



CENTRAL ELECTRIC POWER ASSOCIATION

A tradition of dependable, hometown service since 1937

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Save the date! ANNUAL MEETING *set for March 17*

Central Electric Power Association will hold its 89th annual membership meeting on Mar. 17 at the Carthage Coliseum on Highway 16 East in Carthage.

As pursuant to Central Electric Power Association's bylaws and to provide each Central Electric member an opportunity to vote in a director election, the official ballot and proxy will be mailed to all Central Electric members the week of Feb.16.

Enclosed will be an information sheet with "how-to-vote" details along with a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope for members to return their ballot or proxy. Your official ballot must

be received via mail no later than Mar. 17. The election results will be published in *Today in Mississippi* magazine and the association's website.

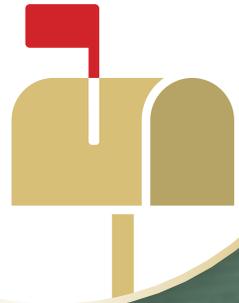
In accordance with the laws of Mississippi and the bylaws of the association, members will elect three directors for three-year terms: two directors from Leake County, and one director from Attala County.

Mark your calendars for Mar. 17, and we'll see you at the annual meeting!



Don't forget to mail in your ballot for a chance to

**WIN
A DOOR PRIZE!**





Should I upgrade my appliance?

by Miranda Boutelle

Buying a new appliance can feel daunting. Before you hand over your hard-earned money, here's how to choose an appliance that will help you save money over time.

When shopping, keep in mind that not all new appliances are high efficiency and not all old appliances are inefficient. The less efficient your current appliance, the more you will save with an upgrade. The yellow EnergyGuide label on new appliances shows the yearly energy cost, kilowatt-hour electricity use, and Energy Star logo, if certified.

Let's look at some appliance examples to see how the costs and savings stack up.

Refrigerators have seen major efficiency improvements over the years. New refrigerators use up to 73% less energy than 1970s models and about a third less than 20-year-old models.

On a visit to my mom's house, she proudly showed off her 1980s refrigerator she bought when her 1970s harvest gold model died. If her 80s fridge uses 2,000 kWh per year, at 14 cents per kWh, it costs \$280 per year to operate. New Energy Star-certified refrigerator prices start at \$500 with yearly energy costs ranging from \$38 to \$122. If mom buys a new Energy Star-certified refrigerator for \$1,000 with \$100 yearly energy cost — saving her \$180 per year — it will pay for itself in about five and a half years.

If you intend to keep your old appliance, be sure to weigh the additional energy costs. Maximize efficiency and keep your food safe by setting your refrigerator to 37 degrees and your freezer at 0 degrees.

New Energy Star-certified clothes washers and dryers are also more efficient than older models. Use the Energy Star Product Finder at energystar.gov to compare products. Integrated Modified Energy Factor measures the washer's energy efficiency. A higher number is better. Integrated Water Factor measures water efficiency. A lower number is better.

I recently bought a new washing machine when my old front-load machine died. I was considering a top-load machine. When I compared Energy Star-certified top loaders to front loaders, I changed my mind. Energy Star-certified front loaders use about 50% less energy and water than top-load agitator washers and about 25% less energy and water than top-load impeller washers that don't have an agitator.

My new washer cost \$698. According to the appliance's EnergyGuide, based on six loads of laundry a week and an electricity cost of 14 cents per kWh, the yearly energy cost is \$15. Similar non-Energy Star-certified models were \$48 per year. Mine didn't cost much more than non-Energy Star models and will help me save over time.

Then I had to make the decision about buying the matching dryer. My dryer was functional but had features I didn't like. At 14 cents per kWh and running roughly six loads a week for an hour each, my old dryer used \$131.04 per year.

The new matching Energy Star-certified dryer cost \$698 and estimates annual energy use at 607 kWh, which is \$84.98 per year at 14 cents per kWh. With an estimated savings of \$46 per year, the dryer would take 15 years for the savings to cover the price. That's a long time and not worth the cost.

To improve your washer and dryer efficiency, wash in cold water, don't over dry clothes, and clean your lint trap between every load.

Buying a new Energy Star-certified refrigerator and putting the old one out in the garage won't save energy. However, sometimes the secondary fridge or freezer allows you to save through groceries by stocking up on sales, preserving your own food, and saving gas with fewer trips to the store. It's all a balance.

