

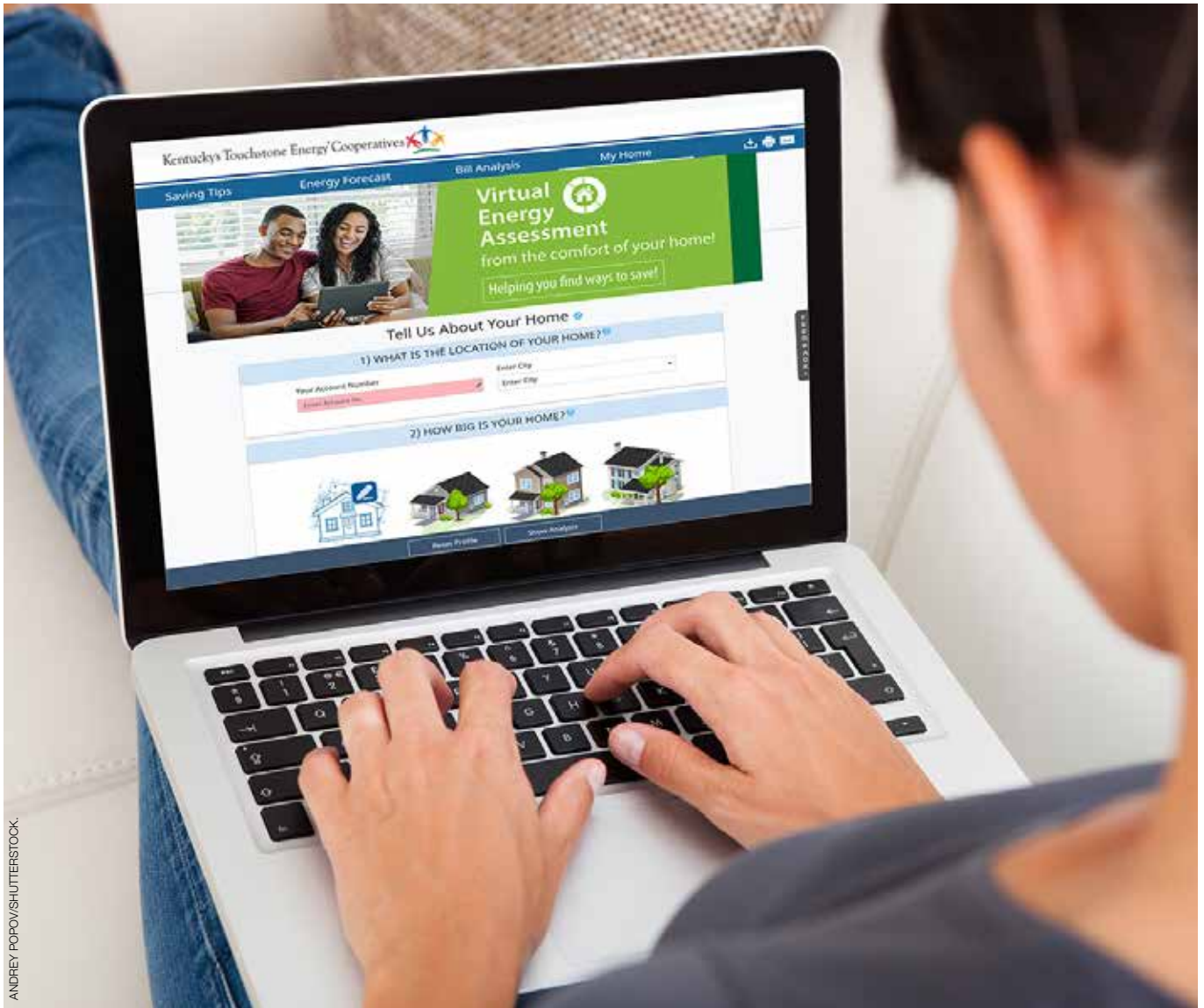


# SALT RIVER ELECTRIC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

A Publication For Members Of Salt River Electric Cooperative Corporation

Kay Lewis, Editor



ANDREY POPOV/SHUTTERSTOCK

## Track your energy use with our Virtual Energy Assessment

# Salt River News

A monthly publication for the 53,593 members of the Salt River Electric Cooperative Corporation, serving Bullitt, Nelson, Spencer, and Washington County, plus portions of six surrounding counties, since 1937.

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## On Our Cover

Salt River's online Virtual Energy Assessment tool takes the guesswork out of energy use.

With a few taps on a mobile device or clicks of a computer mouse, this online tool offers a custom plan for lowering energy costs and allows members to see exactly where energy is being used.

The Virtual Energy Assessment can also provide members with a contactless, in-depth energy audit without an onsite visit by an energy advisor.

Read more about this free online energy assessment tool on page 28C.

