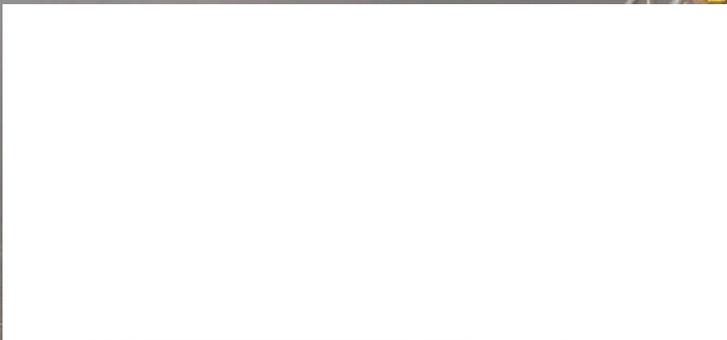


Since 1940

# WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* November 2016 NEWS

# High hopes for hydro



TAYLOR ELECTRIC  
*Cooperative*  
Your Touchstone Energy® Partner





# 20 YEARS of Christmas Wishes

For 20 years, Taylor Electric Cooperative has been helping to brighten the holidays for friends and neighbors in need through the Christmas Wish Program. It's just one of the ways we exemplify the seventh cooperative principle, Concern for Community.

Watch next month's *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News* for details about the

## 20th Annual Christmas Wish Program.

**You CAN help make someone's holiday a little brighter!**

For more information, contact WIGM/WKEB radio at (715) 748-2566.



## DONT FORGET TO FALL BACK

This is the time of year (November 6, to be exact) when we set our clocks back an hour for daylight saving time. Changing the clocks is an easy task to forget since we only have to do it twice a year. Thankfully, most calendars come noted with reminders. Take advantage of this reminder and use daylight saving time to perform a few other necessary household tests.



First, please also remember that if you have a time-of-day meter, it will automatically change to the new time Sunday morning. If you are using any timeclocks to control your usage during the peak times, you may need to reset them. **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO RESET YOUR TIME-CLOCKS.**

After you've turned all of your clocks back, turn to your smoke alarms to change the batteries. Batteries should be changed at least once a year.

Test smoke alarms monthly by pushing the TEST button or using other procedures recommended by the manufacturer. Smoke alarm batteries should be changed at least once a year. If an alarm "beeps" to indicate low batteries, change them right away. Replace all smoke alarms at least every 10 years.

Once you've checked your smoke alarms, turn your attention to your carbon monoxide detectors. If your home has battery-operated carbon monoxide detectors, use Daylight Saving Time to remind you to change those batteries too. This is especially important as the heating season gets underway.

## Happy Thanksgiving from Taylor Electric Cooperative!

Our office will be closed Thursday and Friday, November 24 and 25.





## DON'T LET YOUR WINTER EFFICIENCY FALL BEHIND

Take time this fall to make home improvements that will boost energy efficiency. The Energy Education Council provides tips on how to prepare your home now to help cut back on winter energy costs.

Consider scheduling an energy audit. It will reveal the biggest sources of inefficiencies around the home so that you're able to identify how best to cut back on energy loss.

Start the season off with a fresh filter and a thorough cleaning of your furnace. The filter should be checked every month. If you find it dirty during this check, EnergyStar.gov advises that you change it. At a minimum, it should be changed every three months.

Check for air leaks around windows, doors, fireplaces, electrical boxes, outlets, and light switches. Use caulk and weather stripping to fill in gaps and leaks. Also check your attic insulation level. According to EnergyStar.gov, if it is just level with or below the floor joists, more insulation should be added.

Insulate your hot water heater so that it can stay warm longer without wasting energy. If your water heater is warm to the touch, it should be covered by a blanket. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, you can lower the temperature of the water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit and

still enjoy comfortable hot water—with lowered heating costs. For every 10 degrees that you reduce the temperature, a person can save between 3 and 5 percent on water heating costs.

