



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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TWIN VALLEY
ELECTRIC CO-OP

NEWS

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Board Selects Metzger as CEO

Twin Valley Electric Cooperative's Board of Trustees have selected **REED METZGER** as the cooperative's next CEO.

For more than 19 years, Metzger has worked for a cooperative, beginning his career at a telephone cooperative in Colorado before transitioning to the electric industry. Metzger has worked at every level of the cooperative business model and has spent the past 11 years of his career in the CEO role—eight years as a telephone cooperative CEO and the past three as the CEO of Big Horn County Electric Co-op, Inc. in Montana.

The cooperative principles have been the cornerstone of Metzger's career and have been instrumental in his success. For Metzger, safety is the highest priority.

Metzger and his wife of 12 years, Brandy, have six children: Alyssa, 18; Tucker, 9; McKenna, 7; Emmett, 5; Quigley, 3; and Sterling, four months. The Metzgers enjoy the outdoors and spending time together as a family.

Through his work with employees and the Board of Trustees, Metzger plans to increase the core competency of the cooperative and ensure its success both now and in the future.

Join us in welcoming Reed to the cooperative family.



Reed Metzger named Twin Valley's CEO.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Look for LED products and fixtures for outdoor use, such as pathway, step and porch lights. Many include features like automatic daylight shut-off and motion sensors. You can also find solar-powered lighting for outdoor spaces.



What is the Smart Grid?

The term “Smart Grid” is used frequently these days by energy providers and the news media. However, few people know what the smart grid is. The word “grid” itself refers to the electric grid, a network of transmission lines, substations, transformers and more that deliver electricity to your home or business from the power plant and renewable sources such as wind and solar. What makes it smart are the ways it can use technology to help both consumers and power providers.

The smart grid uses new computers, communication, automation and control technology to improve the efficiency and reliability of power delivery. It incorporates “smart meters,” which provide tools for consumers to monitor and make better decisions about energy use and save on their energy bills.

The smart grid is also vital to efficiently integrating increasing generation of renewable energy. Growing development of utility-scale solar and wind systems and popularity of renewable energy for residential and small business use, require the grid to provide smarter, more efficient connections to the power delivery system.

Here are some other ways the smart grid is changing the landscape of electrical distribution:

- ▶ **Quicker restoration of electricity** after power disturbances;
- ▶ **More efficient distribution of electricity;**
- ▶ **Reduced operations and management costs for utilities,** and ultimately lower power costs for consumers; and
- ▶ **Reduced peak demand,** which will also help lower electricity rates.

Similar to a smart phone, a smart grid incorporates advanced technology to make lives easier in an electric energy-dependent world.

Latest and Greatest in Smart Home Tech

Today’s smart home has grown to near Jetson-esque capabilities. The applications for home automation are racing ahead, fueled by the greater availability of wireless technology and the growth of the “internet of things.”

The actual smart home gadgets and technologies continue to evolve, but mobile apps seem to be taking the lead. Let’s catch up with the advances in some key areas.

Smart thermostats deserve top billing as they were truly the first smart device to become mainstream. Product choices abound with smart options for baseboard electric being developed, while the focus remains solidly on convenience, energy savings and peace of mind.

Geofencing—technology that creates a virtual geographic boundary—is one of the best enhancements in this category. Link your smart thermostat to your smart phone, set a radius around your home, and whenever you cross that boundary your thermostat goes into away or return mode, depending on which way you are heading.

Smart security is surging. Smart door locks were the first entrants in this category. More recently, video doorbells have entered the fray where you can see who is at the door from wherever you are. Very slick.

Wireless cameras have dropped in price, allowing you to canvas your home and property to keep an eye on things anywhere. Get an alert? Open the app on your mobile device and find out what’s going on at home.

Smart smoke and carbon monoxide sensors are key in the safety sector, with the capability of sending alerts to your phone, allowing remote status checks and silencing alarms from the app—all without sacrificing that awful, ear-splitting alert we have come to know and love.

Smart appliances are slowly grinding

The applications for home automation are racing ahead, fueled by the greater availability of wireless technology and the growth of the “internet of things.”

forward. Refrigerators with cameras allow you to check for needed items while at the grocery store, and dryers sense when electric use is highest and turn off—talk about demand response! Even HVAC systems, including window air conditioners, are sporting mobile apps these days.

There is not a huge amount of automation for stoves and cooktops. Controlling this appliance remotely seems too dangerous unless the feature is to turn it off. In that case, chalk up another one for peace of mind by resolving that nagging vacation worry, “Did I turn the stove off?”

