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# Butler REC NEWS

FROM THE MANAGER

## Go Online for Energy Savings



R. Dale Short

“Try this new online tool next time you are surfing the Internet.”

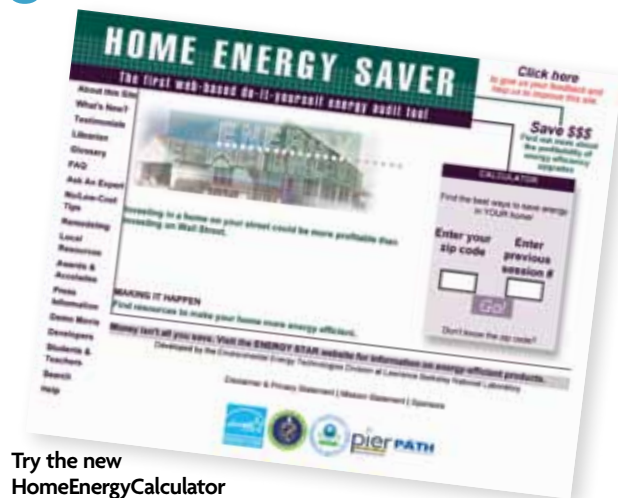
Over the past several months we have been talking to you about what you can do to help reduce your bill through our new rate structure. Looking at your home's energy use and trying to find areas that you can improve efficiency on can help reduce your bill.

Ever wonder what you could save by changing your thermostat setting or adding storm windows? Now you can find out with just as few clicks of your mouse.

Give it a try at the new HomeEnergyCalculator now on our Web site at [www.butler.coop](http://www.butler.coop), available to you 24/7 in the comfort of your home. The calculator's a quick, one-screen form that asks about a dozen questions regarding your home. Simply click to indicate your home's approximate square footage, age, number of occupants, fuel type, and several other variables. Then hit "calculate" to get an estimate of the monthly and annual energy use and costs for your "base house."

What changes would you like to consider? One easy step might be to reduce the temperature on your water heater. Try making that change on the calculator's drop-down menu and click "calculate" again to see what you might save. Then try some others: adjusting heating settings down or cooling settings up; tightening up your home by reducing air leaks; adding insulation; installing storm windows; or changing out your heating system. Click "calculate" after each change to see the difference in your monthly energy bill.

Then, go ahead and do what most calculator users do—add or remove one of the home's occupants! We're not sure why that's such a popular inquiry, but it usually ranks as the first or second



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most popular change selected.

Once you've gotten a feel for your home's energy costs and what various changes might result in savings, it's time to take a big-picture look at overall home energy usage. Click the "chart" button and you'll see a pie chart with the percentage break-down of total annual energy use by appliance or system type. With one more click you can display a colorful, stacked bar chart showing monthly energy use by system.

To learn more, notice that each of the items on the calculator's face is a click-able link. By clicking on heating system or any other of the links, you are taken to an encyclopedia of home energy information that can help you better understand that system, how it operates and what improvements are possible.

Try this tool next time you are surfing the Internet. It's just one more way we're working to help you manage your home energy costs.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIPS

# A Better Way

BY DOUG RYE

Many people think that I am against renewable energy systems, such as solar and wind. I can assure you that I am not.

I admire those who live off the land and use our natural resources wisely. There are, however, only a few in this country who are living “off the grid.” There are a goodly number of others that are generating part of their energy needs from solar, wind or water. In my dreams, I could do that. I could just live at the deer camp and use my little six-inch, 12-volt television while cooking my dinner on a wood or propane stove. I could get my light from a battery or propane-powered lantern and my water from a well with a hand pump.

Actually, I have done that and totally enjoyed it for about... five days. After that, I wondered how the pioneers made it.

Well, in real life, I think one of the most important discoveries ever is electricity. I consider it an absolute blessing.

For the cost of a hamburger, fries and a small drink per day, I can do many wonderful things in our house, such as heat, cool, cook, refrigerate, light and watch football. Make your list and you will agree.

