespan of each bulb, while reducing the amount of energy each bulb uses.

In Florida, electricity usage is heavy in both the summer, when air conditioners are running most of the day, and in the winter, when home heating units are used to keep away the morning chills. Heating and cooling your home are usually the largest drivers of how much energy you use each month. Having a well-functioning heating, ventilation and air conditioning system (HVAC) is always critical. Here are some ways to increase the



As your local electric cooperative, we can assist you with a professional home energy survey to ensure your home is using electricity in an efficient manner.

efficiency of your system, regardless of its age:

- Have your HVAC system inspected annually by a professional to make sure it is running at its best.
- Make sure to change your system's air filters regularly. In fact, since it's the end of 2020, go ahead and start this regular maintenance by changing your filter this week.
- Inside of your home there may

be areas around air ducts or in insulated areas such as the attic, which require routine maintenance to address problems such as leaky air ducts or possible attic insulation deficiencies.

• There may also be places in your home where the strategic use of floor or ceiling fans can result in gains in energy efficiency by affecting how air flows in a room and

from one room to another — and in the summer you can raise the temperature on your thermostat a couple degrees without any reduction in comfort levels.

• Also, check the exterior areas of your home, such as doorframes and windows, which could be improved with new weather-stripping, or with fresh applications of caulk and/or other sealants.

As your local electric co-op, we can assist you with a professional home energy survey to ensure your home is using electricity in an efficient manner. One of our experienced energy efficiency analysts will make observations about the physical characteristics of your home and your family's energy usage to form cost-reducing recommendations. For more information or to request a survey, please visit ClayElectric.com or call 1-800-224-4917.

We are proud to provide you with safe, reliable and affordable electricity. As part of our mission to serve you — our members — we are always happy to assist you with tips and services that can make your home more comfortable and save you money on your electric bill.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding energy use or improving energy efficiency in your home, please contact us online or by phone.