

SWRE POWER SOURCE

A Supplement to Oklahoma Living



APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR 8TH GRADE ENERGY CAMP

Southwest Rural Electric sends two eighth graders to Energy Camp each summer to learn about electric cooperatives and where electricity comes from, experience a day in the life of a lineworker, gain leadership skills, and more!

The annual Energy Camp Contest is open to eighth grade students living in or attending school in SWRE's service territory. This includes currently-enrolled eighth graders in Altus, Blair, Chillicothe, Crowell, Davidson, Electra, Frederick, Harrold, Navajo, Northside, Snyder, Tipton and Vernon. Co-op membership is not required to enter the contest. Children and grandchildren of SWRE employees and board members are not eligible to apply.

To enter, student should write an original, 300-500 word essay on this topic: ***What would life be like without electricity?*** Application instructions, contest details, and the official application are available online at [SWRE.com/EnergyCamp](https://www.swre.com/EnergyCamp).

Applicants **MUST** be available to attend Energy Camp May 28-31, 2024 in Hinton, Oklahoma. Students should not enter the contest if they will not attend camp.

The deadline for students to apply is March 1, 2024. An independent judge will select up to eight finalists to receive \$50 cash prizes. The judge will select the top two essays from the pool of finalists, and the authors of those essays will attend Energy Camp for free courtesy of SWRE! Teachers who participate in the contest by making the essay a class assignment or by helping students submit their applications will be eligible to receive a \$50 classroom donation (limit one per teacher).

For more information, contact the marketing department at 1-800-256-7973 or marketing@swre.com.

Feature photo: Brandon Rater from Northside ISD climbs a pole during Energy Camp last summer.

ELECTRICITY BRINGS EVERYDAY VALUE



Jeff Simpson, CEO

// Because electricity is so abundant, we don't think much about it. We expect the lights to turn on with a flip of a switch and the coffee maker to work each morning. No matter how much power we use, we still expect an endless supply of it with uninterrupted service 24/7. The only time we really think about electricity is when the lights go out or perhaps when the monthly bill arrives.

Given how electricity powers our lives every day, it's a great value—especially when compared to other common services and expenses. For example, think back to the cost of a gallon of gas 20 years ago. Consider the cost of groceries or a cup of your favorite specialty coffee from a few years back. In comparison, the cost of electricity has remained largely flat, unlike most other consumer goods.

Like many of you, I have a cellphone to stay connected, and I subscribe to streaming channels so I have more viewing options. Many of us consider these necessities for modern day life. We can see what we're getting for our money, and we pay the price for those services. In contrast, when we use electricity, we don't necessarily 'see' all that we're getting for our money.

But considering what electricity does for us, it's a tremendous value for our quality of life as well as our budgets. For comparison, consider that in recent years, the costs of rent, medical care, groceries and education have all increased 5%–10%. But the price of electricity from your cooperative has increased less than 3%.

The bottom line: Electricity brings everyday value. In fact, Southwest Rural Electric continually improves our distribution network to minimize the frequency and length of outages. Considering that electricity is something we all use around the clock, I'm very proud of our track record. We're also continually working to improve our operations to ensure a smarter grid and exploring more renewable energy options where possible.

SWRE provides the reliable service you expect and deserve as valued members of the co-op. And as your trusted energy adviser, we want to help you save energy and money.

We recognize that the cold winter months can create bill challenges for many of our members, and we're here to help. For tips on ways to save energy at home, visit [SWRE.com/Together-We-Save](https://www.swre.com/Together-We-Save). If you have questions about your account, please give us a call. SWRE is your electric co-op, and our sole purpose is to serve you and the needs of our community. That's an everyday value. //



HOW EXTREME WINTER WEATHER IMPACTS RELIABILITY

When outdoor temperatures drop, our electricity use increases. That's because we're doing more activities inside, and our heating systems are running longer and more often to counteract colder outdoor temperatures. Factor in that we all tend to use electricity at the same times—in the morning and early evenings—and that equals a lot of strain on our electric grid.

SWRE works closely with our local generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative in resource and infrastructure planning to ensure you have the power you need whenever you flip a switch, but the electric grid is much larger than your local co-op and G&T.

In winter months, when even more electricity is being used simultaneously across the country, it is possible for electricity demand to exceed supply, especially if an unexpected event like a sudden snow or ice storm or equipment malfunction occurs. If this happens, which is rare, the grid operator for our region of the country may call for rolling power outages to relieve pressure on the grid, and SWRE will inform you about the situation.

SWRE and our G&T take proactive steps to create a resilient portion of the grid and ensure electric reliability in extreme weather, including regular system maintenance, grid modernization efforts and disaster response planning; but it takes everyone to keep the grid reliable.

To help keep the heat on for you, your family and neighbors, here are a few things you can do to relieve pressure on the grid (and save a little money along the way):

- Select the lowest comfortable thermostat setting and turn it down several degrees whenever possible. Your heating system must run longer to make up the difference between the thermostat temp and the outdoor temp. **Pro tip: Seal air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weatherstripping. Air leaks and drafts force your heating system to work harder than necessary.**
- Stagger your use of major appliances such as dishwashers, ovens and dryers. **Pro tip: Start the dishwasher before you go to bed and use smaller countertop appliances like slow cookers and air fryers to save energy.**



*Pictured: Crews restoring power during the 2020 ice storm.
Photo courtesy of Whitney Huff.*

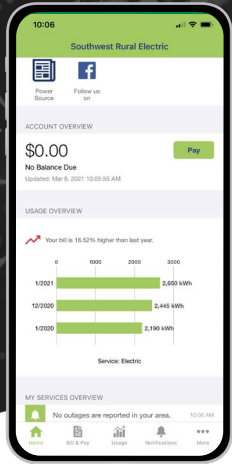
- Ensure that your heating system is optimized for efficiency with regular maintenance and proper insulation. **Pro tip: Make sure your furnace filter isn't clogged and dirty. Replace it as needed.**
- When possible, use cold water to reduce water heating costs. **Pro tip: Setting your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees can help you save energy and reduce mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.**
- Unplug devices when not in use to eliminate unnecessary energy use. Even when turned off, electronics in standby mode consume energy. **Pro tip: Plug devices into a power strip so you can turn them all off at once with the push of a button.**

As we face the challenges posed by winter weather, understanding its impact on energy demand is crucial for maintaining a reliable power supply. By adopting energy conservation practices during periods of extreme cold, not only can you save money on your electric bills, but you can also each contribute to the resilience of the power grid, keeping our local community warm and connected.



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Choose Southwest Rural Electric as your service provider.

Southwest Rural Electric

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SmartHub App

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BEST BETS FOR Winter Savings

Energy consumption spikes during winter months as we spend more time indoors and heating systems work overtime. You can help reduce demand and strain on the electric grid by conserving during peak energy times. Reducing energy use will also help lower your energy bills.

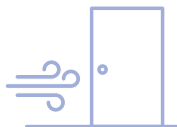
UNPLUG WHEN POSSIBLE




Turn off unnecessary lights and electronics when you aren't using them.

ELIMINATE DRAFTS AND AIR LEAKS

Seal air leaks and drafts around windows and exterior doors.



MAINTAIN HEATING EQUIPMENT



Maintain your heating system by replacing dirty, clogged filters and scheduling an annual inspection for necessary maintenance.

USE APPLIANCES WHEN ENERGY DEMAND IS LOWER

Run large appliances like clothes washers, dryers and dishwashers early in the morning or before you go to bed.



LOWER THE THERMOSTAT

Home heating accounts for a large portion of energy consumption. Adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting (68 degrees or lower).