# driving is BELIEVING



Owning an electric vehicle or EV is easier and more exciting everyday. With more models available, lower cost of maintenance, reduced fuel costs, the ability to charge on the go and at home, electric vehicles are the way of the future and that future is today.

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# Salt River's Virtual Energy Assessment tool takes the guesswork out of energy use

Most of us are spending a lot more time at home these days. With work, school and even recreation time shifting to the kitchen table, TVs and computers run longer, the oven and microwave work overtime and house lights shine more hours each day. If all those extra hours of energy consumption—and the associated electric bill—have you concerned, it's time to check out Salt River's Virtual Energy Assessment tool.

This technology is timely for members who are spending more time at home these days and may be experiencing a higher electricity bill because of the extra hours of energy consumption. This home energy analysis tool, free to members of Salt River Electric, provides essential

data and analyses that take the guesswork out of electricity consumption.

With a few taps on a mobile device or clicks of a computer mouse, the Virtual Energy Assessment allows a co-op member to track electricity use and learn exactly where energy is being consumed. The digital tool uses the actual energy data from your home or business, and local temperature information to calculate specific electricity use and costs.

Along with learning how much power you're using, the Virtual Energy Assessment can also provide a contactless, in-depth, energy audit without an onsite visit by an energy advisor. The technology can pinpoint specific problem areas that

may contribute to higher energy bills, and users also receive do-it-yourself suggestions for reducing energy use, based on individual circumstances and a profile of your home or business.

Salt River is committed to helping our members maximize energy efficiency. Getting a handle on your energy use is just a click away. You can find the Virtual Energy Assessment tool on our website at <https://billing.srelectric.com/oscp>. Just click on the Virtual Energy Assessment button on the homepage, provide a few pieces of information about your home, and this tool can provide answers to energy questions and generate a custom plan for lowering energy costs in your home or business.



## Virtual Energy Assessment



from the comfort of your home!

Complete a no-cost online analysis of your home today. We can help to identify opportunities to save on your energy bills. Your personalized energy report allows you to budget home expenses and make informed decisions when it comes to buying energy-efficient appliances.

[srelectric.com](https://srelectric.com)



## Your Safety Matters

# Protect kids from electrical hazards

Accidents can occur when young children have an opportunity to explore their home and unintentionally expose themselves to electrical dangers. Without proper precaution, everyday items such as power strips, space heaters, outlets and cords can pose a threat.

Especially for toddlers and young children, it is a must to childproof your house from electrical hazards. Luckily, this task is easy to do, and it's usually inexpensive.

Look at your home from a child's point of view. Get down on the floor and see what is at eye level or within reach of a small

child. Don't forget to check for potential hazards behind tables, dressers and furniture.

Little fingers seem to be attracted to electrical outlets, so be sure and place outlet plug covers on all the ones that are low to the ground.

Store electric bathroom and kitchen appliances—like hair dryers and toasters—out of reach of curious children.

Your home may have a space with many power cords and power bars. Put barriers around this area and tie up loose cords. If you're temporarily using extension cords, hide them behind furniture or use

a hide-a-cord device. You can also put electrical tape over unused plug holes on cords.

When using a space heater, establish a 3-foot, kid-free zone, and never put a space heater in a child's room or leave it untended. Be sure to keep the heater at least 3 feet away from furniture, bedding and curtains.

Begin the educational process as soon as your child can crawl and remind the kids in your home to always be safe when dealing with electricity.

Salt River Electric cares about keeping your family safe.



# Simple appliance repairs can be big jobs

It's tempting to do maintenance and simple repairs on large appliances like the refrigerator, dishwasher and washing machine. Beyond the safety risk that comes with touching electrical components, however, are some practical red flags.

**1** Electrical replacement parts often have to be ordered from the manufacturer and are nonrefundable. If you misdiagnose a problem or order the part in the wrong size, you could be wasting your money.

**2** Washing machines and refrigerators are heavy. Trying to lift or move them so you can get access to the back or bottom of the appliance can be back-breaking work—

literally, if the DIYer doesn't do it properly.

**3** Some appliance manufacturers will not honor a warranty if an appliance repair isn't performed by a qualified professional.

**4** If a licensed electrical inspector does not examine the repair, an insurance company could claim that the homeowner was negligent.

**5** Once a DIYer gets the appliance torn apart and realizes he or she cannot diagnose or fix the problem, the machine will be out of commission until a pro can come and put it back together. How long can your family go without its clothes dryer or dishwasher?



## Even the handiest DIYers should call a pro for electrical repairs

Home improvement TV shows make household repairs look easy. But when it comes to electrical repairs, DIYers should move over and make room for a pro.

Working with electricity is risky business. Anyone who tinkers with wiring or circuits could suffer electrocution or shock, or could start a fire. High-voltage items are

especially dangerous to work on, even for professionals.

