

# Energy vampires suck up energy

Electronics make our lives easier and fun, but there's an undesirable aspect: vampire loads. Vampire loads come from devices that use electricity even when they appear to be off. The primary culprits are chargers, set-top TV boxes, instant-on TVs and gaming systems.

Listed below are why vampire loads occur and how they are approaching 10 percent of average household electric use, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

- Chargers take the 120 VAC (volts alternating current) power at the outlet and reduce it down to the voltage required by the connected device,

usually 5 to 12 VDC

(volts direct current). When your device is charging, it's using electricity, but chargers also use small amounts of energy even when they're not connected to a device.

- Television set-top boxes also consume energy when they appear to be inactive. Anytime the set-top box's lights are on, it's using power. Like chargers, they use more when the television is on, but they are always working — even when the TV is off. This is especially true for devices with a DVR function that records your favorite TV shows.

- The instant-on television is another culprit. The intention of the "instant-on"



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## VAMPIRES

Continued from inside

feature is instant gratification for the viewer, meaning no waiting for the TV to turn on and warm up. Unfortunately, for that convenience, the TV must be on at nearly full power. So, in this mode, it can be a real energy drain.

- The typical gaming console can use as much energy as a regular refrigerator even when it's not being used. Make sure to check the console settings and disable automatic updates, which is where the energy drain comes from. Games on the console are frequently updated, which requires a lot of electricity.

So how does the average family combat these dreaded vampire loads? Garlic garlands? Silver bullets?

Fortunately, none of the remedies of fable are necessary. You just need to change how you handle these energy-sucking electronics. Here are a few suggestions:

- Unplug chargers when not in use.
- Invest in smart power strips. These look like normal power strips, but have a twist: one of the outlets is the "master" that receives power all the time. The others are off. When the device connected to the master outlet turns on, the rest of the outlets receive power too. Ingenious and perfect for entertainment centers. Have the television in the master outlet and when you turn it on, the set-top box, speakers, streaming devices, etc. will turn on too.

- Turn off the instant-on function on your TV. Turn off set-top boxes that do not contain the DVR functionality.

- Disable automatic updates in gaming consoles and turn the console completely off when you finish using it.

### More energy tips

Looking for more ways to save energy? Our Energy Services Department offers several tips to reduce your electric consumption and lower your electric bills at ClayElectric.com.

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The Clay Electric Cooperative, Inc. \_\_\_\_\_

# Power Line

October 2020

## Switch to eBill for \$75 prize drawing

Sign up to receive your electric bills via email and you will be entered into a drawing to win 1 of 10 \$75 bill credits!

With eBill you get the convenience of receiving your bill sooner, wherever you are, and without the addition of paper clutter. Clay eBill participants get their electric bill via email each month instead of receiving a printed bill in the mail. Less time to wait, less paper to deal with.

To sign up for Clay eBill, follow the directions below or call us at 1-800-224-4917. Everyone who signed up for eBill between Jan. 1 and Oct. 31 will be in the drawing.

A separate \$75 prize drawing will be held for members who enrolled in eBill before Dec. 31, 2019. Ten members will win.

### How to sign up online

Visit ClayElectric.com and enter your account number and either the last four digits of the primary account holder's Social Security Number or your own PIN if you changed it.

After signing in, select Billing Email Preferences from the menu on the left. Follow the instructions and you're done!



Report from  
the manager

**Ricky Davis**

General Manager/CEO



## Power On: October is National Co-op Month

As an electric cooperative, our top priority is always to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity to you, the consumer-members we serve. Because we are a co-op, our mission is to enrich the lives of our members and serve the long-term interests of our local community — and this mission has never been more critical than in recent months.

One of the seven principles that guides all co-ops is “concern for community.” To me, this principle is the essential DNA of Clay Electric, and it sets us apart from other electric utilities.

October is National Co-op Month, and electric cooperatives across the country are highlighting the many ways we “Power On.” Keeping this theme in mind, I recognize the essential role we play in serving the special communities like ours.

Who would have fathomed in March that the COVID-19 virus would amount to a test of our state and our nation? The changing circumstances due to the pandemic have created both challenges and opportunities. Over the past several months, we’ve all been challenged to operate differently, and Clay Electric has stepped up to help our members and strengthen the safety net for our more vulnerable neighbors.

As an essential service, and to ensure reliability of your power supply, we modified our operations to safeguard business continuity. Our line crews and other employees began working on staggered schedules to maintain separation. Some staff worked remotely. In the office, we limited and

modified meetings and gatherings to allow for safe separation. We also adjusted our walk-in office availability and in-person service calls to ensure the health and safety of our employees and our valued members. In addition, we canceled the gathering portion of our Annual Meeting for the first time. For the health and safety of everyone, we think these measures were the prudent course of action for the times.

For our members impacted by COVID-19 who needed help with their electric bills, we suspended disconnects due to nonpayment and worked with those hardest hit to make special payment arrangements. We also lowered the cost of power for members in April with a one-time decrease of 25 percent, assisting those in our communities experiencing financial hardship due to the pandemic.

And while we certainly missed visiting with you in person, we found new ways to stay connected. We’ve partnered with local organizations to help members of the community, and in April, the Clay Electric Foundation donated \$50,000 to local food pantries. The Foundation granted \$5,000 each to 10 area organizations providing food to those in need during the pandemic through Operation Round Up. We also increased our social media engagement efforts.

I tell you about all of these efforts not to boast about Clay Electric, but to explain how much we care about our communities — because we live here too.

We’ve seen other local businesses rising to meet similar challenges during this time, because that’s what communities do. While the challenges caused by COVID-19 have been daunting, I’m heartened to see how everyone is pulling together.

Eighty-three years ago, Clay Electric was built by the community to serve the community, and that’s what we’ll continue to do — Power On.

Power Line is an informational publication of Clay Electric Cooperative, Inc. It is distributed monthly with members’ billing statements. If you have questions or comments about Power Line, write Justin Caudell at P.O. Box 308, Keystone Heights, FL 32656; or email: [jcaudell@clayelectric.com](mailto:jcaudell@clayelectric.com). Clay Electric’s Board of Trustees will meet at noon Thursday, Oct. 22 and Thursday, Nov. 19 in Keystone Heights.

## Please make room for roadside crews

When the power goes out, so do Clay Electric’s line crews. Lineworkers are the first to respond after an outage occurs, and they work tirelessly to restore power.

If you’re traveling and see one of our crews on the side of the road, we kindly ask that you move over if possible and give them a little extra space to work. We deeply care about the safety of all, and this extra precaution ensures just that.

In 2014, utility crews became protected by the Florida Move Over Act. Under the law, motorists are required to:

- Approach law enforcement patrol cars, emergency vehicles, utility service vehicles, sanitation vehicles and tow trucks/wreckers with caution.
- Change lanes away from these vehicles if traveling on a multi-lane roadway and you are able to move over safely; OR
- Slow down to a speed that is 20 mph less than the posted speed limit when a clearly identified emergency or work-crew vehicle is parked and crews are working.

