

**ARK VALLEY
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

the **FLASH**



Dechant Welcomes New Addition

The staff of Ark Valley would like to congratulate **KEVIN DECHANT**, journeyman lineman and his wife, Jennifer, on the birth of their daughter, **BRYN MADISON DECHANT** on January 11, 2012.



Bryn Madison Dechant was born on January 11, six pounds, six ounces and 20 inches long.

Let's Look on the Bright Side

From dusk to dawn, security lights for homes, businesses, and farms let you look on the bright side with safety and convenience. That's because when you add a security light from Ark Valley Electric, you're adding protection for your family and your property.

At just pennies a day, a security light is not only a bright decision, it is very efficient and affordable. Call us today for more information.

- ▶ **100 Watt Metal Halide Light—\$115**
- ▶ **Service/Trip Charge—\$30**

**Light must be installed on a pole, on the low-voltage side of the transformer. Cannot be installed on the transformer pole.*

Monthly Readership Drawing

ROB BARKLEY is the winner of our monthly \$25 readership drawing. To claim your prize, please contact Ark Valley Electric before February 29, and give us the account number from your bill.

Board Meeting Highlights

The Board of Trustees for the Ark Valley Electric Cooperative Association held its regular monthly meeting at the Cooperative's office in South Hutchinson on Tuesday, December 27, 2011.

In preparation of the upcoming Ark Valley Electric Cooperative Association Annual Meeting in April, the Board selected a Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee is composed of seven Ark Valley customers that will be responsible for nominating qualified Cooperative members for election to the Board of Trustees. The Cooperative by-laws require those nominated to be from diverse geographic areas within Ark Valley's service territory.

The Board of Trustees agreed to a two-year contract with the CPA firm of Schmidt & Co. to perform Ark Valley's annually required financial audit. Because Schmidt & Co. has prepared audits for the cooperative in years past, the Board requires new auditors to be assigned annually to Ark Valley's accounts in order to perform the required audit. Allowing the books to be reviewed by new

auditors will help insure the continued accuracy of Ark Valley's accounting practices.

Lastly, the Board addressed a \$244,752.75 credit adjustment the Cooperative received from its power supplier, Kansas Electric Power

Cooperative (KEPCo). As the credit was not expected, the Board received several recommendations from staff as to how the Cooperative could best utilize the additional funds. The Board decided to use the credit to increase the capital credit amount paid to Ark Valley members when the 2011 capital credits are allotted. This method is the most equitable solution, as it will give back to consumers, in the form of capital credits, who actually paid for the credit.

Flash Points

- ▶ The Board selected a Nominating Committee to select Trustee candidates
- ▶ Schmidt & Company was hired for the financial audit.
- ▶ An additional \$244,752.75 was allocated to capital credit accounts for disbursement.

Mark Your Calendars!

Join Ark Valley Electric for our Annual Meeting on Tuesday, April 3 at 6:30 p.m. at the Sunflower Building (State Fair Grounds) in Hutchinson. Continue to watch *Kansas Country Living* for more information.

We hope to see you there!

April 2012						
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29	30					

Youth Competition Winners Selected



Melissa Albers
First Place

Congratulations to the winners of the 2012 Youth Competition. There were two winners chosen this year.

The first place winner is **MELISSA ALBERS**, the daughter of Steve and Mary Albers, of rural Cunningham. Albers has won a \$500 scholarship



Mckayla Ketchum
Second Place

to the school of her choice and a trip to Steamboat Springs, CO. If you would like to hear the winning essay, Albers will be presenting her essay to the membership during the 2012 Annual Meeting.

The second place winner is **MCKAYLA KETCHUM**, the daughter of Tim and Cindy Ketchum, of Hutchinson. Ketchum has won a \$500 scholarship to the school of her choice.

We would like to thank all of the applicants for the time and effort they put into the 2012 Youth Competition.

Efficiency Tip of the Month

Air is drawn into your home from low areas, so inspect your foundation for potential air-infiltration points. Fixing these leaks makes a bigger impact on your electric bill than sealing doors and windows! Caulk all cracks and gaps around your home including spaces around wires for telephone, electrical, cable, and gas lines, water spigots, and dryer vents. Find more ways to save at TogetherWeSave.com.

Revealing R-values: Peel Back Insulation for Layers of Cost Savings

When the weather's brisk, it's smart to wear a coat. Your home needs the same kind of protection, too—insulation to keep cold air out and warm air in. Just as a coat closet features thin jackets for fall and heavy jackets for winter, different types of insulation, ranked by R-value, exist to keep your home comfortable and your electric bills affordable.

R-value reflects the ability of insulation and other parts of your home, like windows, to resist the transfer of heat. The rating depends on material, thickness, and density, and a higher R-value indicates more effective insulation. Multiple layers of insulation may be combined for a higher cumulative R-value.

How Insulation Works

Metals and liquids easily transfer heat, making them bad insulators. Air, however, does not conduct heat, making it a strong insulator when isolated in small pockets.

Just as fur keeps animals warm, insulation holds heat in (or out) of a building. Fur is a collection of hair—tiny hollow cylinders. Air fills the cylinders and spaces in-between. The smaller the space for air in between the cylinders and the more spaces there are (longer hair equals more space), the greater the insulation.

Building insulation works on the same principle. Fiberglass insulation, for example, exists as a collection of hollow fiberglass cylinders.

