CENTRAL ELECTRIC POWER ASSOCIATION

A tradition of dependable, hometown service since 1937

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When outdoor temperatures soar, our electricity use increases. That's because our air conditioners are running longer and more often to counteract sweltering 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 our electric grid.

FLECTRIC

At Monroe County Electric, we work closely with the Tennessee Valley Authority, (TVA) our local generation and transmission (G&T) 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 and G&T.

In summer months, when even more electricity is being

used simultaneously across the country, it is possible for electricity demand to exceed supply, especially if a prolonged heat wave occurs. If this happens, which is rare, the grid operator for our region of the country may call on consumers to actively reduce their energy use or initiate rolling power outages to relieve pressure on the grid. Monroe County Electric will always keep you informed about situations like this.

We work proactively with our G&T to create a resilient portion of the grid and ensure electric reliability in extreme weather, including regular system maintenance, grid modernization efforts, and disaster response planning, but it takes everyone to keep the grid reliable.

To help keep the air conditioner running for you, your family and neighbors, here are a few things you can do to relieve pressure on the grid during times of extreme summer heat:

- Select the highest comfortable thermostat setting and turn it up several degrees whenever possible. Your cooling system must run longer to make up the difference between the thermostat temp and the outdoor temp.
 - **Pro tip:** Seal air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weatherstripping. Air leaks and drafts force your cooling system to work harder than necessary.
- Use ceiling fans to make yourself feel a few degrees cooler. Remember, ceiling fans cool people (not rooms), so turn them off in unoccupied rooms.
- Pro tip: During summer months, set ceiling fan blades to rotate counterclockwise, which pushes cool air down for a windchill effect.

- Run major appliances, such as dishwashers, ovens, and dryers, during off-peak hours when the demand for electricity is lower.
 - Pro tip: Start the dishwasher before you go to bed.
- Close blinds, curtains and shades during the hottest part of the day to block unwanted heat gain from sunlight.
 - **Pro tip:** Consider blackout curtains with thermal backing or reflective lining to block heat and light.
- Use smaller appliances, such as slow cookers, air fryers, and toaster ovens, to cook meals.
 - Pro tip: Studies have shown that air fryers use about half the amount of electricity than a full-sized oven. Air fryers are smaller and use focused heat, which results in faster cooking times, less heat output, and lower energy use.

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

What are some energy efficiency upgrades I should consider when building a new house?

Prioritizing energy efficiency when building a new home can create future savings and make living more comfortable. It might cost a little more upfront but will pay off in the long run.

by Miranda Boutelle

Let's explore two approaches: Following an energy efficiency certification plan or adding energy efficient designs and equipment to your construction project.

There are several efficiency certifications available for new-construction homes that may qualify for discounted homeowner's insurance, tax credits, and other incentives.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification ensures the home uses less energy while prioritizing sustainable resources and healthy indoor air quality. LEED-certified homes use 20% to 30% less energy than the average home with some homes saving up to 60% – and can cost the same as non-LEED homes with proper planning, according to the U.S. Green Building Council.

Passive House certification requires the home to be so efficient it needs little to no heating and cooling equipment while remaining comfortable for its occupants. To achieve up to 90% less energy use than the average home, the certification focuses on maximizing the efficiency of the building envelope – all components that separate the indoors from the outdoors – including proper insulation levels, air sealing and high-efficiency windows.

ENERGY STAR NextGen Certification for New Homes recognizes houses that are 20% more efficient than the average home and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% to 80%.

Although various certifications are available, you don't have to follow a set guide. Consider adding these energy efficiency principles to your new home build.





cooling equipment and lead to long-term energy savings.

Consider framing techniques, insulation levels, and heating and cooling equipment to maximize your new home's energy efficiency.

Advanced framing techniques maximize the amount of insulated area and save on material costs in woodframed homes. This technique can save up to \$500 for a 1,200-square-foot home and \$1,000 for a 2,400square-foot home on material costs, between 3% to 5% on labor costs and up to 5% on annual heating and cooling costs, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Choose a contractor who is familiar with these techniques, and check with your local building officials to ensure compliance with local codes.

The importance of a home's orientation is often overlooked. According to the International Association of Certified Home Inspectors, homes oriented to the path of the sun use less energy for heating and cooling to reduce energy bills and improve comfort.

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Advanced framing techniques maximize the amount of insulated area and save on material costs in wood-framed homes. This technique can save up to \$500 for a 1,200-square-foot home and \$1,000 for a 2,400-square-foot home on material costs.

If you are building or buying a new home that doesn't allow options for orientation or framing, you might be able to request higher insulation levels in the attic. Increasing the insulation levels likely won't cost much more for materials and labor, but it can help you use less energy and save money in the long run.

Heating and cooling equipment should be properly sized using energy modeling tools that calculate the home's heating and cooling needs. Investing in a more efficient building envelope that is well insulated and air sealed can reduce the home's heating and cooling load, making it possible to have a smaller, less expensive heating and cooling system. This saves money on equipment costs and lowers energy use.

Optimizing the efficiency of a new home requires a whole-house approach. Analyze all systems and how they work together to ensure maximum efficiency for a safe and comfortable home.

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

ECM FOUNDATION

Scholarship Recipients

The Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi Foundation was created by the state's electric cooperatives in 2005. In an effort to give back to the communities they serve, the Foundation provides scholarships for post-secondary and vocational education to accredited institutions for qualifying high school seniors. For the fall of 2025, the Foundation awarded scholarships to dependents of employees of participating electric cooperatives. Four Central Electric employee's children who are entering college this fall were awarded the ECM Foundation Scholarships. Central Electric wants to congratulate each recipient on receiving this scholarship.



SUZANNE BURNETT

Union Public School District

Suzanne Burnett is the daughter of Danny and Tammy Burnett. She is a graduate of Union Public School District. Suzanne enjoys painting and reading. She plans to attend East Central Community College and Mississippi State University to pursue a degree in early childhood education.



JOHN MICHAEL DUNCAN

Lake High School

John Michael Duncan is the son of Michael and Nyka Duncan. He is a graduate of Lake High School. John Michael enjoys fishing, golf, and hunting. He plans to attend East Central Community College and Mississippi State University to pursue a degree in computer engineering.



ABBIE LOUISE SCARBROUGH

Union High School

Abbie Louise Scarbrough is the daughter of Fred and Alisa Scarbrough. She is a graduate of Union High School. In high school, Abbie was a member of the high school band and softball team. She also enjoys hunting and fishing. Abbie plans to attend East Central Community College lineman school along with pursuing a welding degree.



GRAYSON WHITE

Germantown High School

Grayson White is the daughter of Michael and Cherie Brooks and Michael White. She is a graduate of Germantown High School. Grayson plans to attend Holmes Community College and then the University of Mississippi Medical Center to pursue a bachelor of science degree in nursing.

2025 ANNUAL MEETING

ELECTED BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The elected board of directors are Jackie Harpole, Leake County; Andrew Windham, Neshoba County; Kenneth Hagan, Newton County; and Phillip Crosby, minority member at large.