

# Rural Life



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Lamar, CO 81052

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Springfield, CO 81073

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Eads, CO 81036

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719-336-3236 Lamar  
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719-438-5591 Eads  
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719-384-7320 fax

[www.secpa.com](http://www.secpa.com)

**SUMMER HOURS**

7 a.m. — 5:30 p.m.  
Monday — Thursday

**MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS**

Third Wednesday of each month, 10 a.m.  
801 West Third Street  
La Junta, CO



Touchstone Energy®

## Cap-and-Trade: Simply Another Tax

BY RICHARD WILSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**L**ast month we reprinted an article from Intermountain Rural Electric's newsletter regarding cap-and-trade taxes. This month I'm still on that same bandwagon. I just can't stress enough how important it is for all of us to let our senators and representatives know how we feel about this issue. Following is an article I submitted to newspapers in our area in an attempt to define the potential impact to all of us if this bill gets passed in the United States Senate. Please do your part in keeping electric rates affordable.



**Richard Wilson**

Dear Editor:

I am writing to share important information with your readers about an impending tax increase that will potentially affect every person paying an electric bill.

One of the largest tax increases in the history of our country is currently being considered before the United States Senate. One version has already passed in the House of Representatives. Many people probably haven't heard about this new tax because it will be disguised as an added cost to your electric bill called "cap-and-trade." The seemingly innocent reason for this added cost is to discourage the use of fossil fuel-burning power plants.

If an arbitrary cap is placed on the amount of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>, a greenhouse gas) produced by a power plant and an arbitrary tax is placed on the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that is produced over that cap, the tax in turn will get passed on to the utility customer as an added fee (not a tax).

While the lofty goal of all this is to reduce greenhouse gases, the billions (yes billions) of dollars that this tax will produce over the next few years will fund a multitude of social programs that have nothing whatsoever to do with controlling greenhouse gases. If the proposed legislation would pass and add a \$20 per ton of CO<sub>2</sub> tax to the wholesale price of electricity, taking into account accepted CO<sub>2</sub> allowance estimates, Southeast Colorado Power Association members could see an additional \$2.5 million in costs as soon as next year. Most versions of the proposed legislation will raise this tax even higher in the coming years. By 2030, the amount of additional cost for Southeast members alone could rise as high as \$9 million per year.

The cost, reliability and availability of clean and efficient electricity, so vital to the economy, are at stake. I urge you to contact your local electric utility to learn more about this legislation and the costs associated with it. Above all, contact your Colorado senators and representatives and let them know how you feel about this issue. You should not be silent in this debate. Write or call: Rep. John Salazar, 134 West B St., Pueblo, CO 81003, 719-543-8200; Rep. Betsy Markey, 301 S. 5th St., Lamar, CO 81052, 719-931-4003; Rep. Doug Lamborn, Dist. Office, 1271 Kelly Johnson Blvd., Suite 110, Colorado Springs, CO 80902, 719-520-0055; Sen. Mark Udall, 107 West B St., Pueblo, CO 81003, 719-542-1701; or Sen. Michael Bennet, 129 West B St., Pueblo, CO 81003, 719-542-7550.

Don't let the government pass this disguised tax on to us.

Sincerely,  
*Richard Wilson*

Richard Wilson  
CEO, Southeast Colorado Power Association

## SECPA's Newest Employees

**J**immie Scantlin began his duties at Southeast Colorado Power Association in Lamar as a journeyman lineman in March. Prior to coming to Southeast, he worked for various electrical contractors. He was raised in California and graduated from North High School in Oildale, California. Jimmie served in the military. Following his military duties, he completed lineman apprentice training. He is married and has two stepchildren. Jimmie enjoys music, hunting, fishing and motorcycles.

