

# POWERLINE

NEWSLETTER FOR CO-OP MEMBERS OF CORN BELT ENERGY



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## Are portable space heaters efficient for my home?

Small space heaters are meant to do exactly as their name says: heat a small space. But unfortunately, many people use portable space heaters to heat their entire home, which can really take a toll on your energy bills. The truth is, whether you should use space heaters really depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

If you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like inadequate insulation, drafty windows and exterior doors, or an inefficient heating system, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home. If you're on a tight budget, caulking and weather stripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy. Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a great next step. Loose fill insulation typically costs \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot. Taking these proactive energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters for supplemental warmth can reduce your heating and cooling bills for years to come.

Perhaps your home is energy efficient but you're cold-natured and want a specific room to be cozier than the rest. In this case, a space heater may work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling

fans; we use ceiling fans in the summer to cool people, not rooms. A space heater can be used in a similar way during winter months. Only use a space heater in small spaces that you're occupying and, if possible, try to shut off other rooms to contain the warmth provided by the space heater. If you decide to use a space heater to heat a small area in your home, make sure the heater is properly sized for the space; most heaters include a general sizing table.

A word about safety: the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates more than 25,000 residential fires are associated with the use of space heaters every year, resulting in more than 300 deaths. If you must use a space heater, purchase a newer model that includes the most current safety features and make sure it carries the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label. Choose a thermostatically controlled heater to avoid energy waste and overheating, and place the heater on a level surface away from foot traffic when in use. Always keep children and pets away from space heaters.

Consider alternative ways to stay warm like extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors,



lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation (and appeal!) and maintain warmth.

We know it's cold out there, but remember in addition to safety concerns, space heaters can greatly increase your energy bills if used improperly.

If you're looking for alternative ways to save energy and increase comfort in your home, contact Corn Belt Energy at 309-662-5330. We're here to help you manage your energy use.

## Residential meter base specifications change

Corn Belt Energy is adopting a National Electric Code (NEC) 2020 code requirement. The NEC 2020 requirement states that all one- and two-family dwelling units must have an emergency disconnect, and that the emergency disconnect be installed outdoor in a readily available location. In addition, the requirement states that the service overcurrent device shall be an integral part of the service disconnecting means.

The requirement change will take effect January 1, 2022, for all new construction, as well as any modifications a member may make to their existing service, which

requires work in the meter base. For those members who have already ordered materials but have not yet completed their metering installations or upgrades please work with your Corn Belt Energy engineering technician.

Our commitment to safety remains of the utmost importance which is why we continue to update specifications provided to our members and electrical installers. We have recently revised the single phase residential and farm service specifications. The updated specifications include overhead and underground services, solar installations, backup generator

installations, and electric vehicle as a backup installation.

You will find the updated specifications at the following link, <https://www.cornbeltenergy.com/specifications/specifications-and-standards.html>. Please note that specifications are subject to change and updated specifications will be provided on the Corn Belt Energy website.

For more information or questions about these changes, please contact us at 309-662-5330.

## Check your electric usage online with SmartHub

Are you interested in checking your electric usage online? You can view your own electric usage compared

to previous months by logging in to your SmartHub account at [cornbeltenergy.com](http://cornbeltenergy.com). You can also

overlay temperature data with your usage to see how the weather plays a significant role in your energy use.

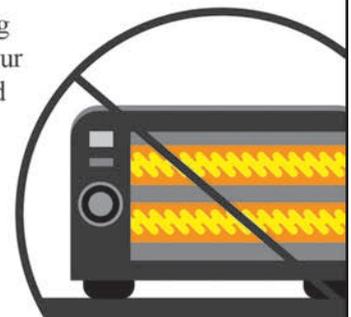
*To access SmartHub from your desktop, simply click "Account Login" at [cornbeltenergy.com](http://cornbeltenergy.com) and log in with your email address and password.*



### TIPS TO DITCH THE SPACE HEATER

Space heaters are energy hogs, and older models can be extremely dangerous. This winter, ditch the space heater and try these alternative solutions to stay cozy.

