

# SWRE POWER SOURCE

*A Supplement to Oklahoma Living*

## ROOFTOP SOLAR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Adding rooftop solar to your house is an investment of time and money comparable to the commitment you made when purchasing the property. Think back to that time: You looked for the right place at the right price. You found out as much about it as you could. You sought a trusted source to lend their expertise in matters they understood. You had a thorough understanding before you signed the mortgage papers. You should do the same before signing a solar contract.

To help determine whether rooftop solar is right for you, consider this:

- Overall energy efficiency of your home/building
- Orientation of the sun in relation to the home/building
- Tree coverage near the home
- Weather patterns for the region
- Return on investment

We encourage SWRE members to do research on solar providers and request several quotes before signing a contract to install rooftop solar panels on your home.

Keep in mind that proposals that claim that your electric bill will equal \$0 after installing solar panels are incorrect. All members of Southwest Rural Electric pay a monthly fee to help cover fixed costs like poles, wires and transformers—all equipment that is required to provide power whenever you need it.

Questions you should ask a salesperson before you sign anything:

1. What is the proposed electric rate? What is the inflation rate used? How do these compare with my current electric rate?
2. What estimated cost is used for the excess energy produced? SWRE purchases energy supplied by the member at the cooperative's current avoided energy cost.
3. Is there a large upfront payment required or are fees spread out over time?
4. Will I own the panels, or will they be leased?
5. Are there any hidden costs like replacing the roof before installation? What about marketing, advertising or research fees?
6. Are there ongoing maintenance fees?
7. Are there rebates or other financial incentives available?
8. Are the estimated energy savings worth the investment?
9. Is it more cost effective to invest in other energy-saving measures?

As your trusted energy provider, SWRE is here to help you determine what option is best for you and we welcome your questions. Give us a call today at 1-800-256-7973.

# PREPARING TO SERVE YOU BETTER



*Jeff Simpson, CEO*

// Providing reliable power to you is and will always be top priority for Southwest Rural Electric. These days, power reliability seems to be making news now more than ever.

As the energy industry continues to transition and more segments of the economy are becoming electrified, such as vehicles, machinery and even lawn equipment, additional pressures are being placed on our nation's electric grid.

With summer storm season upon us, I thought it would be a good time to tell you about a few measures we're taking to ensure you continue receiving the reliable power you depend on and deserve.

### VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Let me be the first to say I love trees and the charm they add to our communities, and I know you do too. While trees provide shade and add beauty to our area, you may be surprised to learn that overgrown vegetation accounts for about half of all power outages.

That's why we strive to keep the co-op's power lines clear in right-of-way (ROW) areas. A ROW area is the land a co-op uses to construct, maintain, replace or repair underground and overhead power lines. This ROW enables SWRE to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder distribution power lines. The overall goal of our vegetation management strategy is to provide reliable power to our members while maintaining the beauty of our area.

Vegetation management is an essential tool in ensuring power reliability and minimizing the risk of outages. As advancements become more accessible and costs drop, we anticipate using additional technologies to ensure a consistent energy supply while managing the environment.

### PLANNED OUTAGES IMPROVE RELIABILITY

Although it may seem counterintuitive, we also maintain power reliability through planned, controlled outages. By carefully cutting power to one part of our local area for a few hours, SWRE can perform system repairs and upgrades, which ultimately improve electric service. Planned outages can also be used to balance energy demand, but only in rare circumstances. Rest assured, we will notify you in advance of a planned outage, so make sure we have your correct contact information on file to receive the latest notifications.

I encourage you to follow Southwest Rural Electric on social media so you can learn about the latest co-op updates. //



# ENERGY-SAVING PROJECTS FOR THE WEEKEND WARRIOR

Are you a weekend warrior? If you're considering home improvement upgrades that save energy and money, we've got a few project ideas for you—all of which can be completed in a day or less!

Here are three energy-saving projects that you can easily tackle whether you're a weekend warrior pro or a DIY dabbler.

## ***Get smart about home cooling and heating.***

Cooling and heating your home typically account for a large portion of energy bills. Smart thermostats can help keep your cooling and heating costs in check, with ENERGY STAR®-certified models saving about 8% on annual energy costs.