So even if it seems that the talented DIYer in your home has the skills to fix just about anything, he or she should not take any chances when it comes to electrical repairs.

Licensed electricians are trained not only in the skills they need to work with electrical circuits and components, but in how to stay safe during the job; how to adhere to electrical codes; and how to prevent fires. They also know which permits are required to do the work legally.

Homeowners also should consider the

following before attempting to do their own electrical repairs:

- Some homeowner's insurance policies do not cover fires that start because of a DIY electrical repair gone wrong.
- Electrical work requiring city or county permits can result in fines for a DIYer who does not obtain those permits.
- Selling a home if electrical work has been done by a DIYer can be a challenge. Potential buyers usually hire home inspectors, who could flag faulty repairs and force the homeowner to pay for a professional do-over. Even when you hire a professional electrician to work in your home, insist on a license, proper permit and an inspection.



TOMASZ ZAJDA/AROBEE STOCK

# Plug into safety when charging your devices

Charging a cell phone is something we all do every day. No big deal, right? Wrong.

Take these familiar scenarios, for example:

- You need a new charger. So, you head to the nearest gas station and grab one at a discounted price.
- You typically charge your phone in the bathroom—using an unwieldy 10-foot cord.
- You like keeping your phone close, so you plug it in next to your bed and tuck it under your pillow.
- You've run out of outlets, so your phone charger has taken permanent residence plugged into an extension cord.

All of those scenarios pose dangers. Here's why:

## QUALITY CORDS

Whether you need a replacement or just want an extra phone charger, it can be tempting to purchase the low-priced option rather than the higher-priced charger from the manufacturer. However, purchasing a bargain charger could have disastrous consequences.

Most of the time, these products are unregulated and untested. Their components are often low quality and are not backed by a manufacturer's warranty. Only purchase charging devices and electronics from trusted sources and be sure they have been tested or marked by a nationally recognized testing laboratory like Underwriters Laboratories.

It's also important to inspect your charging cords for damage. Any cord that carries electrical power becomes a fire hazard when it's damaged and wires are exposed. As soon as you see damage to a cord, stop using it.

## RIGHT LOCATION

It's safest to charge your devices on cool, well-ventilated surfaces away from flammable objects. A well-ventilated spot will help prevent your device from overheating. Devices tucked under a pillow, nestled on the carpet or resting on a bed or couch don't allow for this.

And, always unplug charging cords when they're not in use. Cords that are plugged in are constantly drawing power. Be sure the cord isn't plugged into a device that power can be transferred to flammable objects, such as fabric, carpet or wood, and cause it to ignite.

## WATER HAZARD

Once your phone is plugged into an outlet it becomes a potential electrical hazard. And, unlike a hair dryer or electric razor—devices meant to be used in a bathroom—

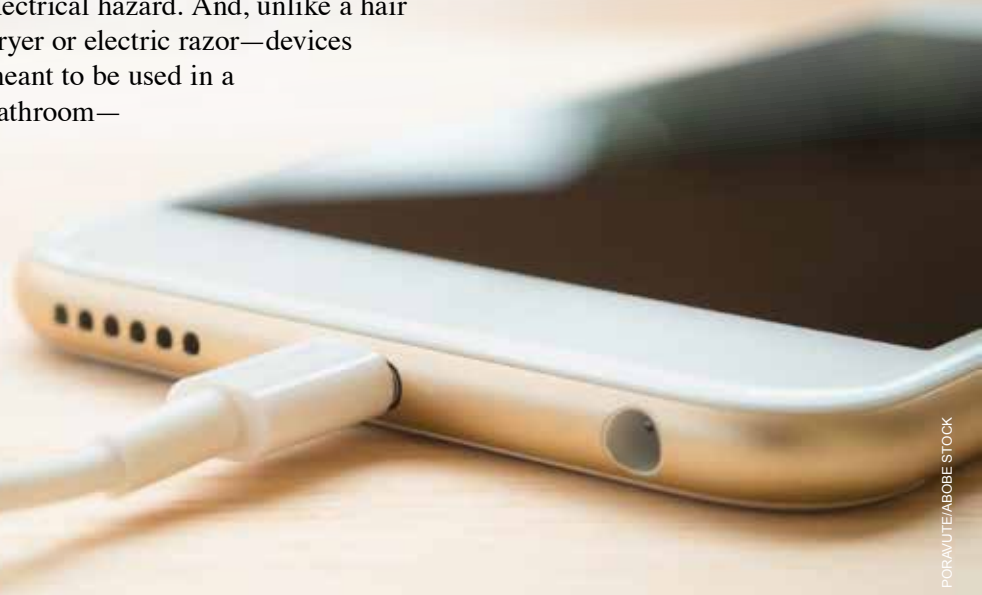
phones, laptops and wireless speakers are not equipped with a safety mechanism known as a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI), which shuts off power to the device when it gets wet.

