

# WATTS GOING ON...

at Coastal Electric Cooperative, Inc.



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December, 2022

## Small Change Can Change Lives

By: Anne Prince

The holiday season is finally here. Some call it the most wonderful season of all. That's because we associate it with family traditions and gathering with friends and loved ones. It's a time of giving and spreading joy.

But giving back reminds me of the many good things we have right here in our community and why it's so important to spread the good as far as we can, especially to the most vulnerable in our local area. I'm also reminded of how wonderful our community is and what a big impact we can have when we work together.

When you are a member of Coastal Electric Cooperative, you help us spread the good throughout the year. Through our Operation Round Up program, your donations help local families and individuals in need by providing financial assistance with their energy bills.

When you "round up" your monthly bill from CEC and donate to this fund, you're making a big difference in someone's life. You are helping to meet an immediate, critical need, but just as importantly, you are telling this person the community cares.

Over the years, our community-focused programs, food donations and other giving projects have supported local schools and young people, fed hungry families, enabled families in need to keep the lights on and so much more.

CEC also participates in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, where we take our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C. for a week-long immersion to experience democracy in action. Ultimately, the larger community benefits from these programs because of you and your neighbors.

You've likely heard me say that the cooperative principle "concern for community" is part of Coastal's DNA. It defines who we are as an organization. When we first brought electricity to this community in 1940, the quality of life improved. But other things also need to be addressed and through the years, this co-op has been at the forefront of bringing improvements to the quality of life in this community. It's why we created Operation Round Up.

To date, with your help, we've given hundreds of thousands of dollars back to local families and individuals through this program. And across the country, more than 350 electric co-ops have an Operation Round Up program, and together, we've raised millions for local communities. This shows that small donations

from electric co-ops like ours, over time, can collectively make a big impact.

As a local cooperative, we have a stake in this community. We hope you will think of Coastal Electric as more than your energy provider, but also as a catalyst for good in our community.

I hope all our members have a joyous holiday season. May it be merry and bright!

To learn more about Operation Round Up, visit <https://coastal.coop/community/operation-round-up>





## Keeping Pets and Energy Bills Comfortable

By: Anne Prince



Mark Walling, President & CEO

### Coastal Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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[www.coastal.coop](http://www.coastal.coop)

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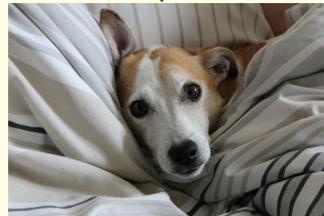
I don't know about you, but I consider my four-legged companion a part of the family. I can't imagine life without my dog Bear. I know others feel this way, too. That's why during the winter months, we make sure our whole family, including our four-legged members, is cozy—without taking a big "bite" out of our budget.

This month, I'd like to share a few simple ways you can make your home more comfortable this winter, which can ultimately help you save on energy bills.

At the onset of the cold weather season, we replace the HVAC filter for better air quality and to help the unit operate more efficiently. You can also keep your home cozier by caulking and weatherstripping windows and doors. If your home is particularly chilly, you can tape or affix heavy, clear plastic to the inside of your window frames to create an additional barrier against the cold. Ensure that the plastic is tightly sealed to the frame to help reduce infiltration.

We know winter can be "ruff", so we set our thermostat at 68 degrees, a "purrfect" temperature for people and pets. This is especially important for smaller, short hair and senior dogs—not just for warmth, but for their general health. Puppies, kittens and older pets with arthritis or other ailments may have a harder time controlling their body heat and need the additional warmth when it's chilly out.

Pets that sleep close to the floor can be subject to cold drafts that enter your home through windows and exterior doors. If your pet's bed is near a window or door that feels drafty, tightly roll up a towel and place it near the bottom of



the door or window to eliminate the draft. Cutting down on cold drafts helps everyone feel more comfortable during colder months.

If possible, elevate your pet's bed so it's not placed directly on a cold floor. An old chair or sofa cushion works well. If you don't use a dog bed, take some old

blankets and create a donut shape on the cushion so the dog can snuggle and "nest" within the blanket. You can do the same for cats but on a smaller scale. Blankets enable pets to nestle into them, even when they aren't tired, and provide a comfortable place for dogs and cats to curl up.

