



Giving Efficiency



With the holiday rush starting earlier and earlier every year, get a jump-start on your shopping wish list with some great green gifts. Using the tips below, you can have everything wrapped up before the ho, ho, ho turns into go, go, go!

Why give efficiency?

Green giving is thoughtful on many

levels. The person receiving the gift has a way to keep costs low year-round.

“Choosing a green gift can be easy,” says Brian Sloboda, senior program manager for the Cooperative Research Network (CRN). “Be aware of energy use. Look for any mention of energy ratings on large appliances and televisions, or select unplugged gifts. Think solar, reusable, and recyclable. Even something as small as the packaging and wrapping can make a difference.”

Look for items with lightweight packaging. And think about wrapping your gift in something like a fabric bag that can be reused or even an accessory like a scarf to tie things up.

Green Gift Ideas

• For Decorators: LED Christmas lights (\$15-\$35)–These energy-efficient lights save on high holiday electric bills and stay cool to the touch. For a festive complete package, wrap in a decorative stocking.

• For Gardeners: Solar garden lights (\$15-\$50)–Available in endless colors, styles, and sizes, solar garden lights can be a lovely addition to your favorite green thumb’s garden. To up the green quotient, wrap in a burlap bag.

• For Cooks: Toaster oven (\$60 – \$140)–Especially great for the empty nester or those only cooking for one or two, toaster ovens are a good choice to save energy as an alternative to heating a large standard oven.

• For Movie Buffs or Sports Fans: ENERGY STAR®-rated TV (price based on size)–Televisions are getting bigger and better. But before you give something that could use as much electricity as a refrigerator, make sure and look for the ENERGY STAR® label. It will offer the smallest impact on electric bills. [1655869]

• For Techies: Smart strip (\$20 - \$40)–This new cutting-edge technology is great for plugging in electronic gadgets. Not your average power strip, smart strips sport designated outlets that make it easy to power down certain devices to save energy while not affecting others plugged into the same strip.

• For Cell Phone Users: Solar cell phone charger (\$55 - \$100+)–Help unplug energy-sucking chargers from the wall; solar chargers can be placed in a window to charge a cell phone or other devices like a GPS unit or even MP3 players anywhere the sun shines, even in a car on-the-go!

There are many options when you start looking for green gifts. Get creative, and remember that what you give impacts future electric bills. So give the green light for energy-smart gifts this year!



Save 20% Using Your
Co-op Connections® Card

EnergySavers.coop helps you identify the best-quality energy efficient products and useful energy savings devices. Visit www.energysavers.coop/?affid=35240 to take advantage of this offer.

A Message From the General Manager



Kootenai Electric Cooperative was formed in 1938 for a single purpose—to make sure everyone who needed power had it. Over the years we have worked hard to keep the lights on and keep electricity reliable and affordable for our members.

That philosophy continues to be carried out in our organization

today. Every year we continue to put you, our members, first.

From the linemen repairing outages as quickly as possible to our office staff that make the day to day business run smoothly; all of us at KEC work hard to make sure our members receive the excellent service they deserve. We are here to serve our membership.

It was our purpose in 1938. It is our purpose now. And that will never change. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you this year and we look forward to a positive future in continuing to serve our membership. Enjoy a safe and happy holiday season!



Doug Elliott
KEC General Manager

KEC Meters: Utilizing the Power Line to Transmit Meter Reads

In recent years, there has been a lot of discussion about “smart meters”, specifically relating to potential health risks they pose. While there are several types of meters being used by utilities throughout the country, we would like our members to be informed about the meters used at Kootenai Electric.

Our meters utilize the power line (not radio frequency) to send daily meter reads back to KEC. Our advanced metering system takes meter readings as if a meter reader was in the member’s back yard reading the meter once a day and the communication only lasts for a few seconds. KEC’s meters are only able to record the total usage of a home; not any kind of individual appliance usage or distinguish whether a member is home or not.

The meter can also be checked during a power outage (to determine if the meter is experiencing an outage or not) which greatly assists KEC in the identification of the location of a power outage and lessens the outage duration. For more information on the meters used at KEC, please visit www.kec.com or call us at 208.765.1200.



KEC Holiday Office Hours

The KEC office will be closed Thursday and Friday, Nov. 24 and 25, in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. [1323193]



For the Christmas holiday, KEC will close at 3 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 23, and will be closed on Monday, Dec. 26. KEC will also be closed on Monday, Jan. 2, for the New Year.

Nominating Committee Seeks Board of Director Candidates

The KEC Nominating Committee is looking for members interested in serving on our Board of Directors. Candidates must meet the qualifications outlined in the Cooperative's By-Laws, be able to invest a minimum of 40 days per year on board-related activities, and be able to periodically attend conferences and director training conducted within the Northwest.

Directors should also have strong business acumen and a broad understanding of regional and national energy issues.

Information on specific board positions up for election will be available in next month's newsletter. If you or someone you know would like to be considered, please contact Erika Neff at eneff@kec.com or 208.292.3270.



