



Egyptian Electric News

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OCTOBER 2019

By the Community, for the Community

October is National Co-op Month

By Anne Prince, NRECA

When you think of October, pumpkins, Halloween and beautiful fall foliage naturally come to mind. But October is notable for another reason – it's National Co-op Month! This is the time of year when cooperatives across the country, including Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association (EECA), celebrate who we are and more importantly, the members we serve.

Cooperatives are different than other types of businesses. When the market declines to offer a product or service, or does so at a very high price, co-ops intervene to fill the need. Similar to how Egyptian Electric Cooperative was built by members who came together to bring electricity to our community, cooperatives are conveners for the common good. Your electric co-op exists to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, the members of the co-op. Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members we serve.

As a co-op, we are well-suited to meet the needs of the community because we are locally governed. Egyptian Electric's leadership team and employees live right here in the community. Our Board of Directors, who helps set long-term priorities for the co-op, live locally on co-op lines. These board members have been elected to the position by neighbors like you.

We know our members (that's you!) have a valuable perspective. That's why we are continually



October is National Co-op Month.



Electric cooperatives are led by the community, for the community.

seeking your input. Whether through community events, our social media channels or the Annual Meeting, we want to hear from you.

Our close connection to the community ensures we get a first-hand perspective on local priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments, such as high-speed broadband, community revitalization, solar programs, equipment and technology upgrades and electric vehicle programs. **52-17-0013**

Another feature that sets our co-op apart from a traditional utility is one of our core principles, "Concern for Community." We partner with local organizations like Rotary, Chamber of Commerce's, CEO student programs, economic development entities, USDA, schools and other worthy programs. We participate in the Electric Cooperative

Youth Day and Youth Tour, where we take our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C. for a week-long immersion to experience democracy in action. Ultimately, the larger community benefits from these programs because of you and your neighbors. You empower the co-op through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs.

We hope you will think of Egyptian Electric Cooperative as more than your energy provider, but instead as a local business that supports this community and powers economic development and prosperity for the people. We will continue to learn from our members about their priorities so that we can better serve you – because your electric co-op was built by the community, for the community.



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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Heating requires more energy than any other system in your home, typically making up about 42% of your energy bill. With proper equipment maintenance and upgrades like additional insulation and air sealing, you can save about 30% on your energy bill.

Source: energy.gov

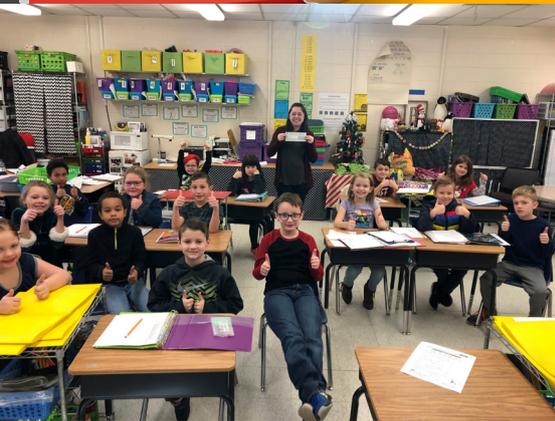


MEMBER PRIZES

Every month we will have three map location numbers hidden throughout our Egyptian Electric News section. If you find your location number, that corresponds to the one on your bill, call our office and identify yourself and the page that it is on and you will win a \$10 credit on your next electric bill.

CLASSROOM GRANTS

A Commitment to Our Schools



Egyptian Electric Cooperative is again offering Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants for our local schools located within our Cooperative's territorial footprint. We are aware that adequate funding for many school systems has been a challenge. Commitment to Community is one of our Touchstone Energy core principles, and we are committed to the communities we serve and want to continue to provide assistance to them.

Ten \$500 Classroom Empowerment Grants will be offered and awarded to public and K-12 schools to help them with projects that will improve educational opportunities for students. Prior applicants and recipients are eligible to apply. The evaluation of the applications will be based on the projects that best serve the purpose of improving the learning environment and/or increasing educational resources for the school. **27-16-0008**

How do Teachers or School Administrators apply?

- 1 Review the official rules and complete the Grant Application Form found on Page 13 of this magazine, also found on our website, www.eeca.coop.

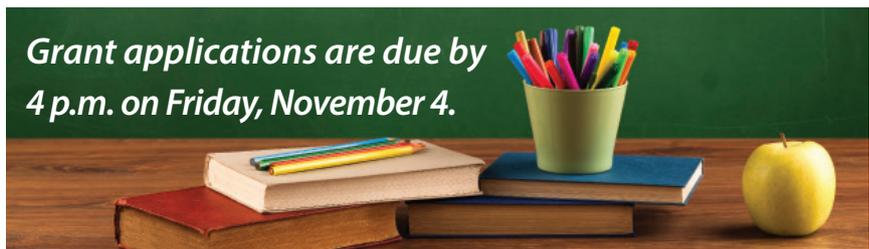
- 2 Attach a typewritten request, under three pages, with the following information:
 - ✓ A description of the project and what it will accomplish.
 - ✓ The estimated cost of the project.
 - ✓ An explanation of why funds or additional funds are necessary for the completion of the project.
 - ✓ Whether other funding options have been pursued and if so, the status of those requests.
 - ✓ When the project should be completed.
 - ✓ The number of students impacted by the project.
 - ✓ If the project's goals are measurable and how they would

be measured if the project is successful.

