



As of January 1st, 2011, Energy Star® changed its criteria and less units now qualify.

## Energy Star Changes Clothes Washer Criteria

As of January 1st, Energy Star® made changes to its clothes washer program that include new criteria levels. Due to these changes, the number of Energy Star® qualified clothes washers has dropped from approximately 500 units to 250 units.

Unfortunately, there will be units still out in the stores that will have the Energy Star® label and will no longer meet the new 2011 criteria.

Linn County REC will honor purchases of clothes washers made in 2010 (within 6 months of purchase date) as long as you provide documentation that it was Energy Star® at time of purchase. This documentation can be a copy of the Energy Guide showing the Energy Star® label or a copy of the unit manual page showing the label.

Part of our requirement for filing an Energy Star® appliance

incentive has always been to provide Energy Star® label verification. But now it is even more important that we have this information. If you do not provide verification, then we have to go to the Energy Star® website to verify and now that the criteria is more strict, there is a chance your unit will not qualify.

Units purchased in 2011 will need to meet the new criteria for Energy Star® qualification. To see the list go to Energy Star's website at [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).

For more information on all of our incentives and to download forms, please go to our website at [www.linncountyrec.com](http://www.linncountyrec.com).

## Know What's Below: Call Before You Dig

Whether you are planning to do it yourself or hire a professional, smart digging means calling 811 before each job. This free service will help ensure your safety and prevent disruption of electrical or other utility services.

When you call 811 prior to digging, a locating contractor will locate your underground electric facilities and mark them with paint and/or flags. Placing this call also notifies other utilities that may have buried services on your property. Iowa law applies to professional contractors as well as homeowners.

Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. If you hit an underground utility line while digging, you can harm yourself, disrupt service, and potentially be responsible for fines and repair costs.



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

For more safety tips on your next construction or landscaping project, visit [linncountyrec.com](http://linncountyrec.com).



## Move Farm Equipment Safely



As we approach the planting season, farm-related accidents involving power lines are always a concern. Farmers are urged to take extra time to locate all electrical facilities before moving farm equipment.

Many types of farm equipment can come in contact with overhead power lines. Tractors, planters and tillage equipment can easily become an electrical hazard and should be operated with care near power lines.

Today's larger farms require transporting tractors and equipment to fields several miles away. Before transit, avoid raising the arms of planters and cultivators near power lines.

Make sure everyone who works on the farm knows the location of power lines and keeps farm equipment at least 10 feet away from them. The minimum 10 foot distance should be maintained in all directions.

A safe planting season begins with the prevention of accidents. For more safety information, visit [www.linncountyrec.com](http://www.linncountyrec.com).

## Energy Evaluation: Access How Much Energy You Use



Linn County REC's energy evaluation program includes steps that can assess how much energy your home, farm or business is using. This program will assist you by suggesting measures you can take to be more energy efficient.

1. Go to our website and complete our energy evaluation form.
2. Call to speak with one of our energy advisors. They will review your historical usage and go through your evaluation form over the phone.
3. You will be asked to read and record your meter readings daily for a two week period. You will also receive a "Kill-A-Watt" meter to assist you

with appliance usage readings.

4. If you still have questions about your usage after the two week period, contact your energy advisor so they can further evaluate your account.

If you are looking for a performance testing evaluation of your existing homes envelope, (blower door test and other diagnostic testing), Linn County REC can help lower the cost with a \$250 incentive.

This incentive is limited to one per home, per 10 year period and be pre-approved. Please contact our office for more information.



### Energy Efficiency

### *Tip of the Month*

**Check your filter every month, especially during heavy use months (winter and summer). At a minimum, change the filter every three months. A dirty filter will slow down air flow and make the system work harder — wasting energy. A clean filter also prevents dust and dirt from building up in the system.**

Source: Energy Star

# Co-op Energy Efficiency

## The Measures We Take To Save Member Dollars

Linn County REC is committed to doing everything possible to keep your electric bills affordable. We're controlling costs through innovation - our energy efficiency measures are just one way we manage energy costs.

Linn County REC encourages its members to be energy efficient and to use energy wisely. These are principles that Linn County REC practices as well on a system wide basis to benefit its members.

Purchasing properly sized equipment, system design and controlling line loss are all ways Linn County REC practices energy efficiency and saves our members money.

