

New Rebate Program Makes It Easier To Save

At Wood County Electric Cooperative, we're all about helping our members. So we've created one more great way—and we think our members are really going to like it.

We are rolling out a rebate program that will make it easier than ever to say “yes” to energy savings, while also earning lucrative bill credits. Each member can earn up to \$2,000 annually during the life of our rebate program, along with years of energy savings, by implementing any one or combination of the 18 qualified energy-saving actions for residential and small business consumers. There's also a lighting rebate for our commercial and industrial members.

Our program, Great Rebates, is funded entirely from unclaimed capital credit payments returned to WCEC by the State of Texas. Great Rebates kicks off July 1 and uses escheated funds to the best advantage of our members and the cooperative. Great Rebates is first-come, first-served, and will last until the money is gone. All rebates will be returned to members in the form of a credit on their bill and can range from \$20 up to \$2,000, depending on the action.



Participating is simple. Active members should visit WCEC.org to download the claim forms and follow the simple submission instructions to send to us electronically or by mail. Once we've reviewed, validated and processed your claim, we'll notify you via postcard or email to look for the credit on your bill.

The items and actions that qualify run the gamut from simply having an HVAC tuneup or purchasing Energy Star-compliant appliances to adding insulation. Full details for each rebate can be found on each individual claim form. Importantly, each form is unique to the particular rebate claim, and all criteria must be met to claim the rebate. So if you are planning on claiming a rebate, it will be important to note the qualifying criteria before making a purchase.

If you have any questions before making a purchase, call us and ask for the Rebate Administrator at (903) 763-2203 or email greatrebates@wcec.org. The administrator can guide you to help you best maximize this opportunity.

Great Rebates is a wonderful way to take advantage of continual savings on your electric bill and reap some immediate

financial rewards while doing so. And it's a win-win for all members because together we'll be increasing efficiency, reducing our energy demand and limiting our carbon footprint. How great is that?

For details, go to WCEC.org and under Member Services, select the Great Rebates tab.

GREAT REBATES PROGRAM ITEMS

HEATING AND COOLING

- ▶ **Energy Star Window/Room AC Unit**—Install an Energy Star-qualified (10.8-SEER or higher) window/room unit for a \$50 rebate.
- ▶ **Heat Pump**—Install HVAC equipment (in electric-only, single-family homes or small businesses) with a 15-SEER high-efficiency heat pump for a \$300 rebate, or install a 16-SEER for a \$500 rebate.
- ▶ **HVAC Tuneup**—\$50 rebate on an HVAC tuneup performed by a qualified service professional.
- ▶ **Duct Cleaning/Inspection/Repair**—\$100 rebate on ductwork for existing mobile home or residential/small business system.

INSULATION

- ▶ **Any Insulation R19 and above**—11 cents per square foot with \$500 max rebate.
- ▶ **Spray Foam Insulation**—30 cents per square foot with \$600 max rebate.

NEW BUILD

- ▶ **New Energy-Efficient Homes**—Build a home/small business with a verifiable Home Energy Rating System (HERS) score of 60 for a \$500 rebate.
- ▶ **New Energy-Efficient Small Business/Home**—Build a verifiable LEEDS-certified structure to receive a \$500 rebate.

APPLIANCES

- ▶ **Energy Star Dishwasher**—Install a dishwasher with an Energy Star unit to receive a \$50 rebate.
- ▶ **Energy Star Refrigerator**—Install a refrigerator with an Energy Star unit for a \$75 rebate.
- ▶ **Heat Pump Water Heater**—Install a high-efficiency heat pump water heater for a \$200 rebate.
- ▶ **High-Efficiency Electric Water Heater**—Install a high-efficiency electric water heater for a \$50 rebate, or \$100 if switching from gas.

ELECTRONIC THERMOSTAT

- ▶ **Programmable Thermostat**—Install a programmable thermostat and receive a \$50 rebate.



Take advantage of Wood County EC's Great Rebates program to receive a \$50 rebate on an HVAC tuneup.

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RENEWABLE

- ▶ **Solar Water Heater**—Install a solar water heater for up to a \$400 rebate.