With that said, I do not believe in wasting any of our energy resources. I think that producing some of our energy from solar or wind is a noble thought, but I have a better way.

In the early 1980s, I was working for the federal government to provide low-income housing. In that role, I was responsible for the installation of about 1,000 solar systems. The U.S. government wanted it done and I did it. It was an exciting time. Two of the systems had 220 solar panels each. Everyone was impressed. Folks would say, “Oh boy, Doug has got it going.”

An engineer from Huntsville, AL, had a different view, however. He told me I would see the day when I would not want my name associated with these projects. I thought he was crazy. But, unfortunately, he was right.

Both systems were total failures in less than 10 years. In fact, nearly all of the systems failed in less than 15 years. I thought there must be a better way.



A solar system produced only 409 kWh per month, making the approximate payback on a solar system 84 years.

Just over a year ago, I had the opportunity to work with a company that was willing to purchase, install and monitor a quality solar voltaic system and a quality wind generating system.

The solar system cost more than \$50,000 installed. The system is monitored daily and has produced an average of 409 kilowatt-hours of electricity per month. This would save about \$50 per month on an electric bill. A simple payback would be \$50,000 divided by \$50 per month equals 1,000 divided by 12 equals 84 years. I think there is a better way.

The wind turbine cost \$15,000 installed and has produced about 58 kilowatt-hours a month. This would save about \$7 per month on an electric bill. That would calculate into a simple payback of 180 years.

Now I know I have a better way. And being the nice guy that I am, I plan to tell you about it next month. See you then.

**DOUG RYE**, is a licensed architect and the popular host of the “Home Remedies” radio show. You can contact Doug at 888-Doug-Rye. Source: Arkansas Electric Cooperatives Corporation.



Doug Rye

“I think one of the most important discoveries ever is electricity. I consider it an absolute blessing.”

## When Heating Remember—Safety First

Summer has quickly turned to Fall and Winter is on its way. With the cooler weather, heating equipment will get put to work. Ensure the safety of everyone in your home by considering the following safety tips for heating equipment.

### Space Heaters

- ▶ Ensure space heaters are in good repair and certified by an independent testing lab such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- ▶ Do not use an extension cord to power a space heater. Plug it directly into the electrical outlet.
- ▶ Space heaters should have an automatic shut off in the event they tip over.
- ▶ Keep space heaters at least three feet away from flammable materials such as curtains,

draperies, loose paper and upholstery.

- ▶ Keep space heaters out of reach from small children and pets.
- ▶ Never use heaters as drying racks.
- ▶ If the heater is running on fuel (gas, kerosene, wood), follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.
- ▶ Keep chimneys and flues free from corrosion or blockages.

### Electric Blankets

- ▶ Ensure electric blankets are in good repair and certified by an independent testing lab like UL.
- ▶ Do not tuck your electric blanket under the mattress.
- ▶ Do not put anything on top of the blanket.
- ▶ Do not allow pets to sleep on electric blankets.

## Cold Weather Rule

*Effective November 1–March 15*

The Cold Weather Rule (CWR) allows for special payment and disconnection procedures for any qualifying Residential Member. The rule allows a qualifying member the opportunity to retain or restore electric service throughout the cold weather period, which extends from November 1 through March 15, and for the development of payment agreements between the cooperative and the Member.

To qualify for the benefits of the Cold Weather Rule and to avoid disconnection, the member shall,

- inform the cooperative of the Member's inability to pay the bill in full;
- give sufficient information to allow the cooperative to make a payment agreement;
- make an initial payment of the arrearage plus any required charges, fees & deposits plus the bill for consumption during the most recent billing period for which service was provided, divided by three;
- enter a payment plan agreement for past, current and future charges for electric service under the Member's Electric Service Agreement, the cooperative's rate schedules, and these Rules and Regulations as negotiated with the utility for the payment of the arrears and for current and future consumption.

e) not obtain electric service by tampering as defined in Section 3 A (2)(c); and

- not default on a payment plan which includes but not limited to issuance of an insufficient funds payment for the initial payment or for any installment of the payment plan, unless subsequently cured by the member, shall constitute a default of the payment plan.