Linn County REC considers the cost and expected service life of all equipment it buys to maximize our kilowatt savings potential. Another area where Linn County REC can save significant kilowatt hours is in line loss. Line loss is the energy it

takes to move electricity through wires and energize equipment (i.e. transformers, conductors). This energy cannot be sold to our members so it is considered a "loss".

Linn County REC helps reduce line loss by sizing conductors and transformers properly and utilizing their efficiencies. When you reduce system line losses, it decreases the amount of energy used and purchased. Therefore, we are not buying additional kilowatt hours from our power supplier to cover the loss so that cost is not passed on to our members.

So what kind of savings are we talking about? If the cooperative's line loss were to increase one percent, an



additional 4,500,000 kilowatt hours would have to be purchased to deliver estimated kilowatt hour sales for 2011.

Efficient system design combined with our member efforts in energy efficiency really does make a difference. In the long term that saves us significant dollars without sacrificing the reliability our members expect.

## System Upgrades Will Increase Your Reliability



In addition to normal electric system maintenance and installation of new services, Linn County REC has a short and long term work plan in place to improve system reliability. The work plan addresses anticipated or existing growth and the replacement of older lines, equipment or substations.

During later summer and early fall of 2011, a Linn County REC contractor will complete approximately \$1.5 million dollars of system improvements.

Line projects will take place in rural

Marion, Robins, North Liberty and the Lake MacBride area.

Most construction projects can be completed without loss of power. If it is necessary to interrupt power during construction, the cooperative makes every effort to contact members who are going to experience an outage.

When construction is underway, the system is more vulnerable to storm related outages in the area of construction as well, so every effort is made to complete the construction as quickly as possible.



## LCREC Grant Approved For Library

In February, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the selection of Linn County Rural Electric Cooperative to receive a \$300,000 grant to help finance a library expansion in North Liberty that will offer more educational programming and training opportunities.

It is one of 16 projects in 10 states that will receive funding through the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program (REDLG), which is administered by USDA Rural Development.

“Linn County REC is pleased that the North Liberty library expansion project was approved by USDA,” said Kim Colberg, General Manager/CEO. “The project has a tremendous amount of local support and is well organized. We look forward to being a part of the project.”

REDLG provides funding to rural projects through local utility organizations. Under the program, USDA provides zero-interest loans to local utilities which they, in turn, pass through to local businesses (ultimate recipients) for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas. For more information on this program, please visit [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP\\_redlg.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_redlg.html).

- 1-3/4 cups sauerkraut, rinsed and well drained
- 1/2 pound thinly sliced deli corned beef, julienned
- 2 cups (8 ounces) shredded Swiss cheese
- 1/4 cup Thousand Island salad dressing
- 2 medium tomatoes, thinly sliced
- 6 tablespoons butter, divided
- 1 cup coarsely crushed seasoned rye crackers

In a greased 1-1/2 -qt. baking dish, layer half of the sauerkraut, corned beef and cheese. Repeat layers. Drop salad dressing by teaspoonfuls over the cheese. Arrange tomato slices over the top; dot with 2 tablespoons butter.

In a small saucepan, melt the remaining butter. Stir in the crumbs. Sprinkle over top of casserole. Bake, uncovered, at 400° for 30-35 minutes or until heated through. Yield: 6 servings.

## What's YOUR Incentive?

Have you made an energy efficient upgrade not covered in our current incentive program? File for a REAP incentive. REAP is our rewards program that gives us flexibility to offer our members a customized plan that awards points for energy efficient actions members do in their homes or businesses. **Reward points are redeemed semi-annually and can be received by purchasing items such as windows, solar panels/tubes or insulation not covered by our weatherization incentive.**



Dollar amounts will be determined by Linn County REC based on kilowatt hour savings, number of applicants and money available.

Visit [www.linncountyrec.com](http://www.linncountyrec.com) for more information and to download incentive forms.

To receive an incentive from Linn County REC:

- Must be or have been a member at service location
- Complete ALL fields on incentive form
- Provide a copy of the sales receipt
- Provide ALL additional required documentation (i.e. Energy Star® verification)
- Must be received within six months of installation

Members contacted for additional information on incomplete/unsigned forms will be assessed a 10% reduction of incentive amount. Need help filling out an incentive form? Visit the video center on our website for a step by step tutorial on the filing process. If you have any questions about our incentive program, please contact our office to speak with member services.

