

January  
2004



## Lane-Scott Electric Cooperative

# LANE-SCOTT CONNECTIONS

P.O. Box 758, 410 S. High St., Dighton, KS 67839  
Phone 620-397-5327



This picture was taken after the presentation to the public and school board at the Healy High School on December 8, 2003. Pictured Left to right: Front row Kristy Yates, Chris Butler, Jerrad Temple, Michael Pollock Back row Earl Steffens, Manager of Lane-Scott Electric; Tim Herra, Advisor; Chris Venters, Matthew Pollock and Michael Higgins, Advisor.

## *Students Earn Grant, Gain Experience*

Tim Herra and Michael Higgins, both advisors at Healy High School challenged their students to do a survey and presentation on a wind farm in their area. The students had the opportunity to win a grant for the school from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and Lane-Scott Electric Cooperative as well as gain valuable education experience.

Earl Steffens, Manager of Lane-Scott Electric said, "Lane-Scott Electric is excited to see the good quality of young people who get involved in this type of project and is happy to help sponsor this type of educational experience."

The Economics and Agriculture classes were assigned to create a Power Point presentation and to write a survey over the wind

farm. The students distributed 100 surveys to citizens of Grey County. Unfortunately those surveys went unanswered.

The students involved in the presentation along with Physics, both 7th and 8th grades were able to take a field trip to the wind farm in Montezuma, KS. The class had a great time touring through the turbines and said they were glad to have the chance to visit the farm.

The students' initial reluctance in getting involved in such a big assignment soon turned into the realization that it had been a good experience for them. The student's said, "We would like to thank the teachers for taking time to do this for our school and everyone who has been involved in the project."

### **Lane-Scott Electric Cooperative Newsletter**

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Owned & Published by  
The Lane-Scott Electric  
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### **In Case of Outage**

If your electricity is off for more than a few minutes, call Dighton, 1-800-407-2217. Office hours 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. After hours calls will be answered by the dispatch and forwarded to standby personnel.

**After Hours & Weekends Call:  
1-800-407-2217**

### **24-Hour Electrician Emergency Service**

If you are without electricity, or have an electrical emergency on your side of the meter, we have a master electrician on staff available 24 hours a day. To request after-hours electrician service, call the following number:

**1-800-407-2217**

## *Sharing the holiday spirit!*



Nate Burns in the bucket, puts up Christmas lights as Bruce McAntee supervises. Lane-Scott Electric puts up the Christmas decorations each year as well as any lights that the merchants have ready for them to put on the building. This really helps to give Dighton a nice atmosphere for the Christmas season and let people traveling through town that we are proud of our community.

## Essay Contest For Students At Rural Schools

The National Rural Education Association is calling all students in grades three through 12 who attend a rural school to enter its 2004 essay contest.

The assigned topics and word limits vary for the age range, but guidelines for the contest can be found at <http://www.nrea.net/events.htm>. Entries must be postmarked by February 4, 2004. Winners will be announced April 1, 2004.

The National Rural Education Association (NREA) is the oldest established national organization of its kind in the United States. Formerly known as the REA, the Association traces its origins back to 1907 when it was originally founded as the Department of Rural Education. For more information about the NREA, see <http://www.nrea.net>.

## Deciding Between Mid-Efficiency And High-Efficiency Furnaces

If you are shopping for a new furnace, be sure to check the yellow Energy Guide Label that is required on all new heating appliances. The efficiency of furnaces is rated by Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency (AFUE), and the Energy Guide Label helps you compare the efficiencies of various units. If your existing furnace is an older model with a continuous pilot flame and no draft fan, it probably has an AFUE of around 65 percent.

You have two efficiency choices when shopping for a new gas furnace. A mid-efficiency furnace (80% plus) should save you between 15 and 20 percent of your current heating costs. A high-efficiency furnace (90% plus) furnace should save you between 25 and 30 percent.

The mid-efficiency furnace (80% plus) is equipped with a better heat exchanger, a draft fan to regulate combustion, and electronic ignition to replace the continuous pilot flame. These improvements provide efficiency improvements when compared to traditional open-combustion models with a lower AFUE. The mid-efficiency furnace vents its combustion gases into a masonry or metal chim-

ney. Since they use the existing chimney, the chimney may sometimes need to be upgraded for safety reasons, adding to the cost.

A high-efficiency furnace (90% plus) includes all the improvements of mid-efficiency furnaces. They also recover extra heat from combustion gases by extracting water from these gases using a special corrosion-resistant heat exchanger. Combustion gases vent through plastic PVC pipe and combustion air enters from outdoors through another plastic pipe. This sealed combustion is a health and safety advantage over mid-efficiency models because combustion gases can't leak into the house. Though the high-efficiency furnace will cost more than the mid-efficiency model, it may be a better choice because of both safety and efficiency.

