

CIRCUITS

NEWS FOR DAKOTA ELECTRIC MEMBERS



Fall energy-saving tips

Don't let those beautiful autumn leaves and clear fall sky fool you — cold weather is just around the corner.

'Tis the season for sweaters, football, apple orchards and pumpkin spice-flavored everything. It's also the right time to start weatherizing your home for the heating season because those cold temperatures tend to sneak up on us when we least expect it. The following tips will help you prepare:

- Have your **heating system** serviced by a licensed contractor.
- Replace your **furnace filter** monthly, or per manufacturer's guidelines, to keep the system running at peak performance.
- Check your home's **weather stripping** for air leaks around doors, windows, baseboards and wherever pipes, wires and vents enter the house (see the weather stripping infographic on page 3).
- During the day, open **shades and curtains** to allow solar heating. Close them at night to retain the day's heat.
- Set your **thermostat** at 68 degrees and be sure to lower the temperature when you go to bed or when you are away from home.

Source: TogetherWeSave.com, Energy.gov

Avoid disconnection this winter

Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule begins Oct. 15

Members who fall behind on utility bills can avoid disconnection or be eligible for reconnection between Oct. 15 and April 15 by following the steps outlined in Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule.

Members receive a brochure with their September bill statement (mailed between Sept. 14 and Oct. 6) with program details and contact information for agencies that provide utility payment assistance.

The Cold Weather Rule protects members but does not completely forbid shutoffs. Contact Dakota Electric at 651-463-6212 as soon as you anticipate trouble paying a bill, and we can help you create a payment plan to prevent disconnection. By contacting Dakota Electric and avoiding disconnection, you also avoid paying reconnection fees and a deposit. You must keep your payment plan to qualify for protection.



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Upcoming events

Careers in Energy Open House	Oct. 17
Board Meeting	Oct. 27, 8:30 a.m.

October 2016



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Get to know your heat recovery ventilator

Fall is a good time to clean your system for peak performance

If you live in a newer home, chances are you may have noticed a rectangular box with ductwork mounted somewhere near your furnace or in the utility room of your house. Do you know what it is and what it does?

It can go by different names, but it is most commonly referred to as a heat recovery ventilator (HRV), an important device that uses the heat in the outgoing stale air to warm up the fresh incoming air. A typical unit features two fans—one to take out household air and the other to bring in fresh air.

Older homes are not as airtight and are therefore more drafty, creating natural ventilation. As building codes and efficiencies improve over the years, homes are intentionally built more airtight, creating stuffy, stale air and the need for proper ventilation and improved indoor air quality.

Life inside today's airtight home generates both pollutants and moisture from cooking, washing, showers and breathing. At

excessive levels, moisture condenses on windows and certain areas can become breeding grounds for mold, mildew, dust mites and bacteria. An HRV is vital to maintaining proper humidity and air pressure inside a home.

An HRV is used primarily during the winter months when homes are closed up, heating systems are turned on and opening the windows is not a feasible option. If the home is air conditioned during the cooling season, most people turn the HRV off.

Because the system is constantly moving air throughout the winter months, proper airflow is critical to optimal system performance. That is why regular filter cleaning is so important, and now is the perfect time to do it — right before the heating season. See the images to the right for more information.

Always refer to the owner's manual for proper maintenance and operation of your particular model.



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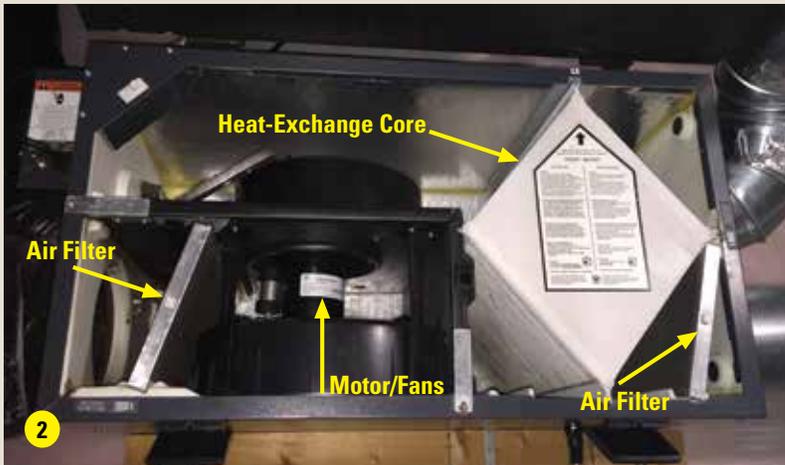
COOPERATIVES ARE:

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- 1 With the improvement of building codes and energy efficiency, a heat recovery ventilator (HRV) comes standard in new, airtight homes to transfer stale air out of the home and bring fresh air into the home, balancing humidity levels and improving indoor air quality.
- 2 Inside an HRV are air filters, the heat-exchange core, motor and fans. Typical maintenance requires regular cleaning of the air filters and heat-exchange core for optimal airflow and performance.
- 3 Each air filter can be easily removed and vacuumed to remove dust. Wash in lukewarm water and mild soap solution. Rinse thoroughly, shake off excess water and let dry.
- 4 The heat-exchange core transfers heat from the outgoing air stream to the incoming air stream. It can be easily removed and should be soaked in a cold/lukewarm solution of mild soap (dish soap). Rinse thoroughly, shake off excess water and let dry. This is typically done annually.
- 5 HRV systems vary, but controls are available for intermittent and remote operation, like the one pictured. A slow to medium fan speed may be adequate for normal living, while a house full of guests might require the highest setting.

Systems vary. Always refer to the owner's manual for proper operation, maintenance and cleaning of your particular model.



WEATHER STRIPPING DOORS

Capturing Energy Savings by Sealing Air Leaks

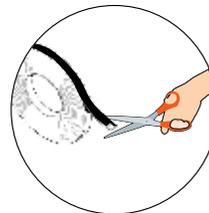
Save energy and seal air leaks by weather stripping exterior doors. How do you know if you need to weather strip? If you can see any amount of light between the door frame and the floor, weather stripping should be applied to eliminate energy waste. This DIY energy-saving project is relatively easy and inexpensive depending on the type of materials selected. The most common weather stripping material is self-adhesive foam strips, although rubber, vinyl, metal, or a combination of materials may also be used.



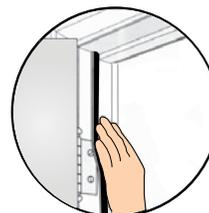
- 1 **CLEANING SURFACES** - Clean the door and door jamb to be weather stripped. For best results, weather stripping should be applied to clean, dry surfaces above 20°F.



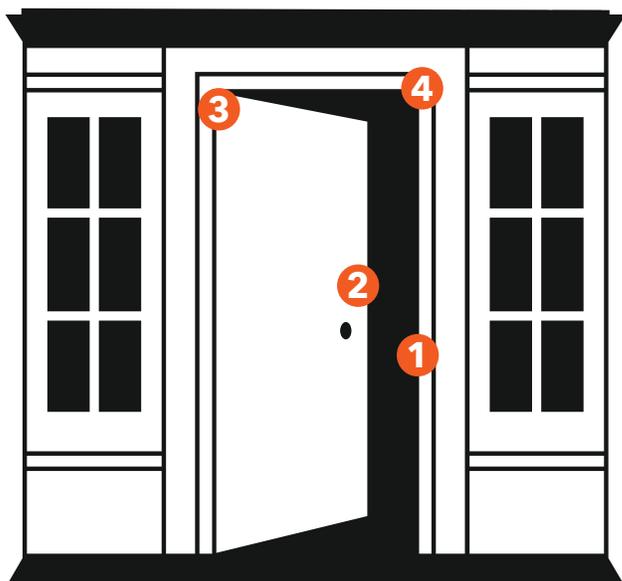
- 2 **MEASURING DOOR & DOOR JAMBS** - To ensure greater accuracy, measure your space twice before cutting the material. It is best to plan for one continuous strip for each side of the door and door jamb.



- 3 **CUTTING FOAM** - Cut long pieces of self-adhesive weather stripping material (foam, vinyl, etc.) for each side of the door jamb and door.



- 4 **APPLYING WEATHER STRIPPING** - Peel back the self-adhesive foam. Apply one continuous strip of material snugly along each side. Make sure the weather stripping meets tightly at the corners and is pressed firmly onto the door and door jamb. The material should compress tightly between the door and door jamb, without making it difficult to shut.



SOURCE: Department of Energy

Dakota Electric to host open house for **Careers in Energy Week Oct. 17-21**

Did you know energy companies are projecting 30-50 percent of their workforce will be eligible to retire in the next 10 years?

The Center for Energy Workforce Development and its members created Careers in Energy Week, Oct. 17-21, 2016, to increase public awareness about energy careers through a concerted nationwide effort.

In celebration of the special week, Dakota Electric will host an open house at its headquarters in Farmington on Mon., Oct. 17 from 5-7 p.m.

The event is geared toward high school students and their parents but is open to anyone interested in energy careers. Guests will have a chance to tour the facility and speak with representatives from various Dakota Electric careers, including:

- technician electrician
- electrical engineer
- IT/software developer
- finance
- energy services
- mechanic
- lineworker
- distribution system operator
- human resources
- marketing/communications

Dakota Electric will have drawings for college scholarships for students who attend the open house. Students must be attending college in 2017 to be eligible. Information about the event can be found on the Event Calendar at dakotaelectric.com, or watch for updates by following us on Facebook and Twitter.