During the day, open your blinds and curtains to allow sunlight to warm your home. Close window coverings at night for an added layer of insulation.

At Coastal Electric, we want to help you save energy and money. Check out our Smart-Hub app or visit our website at [coastal.coop](http://coastal.coop) for additional energy-saving tips.

We can't control the weather, but we can provide advice to help you save energy and keep your family and furry friends more comfortable during the winter season.

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Blocked air vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and increase pressure in your ductwork, which can cause cracks and leaks to form.

Make sure all air vents are unobstructed from furniture, drapes or other items to ensure sufficient circulation throughout your home. If necessary, purchase a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



# Five Ways to Fight the Winter Chill and Save Energy

By: Janice Avant

We all have our favorite season. Some people love crisp, cool weather and bundling up under a favorite blanket, while others prefer the warm temperatures summer brings and all fun outdoor activities that go with it.

But there's one thing we can all agree on: high winter bills are never fun. Coastal Electric Cooperative is here to help you find ways to manage your home energy use and keep winter bills in check.

Here are five tips to help increase your home's energy efficiency this winter:

1. Mind the thermostat. This is one of the easiest ways to manage your home energy use. We recommend setting your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower) when you're home. When you're sleeping or away for an extended period of time, try setting it between 58 and 62 degrees; there's no need to heat your home when you're away or sleeping and less active.

2. Button up your home. The Department of Energy estimates that air leaks account for 24% to 40% of the energy used for heating and cooling a home. Caulking and weather stripping around windows and doors is another simple, cost-effective way to increase comfort and save energy. If you can feel drafts while standing near a window or door, it likely needs to be sealed.

3. Use window coverings wisely. Open blinds, drapes or other window coverings during the day to allow natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep the cold, drafty air out. If you feel cold air around windows, consider hanging curtains or drapes in a thicker material; heavier

window coverings can make a significant difference in blocking cold outdoor air.

4. Consider your approach to appliance use. When combined, appliances and electronics account for a significant chunk of our home energy use, so assess how efficiently you're using them. For example, if you're running the dishwasher or clothes washer, only wash full loads. Look for electronic devices that consume energy even when they're not in use, like phone chargers or game consoles. Every little bit helps, so unplug them to save energy.

5. Think outside the box. If you're still feeling chilly at home, think of other ways to warm up—beyond dialing up the thermostat. Add layers of clothing, wear thick socks and bundle up under blankets. You can even add layers to your home! If you have hard-surface flooring, consider purchasing an area rug to block cold air that leaks in through the floor.

If you're taking steps to save energy but continue to see major increases in your bills, give us a call at 843-538-5700 or take advantage of our free Home Energy Audit application on our website [www.coastal.coop](http://www.coastal.coop). CEC's energy experts can help identify areas and other factors impacting your home energy use and recommend next steps for savings.

Winter months often bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. By being proactive about saving energy, you can increase the comfort of your home and reduce monthly bills. Visit our website at [www.coastal.coop](http://www.coastal.coop) for additional energy-saving tips.



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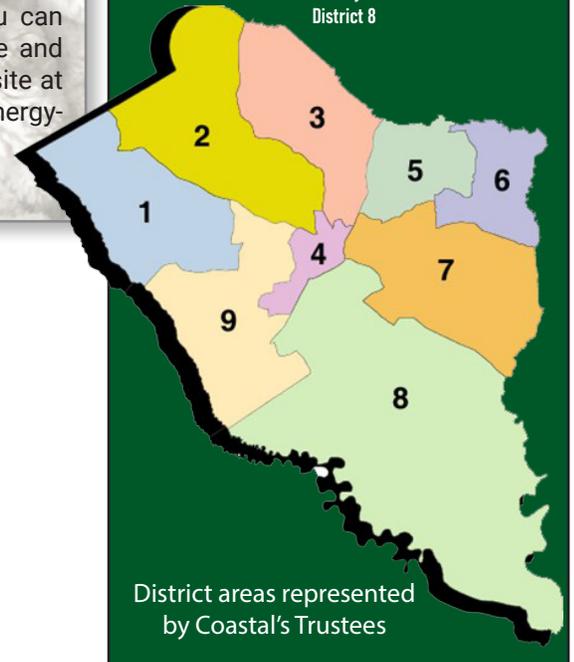
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# Community CONNECTION



*It's time for a*  
**GIVEAWAY!**



For our November Giveaway, we will be **randomly awarding one member a \$100 gift card.** All participants must be signed up for Paperless Billing prior to December 15, 2022. You may still have time!