Check that vents are not blocked by furniture or curtains. Also make sure that radiators or baseboards are clean and unobstructed. If you have a fireplace, keep the damper closed when it is not being used. If you do not foresee use of the fireplace, plug and seal the flue.

Think about adding or upgrading window coverings. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that draperies can reduce up to 10 percent of heat loss. On sunny winter days, keep drapes open on southern and eastern windows. Close window coverings on cloudy days and at night to reduce heat loss. Adding area rugs can help insulate the floor of your room, using less heat when temperatures drop.

If you have a schedule where you are regularly away from home for part of the day, consider installing a programmable thermostat, which can help you save money. Also, if you are looking to replace an older appliance, consider Energy Star labeled products, which can save you money over the life of the appliance.

For more information on energy efficiency, please visit [EnergyEdCouncil.org](http://EnergyEdCouncil.org).—Source: [safeelectricity.org](http://safeelectricity.org)



Changing your furnace filter, caulking around windows and doors, and installing a programmable thermostat are steps you can take in the fall to help you save on your energy costs in the winter.

## LOAD MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO BE TESTED

A test of Taylor Electric Cooperative's load management system will be conducted Wednesday, November 16. This test is designed to provide you with the opportunity to observe your control device, to ensure that the indicator lights on your load-control receiver (pictured at right) function properly, and to check that your heating system and/or back-up



heating system is working properly before winter sets in and the weather gets very cold. Please check to see that your heating system is working properly during the test. If you notice any problems with our load-management receiver, contact the cooperative. **If you find that your heating system does not work as it should, contact your electrician or heating service person.**

Now is the time to make sure your heating system is ready for winter—not after winter has arrived. If you have any questions regarding this test, call Taylor Electric Cooperative, (715) 678-2411.

**Test Date:** Wednesday, November 16, 2016

**Control Begins:** 5:00 p.m.

**Restoral Begins:** 7:55 p.m.; all loads will be restored by 10:30 p.m.



## Busting the myths about “smart meters”

**B**y now, most Americans have likely heard of the “smart grid.” This phrase is being used to describe the computerization of America’s electrical infrastructure. The purpose of this computerization is to improve the reliability, efficiency, resiliency, and security of the electric grid.

A key component of the smart grid is an advanced metering infrastructure, also known as AMI in the utility world. AMI systems utilize digital meters as well as computer technology to measure electric use at homes and businesses more precisely than was possible with analog meters. The digital meters communicate via radio or the existing power lines and have been loosely termed as “smart meters.” Taylor Electric’s AMR system communicates via the power lines, not radio. AMI benefits electric co-op members with greater accuracy in billing, faster outage restoration, operational savings versus manual meter reading, and detailed data that you and your co-op can use to manage electric use much more accurately.

Unfortunately, a number of myths have developed over the years concerning smart meters. These myths can be classified into three categories: privacy concerns, security, and health effects. Let’s take a look at each, starting with privacy.

Taylor Electric Cooperative takes great pains to keep your information private—and that information includes the details of your electric use. The only people who see that data are co-op employees and you. Your co-op will not release this information to anyone else without your specific permission. The myths are that the data collected can tell when you are home or away and exactly what you are doing when you are there and that this data is being given to the government. Naturally, the data will show when you are home

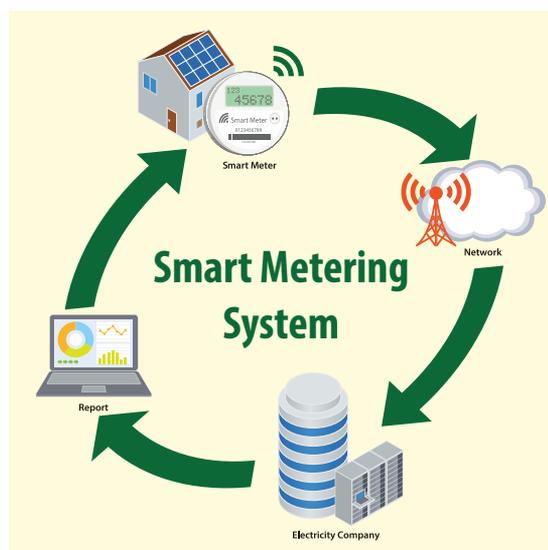
because for most families, energy consumption is higher then. But having said that, the current smart meter cannot identify what activities are taking place down to the specific appliance in use. This myth is simply unfounded.

