

Tideland Topics

Real People. Real Power.

National co-op month

Celebrated by cooperatives nationwide each October since 1964, National Co-op Month is an annual opportunity to raise awareness of a trusted, proven way to do business and build resilient, inclusive communities.

This year we thought it would be fun to share some Co-op Month trivia specific to the nation's electric cooperatives. The answers can be found on Page 18 of Tideland Topics.



How many Americans receive electricity from electric cooperatives?

- A. 24 million
- B. 38 million
- C. 42 million



Vampire power

Appliances that use energy even when they are "shut off" are modern vampires, wasting power and increasing electric bills. One or two devices won't make much difference on your bill, but with each electronic addition to your home it can begin to add up.

Household vampires

- Desktop computers and displays
- Printers
- Fax machines
- Satellite and cable boxes
- Remote control TVs
- Phone chargers
- Video game consoles
- Microwaves
- Digital clocks
- Modems and routers



While some vampire loads are worth tackling, don't overlook your main energy users: HVAC and water heating. They are the primary drivers of energy costs. Save most of your garlic for those items!

Dehumidifiers increasingly impact member energy bills

In recent years we've seen a dramatic increase in the number of Tideland served homes that now have crawlspace dehumidifiers. It's a concerning trend for a number of reasons.

We'll refer to a recent energy audit to address our concerns.

In this particular case, the dehumidifier load was fairly easy to isolate because the home is unoccupied and the only items using energy are the crawlspace dehumidifier, a single indoor lamp, and a chest style deep freezer.

During the months of July and August, Tideland territory received over 25 inches of rainfall. That's more than double the amount of precipitation we normally experience during those months. Those circumstances alone would necessitate the need for longer dehumidifier run times.

The home we visited in August is a two-story residence built in the 1920s. It had an Aprilaire model 1850 dehumidifier capable of

removing 95 pints (11.9 gallons) of water per day with a rated airflow of 245 cubic feet per minute. The unit's compressor had an operating wattage of 960 watts (8.0 amps multiplied by 120 volts). In conjunction with the compressor operation, there was a 135-watt fan that moves the air across the coil. There was also a 228-watt condensate pump that moves the condensate from the drain pan to the outdoors. Together, these three components were contributing over \$100 to the member's total electric bill.

We want to note that this is a larger dehumidifier than we typically see in a residential setting. Based on the home's footprint we are hard pressed to understand why such a large unit was installed by the contractor. However, even at half that size, the additional energy expenses would be significant.

Even more concerning was the condition of the crawlspace where the dehumidifier was located. The crawlspace was not truly encapsulated.

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Invisible death

Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning is the No. 1 cause of injury and death following a hurricane. Because CO is odorless, colorless, and otherwise undetectable to the human senses, people may not know that they are being exposed. The initial symptoms of low to moderate CO poisoning are similar to the flu (but without the fever). They include: headache, fatigue, shortness of breath, nausea and dizziness.

High level CO poisoning results in progressively more severe symptoms, including: mental confusion, vomiting, loss of muscular coordination, loss of consciousness and ultimately death. Symptom severity is related to both the CO level and the duration of exposure.

For rapidly developing, high level CO exposures like those associated with the use of generators in residential spaces, victims can rapidly become mentally confused, losing muscle control without having first experienced milder symptoms. Death is likely imminent if not rescued.

Every new home constructed in North Carolina must now have a carbon monoxide detector. Make sure your home has one too.



TRICK OR TREAT
Don't Let an Electrical Mishap Be Your Halloween Trick

As you ready your yard and porch for Halloween, make sure the decorations you plug in do not become hazardous. **To avoid a Halloween scare, take these safety precautions:**

- Discard any decorations that have **cracked or frayed cords** or damaged plugs.
- **Do not** put any decorations on power poles, padmount transformers or any other electrical equipment.
- Use decorations that are endorsed by a reputable testing laboratory such as **Underwriters Laboratories (UL)**.
- If you are using extension cords outdoors, make sure they are **rated for outdoor use**.
- **Secure all cords** so they do not become tripping hazards.
- Plug all cords into circuits protected by **GFCIs** to prevent electrical shock.
- **Do not use nails or tacks** to hang lights or other electrical decor.
- Keep decorations **away from flammable items** like bales of hay, cornstalks or witch's brew.

Have a safe and festive Halloween complete with safe tricks and tasty treats.