Be careful to preserve the air—the bulk of your home's protection—when installing insulation. When an installer squeezes three inches of insulation into a one-inch space, critical air pockets are eliminated. For this reason, actual insulating R-values may not always match the label. Insulation must be installed correctly to maximize protection—and electric bill savings.

The Value of R-Values

The first layer of insulation pays for itself fastest, saving more than half of the energy dollars spent on heating or air conditioning. However, as more insulation is added, efficiency gains dwindle.

Boosting the R-value of a wall from zero to R-10 cuts 90 percent of heat loss from one side of the wall to the other. This makes an immediate difference you can feel. Adding an additional layer of R-15 insulation (a total R-value of 25) only cuts another six percent of heat transmission. Further increasing insulation thickness from R-25 to R-35 helps only by a little more than 1 percent.

In some regions with several months of very cold winds, increasing attic insulation values from R-25 to R-35 or even R-50 can be worth the investment over the life of your home. In most seasonal climates, however, replacing single-pane windows saves more energy than adding insulation in your attic, floors, or walls.

A typical single-pane window boasts an R-value of 0.9. In contrast, a triple-glazed pane assembly with low-emissivity (low e) insulated coatings have an R-value of 8.3. Based on an electricity cost of 10 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh), a home with 18 single-pane windows (4 square feet each) could waste \$94.32 in unnecessary expense across three months (assuming 12 hours per day of a 40 degrees Fahrenheit indoor/outdoor temperature differential). A more efficient window assembly would cost \$10.20 over the same time. After a year, savings from switching out the windows could surpass \$300.

Energy auditors are trained to discuss the pros and cons of energy efficiency upgrades. Find out how little changes can add up at www.TogetherWeSave.com.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIPS

Simple Facts: Gas vs. Electric Heating Systems

BY DOUG RYE



Doug Rye

“Most geothermal heating systems operate at close to 400 percent energy efficiency!”

It's hard to believe that we are in the second month of the new year already. By now, you probably have made several New Year's resolutions. But, if you haven't done so already, consider adding one more to your list. Why not resolve to make your house more energy efficient and more comfortable?

To do that, you need to understand the energy efficiency of different types of heating and cooling systems. Many times people are confused by inaccurate information they receive from manufacturers and sellers of heating and cooling equipment. But all you need to know in order to make wise decisions when purchasing this equipment are a few simple facts.

First of all, the proper sizing of equipment is of utmost importance for comfort and low utility bills. Once the proper size is known, you must then decide what type of system best suits your needs. Basically there are three ways that houses are heated:

- ▶ Natural gas furnace
- ▶ Air-to-air electric heat pump
- ▶ Geothermal heat pump (electricity)

Now, let's consider how efficient they are. And when I talk about heating efficiency, I'm talking about how efficiently the system converts either natural gas or electricity to heat for you home.

A typical gas furnace will be rated at about 80 percent efficiency when it is new and if it is installed properly. That percentage will lessen with each year's use. An 80 percent efficiency rating means that 80 percent of the gas used will provide heat and the other 20 percent goes up the flue. For example, look at your neighbor's gas flue on a cold winter morning and see the steam coming out.

While I don't recommend this, a gas furnace that is 90 percent efficient can be used. With this unit, about 10 percent of the fuel goes up the flue. At first glance, you

might think 80 to 90 percent sounds pretty good. But consider this. Would you purchase gasoline for your car and pump 10 to 20 percent of it on the ground? In my opinion, our nation would not have to worry about shortages of natural gas if we simply didn't waste it.

Another popular type of heating system, an air-to-air heat pump, uses electricity instead of gas. All Doug Rye Homes use electric heating systems. An air-to-air heat pump, properly installed, would operate at an efficiency of around 250 percent. I know what you are thinking. "How can anything be more than 100 percent energy efficient?" Remember, we are talking about how efficiently a unit uses either electricity or gas to move or create heat. Unlike a gas-fired furnace, a heat pump does not actually create heat, it simply moves heat from one location to another. Air-to-air pumps extract the heat from the air. With a heat pump, you use one unit of electricity and get about 2.5 units of heat.

My favorite system, the geothermal heat pump, is simply the very best there is. Most geothermal heating systems operate at close to 400 percent energy efficiency! Wow! That's five times the efficiency of the 80 percent gas furnace. As this heat pump is extracting heat from Mother Earth, which is a constant 57 degrees, it is operating on minimal stress and using a very small amount of electricity to move the heat from the earth into the house. With a geothermal system, you buy one unit of electricity (one unit of heat) and Mother Earth will give you three more units of heat for free. (That three units of heat is solar energy that Mr. Sunshine gave us over millions of years).

DOUG RYE is a licensed architect and the popular host of the "Home Remedies" radio show. You can contact Doug at 501-653-7931. Source: Arkansas Electric Cooperatives Corporation.

Would You Like to Become a Lineman?



Application Deadline is March 15, 2012

Ark Valley Electric Cooperative is offering a \$1,000 scholarship to any graduating senior, high school graduate, or recipient of an equivalent degree (GED, etc.) that plans to enroll in a Kansas line school.

Applicants must be a member or have parents who are members of Ark Valley Electric to qualify for the scholarship.

For more information, please call 620-662-6661 or pick up an application from your high school counselor.

Applications must be returned to Ark Valley Electric by March 15, 2012.