- Use an electric blanket to keep warm during the night.
- Caulk and weatherstrip around all windows and doors to prevent heat loss.
- Consider adding insulation to your attic and around duct work.



# Looking for the next generation of leaders - 2022 Youth Day and Youth to Washington Tour

Youth Tour was established with one thought in mind – to inspire our next generation of leaders. Since 1964, more than 50,000 young Americans have taken advantage of this special opportunity offered by their electric cooperative.

It all starts here locally with the Illinois Cooperative Youth Day in April. Corn Belt Energy will sponsor sophomore or junior students from high schools in our service area on an all-expense paid trip to Springfield, Illinois, on March 29, 2022. During the day your students and their counterparts from other Illinois high schools will meet their elected senators and representatives at the Capitol and learn first-hand about the workings of state government.

Then, two "Youth to Washington" representatives will be selected from the contingent that tours Springfield on March 29. The two selected representatives will also receive a weeklong, all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. on June 17-24, 2022, when hundreds of electric co-ops across the country send participants to Washington, D.C., for a chance to learn about the cooperative business model and a full week of sightseeing.

On the tour, students will learn about electric cooperatives, American history and U.S. government. They participate in National Youth Day, visit with their representatives and senators, and explore the sights around the nation's capital.

Youth Tour is so much more than a sightseeing trip. Students have repeatedly shared that this experience has helped them grow into successful professionals. It has also benefited our local communities. Youth Tour participants return home with a deeper understanding and skillset of what it takes to be leader, and as a result, they put these skills to use right here in our community.

Applications can be found on our website at [www.cornbeltenergy.com](http://www.cornbeltenergy.com) under "Community." Applications must be received by January 31, 2022.

**Help us find the next generation of leaders by sharing the Youth Tour experience with a promising student!** For more information, please contact Hillary Cherry at [hillary.cherry@cornbeltenergy.com](mailto:hillary.cherry@cornbeltenergy.com) or call 800-879-0339 x250.



**Michael Conway**  
Central Area Serviceman

*How long have you worked at Corn Belt Energy?*  
**10 years**

*What is your role at Corn Belt Energy?*  
**I develop monitor and maintain the central area distribution system.**

*What aspect of your role do you enjoy the most?*  
**I enjoy member interaction and the scheduling and coordination of large maintenance outages.**

*If there is one piece of advice that you could share with our members, what would it be?*  
**To volunteer and to try and make a positive impact on the youth of your community!**

*Corn Belt Energy puts SAFETY FIRST. What safety tip would you share with our members?*  
**Watch the road and give way to utility vehicles and construction zones! Strobe lights mean slow down!**

*What are your hobbies and outside interests?*  
**I enjoy coaching youth football, boating with my family and watching my two sons participate in football and wrestling.**

*Who or what inspires you?*  
**My kids inspire me to be present in their lives and to get a little better each day!**

*If you had to select a hashtag to describe yourself, what would it be?*  
**#alwaysgrowing**





## When temperatures drop, energy costs rise

You don't need to be a meteorologist to know that winter can be blustery and fierce. This winter sub-zero temperatures and wind chills have become the norm. Many of us will feel an extra chill when we receive our winter energy bills since most of a home's energy use is related to heating during the winter.

The extremely cold weather means

our heating systems have been running a lot harder to keep us warm.

Chances are you've been at home more often than usual, too. Staying home using lights, TV's, and appliances will also add to your electric bill.

To view your own electric usage compared to previous months, log

in to your SmartHub account at [www.cornbeltenergy.com](http://www.cornbeltenergy.com). You can also overlay temperature data with your usage to see how the weather plays a significant role in your energy use.

For questions about SmartHub or your winter bill, contact us at 309-662-5330.

## Tesla chargers now in Meijer's parking lot

Tesla owners now have a new location to quickly charge their electric vehicle. Meijer, located at 1900 East College Avenue in Normal has added Tesla chargers on the south side of their parking lot.



### CONTACT US

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