Now that smart thermostats are more affordable (as little as \$70!), this simple upgrade makes for a fun, efficient weekend project. Smart thermostats offer a variety of bells and whistles, but the average model will allow you to set custom temperature schedules, adjust the settings from anywhere (from your phone), and over time, learn your cooling and heating preferences.

Your new smart thermostat will come with step-by-step instructions, but this project typically involves shutting off your HVAC at the breaker panel, disconnecting/removing the old thermostat, installing the new smart thermostat and connecting it to your home Wi-Fi. Play it safe: remember to carefully read the installation instructions before you get started.

## ***Go green and boost your greenery with a rain barrel.***

If you've got a green thumb, you already know that rainwater is the best water for your outdoor plants. Rainwater is free of minerals, salts and treatment chemicals found in tap water or groundwater. It also contains helpful macronutrients to foster healthy plant growth.

Installing a rain barrel is an easy way to harvest large amounts of rainwater and reduce home water use—it's a win-win. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, one rain barrel can save a homeowner 1,300 gallons of water annually.

Most residential rain barrels range in size from 50 to 90 gallons, so the size you purchase will depend on your watering needs.



The simplest way to install a rain barrel is positioning a plastic or wooden barrel directly under your gutter downspout. Basic piping may be required, but this is an easy way to harvest rainwater, and the barrel won't take up much space. Consider a cover for the top of your rain barrel to keep insects and small debris out of your harvested water.

## ***Create fresh savings with a DIY clothesline.***

If you have enough outdoor space available, installing a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on dryer costs—in the summer, you can also save on cooling costs since unwanted heat from the clothes dryer won't be added to your home (which makes your air conditioner work harder). Additionally, air drying is much gentler on fabrics and will keep your clothes and linens looking fresh longer.

You can create your own clothesline with two T-posts, wire and hook-and-eye turnbuckles. Depending on your soil, you may need a small amount of Quikrete to set the posts. Another option is installing the line between two trees. A typical load of laundry requires about 35 feet of line, so keep this in mind as you're determining the best location.

If an outdoor clothesline isn't an option, no sweat! You can easily create an indoor drying rack that folds to save space. Home improvement websites like [thespruce.com](http://thespruce.com) and [hgvtv.com](http://hgvtv.com) offer step-by-step tutorials for a variety of indoor clothes racks.

These are just a few simple ideas to help you save energy and money. So, get out there, roll up those sleeves and tackle a few projects.

Check out [SWRE.com/Together-We-Save](http://SWRE.com/Together-We-Save) for additional energy-saving ideas and tips.



## WATERMELON FETA SALAD

### INGREDIENTS:

- 8 cups cubed ripe seedless watermelon (5 pounds or 1/2 medium watermelon)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 ounces feta cheese, crumbled
- 4 basil or 6 mint leaves, minced
- Lemon zest (optional)
- 1 pinch kosher salt, for garnish
- Fresh ground black pepper (optional)

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Chop the watermelon and arrange it on a platter. Drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle with feta crumbles, basil or mint, and kosher salt. Add lemon zest or black pepper if desired.
2. Serve immediately.
3. If making ahead, refrigerate the cubed watermelon separately: it releases a large amount of water after it is cut. Then assemble the salad right before serving. Leftovers store for up to 2 days.

Source: You can find this recipe by Sonja & Alex at <https://www.acouplecooks.com/watermelon-feta-salad/>.

## Trading Post

**For Sale:** 1500 watt arena lights with mercury vapor bulbs; 23 available; Located in Vernon, TX; Call (940) 886-7574 for pricing.

*FREE classified non-commercial ad submissions are available for SWRE members only. Submissions must include the account holder's name and account number to be eligible. Ads are also posted on [SWRE.com/Trading-Post](http://SWRE.com/Trading-Post). Send your ad to the marketing department by mail, e-mail or phone!*

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### Bill Pay Options:

24/7 Bill Pay: 1-833-890-9510  
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PROUD TO  
POWER YOU.**