Jan Lancaster also began her duties in March. Jan is a sales director for SECOM, a division of Southeast Colorado Power. She currently resides in Cañon City but was raised in Collins, Iowa, where she graduated from high school. She received extensive technical and sales training with McLeod USA and was a regional trainer for the company in Colorado, Arizona, Washington and Montana. In addition, Jan previously worked for Unite Private Networks and

is a certified trainer for Zenger-Miller classes. Jan has two grown daughters, three granddaughters and one grandson. Her hobbies and pastimes are camping, fishing and spending time with her grandchildren.

Jerid Bruna is the newest employee at Southeast. He was raised at Cheraw and graduated from Cheraw High School. Upon graduation, he headed for Grand Junction and Mesa State College, where he earned his line worker certificate. While in lineman school, he worked holidays and breaks at Southeast. In May 2009, he began full-time duties as an apprentice lineman. Jerid has been working in the Eads area but will soon move back to the Arkansas Valley to work out of La Junta. A newlywed, Jerid married Leslie Trotter of Swink on August 15. In his spare time he likes to hunt, fish and spend time with friends and family.

Southeast welcomes all three employees to its cooperative family.

## Tips for Teachers

**A**s kids are coming back to school, teachers should be considering the impact of the units they plan to teach. Along with imparting knowledge, teachers have the opportunity to educate their students about safety. When it comes to electrical safety awareness, that knowledge can save their lives.

If you are a teacher or parent, talk to your students or children about electricity. Let them ask questions about what makes electricity, how electricity travels, where it comes from and where it goes. Kids love learning about lightning and sparks, so lessons in safety can be fit right into the conversation.

After an electricity unit in the classroom, consider giving students one or a few of these projects to make learning about electricity and electricity safety fun:

- Prepare a one-minute presentation or play for your class on the basics of how electricity travels from the power plant to appliances in people's homes.
- Think of three ways you can convince your friends to be safe around electricity.
- Create a radio commercial about outdoor or indoor electrical safety.
- Write an essay describing electrical hazards found in an extremely dangerous imaginary house.

For worksheets, discussions, questions and project ideas, visit [www.culverco.com](http://www.culverco.com) and click on the Teacher's Corner.

## Check Your Chimney for Drafts

**C**himneys are designed to move lots of air. Many older homes, especially large ones, have multiple fireplaces and chimneys that can pull air from the inside to the outside of the house, reducing heating and cooling efficiency.

Any chimney has the potential to be a massive air leak if the damper is leaky or open, or if the chimney simply has no damper. Unused central heating chimneys can also pull air-conditioning and heating from your home.

Inflatable pillow-like bags or flexible foam plugs are effective for sealing fireplace chimneys. The tops of unused chimneys should have metal caps to prevent water damage and heating and cooling losses.

### STOP QUIET WASTE BY UNPLUGGING APPLIANCES

**M**any small electronics and appliances consume energy whenever they are plugged in. That's because they remain in standby mode all the time, providing instant start-up, digital clocks and memory features. You can simply unplug some of this equipment when not in use. When you shop for new appliances, decide how many of these features you really need.

Cell phone chargers and power adapters for MP3 players, cameras, laptops and other devices waste energy, too, when they are plugged in but not in use. All told, the 1.5 billion power adapters in the U.S. now account for more than 10 percent of the national electric bill.

Make a difference and cut down on your electricity bill by remembering to unplug appliances, adapters and chargers when not in use.



### HAPPY LABOR DAY *Office closure*

All offices of SECPA will be closed on Monday, September 7, in observance of Labor Day.

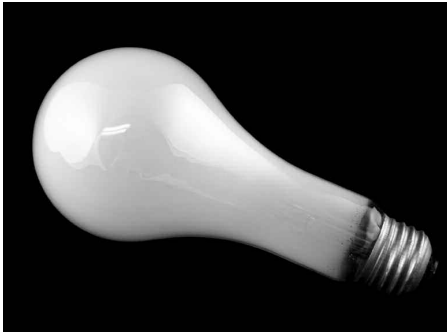


## JACK'S CONSERVATION CORNER

# When to Turn Off Your Lights and Save Some Cash

**T**he cost effectiveness of turning off lights depends on the type of lights and the price of electricity. The type of light is important in determining whether or not lights should be turned off and on.

