Energy Efficiency For the Modern Family
By Kaaren Robbins, Member Communication & Services

If you are struck by the amount of screens, remotes, gaming controls, charging stations and cords that have become fixtures in your home, you are not alone. The typical American family is well connected and owns a variety of electronic devices. According to the PEW Research Institute, 95 percent of U.S. families have a cell phone and 77 percent of Americans own a smart phone. Nearly 80 percent of adults own a laptop or desktop computer, while approximately half own tablets.

Consumer electronics coupled with the growing array of smart home appliances and technology have slowly, but steadily, changed our homes and lifestyles. The increased reliance on our many devices has new implications for home energy use and efficiency.

Using smart technology to manage energy savings
So how can we save energy when we are using more electronic devices than ever before? The answer may lie with some of those same electronic devices that have become indispensable to modern living. In many cases, energy savings is as simple as switching on or off.

As more apps enable you to monitor energy use, Beartooth Electric’s SmartHub app is a great tool to get you started. Download the app, available at iOS and Android app stores, to monitor your usage, pay your bill and communicate with the Cooperative.

From the convenience of your mobile device, smart technologies can maximize your ability to manage electricity use across several platforms—controlling your thermostat, appliances, water heater, home electronics and other devices. One of the easiest ways to make an impact on energy efficiency is with a smart thermostat, like Nest models. Using your mobile device, you can view and edit your thermostat schedule and monitor how much energy is used and make adjustments accordingly. For example, program your thermostat for weekday and weekend schedules so you are not wasting energy when no one is home. Check and adjust the program periodically to keep pace with changes in household routines.

You can also ensure efficiency by purchasing ENERGY STAR-certified appliances. They not only use less energy, many new appliances include smart-technology features such as refrigerators that can tell you when maintenance is required or when a door has been left open. New washers, dryers and dishwashers can allow you to program when you want the load to start. This helps BEC by spreading out your usage to put less demand on our electric system. Visualize walking in the door at night after a hard day of work, and you turn on the lights because of darkness, you start cooking dinner on the range, start the dishwasher from morning dishes, transfer clothes from the washer to the dryer and start a new load. Your electrical load on BEC’s electric system will spike for a couple hours that evening. Did I mention its 10F outside? BEC suggests you spread out your activities by scheduling or using the delay feature on many of the new ENERGY STAR appliances.

As you may recall from our discussion in July, your electric “demand” refers to the maximum amount of electric energy that is being consumed at a given point in time. Demand is a new feature planned to be reported on your electric bill next year. You’ll see the difference from month to month if you schedule your activities. You should also note, demand may cost more for saving energy and money remains your dependence on technology, your best resource to BEC for transmission service provided by Northwestern Energy. If we all take an active part in scheduling our usage a little better, we can save some dollars. Managing demand is a smart choice for all member-owners that saves all of us money.

“Old school” energy savings for new devices
Of course there are the time-tested “old school” methods of energy efficiency that can be applied to the myriad of household electronic devices and screens. Computers, printers, phones and gaming consoles are notorious “vampire power” users, meaning they drain energy (and money) when not in use. If items can be turned off without disrupting your lifestyle, consider plugging them into a power strip that can be turned on and off or placed on a timer.

While modern life involves greater dependence on technology, your best resource for saving energy and money remains your local electric co-op.

Regardless of your level of technical expertise with electronic devices, Beartooth Electric can provide guidance on energy savings based on your account information, energy use, local weather patterns and additional factors unique to our community.
MECA MEMORIAL $500 SCHOLARSHIP

DEADLINE: JANUARY 18, 2019

The $500 Montana Electric Cooperative’s Association (MECA) Memorial Scholarship application period is open.

To be eligible, the student or their parents/guardians must be active members of Beartooth Electric.

Judging criteria is weighted as follows:

- **40%** Personal statement
- **20%** Academic strength (GPA and national testing scores)
- **20%** Activities in school and awards and honors
- **20%** Employment, volunteerism and community service

Applications are available from your high school counselor, the BEC office or on our website at www.beartoothelectric.com.

QUESTIONS? Please call the BEC office at 406-446-2310.

—NOTICE—
The NEW 2019 Beartooth Electric $1,000 Scholarship

This year’s scholarship process is being revamped to open up opportunities for trade school and two-year college applicants.

You could receive one of our 11 scholarships offered. Scholarship application period is scheduled to open December 1, 2018. Details will be posted online at www.beartoothelectric.com.

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS—NEED SOME COLLEGE CASH? SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!

**COOKIES AND CANDY**
Consumption of chocolate can cause agitation, vomiting, diarrhea, high heart rate, tremors, seizures and even death.

**HOLIDAY DECORATIONS**
Tinsel, ribbon and similar decorations can cut up the digestive tract and cause intestinal obstruction. Ornaments should be kept off low-lying Christmas tree branches.

**ALCOHOL**
Alcoholic drinks may cause vomiting, disorientation, diarrhea, lethargy, lack of coordination, difficulty breathing, tremors, coma and seizures.

**ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS**
Sugarless gum and artificially sweetened treats may cause vomiting, lethargy, loss of coordination, seizures and liver failure.

**HOLIDAY PLANTS**
Holly, mistletoe and poinsettias may cause irritation, vomiting, diarrhea and heart arrhythmia in both cats and dogs.

**MACADAMIA NUTS AND WALNUTS**
These nuts can cause severe lethargy, increased body temperature, vomiting, tremors, joint stiffness and the inability to walk.

**LIGHTS AND CANDLES**
If your pet can reach them, they may be a fire hazard if knocked over.

**GRAPES, RAISINS, AVOCADOS, ONIONS AND GARLIC**
These can cause lethargy, lack of appetite and vomiting.

**FATTY TRIMMINGS AND BONES**
Pets may experience vomiting and diarrhea. Fatty foods can also promote pancreatitis. Swallowed bones can cause stomach perforation and painful constipation.