What do you have to do to qualify? **Simply sign up to participate in Paperless Billing within your SmartHub account.** You will be automatically entered to win.

Paperless Billing allows you to access, view and pay your CEC bill online. Instead of a monthly paper bill being mailed to you, you'll receive an email with the amount due, due date and link to the SmartHub online billing and payment portal. It's easy, convenient, and free.

Visit [www.coastal.coop](http://www.coastal.coop) for more information.



**GIVE AWAY**

Our December Giveaway will be **randomly awarding one member a \$100 gift card.**

**All you have to do is sign up for automatic Bank Draft within your SmartHub account.** All new sign-ups will be automatically entered to win.

Bank Draft through SmartHub offers ease of mind to know that your bill payment will always be processed prior to the due date. It's easy, convenient, and free.

Visit [www.coastal.coop](http://www.coastal.coop) for more information.

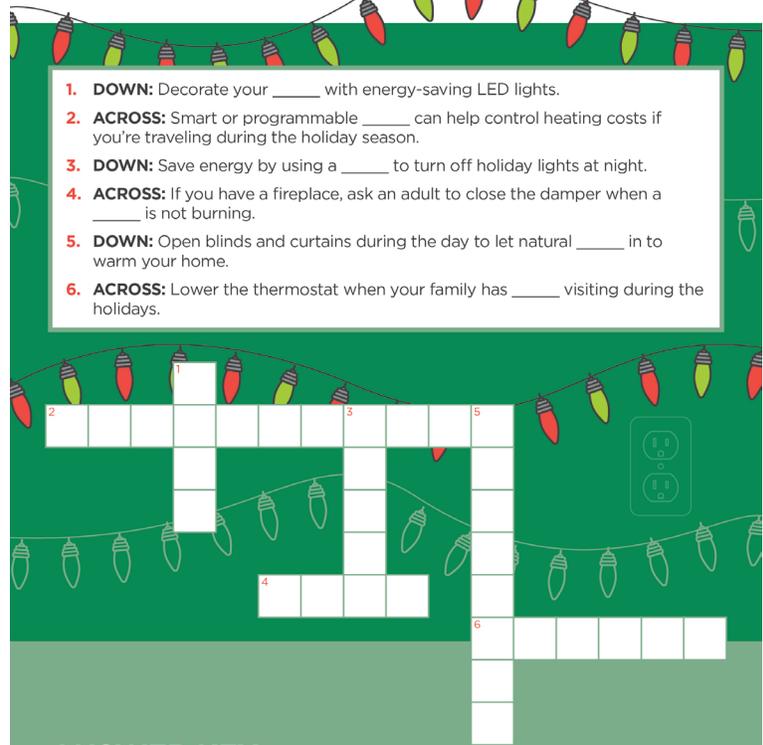
All participants must be signed up for Bank Draft prior to January 15, 2023.

## HOLIDAY EFFICIENCY CROSSWORD PUZZLE

The holiday season is a fun, festive time of year! It's also a time when we use more electricity. Complete the crossword puzzle below to learn how you and your family can be more energy efficient this holiday season.



1. **DOWN:** Decorate your \_\_\_\_\_ with energy-saving LED lights.
2. **ACROSS:** Smart or programmable \_\_\_\_\_ can help control heating costs if you're traveling during the holiday season.
3. **DOWN:** Save energy by using a \_\_\_\_\_ to turn off holiday lights at night.
4. **ACROSS:** If you have a fireplace, ask an adult to close the damper when a \_\_\_\_\_ is not burning.
5. **DOWN:** Open blinds and curtains during the day to let natural \_\_\_\_\_ in to warm your home.
6. **ACROSS:** Lower the thermostat when your family has \_\_\_\_\_ visiting during the holidays.



### ANSWER KEY

- |               |                        |                |                 |                   |                   |
|---------------|------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. DOWN: TREE | 2. ACROSS: THERMOSTATS | 3. DOWN: TIMER | 4. ACROSS: FIRE | 5. DOWN: SUNLIGHT | 6. ACROSS: GUESTS |
|---------------|------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|