All types of lights have a nominal or rated operating life, which is the total number of hours that they will provide a specified level or amount of light. However, the operating life of all types of light-bulbs is affected by how many times they are turned on and off. The more often they are switched on and off, the lower their operating life. The exact number of hours that switching lights on and off reduces the total operating life depends on the type of light and how many times it is switched on and off.



### Incandescent lighting

Incandescent lights (or bulbs) should be turned off whenever they are not needed. Nearly all types of incandescent bulbs are fairly inexpensive to produce and are relatively inefficient. Only about 10-15 percent of the electricity that incandescent lights consume results in light — the rest is turned into heat. Turning the lights off will keep a room cooler, an extra benefit in the summer. Therefore, the value of the energy saved by not having the lights on will be far greater than the cost of having to replace the bulb.

### Fluorescent lighting

The cost effectiveness of turning fluorescent lights off to conserve energy is a bit more complicated. For most areas of the United States, a general rule of thumb for when to turn off a fluorescent light is if you leave a room for more than 15 min-



utes, it is probably more cost effective to turn the light off. Or in other words, if you leave the room for only up to 15 minutes, it will generally be more cost effective to leave the light on. In areas where electric rates are high and/or during peak demand periods, this period may be as low as five minutes.

Fluorescent lights are more expensive to buy, and their operating life is more affected by the number of times they are switched on and off, relative to incandescent lights. Therefore, it is a cost trade-off between saving energy and money by turning a light off frequently and having to replace the bulbs more frequently. This is because the reduction in usable lamp life due to frequent on-off switching will probably be greater than the benefit of extending the useful life of the bulb from reduced use. By frequent, we mean turning the light off and on many times during the day.

It is a popularly held belief that fluorescent lights use a lot of energy to get started, and thus it is better not to turn them off for short periods. There is an increase in power demand when a light is switched on, and the exact amount of this increase depends on the type of ballast and lamp.

The ballast provides an initial high voltage for starting the lamp and regulates the lamp current during operation. There are three basic types of ballasts: magnetic (of which there are energy-efficient and not so energy-efficient types), cathode-disconnect and electronic. All types can operate two or more lamps simultaneously. There are three main methods that are used in a lamp's ballast

to start the lamp: preheat, rapid-start and instant-start.

In any case, the relatively higher "inrush" current required lasts for half a cycle, or 1/120th of a second. The amount of electricity consumed to supply the inrush current is equal to a few seconds or less of normal light operation. Turning off fluorescent lights for more than five seconds will save more energy than will be consumed in turning them back on again. Therefore, the real issue is the value of the electricity saved by turning the light off relative to the cost of relamping a fixture. This in turn determines the shortest cost-effective period for turning off a fluorescent light.

The value of the energy saved by turning a fluorescent light (or array of lights) off depends on several factors. The price an electric utility charges its customers depends on the customer "classes," which are typically residential, commercial and industrial. There can be different rate schedules within each class. Some utilities may charge different rates for electricity consumption during different times of the day. It generally costs more for utilities to generate power during certain periods of high demand or consumption, called peaks. Some utilities can charge commercial and industrial customers more per kilowatt-hour during peak periods than for consumption off-peak. Some utilities may also charge a base rate for a certain level of consumption and higher rates for increasing blocks of consumption. Often a utility adds miscellaneous service charges, a base charge and/or taxes per billing period that could be averaged per kWh consumed, if these are not already factored into the rate.

### Energy savings

To calculate the exact value of energy savings by turning a light off, you need to first determine how much energy the light consumes when on. Every bulb has a watt rating printed on it. For example, if the rating is 40 watts, and the bulb is on for one hour, it will consume 0.04 kWh, or if it is off for one hour, you will be saving 0.04 kWh. *[continued on page 8]*

# Use Caution When Working Near Overhead Power Lines

**T**his time of year, we at Southeast Colorado Power receive a number of calls for broken guy wires, lines and other issues. We urge anyone who is working with large equipment to be mindful of where they are and the proximity of overhead power lines.

