



OWEN ELECTRIC CONNECTION

February 2024 • Owen Electric • A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

The good kind of audit

Colder weather typically results in higher energy bills, and with winter in full swing, I'd like to remind you about a free service Owen Electric provides to its members that can help improve your home's efficiency and help you save money—our home energy audit.

As your trusted electricity provider, we want to provide every tool we can to help our members make their homes more comfortable and energy efficient. An energy audit provides a holistic view of your home's efficiency. Understanding how your home uses energy can help determine the best ways to adjust energy consumption, improve problem areas and ultimately keep more money in your wallet. An energy audit can also identify potential safety issues surrounding electrical wiring and HVAC systems, making your home safer. You could say this is a good kind of audit.

So how does it work? You can request an energy audit by completing the form on our website owenelectric.com/request-home-energy-audit or by calling (800) 372-7612, option 4.

Our energy advisor will reach out to you promptly to schedule a visit to your home.

**free energy audit,
virtual energy assessments,
home energy library &
so much more.**

www.owenelectric.com/energy-efficiency-info-programs-rebates



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What to expect during the audit

The audit is comprised of three parts: evaluation, energy testing and recommendations.

First, our energy advisor will conduct a walk-through of your home, examining energy use and identifying problem areas. They'll look at specific elements of your home impacting energy use, such as doors, windows and insulation levels. The energy advisor will also consider major appliances, including your heating and cooling system, and conduct a room-by-room assessment. During the assessment, our energy advisor will ask you questions about your energy use habits and review past energy bills.

In the testing phase, the energy advisor will evaluate the seal of your home by conducting a blower door test to identify the source of any air leaks or drafts. They'll also conduct thermal imaging of the home to detect heat loss that is invisible to the naked eye.


Thermal imaging can reveal inadequate insulation levels, HVAC airflow, radiant heat malfunction and additional key factors.

Finally, our energy advisor will provide you with a detailed evaluation. This is a written report with a description of your home, an analysis of your energy use, recommendations regarding energy consumption and steps you can take to improve efficiency and save money.

One of the greatest values of an energy audit is helping you understand how you use electricity and more importantly, identifying ways to use it more efficiently. Additionally, making improvements and upgrades based on the evaluation can increase your property

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

President and CEO
Michael Cobb



value—all the more reason to schedule an audit for your home. Free home energy audits are just one of the many advantages of your cooperative membership. If you're looking for more ways to save, check out our additional energy efficiency

offerings at owenelectric.com/energy-efficiency-info-programs-rebates. These programs and tools are designed with Owen Electric's members in mind, putting the power to save in your hands.

Heat your space safely

Portable electric space heaters can be a temporary source of supplemental heat for your Kentucky home on the coldest winter days. Unfortunately, they can pose significant fire and electric shock hazards if not used properly.

Follow these safety guidelines when using a space heater.

- Don't use a unit that has cracked or broken plugs or loose connections.
- Place heater on level, flat surface. Never place it on furniture or carpet, which can overheat and start a fire.
- Position heater at least 3 feet away


from anything that can burn, including papers, clothing and curtains.

- Plug heater directly into a wall outlet. Do not use an extension cord or power strip, which could overheat and result in a fire.
- Never leave a space heater unattended. Turn it off when you leave a room or go to sleep.
- Don't allow pets or children to play near a space heater.
- Don't use heater in wet areas or bathrooms, unless it is specially labeled for this purpose.

- Never use a portable heater to warm bedding, cook food, dry clothing or thaw pipes.
- Check periodically for a secure plug/outlet fit. If this is the case, discontinue use and contact a qualified electrician for replacement.

Portable space heaters are energy hogs that can contribute to an unusually high electric bill. Remember to use a portable heater only to warm a small space for a short period of time.

SPACE HEATER CALCULATOR



Heater's wattage $\div 1,000^*$ \times Hours used per month \times kWh rate (.08362) = Monthly cost

Most space heaters are 1,500 watts. If you're operating a space heater 8 hours a day, and your electricity rate is approximately \$0.08 per kWh, then:
 $1,500 \text{ watts} \div 1,000 = 1.5 \text{ kw} \times 240 \text{ hours/month} = 360 \text{ kWh} \times \$0.08/\text{kWh} = \$28.80/\text{month}$

*Dividing by 1,000 converts watts to kilowatts

Summary of Owen Electric's bylaws relating to annual election process for directors

Each member shall receive notice and be eligible to vote and participate in the annual meeting, scheduled for Friday, June 7, 2024. Our process for the election of directors, as defined fully in the Bylaws, is as follows: A Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Board of Directors prior to April 8, 2024. The Nominating Committee shall meet and nominate qualified individuals for directorship on the Owen Electric Board by April 23, 2024 and post these names at the offices of the Cooperative. If a member wishes to be placed on the ballot for the position for which the term is expiring, the member must secure a petition signed by forty (40) members who reside in the same district and then present the signed petition at the OEC President's office at the headquarters location in Owenton by the close of business (4:30 p.m.) on March 29, 2024. To review more information pertaining to the annual meeting, the election process, and the Board of Directors, refer to the complete Owen Electric bylaws found in the December 2023 edition of *Kentucky Living* or call (800) 372-7612 to request a current copy of Owen Electric's bylaws. For more information, visit www.owenelectric.com/member-resources.