To save even more on your heating costs, consider installing a programmable thermostat that automatically adjusts the temperature of your home. Programmable thermostats can save an additional 5-10 percent in heating costs for most families.

Source: John Krigger, Saturn Resource Management ([www.residential-energy.com](http://www.residential-energy.com))

## Setting Your Thermostat Back Pays Dividends in Energy, Money

Setting your home's thermostat back a few degrees at night will definitely save you money in the long run, says Doug Walter, president of the Kansas Building Science Institute in Manhattan.

"A night setback of 10 degrees for eight hours will typically save from seven to 12 percent on annual heating costs," according to Walter.

To make the process easier, several manufacturers offer add-on devices that can turn

your thermostat up and down automatically, according to instructions programmed into the controller.

"These devices fit many standard thermostats and require no additional wiring or interference with your thermostat's present wiring," Walter said. "The cost is about half that of many replacement clock thermostats."

You can build your own automatic thermostat controller for less than \$10 using an appliance timer, an extension cord and a

night-light.

The night-light is plugged into the extension cord and mounted about two inches below your thermostat. The extension cord is connected to the appliance timer, which is plugged into a nearby electrical outlet.

"The timer should be set to turn the night-light on whenever a temperature reduction is desired," Walter said. "The heat from the bulb warms the thermostat, resulting in a reduction of room temperature."

## Secret Places Where The Air Leaks Hide

Cracks around windows and doors were once considered to be the home's most prominent air leaks. Then building specialists starting measuring air leakage with a device called a blower door. As a result of that research, we've learned that caulking small cracks and weather-stripping doors and windows isn't very effective at reducing air leakage. The biggest air leaks are lurking in the attic, around the foundation, and where utilities pass through the building's outer shell. When you have large hidden air leaks, sealing the little ones doesn't reduce your heating costs much.

Find a specialist in your region who performs energy audits and blower-door testing. The blower door could tell you whether or not air leakage is a problem in your home. If your energy audit shows that air leakage is an energy and comfort problem, go looking for large openings in your home's shell.

You'll often find large air leaks under bathrooms and kitchens where pipes and wires are installed. Go into your attic, too, and note where pipes, wires, recessed light fixtures, and chimneys penetrate your ceiling. Follow the plumbing and wiring and you'll be on the right track.

When you find openings that allow air to leak into and out of your home, seal them with durable materials. Don't worry about cracks smaller than 1/4-inch. For cracks between 1/4-inch and 1-inch, use liquid foam that comes in a can, or stuff fiberglass tightly into the opening. For larger openings, use rigid foam board or plywood, and seal the edges with more liquid foam. If you seal around chimneys, be sure to use fireproof materials such as sheet metal. Every opening you seal will reduce the amount of heated air you lose next winter.

Source: John Krigger

## Installing Water Heater Blankets

By John Krigger

Water heaters use a lot of energy even when you're not using hot water. This stand-by loss happens when heat travels through your water heater's walls, and can account for a substantial portion of your water heating costs.

Most older water heaters have only an inch of fiberglass tank insulation, and most newer ones have just an inch of foam insulation. You can reduce your energy consumption by installing an additional blanket of fiberglass insulation. This is one of the most common and effective energy-conservation measures available.

Water-heater blankets come in kits that contain a blanket, straps and tape. The straps hold the insulation to the water heater, and the tape seals the seams in the insulation.

- Turn the water heater off before installing the blanket. Read all the instructions that come with the blanket.
- Identify the areas where the blanket will be taped to the water heater. Wash these well so the tape will stick.
- Cut the blanket to size with scissors or a sharp knife. Leave some extra until you know for sure how much you'll need.
- Identify the pressure relief valve on either the top or side. Don't cover this important safety device.
- For electric water heaters, you can insulate the top of the tank as well as the sides. Note where two rectangular covers provide access to the thermostats and elements. Cut small flaps in the insulation to provide access to these panels.
- For gas water heaters, don't insulate the top. Note the gas valve and burner access door near the bottom of the tank. Cut the blanket so it is at least two inches away from these.
- Install the blanket so it is snug, and fasten it well so it will stay in place.

This long-lasting conservation measure will save energy day and night for the life of your water heater.

Source: **Saturn Resource Management** ([www.residential-energy.com](http://www.residential-energy.com))

John Krigger is a nationally recognized author of numerous energy efficiency books, including *Your Home Cooling Guide*; *EnergyWise Guide to Home Energy Conservation and Residential Energy*; and *Cost Savings and Comfort for Existing Buildings*. For more info on his publications, please visit his website [www.residential-energy.com](http://www.residential-energy.com).

## Save Your Strength

If you're trying to save water and energy by washing dishes by hand, give yourself a break.

Ohio State University home economists proved dishwashers can clean eight place settings worth of dishes with 11 gallons of water, yet it takes 16 gallons to hand wash the same amount. If you turn off the dishwasher after the rinse cycle and open the door for air drying, you'll save electricity, too.

