

VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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 E-mail: contact@vec.coop

75 YEARS AND COUNTING

75th Annual Meeting of Members

For the last several months we have used these pages to reflect on events that have shaped our organization. For electric cooperatives the most important event of the year, one that helps shape our future, is our annual meeting.

The annual meeting gives members the opportunity to learn about their cooperative from the people that lead it, hear about the challenges that we face politically and vote

on the individuals that serve on the board of trustees. The annual meeting is your chance to participate.

On March 8, 2013, we will host our 75th Annual Meeting of Members in the Lewis and Clark Room of Mathews Hall on the campus of University of Montana - Western. This year's guest speaker will be Joe Lukas, manager, Western Montana G&T.

An official notice of the meeting and a dinner reservation card has been mailed to each member. The dinner reservation cards need to be in by March 1, 2013. Registration begins at 11:45 a.m., with lunch by invitation starting at 12:15 p.m. and the meeting commencing at 1:15. Hope to see you there.

Co-op Connections

Healthy Savings

Last month I wrote about Touchstone Energy's Co-op Connections program, which will help provide our members with valuable discounts on goods and services. One facet of this program is Healthy Savings.

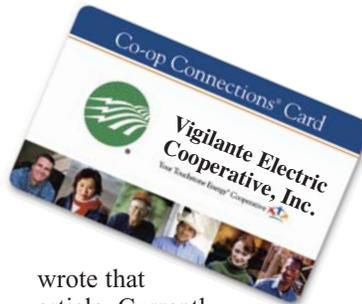
The cornerstone of the Healthy Savings program is the prescription drug discount. Discounts are negotiated through pharmaceutical suppliers and honored at more than 60,000 national and regional pharmacies. There are many pharmacies that are honoring this program within Vigilante Electric Cooperative's service territory. Discounts can range from 10 percent to 60 percent off the retail price. However, there is one thing

to be mindful of. This program will not benefit everybody. It mainly helps those with no prescription drug insurance coverage, but there can be exceptions.

Last month I also alluded to other options that are available in the Healthy Savings program – dental, vision and chiropractic. These discounts are negotiated through an organization called New Benefits, which works directly with Coast to Coast Vision Network, Humana Dental Access Network and VHS Chiropractic Network. Regrettably, in my excitement about this program, I got ahead of myself. I didn't check the availability of participating providers within our service territory before I

wrote that article. Currently, there are only a few providers locally that participate through the New Benefits program.

In the coming months, we will be writing about the Co-op Connections website and getting registered as a member. Through this website you will be able to find all the Healthy Savings provider information. The Co-op Connections program is heavily Internet based, but not entirely. For those of you that don't have Internet access, we will use the communication avenues available to point you to the nearest Healthy Savings providers.



Outage Notification Numbers

M-F 8 A.M. TO 5 P.M.
683-2327 or
(800) 221-8271

Dillon

AFTER HOURS
 MON. - THURS.

Dan Snellman.....683-6222
 Tim Myllymaki683-6369
 Charles Wharton....660-1878

WEEKENDS

683-2327 or
(800) 221-8271

Whitehall

AFTER HOURS AND
 WEEKENDS

Marty Simons.....287-3950
 John Moos266-3605
 Justin Bair266-3351

Townsend

AFTER HOURS AND
 WEEKENDS

John Moos266-3605
 Justin Bair266-3351
 Marty Simons.....287-3950

RESIDENTIAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Lets keep it simple

For decades Vigilante Electric Cooperative has worked with our membership on using the energy in their homes more efficiently. Residential efficiencies offer great potential savings with the easiest, most cost-effective solutions. To start, let's keep two things in mind, you need to understand where your usage comes from and you need to keep it simple.

In our climate zone, about 45 percent of your home energy usage goes toward heating your home. To keep this simple, let's look at three aspects of heating your home, how efficiently your heating system converts the energy source to heat, how effectively that heat is distributed throughout the home and your home's ability to retain heat.

The conversion of energy to heat is a big issue with gas appliances. If your heating system is natural gas, propane or heating oil, have your heating system inspected. Regular maintenance will improve the system's performance and potentially spot problems before they become serious or inconvenient. Also, heating systems lose efficiency over time and, at some point, you should consider a new heating system.

How effectively is heat distributed through your home? There are several things to consider. In forced-air heating systems one of the biggest problems is clogged air filters. Air filters should be looked at monthly during the heating season and cleaned or replaced to ensure proper air flow. You should also ensure that your registers are clean and that noth-

ing is blocking the flow of air. There should also be adequate spacing around registers and heaters to ensure that heat can circulate through the room properly.

Another thing to inspect is ductwork that is outside the space you want to heat. Ductwork is often located in the crawlspace. If the seams in ductwork are not sealed properly, they can and will leak. This is putting warm air in an area that you do not want to heat. This causes your heating system to run longer to maintain the inside temperature.

Finally, let's look at the home's ability to retain heat. Start by looking for areas

where cold air can enter and/or heat can escape. On the outside of the home, cold air can be introduced through plumbing and electrical penetrations. On the inside, heat can escape around poorly fitted windows and doors, as well as the penetration in the ceiling. Many of these issues can be addressed by inexpensive weatherization measures.

In older homes, you should also look at insulation levels. Proper insulation has a large effect on your home's ability to retain heat. While not as easy and inexpensive as some of the measures, adequate insulation levels can provide cost-effective, long-term savings.

Looking at how to save money on your energy bill doesn't have to be complicated. However, if you are like many homeowners, any project you do around the house can seem daunting. Just remember you're not in this alone. We have a variety of resources available to help you make informed decisions on energy-efficient improvements. While there are many no-cost/low-cost things you can do on your own, Vigilante Electric has programs that can help you with some of the bigger, more expensive issues. Next month we will address these programs.

Affordable. Innovative. Member Focused.

It's hard to predict the future, but one thing seems certain—**new government regulations will increase the cost of electricity.**

We want to work with you to keep your electric bills **AFFORDABLE**. We're controlling costs and no matter what the future holds we'll continue to put you, our members, **FIRST**.



**Vigilante
Electric
Cooperative**

Find out how we're *Looking Out for You* at
www.vec.coop

**Looking Out
for You**

VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.