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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

The path to efficiency independence

WHILE FIREWORKS and Independence Day parades are synonymous with the Fourth of July, no such fanfare comes



to mind when discussing energy efficiency. Perhaps it should. If you think about it, energy efficiency not only benefits individuals and families, but the country as a whole. Energy efficiency combined with energy conservation and advances in technology in the utility industry, ultimately help our country on a path toward greater energy independence. And that's worth celebrating.

Benefits of efficiency

At its essence, greater efficiency means less energy is used for the production of goods and services. For individual consumers, a reduction in energy use usually translates to a tangible financial benefit—more money in your wallet at the end of the month. If your co-op neighbors are also using less energy, collectively, it means the overall cost of providing that electricity could be lower and may result in reduced costs for co-op members. For many, this is reason enough to strive for greater energy efficiency. On a national level, energy efficiency, sometimes called the “fifth fuel,” has a more profound impact. It can potentially boost the economy by allowing consumers and businesses to invest in other areas. As important, greater energy efficiency may slow the rate at which domestic energy sources are depleted, and therefore reduce or diminish the need for foreign energy.

Strike up the band

There's no need to wait for the first exploding burst of fireworks in the night sky to start your energy-

efficiency efforts. Every American can take charge of their own energy use, regardless of the date on the calendar. Small steps can lead to a big difference.

Energy efficiency can generally be achieved two ways. The first is with mechanical change, such as replacing an older HVAC unit or less-efficient appliance with new Energy Star-qualified models. Less-expensive actions include improving the seal of your home's “envelope” by caulking around exterior windows and doors and sealing openings where pipes and ductwork meet the outside. Swapping out the last incandescent bulbs (inside and outside) with LEDs also makes a noticeable difference.

Smart control

Another way to realize energy efficiency is through smarter management of your energy use. Leveraging smart thermostat technology is a good place to start. Most smart thermostats contain an app allowing remote control. Program your thermostat to reflect your family's schedule. Sometimes, however, energy efficiency is simply a matter of changing old habits, such as washing clothes in cold water instead of hot or running the dishwasher during off-peak times.

Regardless of the path you take on the road to energy efficiency and independence, Santee Electric Cooperative can help. For information about energy-efficiency programs, visit santee.org or give us a call at 1-800-922-1604.

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