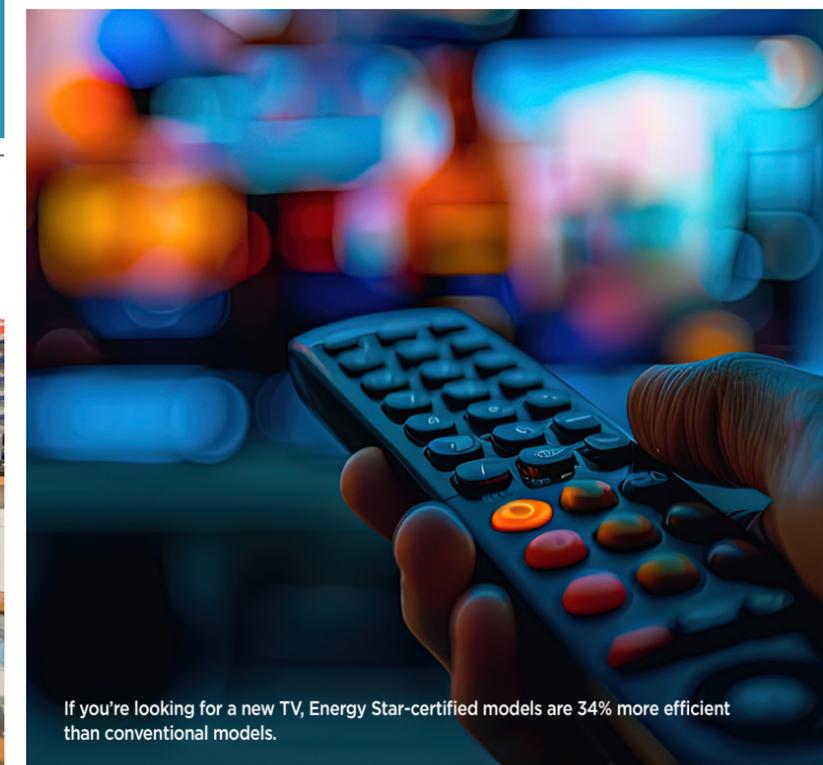


To improve the efficiency of your washer, set it to wash in cold water.

Just like the light bulbs in your home, LED televisions offer increased efficiency. Energy Star-certified televisions are 34% more efficient than conventional models. If you have a working LED television, swapping to an Energy Star model is more efficient but may not make up for the cost of a new TV. Instead, check the efficiency settings on your TV or buy a smart power strip that turns off other connected devices when not in use.

Whatever appliance you are upgrading or replacing, make an informed decision by comparing the cost of operation and shopping Energy Star models to help lower your electric bill.

Miranda Boutelle is the chief operating officer at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy efficiency company.



If you're looking for a new TV, Energy Star-certified models are 34% more efficient than conventional models.



CONNECTED HOMES: THE POWER OF WHAT'S PLUGGED IN

by Jennah Denney

Our homes are changing, and so is the electric grid. Across the country, more households are becoming “smart” and connected. From thermostats that adjust automatically to electric vehicles that charge overnight, the devices we plug in are becoming intelligent, flexible, and increasingly central to how we use and even produce electricity.

For your electric cooperative, this growing network of connected devices creates new ways for co-ops and their members to work together to keep power reliable and affordable.

What is a connected home?

A connected home is one where everyday appliances and devices can communicate with each other, you or even with your electric co-op. These could include thermostats that adjust to your patterns and preferences, water heaters that operate when electricity is cheaper, home batteries that store solar-generated power for later use, or air-source heat pumps that efficiently heat and cool your home.

Each of these tools can help you use energy more efficiently — and when they are managed effectively, or when many homes coordinate and balance their energy use together, they can also help your co-op keep power flowing reliably and affordably for the entire community.

Behind the meter: The power you don't see

You might have heard the phrase “behind the meter.” This simply refers to energy equipment that operates on your side of the electric meter that you own or control. This could include solar panels, battery storage systems, or connected devices like EV chargers or smart thermostats.

Individually, they may seem small, but together they can make a big difference. If hundreds of water heaters slightly delay heating during a peak time of day (when electricity use is high), the co-op can avoid purchasing power at a higher cost, which essentially keeps rates lower for members. If home batteries store solar-generated energy during the day and release it back to the grid at night, it helps balance the overall supply and demand of electricity.

How connected devices help the grid

Each day, our electric grid must maintain a perfect balance to match the amount of electricity generated with the amount of electricity we are using — all in real time. Because electricity can't easily be stored at scale, this balancing act is constant and complex.

Connected devices give electric co-ops powerful new tools to help manage this complexity. Traditionally, electricity use was simple: flip a switch and power flows instantly. But today, many devices can

shift when and how they use energy, also known as load flexibility. Load flexibility allows you and your co-op to better align energy use during times when electricity is more affordable, without sacrificing comfort or convenience.

The cooperative advantage

Electric co-ops are led by the members they serve. That means co-ops can design connected home programs that work for your community, not Wall Street. Members who participate can often earn bill credits or incentives, and every member benefits from lower peak costs and improved reliability.

Together, we can build a grid that's smarter, more flexible, and ready for the future that's powered by what's plugged in. Contact your local electric co-op or visit their website to learn more about programs for connected devices and additional ways you can save energy (and money!).

Jennah Denney writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Connected devices such as smart thermostats can help you use energy more efficiently. When many homes coordinate and balance their energy use together, connected devices can also help your co-op keep power flowing reliably and affordably for the entire community. Photo Credit: LG