Visit the Minnesota Energy Center's "Get Into Energy" website at www.energycareersminnesota.com to learn more about energy careers and energy education opportunities throughout the Minnesota State Colleges and University (MnSCU) system.



UTILITY SCAMS 101



Never give out social security numbers, credit card or banking information to anyone who calls, regardless of who they claim to represent.

Utility phone scams typically involve callers claiming to represent a utility company attempting to trick people into paying them money by threatening to turn off their service.

Dakota Electric reminds members to beware of any suspicious phone calls demanding credit card or personal financial information. Dakota Electric does not ask for this type of information. If you receive a call like this, hang up immediately and call Dakota Electric at 651-463-6212 to verify your account status.

Apply for the 2016 Touchstone Energy Community Award

The Touchstone Energy Community Award allows Dakota Electric to recognize and support local businesses, non-profit organizations and community needs.

In 2016, Dakota Electric will provide up to three awards to local organizations, earning each winner a \$500 cash prize. One local award winner will compete for a statewide award of \$1,000.

How to apply

The application deadline is Oct. 28, 2016. Call Brenda at 651-463-6234 or visit www.dakotaelectric.com/about_us/community for an application and judging criteria.



Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program

Safe at Home helps survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and other crimes, and anyone who fears for their safety, by establishing a confidential mailing address and providing a mail forwarding service.

While Dakota Electric needs members' actual addresses to establish and maintain electric service, we use Safe at Home addresses for communicating with members and take special steps to protect Safe at Home participants' addresses.

If you participate in Safe at Home, alert Dakota Electric and provide your Safe at Home mailing address.



To learn more about Safe at Home, contact the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State at www.sos.state.mn.us or 1-866-723-3035.

Maximize energy savings when you are away from home

If you head south for the winter, or take an extended vacation, keep these tips in mind

Heating System

Make sure furnace fan is in "auto" mode and set the thermostat 6-10 degrees lower than the normal setting when you are occupying the home.

Water Heater

If you have an electric water heater, turn it off at the circuit breaker panel. If you have a gas water heater, set the thermostat to the lowest possible, or "vacation," setting.

Electronics

Many of today's electronics continue to use electricity even when turned off (see ad on back cover). To stop all use, unplug printers, computers, cable boxes, TVs and home audio equipment.

Refrigerator/Freezer

Unplug your refrigerator/freezer after you empty the contents and clean it out. Prop the door open and place an opened box of baking soda on a shelf to absorb odors.

If you prefer to leave it plugged in, you can set it to a warmer temperature than usual to save electricity. Just be sure to remove all perishables and consider putting gallon jugs of water inside to reduce temperature swings.

Home Security

Leave a lamp or two on timers to give your home a lived-in look. Be sure to use high-efficiency LED light bulbs for maximum energy savings.



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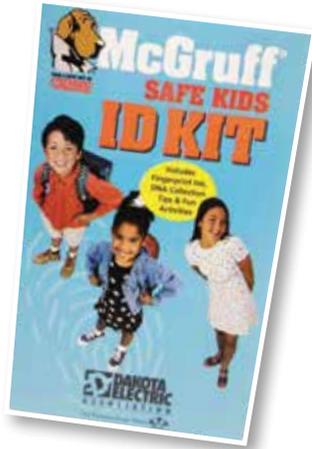
Circuits Quick Clips

McGruff Safe Kids Identification Kits

Each year Dakota Electric donates McGruff Safe Kids ID Kits for local police departments to use in educating kindergarten classes on staying safe.

Each kit contains safety tips along with a personal identification section and finger-printing kit for parents to use to create an up-to-date file on their child.

For more information about obtaining McGruff Safe Kids ID Kits for your school, please contact your local police department.



Members enjoy popular wind farm tours

More than 100 members participated in Dakota Electric's wind farm tours in September.

The groups visited McNeilus Wind Farm in Dodge Center and Pleasant Valley Station near Sargeant. Pleasant Valley Station is a natural gas peaking plant that generates electricity during times of high electricity demand.



Join us for our fall commercial member meeting

Thursday, November 3, 2016

Eagan Fire Safety Center

1001 Station Trail
Eagan, MN 55123

- 8-8:30 a.m.** Registration & Breakfast
- 8:30-9:30 a.m.** Panel Discussion
Insights of LED Lighting
- 9:30-10 a.m.** Fire Safety Center Tour

The meeting is free and open to all Dakota Electric commercial members. Look for more information coming soon on our event calendar at www.dakotaelectric.com.



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