Winter weather impacts

When outdoor temperatures drop, our electricity use increases. That's because we're doing more activities inside, and our heating systems are running longer and more often to counteract colder outdoor temperatures. Factor in that we all tend to use electricity at the same times—in the morning and early evenings—and that equals a lot of strain on the electric grid.

At Owen Electric, we work closely with our local generation and transmission cooperative, East Kentucky Power Cooperative, in resource and infrastructure planning to ensure you have the power you need whenever you flip a switch, but the electric grid is much larger than your local co-op.

In winter months, when even more electricity is being used simultaneously across the country, it is possible for electricity demand to exceed supply, especially if an unexpected event like a sudden snow or ice storm or equipment malfunction occurs. Should this occur, which is rare, Owen Electric would send out communications appealing to our members to conserve energy use.

Owen Electric and EKPC take proactive steps to create a resilient grid and ensure reliability in extreme weather, including regular system maintenance, grid modernization efforts, and disaster response planning. It takes everyone to keep the grid reliable.

To help keep the heat on for you, your family and neighbors, here are a few things to do to relieve pressure on the grid (and save a little money along the way):

BEST BETS FOR Winter Savings

Energy consumption spikes during winter months as we spend more time indoors and heating systems work overtime. You can help reduce demand and strain on the electric grid by conserving during peak energy times. Reducing energy use will also help lower your energy bills.

UNPLUG WHEN POSSIBLE

Turn off unnecessary lights and electronics when you aren't using them.

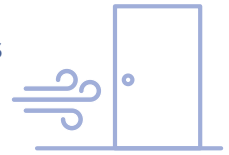


MAINTAIN HEATING EQUIPMENT

Maintain your heating system by replacing dirty, clogged filters and scheduling an annual inspection for necessary maintenance.

ELIMINATE DRAFTS AND AIR LEAKS

Seal air leaks and drafts around windows and exterior doors.



USE APPLIANCES WHEN ENERGY DEMAND IS LOWER

Run large appliances like clothes washers, dryers and dishwashers early in the morning or before you go to bed.



LOWER THE THERMOSTAT

Home heating accounts for a large portion of energy consumption. Adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting (68 degrees or lower).



- Select the lowest comfortable thermostat setting whenever possible. Your heating system must run longer to make up the difference between the thermostat temp and the outdoor temp. (If you have a heat pump, only adjust the setting one degree to avoid kicking on the more expensive auxiliary heat.)
 - › **Pro tip:** Seal air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weatherstripping. Air leaks and drafts force your heating system to work harder than necessary.
- Stagger your use of major appliances such as dishwashers, ovens and dryers.
 - › **Pro tip:** Start the dishwasher before you go to bed and use smaller countertop appliances like slow cookers and air fryers to save energy.
- Ensure your heating system is optimized for efficiency with regular maintenance and proper insulation.
 - › **Pro tip:** Make sure your furnace filter isn't clogged and dirty. Replace it as needed.
- When possible, use cold water to reduce water heating costs.
 - › **Pro tip:** Setting your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees can help you save energy and reduce mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.
- Unplug devices when not in use to eliminate unnecessary energy use. Even when turned off, electronics in standby mode consume energy.
 - › **Pro tip:** Plug devices into a power strip so you can turn them all off at once with the push of a button.

As we face the challenges posed by winter weather, understanding its impact on energy demand is crucial for maintaining a reliable power supply. By adopting energy conservation practices during periods of extreme cold, not only can you save money on your electric bills, but you can also contribute to the resilience of the power grid, keeping our local community warm and connected.



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Honoring our retirees



At the end of the year, retirees are invited to the co-op for a luncheon. Many laughs and memories are shared from years of working together. Above, at left, is Dave Webster and his wife, Jane, across from Henrietta Schneider and her son. Photos: Whitney Duvall

We value safety



We're kicking off our year with safety at the forefront of our minds. This recent addition to our hallway honors years of safety accomplishments and reminds us that at Owen Electric, safety is paramount.