**ELECTRICAL CORDS**
If chewed, live electrical cords can cause burns in or around a pet’s mouth, difficulty breathing, seizures and cardiac arrest.
General Manager’s Message—
Merry Christmas everyone! I hope your holidays are filled with much joy, and of course LED lights!

We hit our first milestone with our Shares du Soleil project. The calendar turned to November 1st, and we had 60 panels subscribed for Phase 1 of the project. Congratulations to all of the members who stepped up in the first phase to make this project a reality. We are already taking applications for Phase 2 where we will add an additional 20 panels.

On October 31st, I submitted our grant application to the Department of Agriculture, Renewable Energy for America Program (REAP). This is a 25% Grant that was integral to buying down the panel subscription price to $750. The actual grant application is posted on our website at the SOLAR tab. When you focus on the Tab D submittal, you will see we are still within the $750 budget while increasing the capacity of the panels from 300 watts to 350 watts. We will know the actual cost of construction after we put the project out to bid in January. I was ecstatic when the final numbers came together on the grant. Now we wait for the Dept. of Ag to secure funding, score our grant submittal and notify us of the award.

On another subject, our digital meter upgrade project is progressing very well after a slow start. You will continue to be notified when we are working in your area.

Give the Gift of Light & Heat This Holiday Season

Beartooth Electric Energy Certificates
If you’re looking for a unique way to help friends and family members make ends meet this season, a gift certificate for electricity might fit better than a sweater or holiday tie. It could warm you both, and keep the lights on, too.

You can purchase a gift certificate at the Beartooth Electric office or by calling 406-446-2310. The credit is applied to the recipient’s account at the time of purchase. A certificate like the one shown above will be provided to the purchaser to deliver to the recipient. You can also give an anonymous gift.

"We get inquiries about electricity certificates each year during the holiday season," says General Manager Kevin Owens. "Some callers want to pay an electric bill anonymously, and some like to send the certificate themselves. We’re happy to help. The certificates mean a lot to those who receive them." Please allow extra time for mail delivery.

Operation Round Up Charitable Foundation Assistance Program
Operation Round Up (ORU) is a charitable program offered by many utility and electric companies across the country, including smaller cooperatives. Almost all states are represented by this program.

ORU was designed to provide financial assistance to families in need of help. It is a volunteer program in which BEC member-owners agree to have their utility bill “rounded up” to the next whole dollar amount or a defined amount billed monthly, annually or a one-time gift. The extra money paid on a utility bill, which is really a donation, goes towards helping the less fortunate pay their electric bills.

Quick Facts
• Beartooth Electric’s Operation Round Up is a charitable foundation separate from the cooperative.
• The foundation’s funds goes towards helping members in need pay their bills.
• An independent board made up of five BEC member-owners review applications for the charitable foundation and select how and to whom the money will be distributed.
• BEC Member-owner participation is voluntary.

For more information call 406-446-2310 or stop by our Red Lodge office.

Merry Christmas from our family to yours!
Making Decisions – Risk Management, 2018 and 2019

Entering 2019 the Beartooth Electric Cooperative Risk Management Committee is focused on four major strategies and practices: educating the committee and board on rate design understanding how to help members conserve and use their energy efficiently; assessing risks of policies under review; and identifying resources and experts to help assess co-op rate design options and equity management approaches.

At the October risk management meeting, a consultant from Portland-based EES Consulting outlined the Cost of Services Analysis (COSA) process. BEC plans for 2019. COSA analysis focuses on customer payments to meet revenue requirements while rate design analysis looks at how to establish billing structures support long-term strategies. BEC will look hard at rate structure options in 2019.

We encourage members to attend board and committee meetings. Member input is especially critical to examination of rate design.

In 2018, two decisions that started with staff and committee analysis proved to hold small risk and great opportunity. The required replacement of obsolete meters is affordable and provides needed efficiencies. Launching a solar project financed by members who want to support renewable energy is underway as planned.

BEC contracted with a financial expert to work on board and management projects after the retirement of our previous consultant who helped develop the forecast model we use to test potential financial impacts of proposed decisions. The retiring consultant compared BEC to other co-ops. BEC is different she reported: financially sound with impressive power contracts through 2027 and a leader in member involvement and corporate transparency.

At BEC, risk management is an enterprise commitment – part of the business culture. Taking the position that data precedes decision-making is good business practice. Engaging outside expertise adds data and perspective. Integrating risk management committee analysis into board and management decision-making is a business culture commitment.

Members-at-large serve on the risk management committee. They provide extraordinary expertise, experience and common sense. We want to hear from members who are interested in volunteering.

Contact either co-chair of the risk management committee: Bill Pascoe (406-494-2075), Arleen Boyd (406-328-6645). Or contact BEC (406-446-2310).

BOARD VACANCY: BEC SEEKS DISTRICT 7 TRUSTEE CANDIDATES

Columbus, Rapelje, Reed Point Areas

Applicants are sought to replace the District 7 representative on the Board of Trustees for Beartooth Electric Cooperative.

Eligible individuals must be at least 18 years old and an active Beartooth member-owner with primary residence in District 7.

Please refer to the BEC Amended Bylaws Article IV. Section 3. for complete trustee qualification requirements. If you are not sure if you reside in District 7, please call the co-op 406-446-2310.

Interested member-owners are invited to submit a letter of interest and a statement of qualifications to bec@beartoothelectric.com or mail to Beartooth Electric Cooperative, PO Box 1110, Red Lodge, MT 59068.

Submissions must be received by December 31, 2018.