OTHER

- ▶ **Solar Screen**—\$20 rebate per window for 80 percent minimum solar-heat blockage with a \$200 cap.
- ▶ **Window Film**—Professionally installed application with .45 solar heat gain coefficient for a rebate of 45 cents per square foot with a \$200 cap.
- ▶ **Residential Pool Pump (High-Efficiency, Variable Speed)**—\$150 rebate for installing a pump with a variable-speed unit.
- ▶ **Low-E or Double-Paned Window Installation**—\$20 rebate per window with a \$600 cap.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL LIGHTING

- ▶ **Per Fixture**—30 cents per watt saved. Must have a pre-inspection visit to be eligible for rebate. WCEC will calculate wattage saved and verify rebate up to \$2,000 annually.



Wood County Electric Cooperative

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CEO/GENERAL MANAGER

Debbie Robinson

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MEMBER BENEFITS AND SERVICES

- Online account access and bill payment
- Paperless E-Bill services
- Free bill-paying app
- Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover accepted
- SmartPower prepay electric system
- Scholarships and youth programs
- Safety and energy conservation programs

MOBILE CONVENIENCE CENTER

Monday, First Methodist Church, *Van*
Tuesday, Family Dollar, *Mount Vernon*
Wednesday, City National Bank, *Hawkins*
Thursday, Brookshire's, *Winnsboro*
Friday, Economy Drug, *Grand Saline*



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wcec.org



Good Sense with Local Cents

Working for the citizens of Wood County for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Agent Clint Perkins says he always feels compelled to patronize local businesses when possible. He believes that, because his paycheck comes from taxpayer dollars, it's important that his family gives back to the community.

So when he and his wife Kari began building their new custom home, they knew they wanted to source from East Texas as much as possible. Perkins said, "I tried as hard as I could to keep everything local. Eighty percent of the house's materials were bought locally. And 80 percent of the labor came from Wood County. We have some really good and skilled contractors."

Talking about different features, Perkins points to cabinets handmade in Alba, stone that came from East Texas Brick, and flooring purchased in Winnsboro. The doors were procured in Quitman, as was the heating and cooling system. Perkins said this all took a little bit of effort, but not as much as one might think.

Perkins worked on the plans for their dream home over the last four years, and as he refined them he also began thinking of another important consideration. During that time, he, Kari and their son Curtis had lived in some places that Perkins says were not very energy efficient. So when it came down to the final building plans, Clint did his homework to ensure that

their new home would offer energy savings for a lifetime. They've only been living in their house since September 2013, but Perkins says that little bit of research has already paid big dividends in the form of reduced electric bills.

Because the cost of heating and cooling is one of the largest contributors to a power bill (generally 56 percent), Perkins paid special attention when purchasing his HVAC unit, which was sized especially for their 1,918-square foot living space. "I knew I could get a cheaper unit, which would have given instant gratification in savings," he said. "But over the long haul, we would have paid much more over the years in energy use."

He had a 16-SEER, two-stage, four-ton, split-system heat pump installed for year-round heating and cooling.

SEER is the Seasonal Energy Efficiency Rating; and the higher the number, the more efficient it is. Today, any systems sold must have at least a 13-SEER rating. Systems with a rating of 14.5 or higher coupled with a Heating Performance Factor of 8.2 are awarded an Energy Star label because of superior energy efficiency.

Perkins also installed an electronic programmable thermostat to operate his HVAC unit. He can set the heating and cooling temperatures to operate less during regularly unoccupied times while his family is away. On average, this can save a family as much as 10 percent a year on heating and cooling costs.

Another feature Perkins decided to concentrate on was insulation. He chose spray foam for the walls and attic because it does a superior job of filling all of the nooks and crannies to provide top resistance to any heat flow. Foam operates more like a windbreaker—stopping air flow—as opposed to sweater-like fiberglass and cellulose, both of which breathe and allow air to pass through. That air leakage contributes to higher heating and cooling costs. Foam insulation, on the other hand, keeps the outside hot air from infiltrating during the summer so the air conditioner does not work as hard to cool the spaces. In the winter, it retains the warm air, so the heat pump does not work as hard to heat the space. As a side benefit, foam insulation increases the indoor air quality with reduced exposure to dust and pollens, and greatly reduces infiltration of outside noise.

In designing their new home, the Perkinses wanted to make good use of natural light but worried about heat gain and losses. To combat that, they employed Low-E glass, which has improved thermal efficiency over regular glass. And little by little, the Perkinses are adding blinds to achieve more privacy and offer further protection from heat gain during hot summer afternoons.