At the cooperative's discretion a Remote Disconnection Switch may be installed. Such switch shall be used to disconnect the service when the temperature is above 35° F. Power shall be restored when the temperature falls below 35° F.

Organizations to contact where funds are available to assist with payment of utility bills are: Mid-Cap, SRS, Red Cross, Salvation Army and area churches.

If you have a complaint, call the Butler REC office at one of the numbers listed on your bill. Provide the cooperative with all the facts concerning your complaint. Then if you are not satisfied with the cooperative's plan, you may submit a written complaint to the Board of Trustees.

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**800-594-0103 or visit [powwwer.net](http://powwwer.net)**

# CONVECTAIR

The Apero works on the proven principle of natural convection and its thermostat control is sensitive to 1/5 degree F. It's the perfect choice when you need to replace an old baseboard heater or in your home where your central heating system doesn't heat adequately.

- ▶ Built-in thermostat
- ▶ 500 to 2000 watts, 208/240 volts
- ▶ 500 or 1250 watts, 120 volts (plugs into a 120V outlet)
- ▶ Two-year guarantee on manufacturing and material defect.
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information call  
**800-464-0060**

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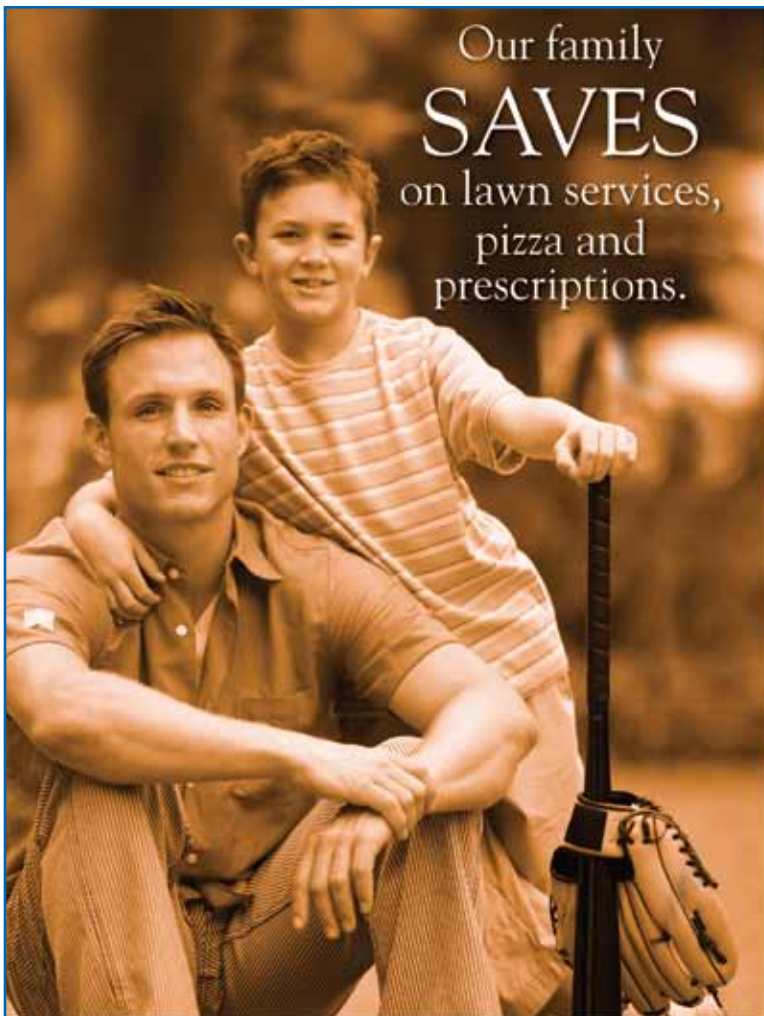
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