In the United States, building codes require you to use outlets equipped with a GFCI in bathrooms, kitchens and other household spaces where an electronic device might come into contact with water. Regardless of the type of cord you're using, if you drop your phone into water you could be electrocuted.

## EXTENSION CORDS

Avoid relying on extension cords when charging devices. Extension cords are not meant for long-term use. If you need to plug in your phone in a more convenient area than is available, this may be an indicator you need more outlets.

Don't make your electronic devices even more complicated than they already are. Always stay plugged into safety when using a device's charging cord.







## A Message From Your Salt River Cooperative

### Prevent frozen pipes by keeping house warm

A mid-winter getaway seems like a dream during a pandemic, but if your family has found a safe destination and is heading out of town for a couple of weeks, leave the heat on at home.

It might seem like a waste of energy and money to heat an empty home, but the cost of cleaning up after a water pipe that has frozen and burst will be far more than leaving the thermostat set high enough to prevent the problem.

When the water inside of a pipe freezes, it expands and puts pressure on the pipe. That pressure can cause the pipe to crack or break, and water can gush out, causing a nonstop flood of water and causing massive damage to your property.

Here are some precautions to take before you leave:

- Shut off the water at the cut-off valve.
- Remove garden hoses from outdoor faucets. Then, drain those faucets and leave them in the “on” position.
- Leave the heat set at around 50 degrees.
- Open cabinet doors under sinks so the heat can circulate around the water pipes.
- If your washing machine is in an unheated garage, shut off the water to the appliance.
- Insulate pipes in the attic and in crawl spaces using a product designed specifically for pipes.
- Give your house key to a trusted neighbor who can check for frozen pipes while you’re away.



NOIMAD SOUL/ABOBE STOCK

### Choose efficient appliances when replacing old ones

The federal government’s ENERGY STAR program marks the most-efficient household appliances with a special label so shoppers will know which appliances will save them money on their utility bills.

The label tells consumers how much it will cost—energy-wise—to operate the unit. Most of the time, ENERGY STAR appliances save at least 15% compared with products that don’t qualify for the ENERGY STAR label, and some save as much as 60%.

A variety of appliance manufacturers make devices that qualify for ENERGY STAR.

Here’s a list of how much energy you can save if you select ENERGY STAR




appliances the next time yours need replacing:

- ENERGY STAR-rated clothes dryers use about 20% less energy than other models, saving you \$215 over their lifetime.
- Room air purifiers or cleaners with the ENERGY STAR label are almost 60% more energy efficient than standard models. Those savings can add up to \$60 a year on utility bills.
- Clothes washers in the program use about 25% less energy and 33% less water than regular washers. Lifetime savings can be as high as \$370.
- Efficient humidifiers use nearly 15% less energy than standard models.
- A new, ENERGY STAR-certified dishwasher will cost just about \$35 a year to run and will save an average of 3,870 gallons of water over its lifetime.
- A stand-alone freezer with the ENERGY-STAR label is at least 10% more energy efficient than federal regulations require. Old freezers use way more energy than newer ones, so replacing yours with an ENERGY STAR model could save up to \$195 in energy bills over five years.
- Likewise, newer refrigerators are more efficient than old ones. ENERGY STAR-certified new refrigerators are about 9% more efficient than new refrigerators that simply meet minimum federal requirements.

5 tips to help with

## WINTER ELECTRIC BILLS



As the temperature drops, your energy bill can rise due to higher usage. Heating and cooling make up nearly half of your home's energy usage, so taking simple steps to save energy can make a difference on your bill.

### Budget Billing

When you know what to expect, it's easier to plan your budget.

### Thermostat Control

Set your thermostat to 68 degrees, or install a programmable thermostat.

### Weather Stripping

Seal doors and windows with weather stripping.

### Water Pipes

Insulate water pipes (especially hot water pipes) to help prevent them from freezing and from heat escaping.

### Change Air Filter

Change or clean your furnace air filter once a month. Dust and dirt make your unit work harder.



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

## Members now have three ways to report a power outage

Salt River Electric members now have three options when reporting a power outage.

- You can use our **mobile app** on any smart phone or mobile device. Download the app at the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.
- You can also go to our website at **[www.srelectric.com](http://www.srelectric.com)** and click on the outage tab. Be sure to set up a username and password in advance so you'll be ready if you lose power.
- You can call our 24-hour outage phone line **(800) 221-7465**.

Outages can be reported 24-hours a day, 365 days a year. Our line crews are on the ready to respond to outages as quickly and efficiently as possible.

When power outages occur, be sure to check your breakers first to be sure nothing has gone wrong inside your home. Have your account information handy when reporting an outage.

Our office will be closed for Presidents Day on February 15, 2021