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Butler REC **NEWS**

FROM THE MANAGER

Remember to Be Efficient & Stay Safe this Summer

Peak Control

It is hard to believe that school is out and summer is in full swing. With summer comes our peak load season and more attention to the demand portion of your electric bill.

Remember the higher your summer peak, the more you and the cooperative has to pay for electricity in the winter. That's why it is so important to try to control our peak load. Each kilowatt shaved or shifted during peak load is a cost savings for all of us.

So, when does this summer peak load occur? Summer time (July and August) is when Butler REC experiences its maximum peak load on the system. This usually occurs between the hours of 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. on weekdays.

On these days, anything you can do to avoid using electricity between these hours will help you save on the demand portion of your bill all year long. Some possibilities are:

- ▶ Move your laundry time to earlier in the day or late at night.
- ▶ Use a slow cooker instead of the electric stove for cooking dinner.
- ▶ Save the ironing for later.
- ▶ Shut the grain dryer off for a few hours.
- ▶ Stop the irrigation pumps during the heat of the day.

Storm Season

We are in the midst of our storm season, which is always a time of concern for the cooperative.

We have more and more questions from our members about adding their own generators. Whether that is wind, solar or just standby generators available during storm outages, we have some major safety issues to follow.

Any generator and controls that you plan to connect in parallel to our electric system must be approved by the cooperative prior to installation.

We have a lot of information that will help you make a more informed decision about distributed generation, so give us a call before you make a commitment.

With that being said, I thought it was time to share some thoughts on generator safety.

Generator Safety: Our Lives are on the Line

The safety of our members and our employees is a top priority at Butler REC, especially during dangerous times. When storms hit our area, we rush to your aid as soon as weather conditions allow our line-workers to travel and make repairs safely.

Our line crews take necessary precautions before they work on downed power lines. First, they verify

a circuit has been de-energized, and that proper switches are opened and tagged to isolate the circuit from the system. We place ground chains on the circuit—on both sides of workers—to make sure the line cannot be energized while work's being done. Even after these measures, our workers' lives remain in your hands.

Butler REC is proud of our outstanding safety record, but sometimes, no matter how many steps we take to keep everyone safe, the very people we are there to help unknowingly put our lives—and their own—in danger.

Portable generators, widely used when power lines are down, can prove fatal to line-workers and your neighbors when used improperly.

In 2005, a lineman died in Alabama when he contacted a power line that was energized by an improperly installed generator when he was working to restore power after Hurricane Dennis. He was married and had two teenage children.

Of course, no one would ever purposely cause the death of a line-worker. Nevertheless, a genera-



R. Dale Short

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Youth Tour Winners Selected



Chase Johnson
1st Place

Recently, area high school juniors competed in the Butler REC Youth Tour Competition.

The competition consists of a test and interview to determine the winners. The top two winners receive all expense-paid trips. There is also an alternate selected in case one of the winners cannot participate.

This year's top winner is **CHASE JOHNSON** from Andover. Chase attends Andover Central High School and will receive a \$500 scholarship and a trip to Washington, D.C., Youth Tour where he will travel with youth from the states of Kansas and Hawaii to our nation's capital.



Ashley Crister
1st Runner Up

He will tour the Holocaust Memorial Museum, Kennedy Center, National Archives, Mt. Vernon, Smithsonian Museums and much more. They will also meet our state Senators and Representatives along with seeing our government in action.

Our second place winner is **ASHLEY CRISTER** from Towanda. Ashley attends Circle High School. Ashley will receive a \$300 scholarship, but due to scheduling conflict with a missions trip, she is unable to go to the Colorado Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.



Alyssa Scott
Alternate

Our alternate is **ALYSSA SCOTT** from Rose Hill. Alyssa attends Kapaun Mt. Carmel and she will receive a \$200 scholarship and will attend the Colorado Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp. She will join other youth from the states of Kansas, Oklahoma, Wyoming and Colorado. Students will tour Mt. Werner, Fish Creek Falls, Old Town Steamboat and Trapper Coal Mine and Craig Generation Plant. They will also learn about cooperatives and the workings of electricity.

To learn more about the Youth Tour Competition contact Travis Griffin, Member Services at Butler REC office.

Make FREE Demand Work For YOU

You get **FREE DEMAND** before 5 p.m. and after 8 p.m. on weekdays and all day on weekends and most major holidays.



How Billing Demand is Determined

- ▶ In July and August, the billing demand will be the highest hourly demand during the week day peak hours (5 p.m. to 8 p.m.).
- ▶ For the months of September through June the billing demand will be the greater of:
 - ▶ The minimum demand which is 70 percent of the highest monthly demand of either July or August; or
 - ▶ Your current monthly demand which is the highest hourly usage during the week day peak hours (5 p.m. to 8 p.m.).

FROM THE MANAGER

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tor connected to a home's wiring or plugged into a regular household outlet can cause back-feeding along power lines and electrocute anyone who comes in contact with them—even if the line seems dead.