Smart lighting seems to have become a convergence of mood, efficiency, convenience and security. This is where a centralized hub and its software might make sense. Setting up a coordinated lighting schedule is easier from a single interface. Create “scenes” for individual rooms or for the whole house. For security, grab a scene that gives your castle a lived-in look.

Perhaps the coolest new entrants are the voice-controlled assistants. These are receiving a lot of attention and, depending on the capabilities they are given, have the potential to command everything via voice, freeing you from the tedium of opening an app to control something.

The smart home circa 2018 is a lot closer to the cartoon vision of the Jetsons. With the ease of installation, programming and use enabled by wireless technology and smart phone apps, anyone not already engaged with smart home tech should at least consider dipping a toe in the water.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIPS

Understanding Appliance Energy Use

BY PAT KEEGAN AND BRAD THIESSEN



Patrick Keegan

DEAR PAT AND BRAD: Several of my appliances are getting older and will need to be replaced soon. Will the appliance choices I make have much impact on my energy bill? – Chelsea

DEAR CHELSEA: Your energy use varies month to month, so it can be difficult to see how much difference an appliance purchase makes. It's best to view the purchase over the lifetime of the equipment. Think about the up-front cost and the lifetime energy cost. In a *Consumer Reports* test, the most efficient

refrigerator used \$68/year less electricity than the least efficient model. Multiply that difference over a decade or two, and the lifetime energy savings could be greater than the up-front cost. All it takes to get the best appliance for your needs is some initial research.

Appliance energy use is usually less, on average, than home heating and cooling bills, but can be several hundred dollars each year. Your appliance use depends on factors like the model, how often

you use it, the settings you use for its particular function and even the time of day it is most used.

Over the last few decades, new appliances became more energy efficient, driven partly by minimum government standards. These standards, created by the U.S. Department of Energy, save consumers more than \$60 billion each year. Appliances are required to include an Energy Guide label that shows estimated energy use and operating cost per year. These labels help you compare different models and calculate the initial cost against the long-term savings.

Some appliances will also have an ENERGY STAR label. This indicates the appliance is substantially more efficient than the minimum standard. Your greatest energy savings opportunities can come from replacing an old appliance with an ENERGY STAR-rated appliance. Removing a refrigerator that's 20 years old and replacing it with a new ENERGY STAR model can lower the monthly electricity cost by 75 percent, from \$16.50 to less than \$4.

In some cases, the configuration of the appliance can also make a substantial difference. For example, a side-by-side refrigerator/freezer uses about 70 percent more energy than other configurations, with the most efficient models having the refrigerator stacked on top of the freezer. All 36 of the most efficient clothes washers of 2018 are front-loading models.

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Brad Thiessen



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All the most efficient 2018 models of washers and dryers were front-loading.



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A new ENERGY STAR fridge/freezer can use 70 percent less energy than a model that's 10-plus years old. Models with the fridge above the freezer are two-thirds more efficient than side-by-side models.

Understanding Appliance Energy Use Continued from page 16C

Consider how much you use the appliance. The more you use the appliance the greater your savings will be from choosing a more efficient model. If you use the appliance less or have a small household, you may get by with a smaller refrigerator or freezer, which will save you money.

How you operate appliances can also make a difference. Here are some easy ways to save.

Refrigerator/Freezer

- ▶ Set your refrigerator at 35 to 38 degrees and your freezer at zero degrees.
- ▶ Make sure there is adequate air flow between the wall and the back of the unit.
- ▶ Keep the refrigerator relatively full when possible.
- ▶ Replace the seals around the doors if they appear to be leaking air.
- ▶ Defrost the refrigerator and freezer regularly.

Stove/Oven

- ▶ Use the correct size of burner to fit the pan.
- ▶ Use smaller appliances like a microwave or slow cooker instead of the oven when possible.

Dishwasher

- ▶ Use the most energy-efficient and shortest setting that gets your dishes clean.



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To maximize energy savings when using your stove top, be sure to match the size of the pot to the burner.

- ▶ Air dry rather than use the heated dry function.
- ▶ Wait to run a load until the dishwasher is full.

Make the most out of your appliance energy use with a little research before buying a new model and a few easy adjustments to the way you use them.

This column was co-written by **PAT KEEGAN** and **BRAD THIESSEN** of Collaborative Efficiency. For more information on saving energy on your appliances, please visit: www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips.



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