

OWEN ELECTRIC CONNECTION

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Drone technology and power lines

Over the past few months, Owen Electric Cooperative has been preparing to implement the use of drone technology to improve our operations, including that of power line inspection, and in some cases, determining the cause of power outages.

Every business day, a portion of Owen Electric's distribution system is inspected. With more than 4,600 miles of power lines, daily inspection is necessary to keep up with our two-year cycle. Currently, our employees must walk or use an ATV to complete inspections, during which damaged poles, conductors, hardware and transformers are recorded and prioritized for repair. Incorporating drones in this process expedites inspections while giving cooperative personnel a better visual perspective on electric infrastructure.

In addition to assisting in our daily operations, we envision the use of a drone for helping diagnose the causes of power outages. Owen Electric's service territory spans a diverse terrain—from suburban to foothills and river crossings. Some of these more rural areas pose a challenge for crews and their vehicles to access. The drone will be able to provide a quicker assessment of damage in these instances.




Service Technician Steve Moore and Line Inspector Travis Duvall survey power lines using Owen Electric's new drone technology. Photo: Whitney Duvall

In order to safely and responsibly operate the drones, Owen Electric personnel have acquired training and received Federal Aviation Administration certifications for piloting these vehicles. The drones are equipped with technology that includes infrared cameras and a safety system that prevents them from crashing into power line infrastructure or other obstacles in the area.

As Owen Electric begins to deploy these industrial-grade drones, please do not be alarmed if you see them flying near your home or business.

More than likely, you'll see an Owen Electric vehicle and employee nearby, piloting the drone and taking great care to respect your property and privacy. Rest assured, our employees are trained and certified to use these aerial vehicles only to inspect the power system, improve reliability and to serve you better.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

President and CEO
Michael Cobb



Maximizing summer energy efficiency

As summer approaches, so does the inevitable increase in energy consumption. With rising temperatures comes the challenge of keeping your home cool and comfortable without breaking the bank. Fortunately, there are several strategies and technologies available to help maximize energy efficiency during the summer months. By implementing these measures, you can not only reduce your home's electricity bills, but also contribute to environmental sustainability.

Here are some practical tips and solutions:

1. Sealing and insulation:

One of the most effective ways to improve energy efficiency is by sealing air leaks and adding insulation to your home. Older homes often lack adequate insulation, leading to significant energy loss. You can start by caulking gaps around windows and doors, installing weather stripping, and sealing ductwork. Additionally, adding insulation to attics, walls and crawl spaces can help maintain a consistent indoor temperature, reducing the need for excessive cooling during hot summer days.

2. Efficient cooling systems:

Investing in an energy-efficient cooling system can make a substantial difference in electricity consumption. Options like heat pumps or a newer, more efficient HVAC unit offer improved performance and lower operating costs; look for models with high seasonal energy efficiency ratio ratings, indicating better energy efficiency. Regular maintenance, including cleaning or replacing filters, is also crucial for optimizing the performance of cooling systems. If you're upgrading your system from a resistance heat source, be sure to check out our Heat Pump Retrofit rebate program at

<https://www.owenelectric.com/heat-pump-rebate>.

3. Smart thermostat usage:

Smart thermostats provide convenient control over indoor temperatures while optimizing energy usage. These devices can automatically adjust temperature settings based on occupancy patterns and time of day, ensuring comfort when needed and conserving energy when you are away. If you're considering upgrading to a smart thermostat, make sure you consider our SimpleSaver Bring Your Own Thermostat program—you may be eligible for a \$100 rebate. Learn more at www.owenelectric.com/simple-saver-programs.

4. Energy-efficient lighting:

Switching to energy-efficient lighting options, like LED bulbs, can result in significant energy savings. LED bulbs consume less electricity, burn cooler and last much longer than traditional incandescent or fluorescent bulbs. Don't forget to switch off lights when they're not in use.

5. Energy-efficient appliances:

When purchasing new appliances, choose models with ENERGY STAR certification. ENERGY STAR appliances meet strict energy efficiency criteria set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, consuming less electricity while delivering the same level of performance. Upgrading to energy-efficient refrigerators, washing machines, dishwashers and other appliances can lead



Energy Advisor Jude Canchola prepares to conduct a blower door test, a diagnostic tool that determines how much air is entering or escaping a home. Photo: Whitney Duvall

to long-term energy savings and lower utility bills.

As you gear up for the summer season, adopting energy-efficient practices can help reduce your electricity costs. By sealing and insulating homes, upgrading to efficient cooling systems, using smart thermostats, switching to energy-efficient lighting and investing in energy-efficient appliances, members can optimize their energy usage and contribute to a more sustainable future.

Need advice? Give us a call at (800) 372-7612, option 4, or go to <https://www.owenelectric.com/request-home-energy-audit> to schedule a free home energy audit. Access all our home energy efficiency references and calculators at www.owenelectric.com/energy-efficiency-info-programs-rebates.

Out and about in our communities



Manager of Safety Trevor Evans and Lineman Josh Hearn present a safety demonstration to members of the Jonesville Volunteer Fire Department. Training for first responders is important as they may encounter unsafe situations involving downed electrical lines, such as a structure fire or car accident. Photos: Whitney Duvall



Manager of Safety Trevor Evans and Line Technician Bobby VonBokern give live-line safety demonstrations as a part of Pendleton County's Progressive Agriculture Safety Day. Above, Leelah Miller models some of the safety equipment lineworkers use on a daily basis. Photos: Whitney Duvall



Residential Services Manager Jude Canchola gives a presentation on electric vehicles on behalf of Boone County Cooperative Extension. After, attendees were invited to take a look at Owen Electric's Chevrolet Bolt. Photos: Whitney Duvall



Pam McAlister, left, and Christel Buffin represent Owen Electric at Sherman Elementary School's Career Day. They visited with students and talked about the many job opportunities available through the co-op. Photo: Sherman Elementary

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Office Hours:

Monday – Friday
8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Toll-free 1-800-372-7612

Owenton Office

8205 Hwy 127 N.
P.O. Box 400
Owenton, KY 40359-0400
(502) 484-3471

Boone County Office

Florence Government Center
8100 Ewing Blvd.
Florence, KY 41042

Grant County Office

300 Arbor Drive, Suite 1
Dry Ridge, KY 41035

Pendleton County Office

10599 Hwy 27 N.
Butler, KY 41006

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Swimming Safely

WATER & ELECTRICITY DON'T MIX



- Locate and label the power switches to your pool, hot tub and spa equipment and lighting.
- Make sure your pool/hot tub/spa equipment is located at least 25 feet from power lines.
- Pools, hot tubs and spas should be inspected annually. Inspections and any wiring or repairs should be performed by a licensed electrician.
- Install GFCI outlets on all receptacles within 20 feet of the water's edge. These can help prevent electrocution.



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