KEC CREDIT AND COLLECTION POLICY UPDATES

Beginning February 1, 2012 Kootenai Electric will be making changes to our credit/collection and deposits policies. Examples of changes include deposit amounts, late fee assessment, re-connection fee and NSF check fee. In order to keep our members as informed as possible, a complete list of policy changes can be found on our website at www.kec.com.

DONATE BLOOD DECEMBER 14

The Inland Northwest Blood Center bloodmobile will be at the KEC office on Wednesday, December 14, from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. Call us at 208.292.3213 if you'd like to donate.

WIN A \$50 ENERGY CREDIT

Four KEC account numbers are hidden in this newsletter. If one of these numbers is yours, contact us at 208.765.1200 and receive a \$50 credit on your bill!

FIND US ON FACEBOOK

Become a fan by clicking "like" at www.facebook.com/KootenaiElectric. We will provide updates on new programs and services, member discount offers, energy efficiency tips and rebates, power outage information and more.



Now Available: Choose Your Due Date

As part of our Member's Choice Program, KEC will be offering our members the choice of their due date. Members will have the option to choose from three due dates of either the 5th, 15th or 25th of each month.

If you would like to learn more or discuss changing your due date, please call our office at 208.765.1200. *As a reminder, changing the due date may result in a change (increase or decrease) in the number of days billed on your first bill after the change occurs.*

Our Member's Choice Program was created to ensure that we offer our members more choices when it comes to their electric usage and their bill. Some of the other Member's Choice benefits include:

Billing Options

- eBill + Paperless Billing
- Budget Billing

Payment Options

- Auto Withdrawal [1323848]
- Pay Online at www.kec.com
- Pay by Phone - 1.877.999.3371
- Pay at Money Gram Locations
- Send Payment via USPS

If you have any questions regarding the above options, please call us at 208.765.1200.



CFLs: The Whole Story

When Thomas Edison sparked light from a bit of carbonized sewing thread in 1879, could he have imagined that 130 years later the same basic technology would still be keeping the world out of the dark? By any measure, Edison's incandescent light bulbs have had a good run. But as of 2012 this time-tested technology will begin to be phased out in the United States, in favor of a more efficient generation of light bulbs.

As energy-savvy consumers know, equipping five of a home's most frequently used light fixtures with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) can save a family \$70 a year in lighting costs.

At Kootenai Electric we have had members ask about the risks of replacing incandescent light bulbs with CFLs. As your energy experts we want to make sure our members know the facts.

CFLs are made of glass tubing containing mercury. The early generation CFL bulbs contain about 4 milligrams of mercury. Classic thermometers contain 500 milligrams, far more than a CFL. Newer CFLs contain as little as 1.4 milligrams according to the Department of Energy, however you should still take precautions in handling them. If a CFL breaks, mercury vapors may pose health risks. Please see the information below on how to handle CFLs.



Quick Guide to Cleaning Up a Broken CFL

The most important steps to reduce exposure to mercury vapor from a broken bulb are:

Before Cleanup

- Have people and pets leave the room.
- Air out the room for 5-10 minutes by opening a window or door to the outdoor environment.
- Shut off the central forced air heating/air conditioning (HVAC) system, if you have one.
- Collect materials (stiff paper/cardboard, sticky tape, damp paper towels/wet wipes) needed to clean up broken bulb.

During Cleanup

- Be thorough in collecting broken glass and visible powder.
- Place cleanup materials in a sealable container (plastic bag or glass jar).

After Cleanup

- Promptly place all bulb debris and cleanup materials outdoors in a trash container or protected area until materials can be disposed of properly. Avoid leaving any bulb fragments or cleanup materials indoors.
- Not all recycling centers accept broken CFLs and some states may have prohibitions on disposal of debris. Check with your local and/or state household hazardous waste authority for disposal requirements in your area.
- For several hours, continue to air out the room where the bulb was broken and leave the HVAC system shut off.

For more detailed guidance on cleaning up and safely disposing of a broken CFL, please visit: www.epa.gov/cflcleanup.

Where to Recycle CFLs

KEC - Bring your CFLs to our office and we will recycle them for you. [1801901]

Home Depot

220 W Kathleen Ave
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815
(208)676-1441

All Home Depot stores accept CFLs to be recycled, just bring them to the store where they have the proper disposal methods.

Waste Management CFL Recycling Kits

Waste Management's (WM) innovative CFL Recycling Kit can help you keep the bulbs out of landfills and allow the mercury to be safely reclaimed and reused.



Their kit is a combination storage-and-shipping box with an interior Mercury VaporLok® bag. It's the safest way to store the bulbs in your home until you have enough to ship back.

Order your kit online and ship them back to WM through the U.S. Postal Service. Postage is already paid and the shipping label is attached. Each kit costs \$16.95 and holds up to 13 13-watt CFL bulbs.

For more information call WM at 1.866.699.6466 or visit www.thinkgreenfromhome.com.