For all larger appliances, such as the refrigerator and clothes washing machine, Perkins selected all Energy Star-rated models. He chose a 50-gallon A.O. Smith water heater with two inches of foam insulation and an energy factor (EF) of 0.91. The minimum rating for an Energy Star water heater is 0.67. According to Energy Star, the average household spends up to \$600 per year heating water, and this is the second-largest annual energy expenditure in a home. Even a small increase in EF will offer savings. As explanation, a unit with a 0.67 EF is using 67 percent of the energy used to heat the

water and wasting the other 33 percent. Therefore, the Perkinses' 0.91 EF unit only wastes 9 percent of the energy used to produce hot water. A typical annual cost for water heating is \$514, but a model with a 0.67 percent factor costs around \$124 more to operate annually.

The average 2,000-square-foot home uses about 1,500 kilowatt-hours per month, according to the Energy Information Administration. Since October, the Perkinses have averaged about 1,100 kWh per month, reaping substantial savings. When they have lived in their home for an entire year, and the 12-month numbers can be calculated, it's likely that their average consumption numbers will fare even better. That's because



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Using spray foam insulation will not only insulate your home but also seal cracks to prevent drafts.

this past winter was extremely cold for much longer periods than usual, and likely skewed the math upward. Perkins said that this winter on the hill where his house is located, the temperature dropped to 13 degrees outside, but he and his family stayed comfortably warm at 70 to 72 degrees without breaking the bank.

By applying time-tested practical energy savings solutions that anyone can use, these Wood County Electric Cooperative members have built a house for the seasons. Using local talents and resources, they've built a home for the generations. May they thrive, as well as save on ... and on!



Won't You Lend Us Your Eyes and Ears?

The consequences of theft and vandalism of Wood County Electric Cooperative equipment plague us all in the form of higher costs, reduced reliability and increased safety hazards. And if that's not enough, these thefts are causing outages (some lengthy) because extensive damage takes time to repair.

In their quest to steal, these criminals have triggered some devastating damage that is many times costlier than the stolen items. They've also left behind highly dangerous conditions that have started fires and have even left sites with live, uncontained high voltage. These situations can cause severe injury or death to the unsuspecting, such as our linemen or innocent passers-by.

Increasingly brash offenders are taking elevated risks to steal equipment and copper. They've even entered high-voltage substations while cameras were trained on them.

In Texas, copper theft from power providers is a felony. Buying stolen copper is also a crime. At WCEC, in the pursuit of safety and protection of our members' pocketbooks, we vigorously support full prosecution of either of these offenses.

Our most valuable assets in combating this crime are the eyes and ears of our members. If you observe someone suspicious around power lines or electric substations, or suspect someone of copper theft, please report it to your local law enforcement or anonymously through Crimestoppers. Or call us at (903) 763-2203.

Our best successes in stopping these crimes have often been because of observant members. Your help matters.

Consider Using Tamper-Resistant Receptacles

They may look like standard outlets, but tamper-resistant receptacles, or TRRs, are different. Their most distinguishable feature—a built-in shutter system that prevents foreign objects from being inserted—sets them apart. Only a plug that applies simultaneous, equal pressure to both slots will disengage the cover plates, allowing access to the contact points. Without this synchronized pressure, the cover plates remain closed.

While a child's curiosity knows no boundaries, it can sometimes put them in peril, especially when electricity is involved. Electrical outlets and receptacles represent potential hazards for children.

In recent years, more homes have been equipping their electrical outlets with TRRs, but in many public facilities, like hospital pediatric wards, these safeguards have been required for more than 20 years. The National Electrical Code now requires TRRs in all new home construction.

Existing homes can be easily retrofitted with TRRs using the same installation guidelines that apply to standard receptacles. TRRs should only be installed by a licensed electrician and should carry a label from a nationally recognized, independent testing lab.

For more information on TRRS, visit esfi.org.

TRRs by the Numbers

- ▶ Each year 2,400 children suffer shocks and burns resulting from inserting objects into the slots of electrical receptacles. That's nearly seven children a day.
- ▶ It is estimated that six to 12 child fatalities result from children tampering with electrical receptacles.
- ▶ Existing homes can be retrofitted with TRRs for as little as \$2 per outlet.