- ✓ How does the project tie to our Touchstone Energy core values of: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community.
- 3 Have the completed Grant Application Form and attached type-written request received at our office by 4 p.m. on Friday, November 4.

The grant awards will be announced on or before Friday, December 9, 2019. For questions regarding the Classroom Empowerment Grants, please contact Brooke Guthman at 800-606-1505 or bguthman@eeca.coop. It's that simple and straightforward, so don't miss this opportunity!

*Grant applications are due by
4 p.m. on Friday, November 4.*



Smart devices:

They're definitely smart, but not always secure

For many of us, buying and using technology to make our homes smarter and interconnected is as tempting as walking through a candy store as a kid.

Although not found in every household, many U.S. homes have one or two components, such as a smart security system complete with cameras, a smart thermostat, or a know-it-all “voice assistant” such as Amazon’s Alexa. The rest of our homes range from doing things the old-fashioned way (no smart devices at all) to having a home decked out in every smart technology one could imagine.

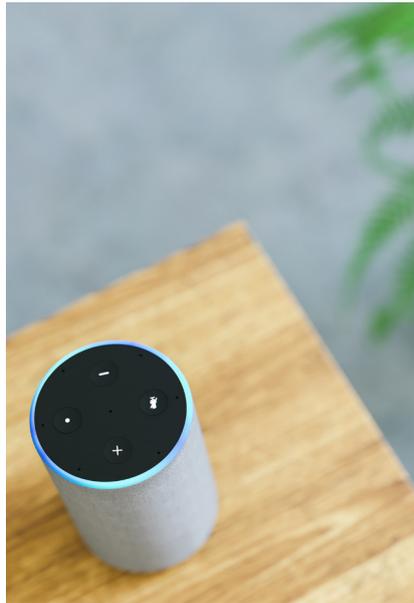
According to Statista, a company specializing in market and consumer data, North Americans are forecast to spend \$63 billion in the smart home market in 2022. And that’s nothing to sneeze at. (But if we do, millions of Americans may hear Alexa say, “Bless you.”) **40-27-0037**

Although convenient – who doesn’t want real-time glimpses of who is ringing our doorbell or to hear Google Assistant recite a recipe – smart devices come with their own set of security concerns.

Canada’s CBC News hired hackers (ethically responsible ones of course) to hack a family’s smart home and they got in, literally. “All it took was a white van, a team of three hackers and a phishing email to remotely unlock the front door.”

This eye-opening scenario is not intended to scare people; Rather we encourage you to give your smart devices serious thought before diving in. Security measures for smart devices are similar to the steps we should take in our daily life to protect us against seedy scammers and hackers everywhere.

For example, be leery of emails or calls asking for personal information



such as login info or passwords. And although everyone loves to use the same passwords like “abc123” for everything, doing so can make your smart devices vulnerable. (Note: it’s not a good idea to use “abc123.” Be creative and make them hard to crack.) And although it seems obvious, never use the factory-set password; change it immediately.

Many tech companies are considering (and others have already switched) to two-step authentication for the smart devices they sell. Although the extra step can feel like a pain, the two-step process is a good thing; It is a valuable step in keeping you and your family safe and your conversations private.

Without the code provided in the second security step, outsiders can’t access your device or account — even if they guessed your *SweetHomeAlabama1973* password (or whatever).

For more in-depth technology advice, consult an IT professional. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Keep cyber invaders at bay

Smart device technology tips

Although not an exhaustive list and not written by security experts, but because October is National Cyber Security Awareness Month, Safe Electricity and Egyptian Electric Cooperative recommend these basic tips to make your smart devices less hackable and more secure:

- NEVER click a link in an email claiming to be from a security- or smart-home related company, even if it looks official. Scammers and hackers get sign-in information and passwords this way, which they can use to hack your smart technology.
- Although tempting, don’t use all the same passwords for all your devices.
- Absolutely change factory-set passwords provided by the manufacturer.
- Make your passwords complex and challenging.
- If you do receive an email from your smart device manufacturer, see if the email address the company used is the same as the one used to contact you in the past. These emails should be general in nature and should never ask for personal or login information.
- Never give out login or password or other personal information in an email, over the phone, or for any other reason unless you are the one contacting the company directly via verified phone number or other trusted method of contact.
- Regularly update the device’s software so that it is protected by the latest security.
- Unless the hacker makes him/herself known, it can be hard to detect if a smart device has been hacked until the obvious happens.
- If it has been hacked, your gadget might be slower than usual, unresponsive, or compulsively reboot.
- If you are tech savvy, keep watch on the IP addresses that access the devices.

Disclaimer: Tips are designed to increase awareness. For expert and in-depth technology advice, contact an IT professional or manufacturer. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org