Learn more at: [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org)

Message to members

We're all in for you

by **PAUL SPRUILL**

GENERAL MANAGER &
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER









As Tideland recognizes National Co-op Month, you may wonder what that has to do with you. Well, it has everything to do with you because the cooperative is you. You are not a customer. You are a member-owner of Tideland. That means you have a voice in the operation and governance of the cooperative. Which in turn means you are heard. If it's important to you, it's important to our cooperative leadership team.

As a member-owner of Tideland, you also get a return on your member equity through the eventual distribution of capital credits. In the ensuing years, between equity accumulation and equity distribution, you benefit from the capital investments that improve electric service reliability and resilience for you and your family.

Because Tideland is member-owned, we owe you truth, transparency and accountability. That's one of the things we love most about our business model. There are no balancing acts to be undertaken between meeting the interests of third-party investors and those we serve. We're simply all in for Tidelanders.

Each year when this national celebration comes along, the emphasis is usually on just how many co-op businesses exist and how vast their reach is in a broad range of industries like agriculture, housing and consumer financial services. But this year, I find myself more struck by the smallness of our co-op business model. Small enough to care. Small enough to listen. Small enough to act. Small enough to do big things. Small enough to make your world a brighter place.

Electric co-op trivia

 <p>How many Americans do electric co-ops employ?</p> <p>A. 73,000 B. 64,000 C. 58,000</p> 	 <p>How many states have electric cooperatives?</p> <p>A. 48 states B. 46 states C. 44 states</p> 
 <p>How many times would electric co-op owned power lines circle the equator?</p> <p>A. 93 times B. 102 times C. 108 times</p> 	 <p>What percentage of the American landscape do electric co-ops power?</p> <p>A. 47% B. 56% C. 65%</p> 

Rights-of-way maintenance schedule

Tideland has hired Gunnison Tree to trim vegetative growth in our rights-of-way. During October, Gunnison will work on Fairfield Harbour circuits #1 and #2. They will also work on the Arapahoe circuit starting at the Silverhill substation and then beyond the Minnesott Beach recloser.

Our contract construction crews with Lee Electrical will work throughout our system to proactively replace any poles that failed to meet our integrity standards following inspections by our contractor, Osmose.

Fall is a popular time to plant new trees and shrubs so they have time to establish root systems before the heat of summer returns. Before purchasing trees, please take time to conduct a bit of research based on location and the proximity to both overhead and underground power lines. Staying well outside of the utility right-of-way when the tree reaches mature height will help the co-op reduce future tree trimming costs. And be sure root spread will not interfere with underground utilities.



Dehumidification

Article continues from Page 16

Encapsulation means that the crawlspace is sealed off from direct communication with the outdoor environment. Consider for a moment trying to heat or cool your home with one or two windows open. That would be a very expensive proposition and that's why we close them before we turn the HVAC unit on. It's also why generations of parents have told their children to not stand there with the door wide open.

Yet during the vast majority of our audit visits, we do not find true vapor barriers underneath homes. Yes, there may be sheets of plastic but most often you can still see dirt because the vapor barrier material isn't continuous, seamed and sealed. Even fewer vapor barriers continue up the home's footers and foundation walls.

That combined with unsealed air vents and crawlspace access doors and improper grading creates a vicious cycle of dehumidifier operation. The dehumidifier that was intended to be a cure now becomes just another symptom of a problem that has not been holistically

addressed. In the meantime, energy consumption increases and sometimes dramatically.

Before embarking on the journey of owning and operating a crawlspace dehumidifier, we'd like to encourage you to visit crawlspace.org. The site is hosted by North Carolina's Advanced Energy Corporation, a nonprofit energy consulting firm.

One thing to point out: crawl space encapsulation is an investment. But when done properly it should last for the life of the home. In fact, once proper encapsulation

is complete it may only be necessary to dehumidify the crawlspace one time to get it in balance, thus foregoing the expense of purchasing and maintaining a dehumidifier.

If you already have a dehumidifier and want to reduce energy consumption we recommend that you check the unit's settings. Be sure to take advantage of any energy-savings modes or lower fan speed settings. Clean air filters regularly. Ensure proper drainage to prevent condensate build-up.



To access Advanced Energy's 4-page quick reference on closed crawl spaces and other materials visit crawlspace.org

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www.tidelandemc.com

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Always call 811 before you dig



Electric cooperative trivia answers

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