

URECC

News



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Preparing for Summer in East Texas

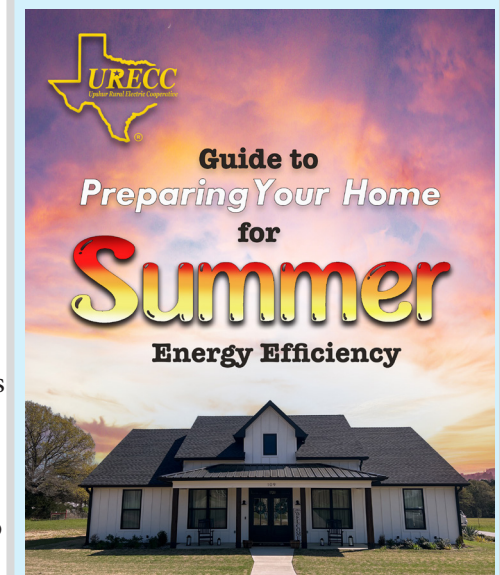
As the temperatures rise in the East Texas summer, more electricity is used in the home. To supply this higher demand, more electricity is purchased by URECC from generation plants. With all the co-ops and electric companies needing more power, generation companies must then produce more power for the supply. This production costs more money. That power cost increase is passed on to the purchaser (the co-op), and is reflected in the Power Cost Recovery Factor passed on to the members.

When the temperatures outside are hot, you use more electricity in your home at a time when power is more expensive. Efficiency in your power use is a must to control your power bill. Below are a few tips to help you make every watt count.

- 1. Install a programmable smart thermostat.** These devices allow you to set automatic temperature controls for maximum comfort and energy efficiency alternatives to air conditioning during hot summer months. You can adjust your thermostat from your smartphone should your schedule change and no one is at home.
- 2. Replace your air filter.** Your HVAC system's air filter gets a lot more use during the summer. Check it every thirty days throughout the summer. Replace it when necessary.
- 3. Practice smart landscaping.** Strategically planting shrubs and leafy trees near your home's windows is an excellent way to prevent those same windows from transferring excess heat into your home.
- 4. Install exterior window coverings.** Protect windows by adding awnings or screen shades to shade their exterior side. Sunlight through windows can warm your room up to 10 degrees or more.
- 5. Update your home's insulation.** Pay close attention to your attic and the levels between your home's conditioned and unconditioned spaces. Extra insulation can be added on top of existing material, but consider contacting a professional for appropriate installation and removal. Foam insulation has become a popular product in new homes due to efficiency.
- 6. Use smart door techniques.** When the air conditioner is on and running, every opened door and window leaks out valuable energy. Keep unnecessary trips to and from the house at a low to keep your energy bill similarly low.
- 7. Clean your refrigerator coils.** Refrigerators can cause surprisingly high energy usage, especially when they're not operating efficiently. To get the best performance from your unit, dust it off and clean up those condensing coils.
- 8. Install ceiling fans in high-trafficked rooms.** Ceiling fans do not actually cool the temperature of the room, but the circulating air will make you feel cooler.
- 9. Search out and seal any air leaks.** Stop cooling the outside by ensuring your home is properly sealed. Test the stripping and caulking around your doors and windows and replace where needed.
- 10. Call in the professionals.** While many of these preparation tips can be easily done by a handy homeowner, have professionals service your AC unit, install airtight doors and energy efficient windows, and even do energy audits to point out areas that are costing you money.

The URECC Guide to Preparing Your Home for Summer is available for download, or to read online, at URECC.coop. Within this guide you will find:

- Summer Tips for Saving Energy.
- Peak times when power costs more.
- Using SmartHub to control power.
- Benefits and types of insulation.
- How to do a DIY energy audit.
- Investing in Energy Star appliances.
- Saving energy by planting trees.
- What are brownouts and blackouts.
- How the weather affects your bill.



Mother's Day Strawberry Crepes



Ingredients:

- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup 2% milk
- 1 cup water
- 2 tbsp butter, melted
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp salt

Filling:

- 1 package 8 ounce cream cheese, softened
- 1-1/4 cups of confectioners' sugar
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp grated lemon zest
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 4 cups fresh strawberries, sliced, divided
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream, whipped

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, whisk eggs, milk, water and butter. In another bowl, mix flour and salt; add to egg mixture and mix well. Refrigerate, covered, 1 hour.
2. Heat a lightly greased 8 inch nonstick skillet over medium heat. Stir batter. Fill a 1/4-cup measure halfway with batter; pour into center of pan. Quickly lift and tilt pan to coat bottom evenly. Cook until top appears dry; turn crepe over and cook until bottom is cooked, 15-20 seconds longer. Remove to a wire rack. Repeat with remaining batter, greasing pan as needed. When cool, stack crepes between pieces of waxed paper or paper towels.
3. For filling, in a small bowl, beat cream cheese, confectioners' sugar, lemon juice and zest, and vanilla until smooth. Fold in 2 cups berries and the whipped cream. Spoon about 1/3 cup filling down the center of each crepe; rollup. Garnish with remaining berries and, if desired, additional confections' sugar. Cover and refrigerate or freeze remaining crepes in an airtight container, unfilled, for another use.

Senior Citizen URECC Members:

At URECC, if you are 65 years of age or older and have no outstanding account balance with the Cooperative (or another utility for the same service) during the past two years, **NO DEPOSIT** is required on **NEW** or **EXISTING** accounts! Call Member Services at 903-843-2536.



Saving Money with the URECC SmartHub App

URECC provides a powerful tool for members to monitor their power usage hour by hour throughout each day. This is one of the features of the URECC SmartHub app. The "actual usage" page on the app (as seen below) will show you in graph form the hours you use less or more power. It makes it easy to see hours to be more conservative on usage, and transfer some of your power-using activities, such as running the dishwasher or washing machine/dryer to hours when electricity costs less from the generation companies. Using the SmartHub graph, a member can target a high usage hour, then the following day make adjustments to the appliances and electronics, times used charging devices or EV's, even programming the thermostat to cool the house more before and after peak hours.

Another helpful feature of the SmartHub app is the ability to set alerts for usage that exceeds the normal or "budgeted" power use. After reviewing the hourly breakdown of your previous days' use of power, a member can set a limit alert for their household usage. At the point you reach that limit, you will receive a message alert from the SmartHub app. If this alert shows the member usage is higher than on an average day they can identify a trouble spot or identify the cause of the escalated usage; was temperatures rise drastically causing the AC to run more? Was this due to plugging in special tools for work in a shop? Was the pool pump running for an extra session?

Knowing when and where you are using power can help you become efficiency-minded and even set a budget for power usage. Either of which can help trim your power bill each month.