Cooperative employees are not the only ones in danger when a portable generator is used improperly. Generator owners themselves may be at risk of electrocution, fire injury, property damage, or carbon monoxide poisoning if they do not follow the necessary safety rules.

Portable generators can be very helpful to consumers during outages. We urge you to follow these safety guidelines when using one:

- ▶ **Never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring unless your home has been wired for generator use.** This can cause back-feeding along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including line-workers making repairs. Have a licensed electrician install the equipment necessary to safely connect emergency generators to your home.
- ▶ **Always plug appliances directly into generators.** Connecting the generator to your home's circuits or wiring must be done by a qualified, licensed electrician who will

install a transfer switch to prevent back-feeding.

- ▶ **Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords.** Make sure extension cords are free of cuts or tears and the plug has three prongs. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage.
- ▶ **Ensure your generator is properly grounded.**
- ▶ **Never overload a generator.** A portable generator should only be used when necessary to power essential equipment or appliances.
- ▶ **Turn off all equipment powered by the generator before shutting it down.**
- ▶ **Keep the generator dry.** Operate it on a dry surface under an open structure.
- ▶ **Always have a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby.**
- ▶ **Never fuel a generator while it is operating.**
- ▶ **Read and adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation.** Never cut corners when it comes to safety.

We encourage you to protect the well-being and safety of your family during outages, and safeguard those who come to your aid during emergency situations. When we work together for safety and the good of our communities, we all benefit.

Do Tankless Water Heaters Live up to the Hype?

An unlimited supply of hot water definitely sounds like a sweet deal to many homeowners. So do reduced water heating costs, instantaneous hot water on demand, and more space in the utility closet.

These are all promises made by companies selling tankless water heaters. But does the technology really deliver?

Unlike traditional electric resistance or gas-fired water heaters, tankless models do not store hot water—they heat water only as it's consumed. One or a series of heating elements within a tankless water heater are activated when a hot water faucet or valve is opened. The unit heats water until the faucet or valve gets closed.

Unlimited Hot Water?

An unlimited supply of hot water sounds great, but generally doesn't make for responsible water use, particularly in areas of the country suffering from drought or chronic water shortages. Moreover, even the largest whole-house unit may not supply enough hot water for simultaneous, multiple uses.

For example, such a unit may be able to supply only two showers simultaneously or perhaps one shower, a dishwasher, and a sink. If users demand too much water, temperatures will drop. As a result, a tankless system probably won't meet the needs of a large family.

In addition, water temperature depends on the volume coming out of a faucet. If you turn on the faucet only a trickle, water runs cold. If you open the faucet further, you will trigger hot water—the hottest possible. If you open the faucet to maximum, the temperature will drop back a bit. If you open more than one faucet, temperatures will drop even more.

Hidden Costs

Generally, tankless water heaters do not require a lot of space (a large unit

can fit in an area no larger than 24 inches square, and extend from the wall about 8 to 10 inches). But they do require an upgrade in electrical service—something most home improvement stores often don't mention and a chief reason electric co-ops generally don't recommend the appliances. This means consumers who want to replace an existing conventional water heater with a tankless unit or add one as part of a home-remodeling project will incur additional costs.

For example, a traditional tank water heater with 4,500-watt elements operates on #10 wire and a 30-amp circuit breaker. One whole-house tankless model boasts four 7,000-watt elements for a total electrical load of 28,000 watts. This requires wire and a circuit breaker that will handle at least 120 amps.

If a tankless water heater is installed in an existing home without upgrading the electrical service, low voltage or sudden voltage drops are likely. This will cause dimming lights, blinking lights, and other problems.

The extra load also necessitates a larger and more expensive meter loop and main breaker panel for the house. In some cases, consumers also must pay for new wiring between the distribution transformer and electric meter. Check with a licensed electrician or your local electric co-op to determine if you must improve your electric service connections to support a tankless water heater.

You must also consider the impact a tankless water heater will have on your demand. With our time of use demand based rate you will incur an extremely high demand charge if the heater is used between the hours of 5 pm and 8pm. Depending on your usage habits and how much hot water you use you could see demand readings between 10 kW to 20 kW.

While gas-fired tankless water heaters generally do not need basic service upgrades, the same consider-



Tankless water heaters may not provide the largest return on investment when compared to other energy saving methods.

ations must be made when determining how many hot water faucets will be turned on at any given time and how far away the tankless heater remains from sinks and showers.

Other Options

Consumers looking for an efficient water heater should consider a heavily insulated electric resistance unit. These appliances are often the most cost-effective option over the long term. And because of their hot water storage capabilities, many electric co-ops employ electric resistance water heaters as a key component of load management programs that shave power costs during times of peak demand—a proven way to help keep electric bills affordable.

To reduce home water heating costs, the Oak Ridge National Laboratory suggests simple and inexpensive measures such as tank insulation, temperature setback, timers, heat traps, and low-flow showerheads. All of these are more practical and provide a greater return on investment than putting in a tankless water heater.



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