Sow the Holiday Spirit All Year Long

MESSAGE FROM
PRESIDENT/CEO RYAN BARTLETT

CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY, A FOUNDING PRINCIPLE IN THE COOPER-ative world, particularly resonates with many of us during the holidays. And it's no wonder, what with all the entreaties to donate time and resources to charitable causes late in the year. We at Taylor Electric Cooperative encourage our members to give to the causes they hold dear and in whatever ways they can. We'd also like to issue a gentle reminder that many agencies and organizations struggle to keep afloat at other times of the year, when offerings aren't so abundant.

It's in this spirit and with an unwavering goal of serving our community that Taylor EC contributes to efforts like food drives and the Special Olympics year-round. The holidays are a wonderful time to help those in need, of course, and the spike in giving during the holidays can be immensely helpful. However, many nonprofits would benefit greatly from a more balanced approach to giving.

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Whether you have a bit of time or money to spare and whatever your chosen beneficiary, think about spreading out your assistance over the course of the year. Modest, regular contributions of time or financial support to an organization of your choosing can be more sustaining than seasonal giving. Many charities offer monthly donation programs.

It's also worth remembering that thoughtful gestures can have a big impact on those who otherwise may feel left out of holiday festivities. Something as simple as checking in on an ill or elderly neighbor or delivering a special treat or notes of thanks to those who don't get to spend the holidays with their loved ones (including first responders, medical personnel and, often, our own dedicated lineworkers) could warm someone's heart.

However you enjoy the beauty of the season, Taylor EC wishes you and yours a very merry Christmas and happy holidays.

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Bright and Efficient Holiday Lighting

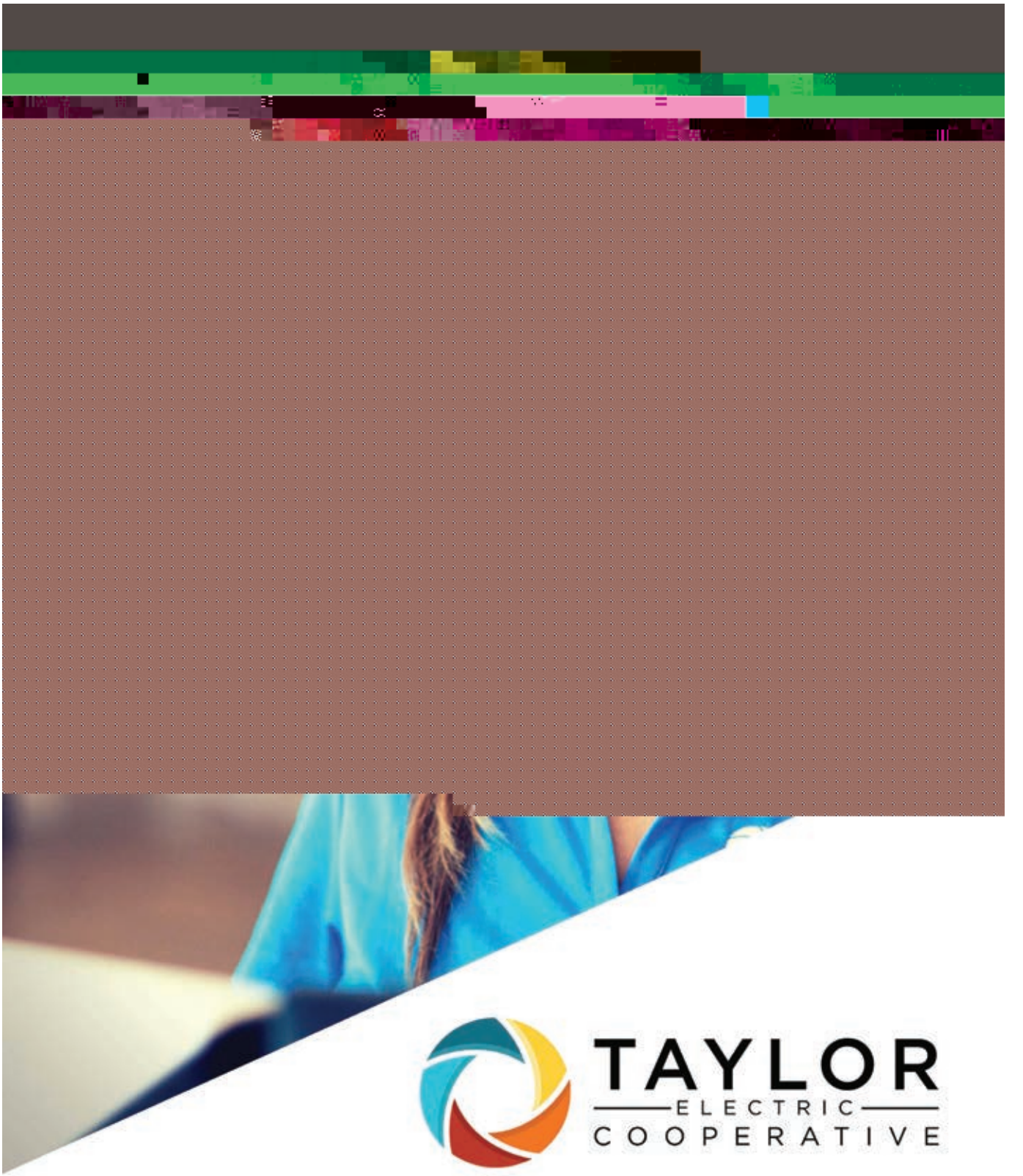
DECKING THE HALLS DOESN'T HAVE TO take a toll on your energy bill. Keep your holiday lighting merry, bright and energy efficient with LED light strands.