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Energy-Saving Heating and Cooling Systems

Climate, costs and technology matter when looking at home comfort equipment

BY THOMAS KIRK

Did you know that more than half of what you're spending on energy bills goes to heating and cooling your home? It all adds up when you think about the amount of energy and money it takes to heat a home in the winter and to cool one in summer. However, consumers can turn this necessary expense into savings by selecting the appropriate heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system—commonly known as HVAC—for their needs. Modern systems featuring ductless, air-source or ground-source technologies are just as effective as more traditional systems, but are much more energy efficient.

Consider Going Ductless

If you are conditioning smaller areas in retrofits, home additions or in new construction, a ductless heat pump, referred to as a DHP, may be right for you. The DHP uses an estimated 50 to 60 percent less energy than electric resistance heating systems and may exceed the efficiency of ducted heat-pump systems by more than 25 percent. They're made up of an outside compressor, indoor air-handling units (mounted on a wall or ceiling), refrigerant lines and a controller (either an in-home display or wireless remote). A 1¼-ton DHP system—an average size for heating and cooling a single-zone home—could cost about \$4,000 to install.

Keep in mind that pricing varies based on brand and installation needs. But despite the system's benefits, some consumers may not like having their heating system and equipment located on their walls and visible. When DHPs are installed, they are placed at the top of walls, near the ceiling.

Is Air Source the Right Choice?

Ducted electric air-source heat pumps, or ASHPs, provide year-round space conditioning and can both heat and cool a home. They use a single piece of equipment—allowing for a lower capital cost in most cases—and provide heat less expensively than electric resistance heating.

These systems work by transferring energy between the air outside and either the air or water inside a building. This principle of moving energy, not creating heat, is what allows ASHPs to be more efficient than electric resistance heating.

When choosing an ASHP, consider your local climate and heating needs. Most air-source heat pumps are best suited to relatively warm climates. When temperatures are low in such regions, a heat pump's efficiency falls dramatically.

Choosing the right system size is also important. If a heat pump is too small, it can't provide sufficient cooling, but an oversized one can be costly and require ductwork and other equipment to operate, which are added expenses. Newer systems are proving effective in northern regions, especially when combined with a backup fuel source such as natural gas.

Ground Source

Ground-source heat pumps, or GSHPs, also called geothermal heat pumps or geexchange systems, are electrically powered devices that use consistent year-round temperatures found underground to regulate indoor air temperature.

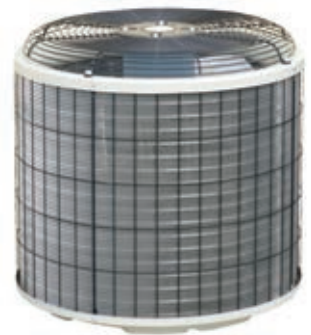
GSHP systems comprise one or more underground loops that act as heat exchangers. They are connected to a heat pump unit that is then connected to a home's heating and air-conditioning system. In the summer, the loops transfer heat from the home into the ground or, in some cases, water. In the winter, the process is reversed. Because GSHPs take advantage of moderate temperatures found below the ground for heating and cooling, they are much more efficient than air-source heat pumps and other standard HVAC equipment in most climates.

While savings vary depending on climate, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates that most homeowners will see a return on their investment in a GSHP system in two to 10 years through lower energy bills. A desuperheater or hot water generator can be added to the GSHP system, eliminating the need to heat water with gas or more electricity. If the investment is financed on a mortgage, cost savings begin immediately.

As you consider these many heating and cooling options for your home, think carefully about whether a high-efficiency system will save you money in the long run and whether it

With any HVAC system, taking some easy and inexpensive energy-saving measures will maximize your home's efficiency.

- ▶ Add caulk and weatherstripping around doors and windows.
- ▶ Add insulation to attics and exposed walls.
- ▶ Move furniture or obstacles away from vents.
- ▶ Close blinds or curtains during the day to keep heat out, or open them to allow more heat in.



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meets your heating and cooling needs. Remember that HVAC costs vary significantly by manufacturer, region, dealer and the time of year the unit is purchased. So, as you evaluate these systems and comparison shop, be sure to get local or regional price quotes. Some of the best savings and deals can come from government programs offering rebates, tax incentives or interest-free loans.

Thomas Kirk writes for the Cooperative Research Network, a service of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.