What about the myth that these meters actually make the electric grid less secure by providing an avenue for hackers to break into systems through the smart meter and wreak havoc? While hackers continually attempt to break into electric systems, their focus is at higher levels in the operation. Hacking a meter is unlikely for a variety of reasons. Hackers like to work remotely via the Internet, and smart meters don’t offer that option. Radio-based smart meters require the hacker to be nearby to catch the weak communication signal, break the proprietary communication protocol, and to be there for extended periods of time to collect the short burst of data sent. Therefore, smart meters are an unlikely and unprofitable target for hackers.

Finally there are the myths surrounding smart meters and ill effects on health. These concerns state that having the radio-based smart meter is the equivalent to having a cell tower attached to the side of your home. Again, this is unfounded.

Let’s look at why. Number one is that smart meters communicate intermittently for as few as five minutes a day. These devices are regulated by the Federal Communications Commission, and their output is well below the levels this federal agency sets. As one doctor observed, the radio waves emitted are more like those of a cordless phone or wireless router. Radio waves emitted by smart meters are much weaker and less frequent than other sources we use on a daily basis.

We will all benefit from the continued development of America’s smart grid and can rest easy with the knowledge that the rumors surrounding smart meters don’t hold water.





## THIS NOVEMBER, LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

Low voter turnout has been a topic of conversation for the last several election cycles. Since the 1960s, voter turnout during presidential elections has seen a steady decline—with the occasional uptick here and there. In the 2016 primary election cycle, voter turnout in most states was only 21 to 30 percent, and this was a record year for primary voter turnout!

**We want to give you what you need to make informed decisions about candidates at all levels of government.**

Some speculate the reason for the decline is because the average American is not as engaged in politics as they have been in the past. And who can blame us really? Often times, we may feel like candidates are not speaking to the issues we care about. Or perhaps we don't feel like we understand enough about the candidates' stances on the issues, or even the issues themselves. But we can change this.

Here at Taylor Electric, we want to see civic engagement in our rural communities increase. We want to give

you what you need to make informed decisions about candidates at all levels of government, not just the presidential race. And we want you to know more about the issues that could impact our local communities.

America's electric co-ops are doing their part by informing members through Co-ops Vote, a non-partisan campaign with one simple goal: increase voter turnout at the polls this November. By visiting [vote.coop](http://vote.coop), you can learn about your candidates, access voter registration information, and more.

The future of rural economies depends on their ability to keep up with today's global economy, which is why access to broadband internet is a key topic of discussion this election season. Just 55 percent of rural Americans have broadband at home. Quick access to information is crucial in finding a job, getting a better education, and even gathering the information needed to make major health decisions. But there is a barrier: expensive costs.

With the right state and federal policies, broadband technology can become available to all rural Americans, allowing families and businesses to communicate in new and faster ways.

Electric cooperatives are already committed to providing affordable electricity to our communities, so helping provide affordable broadband access is a natural next step.

We encourage you to visit [vote.coop](http://vote.coop) and take the pledge to learn more about the issues that impact us locally. Let's work together to improve our communities by increasing voter turnout and changing our country, one vote at a time.

Sources:

Voter Turnout data: [http://www.fairvote.org/voter\\_turnout#voter\\_turnout\\_101](http://www.fairvote.org/voter_turnout#voter_turnout_101)

Pew Research Study on Broadband: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/12/21/home-broadband-2015/>



They cared, not for themselves, but for the nation. Let's salute them on Veteran's Day.



NOVEMBER 11, 2016

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