Some family heirlooms should still be washed by hand, however. Dishwasher detergents can dull the glaze on old china, and some delicate glass may even turn yellow because of the dishwasher's hot water, detergent chemicals and steam.

## What That TV Show Costs...

If you've ever wondered how much it costs to watch TV, here's an example for a month.

"An average solid-state, color television may be rated at 300 watts per hour of operation," said Bruce Snead, extension specialist in residential energy at Kansas State University.

If the average family watches four hours of television a day, this amount to 1.2 kilowatt-hours per day. A 30-day total would be 36 kilowatt-hours.

"At eight cents per kilowatt-hour, the cost would be about \$2.88 a month," Snead said.

**HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR**

*From Everyone at  
Lane-Scott  
Electric*

# Winter Survival Outage Tips

❖ Don't connect an electric generator to house wiring. If you do, it could energize power lines where your cooperative linemen are working, possibly resulting in electrocution.

❖ Avoid downed power lines.

❖ Never use a charcoal grill indoors; it produces deadly fumes.

❖ Keep a fire extinguisher near portable heating and cooking sources.

❖ If you leave home during an outage, shut off all electricity at the main service panel.

❖ If you are dependent upon a life-support system, evacuate to a shelter with electricity.

❖ Don't open freezers. Food will remain frozen 48 hours in a full freezer that stays closed, especially one covered with blankets.

❖ When an outage is foreseeable, scrub up the bathtub and fill it with water for cooking, cleaning or flushing commodes.

❖ Pour radiator antifreeze down drains and into commode tanks and flush them. Drain the water heater.

## Before the Storm

◆ Keep ahead of the winter storm by listening to weather forecasts.

◆ Check to see that your battery operated radio and flashlights are in working order. Buy extra batteries. Check medical supplies, baby items and first aid supplies.

◆ Make necessary trips for supplies before the storm develops. Stock up on canned and ready to eat foods (make sure you have a manual can opener in case of a power outage).

◆ Make sure you have an alternate heat source and fuel. Never burn charcoal or trash inside.) Test your fire extinguisher and smoke detectors.

◆ On the farm, move animals to sheltered areas, haul extra feed and have ample water supply for them.

# Winter Driving Tips

Winter driving presents new challenges and dangers for motorists, including slippery road surfaces and limited visibility. These basic preparation tips by *Consumer Reports* and a gentle driving style will increase your chances of skating through the season unscathed.

- Before driving, be sure to remove all snow and ice completely off the car. This will insure you are able to see out all of the windows and prevent large chunks of snow sliding and covering the windows or flying off and hitting another vehicle. This will also allow other people and yourself to see the lights from your taillights and headlights.
- If you drive a lot in slippery conditions, it's a good idea to replace your tires with a set of winter tires. These have tread patterns and rubber compounds specially designed to grip snow and ice, for optimum traction on slick roads.
- If starting the vehicle from a standstill position on slick snow or ice, start in second gear so the vehicle is less likely to spin the tires.
- Drive slowly and smoothly. Sudden movements, like braking quickly or turning sharply, can cause you to lose traction and slide.
- When you need to stop, plan on starting your braking sooner than you normally would in dry conditions.
- If you have a vehicle without an antilock braking system (ABS), you may need to gently pump the brakes repeatedly to avoid having them lock up the wheels. The majority of cars today have ABS brakes, so gently depress the brake pedal and hold it down. The ABS system typically sends a vibration or pulsing sensation through the brake pedal. If you feel this, don't let up; it's normal.
- Should the car begin to slide, steer in the direction of the slide and gently let off the gas until you regain control.
- Don't let four- or all-wheel drive (4WD and AWD) give you a false sense of security. 4WD and AWD systems only provide extra traction when accelerating, not in braking or cornering. So use the above tips no matter what type of vehicle you're driving.
- For some winter practice, go out to an empty parking lot and maneuver the car through some skids. You will gain some confidence and know how your car handles the snow.
- Be extra wary of other motorists. They may not be driving as cautiously as you.

Source: [ConsumerReports.org](http://ConsumerReports.org), [cartalk.cars.com](http://cartalk.cars.com)

## Dealing with the Cold and Flue Season

When the first crisp nights of autumn arrive, it's tempting to build a crackling fire in the fireplace. But when the weather gets really cold, an open fire can actually rob your home of far more heat than it produces. In fact, when you open your fireplace damper, you're creating an escape hatch that lets out as much heated air as a large open window!

So enjoy your fires when the weather is more moderate, and reduce your use of the fireplace during the really cold months. Be sure to keep that flue closed whenever the fireplace isn't in use. If you really love a fire, install glass fireplace doors that let you see those flickering flames, but keeps the heat in the room from going up in smoke.