

## Be Sure To Deliver All The Packages You Wrap



**MESSAGE FROM CEO AND GENERAL MANAGER DEBBIE ROBINSON**

Every Thanksgiving, with family gathered 'round, we take turns sharing what we're thankful for. Some things seem trivial, some humorous, some deeply touching.

I always walk away from the table—slowly, from overindulging—and wonder why we only do this once a year. Are we really only appreciative when the calendar tells us we should be?

I suspect we let the hustle and bustle of day-to-day living get in the way of taking time to appreciate how



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blessed we are and letting the people responsible for those blessings know how much we appreciate them.

Like most of you, if asked what I'm grateful for, I'd say something like, "I'm grateful for family, friends, a comfortable bed to sleep in, good health and a home to shelter my family."

But, goodness, that's an awfully short list for someone who has so much.

I'm also fortunate to have a job that

I love—being general manager of Wood County Electric Cooperative. While some days aren't easy, knowing that the work we do here at your electric cooperative makes our members' lives better is richly satisfying. Nowhere in the world will you find a more dedicated and hardworking group of employees.

Our linemen literally risk life and limb every single day in their efforts to keep power flowing to each and every home and business on our system. Other employees provide critical behind-the-scenes support to make sure everything runs smoothly.

Working in this business, I learned quickly not to take a constant supply of electricity for granted and to be grateful when it is available. While it's never convenient to be without power, it does give us a moment to reflect on just how much we rely on this invisible servant. Sometimes it's a convenience we miss, like hot popcorn in 3 minutes from a microwave oven.

Other times the absence of electricity can be life-threatening, such as when it's not available to power a breathing machine or other health-related equipment.

When the power does go out, I'm grateful we have talented and skilled crews very willing and available 24/7 to fix the problem and understanding members who patiently await completion of the repairs.

William Arthur Ward is credited with saying, "Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."

I'm going to do my best throughout the year to make sure every gift I wrap gets delivered.

With this letter I express my sincerest gratitude to all WCEC employees and I wish all of them, along with all of our members and their families a richly blessed Thanksgiving.

## What Does 'Green' Really Mean?

Most people believe a "green" home is energy efficient—and it is. But that's just one part of a three-prong "green" strategy that also involves water conservation and indoor air quality.

Still, energy efficiency is a good place to start if you want to make your home more environmentally friendly, healthier and cheaper to operate.

Here are some tips for being green:

**1. ENERGY EFFICIENCY.** Conduct an extensive energy audit of your home. There are a variety of online tools ([www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov) is a good place to start), or you can hire an energy specialist to do the audit for you. The audit should include checking your home for leaks—in air-conditioning ducts, windows, walls and the attic. If leaks are found, fix them before you invest in expensive new products like super-efficient windows or a new air-conditioning system. Even the most efficient products won't cut your energy bills if you install them in a house that's leaking air.

**2. WATER CONSERVATION.** Invest in plumbing fixtures that make water savings automatic. If your toilets are the ancient models that swallow five gallons with every flush, buy low-water versions that use 1.6 gallons or less. Look for the new WaterSense designation for faucets, showerheads and lawn-watering fixtures and be sure to fix any leaking faucets.

**3. AIR QUALITY.** Properly ventilating bathrooms and kitchens can help your whole family breathe easier. And choosing less-toxic versions of paints, carpets and other materials can go a long way toward improving your home's indoor air quality.

**HAPPY  
THANKSGIVING**

*from Wood County  
Electric Cooperative*

# Extension Cord Safety: Make Smart Connections

**D**uring the holiday season, families often string together extension cords without a second thought. Unfortunately, not all cords are created equal.

Just because an extension cord can reach an outlet across a room doesn't mean it's the right one for the task at hand. If a tool, appliance or holiday display draws more current than an extension cord can carry, it may cause the cord (and whatever is connected to it) to overheat and start a fire.

Cords come in many lengths and are marked with a size or gauge. The gauge is based on the American Wire Gauge (AWG) System, in which the larger the wire, the smaller the AWG number.

For example, a 12-gauge wire would be larger and could power larger wattage appliances than a 14-gauge wire. A cord, based on its gauge, can power appliances of a certain wattage only at specific distances. As the cord gets longer, the current-carrying capacity of the cord drops.



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Using the right cord for the job is only the first step in using extension cords safely. Follow these tips to ensure safe use and make smart connection decisions:

- Look for the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) symbol. The UL mark means that samples of the cord have been tested for safety hazards.

- Never use an indoor

extension cord outdoors, as it could result in electric shock or trigger a fire. Extension cords that can be used outdoors will be clearly marked "Suitable for Use with Outdoor Appliances."

- Extension cords should not be placed underneath rugs or other heavy furniture; tacked in place to a wall or taped down; or used while coiled or bent. Match the length of the cord to your needs.

- Store all cords indoors when not in use. Outdoor conditions can deteriorate a cord over time.

- Unplug extension cords when not in use. The cord will continue conducting electricity until unplugged.

- On cords with more than one outlet, use the covers provided for unused openings. Children and pets face serious injury if they chew on unused cord outlets or stick sharp metal objects into the openings.

- Do not use extension cords that are cut or damaged. Touching even a single exposed strand of wire can result in an electric shock or burn.

- Never file or cut the plug blades or grounding pin of an extension cord or appliance to plug it into an old outlet.

- As a safety feature, extension cords and most appliances boast polarized plugs (one blade wider than the other). These special plugs are designed to prevent electric shock by properly aligning circuit conductors. If a plug does not fit, have a qualified electrician install a new outlet.

*Source: Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.*

## Tax Credits To Expire in December

If you need new windows, roofing, insulation or an air conditioner, consider replacing them by December 31.

That's when the federal tax credit for energy-efficient home improvements expires.

For qualifying products that you have installed by the end of the year, you can take a tax credit of up to \$1,500 on your 2010 taxes. You can claim the credit on 30 percent of the cost of the following products:

- Windows, doors and skylights
- Metal or asphalt roofs (other kinds don't qualify)
- Insulation
- Electric heat-pump water heaters; gas, oil or propane water heaters
- Air-conditioning and heating systems
- Biomass stoves

You can claim the credit on 30 percent of the cost of the following products—with no limit at all—until the end of 2016:

- Geothermal heat pumps
- Solar panels
- Solar water heaters
- Small wind-energy systems
- Fuel cells

**THE CATCH:** The requirements for each product are very specific. Not every product is eligible for the tax credit; not even every energy-efficient or Energy Star product is eligible.

So don't assume that you'll qualify for the tax credit just because you're buying an energy-efficient device in one of these categories. Double-check before you buy by visiting the federal government's Energy Star page at [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).