

DECEMBER 2010

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF OTERO COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP

# Otero County Electric Cooperative, Inc.

## Power-Gram



For Outages Please call: 1-800-548-4660

Visit us at [www.ocec-inc.com](http://www.ocec-inc.com)

Cloudcroft, N.M. 575-682-2521

Alto, N.M. 575-336-4550

Carrizozo, N.M. 575-648-2352

## HOLIDAY SAFETY

The holidays are upon us and with them come many opportunities for fun, festivities, and celebrating. Follow these guidelines to keep the season merry!

### LIGHTS

- Whether using Christmas lights indoors or outside, always use lights that have been tested for safety and that indicate conformance with safety standards.
- Check each strand of lights before using. Make sure there are no broken sockets or frayed or bare wires. Also check for loose connections and throw out any strands that are damaged.
- Replace burned out bulbs promptly with bulbs of the same wattage.
- Only use lights outside that are labeled for "Outdoor Use." Packaging will note whether lights can be used inside, outside or both.
- Secure outside lights with insulated holders. Using nails or staples may damage insulation on the wires.
- Turn off all lights before going to bed or leaving the housing.
- Stay away from power lines.
- Use extension cords properly. Avoid using more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord.

### TREES

- If buying an artificial tree, make sure that it is labeled as "Fire Resistant." This does not mean that the tree won't burn, but it does indicate that it will resist burning and will extinguish quickly.
- Check for freshness when purchasing a live tree. A

fresh tree should not lose many needles when tapped on the ground and the trunk should be sticky with resin. It should be green and the needles will be hard to pull from the branches and should not break when bent in between fingers.

- Place tree away from fireplaces, radiators and heaters.
- Never use lighted candles on a tree.

## GOLDEN GLOW HOLIDAY PUNCH

### WHAT YOU NEED

- 1 tub TANG Orange Flavor Sugar-Free Drink Mix or 1/2 cup TANG Orange Flavor Drink Mix
- 1 qt. (4 cups) water
- 1 pkg. (10 oz.) frozen unsweetened strawberries, partially thawed
- 1 can (6 oz.) frozen lemonade concentrate
- 2 cups cold club soda
- Ice

### MAKE IT

Place drink mix, water, strawberries & lemonade in large pitcher. Stir until drink mix is dissolved and strawberries are separated. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Pour into large punch bowl just before serving. Stir in club soda and ice cubes.

Source: Kraft Recipes.com



**OCEC will be closed on the following dates in observance of the holidays.  
We wish you a very safe and happy holiday season!**

**December 23 & 24**

**December 31**

**INFORMATION YOU CAN FIND AT OUR WEBSITE [WWW.OCEC-INC.COM](http://WWW.OCEC-INC.COM)**

- Make a payment with your credit card, debit card, or e-check.
  - Check your balance, payment history, consumption history and other detailed billing information.
  - Online Energy Audit
  - Kids Corner for educational purposes.
  - Regulatory Information & Existing Rates
  - Products and Services offered by OCEC.
  - Job Opportunities
  - Net Metering Information
  - Contacts at OCEC
  - Energy Calculator & Energy Library
  - Information on Coop Connections Card.
- Check it out today and see what's available!



**OCEC LOBBY HOURS**  
8 AM - 4 PM  
MONDAY-FRIDAY  
Excluding Holidays, which  
will be posted separately.

**INFORMATION REQUESTED BY COOPERATIVE**

When you as a member of Otero County Electric Cooperative, Inc. perform some type of improvements around your home or property and you add electrical load, please notify OCEC so we can be assured that the equipment we have at your location is sized properly. Failure to do so may result in damage to your equipment and also the cooperative's equipment. So to avoid unnecessary outages or damages to equipment, please contact the cooperative office when you add a load a your location.

## Enjoy an EverGREEN Holiday Season

■ Get the most out of energy during the holidays

By John Bruce

Holidays are a festive time of year, with gifts, fun decorations, family visits, and lots of laughter. But they can also ring in extra energy use for heating, decorative lights, and more. So what steps can you take to make sure the holidays don't leave a surprise "gift" on your next electric bill?

One of the most popular ways to save energy without dimming holiday cheer is switching to light-emitting diode (LED) holiday lights. These long-lasting and energy efficient lights have been used for years in vehicles to let you know when you're low on gas or need an oil change. Over the past few years, prices have dropped low enough to make these bulbs cost-effective for decorative use.

On the plus side, LEDs last longer than traditional incandescent lights. They run cool and colors don't fade over time. Best of all, they use about a tenth of the energy for the same amount of light.

The news isn't all cheery. Decora-

tive LEDs cost much more than strands of typically lights—up to \$40 or more to outfit a tree, according to Consumer Reports, an independent product tester. But over time, the higher investment pays off. When Consumer Reports compared LEDs and incandescent holiday lights in 2007, they found LEDs use between 1 and 3 kWh of energy, compared to between 12 to 105 kWh for traditional lights. This translates into a savings of up to \$11 every year. Because LEDs are more durable, lasting more than 4,000 hours while incandescent bulbs burn out by the 2,000 hour mark, the initial investment pays dividends over the long haul.

Whether or not you fork out extra bucks to switch to LEDs, it's a good idea to turn off your holiday lights before you go to bed. Consider installing timers to reduce the amount of time your holiday lights are on. Just 10 incandescent strands lit for 13 hours a day can easily add more than \$50 to an electric bill. Limit light displays to no more than six hours nightly.

Lights aren't the only holiday addition impacting your electric bill—family guests add to your costs, too.

Because everyone wants to stay toasty during colder holiday months, heating usually accounts for the lion's share of cold-weather energy costs. Extra guests translate into extra water to heat for showers.

Make sure to set your thermostat as low as comfort permits. Each degree above 68 degrees adds 2 percent to 3 percent to the amount of energy needed to heat your home. Conversely, you'll save by lowering your thermostat (and leaving it there).

You can expect extra guests to strain your electric water heater—folks often take longer showers in colder weather, increasing water-heating costs. Before guests arrive consider installing a low-flow showerhead to reduce the amount of water used, and try to keep showers to six minutes or less.

Finally, in the average home, 75 percent of the electricity used to power electronic gifts and gadgets is used while the products are off. This phantom power use can be avoided by unplugging the items or using a power strip.

To learn more about ways to cut home energy use, visit [www.TogetherWeSave.com](http://www.TogetherWeSave.com).

Sources: Consumer Reports, U.S. Department of Energy

**OTERO COUNTY ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE, INC.  
PO BOX 227  
CLOUDCROFT, NEW MEXICO 88317**

- Lobby hours are 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday through Friday. If service is interrupted, check your fuses and circuit breakers. If all your service is off, check with your neighbors.
- Report promptly if you think the trouble is on Otero County Electric Cooperative, Incorporated lines.
- When problem is on consumers side of the meter, the consumer will be charged for a false call for service.
- Please examine this bill carefully as it will be considered correct if we are not notified within 30 days.
- The statement enclosed does not include payments made after billing date.
- If you desire information on the use of electricity for any job, large or small, do not hesitate to call your Cooperative, come by the office, or write for information at any time.
- FOR EMERGENCIES OR POWER OUTAGES CALL (800) 548-4660.