▶ Consider replacing older light strands with new, Energy Star-rated LED lights, which are 70 percent more efficient and last 10 times longer than age-old standard incandescent bulbs.

▶ You sill can get the look of cozy lighting with LEDs. Just look for "warm white" on the label.

▶ Unlike older light strands, LED lights give off virtually no heat, making them safer for kids and pets (and reindeer).

▶ Save energy by setting a timer for outdoor lighting and decorations. Program the timer so the lights turn on in the evening and turn off later at night, when you typically go to sleep.



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Heat Small Spaces Sensibly

AH, THE LUXURIOUS WARMTH A SPACE HEATER PROVIDES. IT CAN FEEL LIKE A GODSEND during the coldest days of winter, particularly if your home has chilly areas. But that increased comfort comes at a price: a higher risk of fire, burns and electrical shock, not to mention a serious reduction in energy efficiency. It's worth noting that no space heaters currently qualify for the government's Energy Star rating, and the Environmental Protection Agency, which applies the designation, has no plans to label them in the near future.

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So to enjoy the cozy warmth that space heaters give off as economically as possible—and avoid endangering your family and home—keep the following guidance in mind.

▶ Purchase only new space heaters that have up-to-date safety features, including a tip-over switch, which automatically shuts off the heater if it falls on its side. Make sure the model you choose displays the certification mark of a reputable independent testing laboratory.

▶ Select a space heater that is designed to heat a room comparable in size to the room you plan to use it in, and compare wattages of similar models of heaters to determine which uses less energy.

▶ Place the space heater on a level surface out of the way of foot traffic.

▶ Be especially mindful of keeping children and pets away from space heaters.

▶ The space heater should be plugged directly into a wall outlet only, not into extension cords or power strips. Also, don't plug anything else into the same outlet as the space heater.

▶ Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from anything flammable, including draperies, rugs, furniture and paper.

▶ Opt for a space heater with thermostat and timer settings to save energy and prevent overheating the room. In the absence of a timer setting, always turn a space heater off when leaving the room or going to bed. Don't forget to unplug it, too.

A final word of caution in putting supplemental heating methods to work: Never use an oven for home heating. Since it can emit carbon monoxide, which can be fatal, an oven's door should be opened for short periods of time only. By heeding this advice and the steps outlined above, you can stay warm and safe this winter.

Taylor Electric Cooperative

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Ryan Bartlett

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May your home be filled with joy and love this holiday season.

To allow our employees to enjoy the holidays with their families, Taylor Electric Cooperative will be closed Monday–Tuesday, December 24–25, for Christmas and Tuesday, January 1, for New Year's.

Happy Holidays

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Staying Warm and Safe This Winter

IT SEEMS INTUITIVE THAT ELECTRICITY USE INCREASES DURING winter, when sunlight is limited, days are shorter and temperatures much lower. You're surely aware of the battle to keep your home a decent temperature during those colder months, but you also should be aware of some of the potential electrical safety risks.

More home fires occur during colder months than at any other time of the year. Help ensure safety for you and your loved ones this winter by following these tips and minimizing your home's hazards.

Electric Blankets and Heating Pads

Did you know electric blankets and heating pads cause almost 500 fires each year in the U.S.? According to Electrical Safety Foundation International, the majority of those fires were caused by electric blankets that were more than 10 years old.

Experts say you should never fold an electric blanket or tuck it into other blankets while in use because it could overheat and cause a fire. Don't place anything on top of a heating pad or electric blanket, as this also increases the chances of overheating. Be sure to inspect the electric cords to look for cracks and fraying.

Candles

Did you know December is the peak time of year for home candle fires? Never leave candles unattended or near any items that are flammable.

Roughly one-third of home candle fires start in the bedroom, so you also should avoid placing candles in your bedroom or anywhere you could fall asleep. The top three days for home candle fires are Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Consider using battery-operated candles to avoid the risk altogether.

Cords and Outlets

Plugging too many appliances into a single outlet or extension cord can cause overheating that could lead to a fire. Be mindful of how many appliances and devices you connect to an extension cord.

Do not hide electric cords or power strips behind furniture or under rugs because they could spark and start a fire. Never place electric cords within a child's reach. You also should use plastic safety caps to cover outlets to keep children from sticking their fingers or other objects inside. Keep dogs and cats away from electric cords, too, to make sure they do not chew on them and cause a short or shock.

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Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms

A carbon monoxide detector can alert you and your loved ones to the presence of the deadly, odorless, colorless gas in your home. Smoke detectors should be on every level of your home and outside each sleeping area. Check the batteries in both of these lifesaving devices regularly. Make sure to test your smoke and CO alarms monthly to ensure they're working properly.

Space Heaters

Your space heater should be kept at least 3 feet away from anything that's flammable, such as rugs, blankets and curtains. Placing a heater too close to upholstered furniture, clothing, a mattress or bedding is the leading factor contributing to fatal home fires. Don't leave your space heater unattended, and unplug it when it's not in use. Consider getting a space heater that has an automatic shut-off.