Accidents involving contact with overhead power lines not only can damage equipment, but also cause serious injuries and even death.

If your job requires you to work near overhead power lines — installing antennas, pruning trees or operating farm equipment, for example — please exercise caution at all times.

## Overhead line safety precautions

Please remember the following safety guidelines when working near overhead power lines:

- Keep a safe distance between yourself and power lines. Ten feet is generally considered the minimum safe distance.
- Before you begin working, check carefully for overhead power lines in the area where you will be working. Don't assume that wires are telephone or cable lines; check with your electric utility for advice.
- If you need to cut a tree branch, be sure that it won't fall into power lines. Should a branch fall into our lines, call us at 800-332-8634 to remove it.
- Even if a power line appears to be broken or grounded, keep your distance. The line could still be energized. Contact with an energized line can injure or kill.

- When working with ladders, make sure they can't come into contact with power lines in case they fall over.
- Work only in good weather. Thunderstorms, rain, winds and damp or icy ground can cause you to lose control and come into contact with power lines.
- Although overhead power lines may appear to be insulated, often these coverings are intended only to protect metal wires from weather conditions and may not protect you from electric shock. (WIN\*Ben DeVorss\*, Yoder, account #401520000)

## Working on a farm

- Before using high-profile equipment (cranes, harvesters, ladders) under power lines, make sure adequate clearance is available.
- Look up before raising irrigation pipe. Farm workers have been electrocuted because they raised a length of pipe into overhead lines.
- Be sure to check for overhead lines before picking produce from trees. Don't pick from trees that are in contact with a power line. Trees can be excellent conductors of electricity.
- When picking produce, don't stand on metal ladders or use metal-poled knockers and other tools. Metal equipment conducts electricity and can cause an accident if they come into contact with power lines.

If you have any questions about proper safety techniques or want more information about safety hazards, call 800-332-8634 or 719-384-2551.

## TURN OFF YOUR LIGHTS

[continued from page 7]

(Note that many fluorescent fixtures have two or more bulbs. Also, one switch may control several fixtures — an “array.” Add the savings for each fixture to determine the total energy savings.)

Then you need to find out what you are paying for electricity per kWh (in general and during peak periods). You will need to look over your electricity bills and see what the utility charges per kWh. Multiply the rate per kWh by the amount of electricity saved, and this will give you the value of the savings. Continuing with the example above, let us say that your electric rate is 10 cents per kWh. The value of the energy savings would then be 0.4 cents (\$ 0.004). The value of the savings will increase the higher the watt rating of the bulb, the greater the number of bulbs controlled by a single switch and the higher the rate per kWh.

The most cost-effective length of time that a light (or array of lights) can be turned off before the value of the savings exceeds the cost of having to replace bulbs (due to their shortened operating life) will depend on the type and model of bulb and ballast. The cost of replacing a bulb (or ballast) depends on the cost of the bulb and the cost of labor to do it.

Lighting manufacturers should be able to supply information on the duty cycle of their products. In general, the more energy efficient a lightbulb is, the longer you can keep a light on before it is cost effective to turn it off.



## YOU COULD BE A WINNER

**I**f you find your name in this issue as follows (Win\* your name, account number), please contact Paige Horn at Southeast Colorado Power, 719-384-2551 or 800-332-8634, to receive a credit on your next power bill. Last month's winner was Jenny Guerrero, account #1921680108.

## CHECK YOUR CHIMNEY FOR AIR DRAFTS

**C**himneys are designed to move lots of air. Many older homes, especially large ones, have multiple fireplaces and chimneys that can pull air from the inside to the outside of the house, reducing heating and cooling efficiency.

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