

# living with energy

IN IOWA

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS OF TOUCHSTONE ENERGY COOPERATIVES



MAY 2011

## Go green when you remodel your kitchen

Button batteries  
pose a risk  
for toddlers  
and seniors

See Page 13

Spring into  
**super salads**  
(and dressings too)

Will your  
home pass our  
**safety quiz?**

Convert recessed  
ceiling lights from  
energy wasters to  
**energy savers**



## How to Contact Us

### WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Letters to the editor may be edited for clarity and length before publication.

#### E-mail:

editor@livingwithenergyiowa.com

**Address:** Editor, *Living with Energy in Iowa*, 8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992

#### SUBMITTING A RECIPE

You may submit a recipe to be considered for publication in an upcoming issue. Recipes appearing in the magazine also may be shown on the *Living with Energy in Iowa* Web site at [www.livingwithenergyiowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiowa.com). Please include your name, address, telephone number, co-op name and the month's recipe category on all submissions.

**E-mail:** [recipes@livingwithenergyiowa.com](mailto:recipes@livingwithenergyiowa.com) (Attach your recipe as a Word document or a PDF to your e-mail message, rather than including it in the body of your message.)


**Address:** Recipes, *Living with Energy in Iowa*, 8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992

#### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Every local electric cooperative maintains an independent mailing list of its members, so please send your change of address directly to your local electric cooperative's office. *Living with Energy in Iowa* cannot make an address change for you.



Iowa Association of  
**Electric Cooperatives**

\* A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Volume 64 ■ Issue 5

#### EDITOR

Robert A. Dickelman

#### ART DIRECTOR

Joel Clifton

#### REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS

Gary Anderson      Buck Jones  
Ruth Rasmussen      Billie Shelton

#### EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Brian Kading

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Marion Denger, Dows – President  
Larry Tjaden, Charles City – Vice President  
Larry Rohach, Reinbeck – Secretary-Treasurer  
Steve Seidl, Coon Rapids – Assistant Secretary-Treasurer  
Lawrence Quinn, Lowden  
L. Kirby Range, Milford  
Frank Riley, Osceola

*Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine (ISSN: 1935-7176) is published monthly by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, a not-for-profit organization representing Iowa's member-owned local electric cooperatives. Association address: 8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992. The phrase *Living with Energy in Iowa* is a mark registered within the state of Iowa to the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. The magazine does not accept advertising.

**Editorial Office:** 8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992. Phone: 515-276-5350. E-mail: [editor@livingwithenergyiowa.com](mailto:editor@livingwithenergyiowa.com). Web site: [www.livingwithenergyiowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiowa.com). *Living with Energy in Iowa* does not assume responsibility for unsolicited items. Unsolicited manuscripts, photographs and other materials submitted without adequate postage will not be returned.

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to *Living with Energy in Iowa*, 8525 Douglas Ave., Suite 48, Des Moines, IA 50322-2992. Periodicals Postage Paid at Des Moines, Iowa, and at additional mailing offices.

© Copyright 2011, Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. No portion of the editorial, photographic or other content of *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine or its Web site may be reproduced without written permission of the editor.



When was the last time  
you visited our Web site?

[www.livingwithenergyiowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiowa.com)

# living with energy IN IOWA

## Contents

May 2011

### Features

- 6 Will your home pass this safety test?**  
A healthy respect for electricity and a basic knowledge of electrical safety practices can help protect your home and family from electrical hazards.
- 8 Recipes for salads and dressings**  
Serve these super salads as a meal!  
**PLUS:** You could win \$50 for your favorite ethnic recipe.
- 10 Go green when you remodel your kitchen**  
An earth-friendly strategy can work wonders for the looks and functionality of your kitchen, without breaking the household budget.

6



8



10



### Favorites

- 3 Statewide Perspective**  
Tragic farm accident provides valuable safety lessons.
- 4 About Energy**  
Do your part to help reduce peak loads this summer.
- 5 Editor's Choice Contest**  
Win a pair of high-tech, low-energy, LED light kits.
- 13 15-Minute Energy Saver**  
Convert recessed lights from energy wasters to energy savers.
- 14 Doing It Yourself**  
Natural ventilation cuts cooling costs.
- 15 Out Back**  
Pansies bring a special magic.

## Energy-saving tip of the month

Help your clothes washer keep its cool all year long. Select the cold wash/cold rinse cycle for all loads, and take advantage of energy-saving features such as presoak and suds saver.



## Tragic farm accident provides valuable safety lessons

BY ROBERT A. DICKELMAN

Just to our east, Jim Flach, an Illinois farmer, was operating a crop sprayer in a neighbor's field when one of its arms contacted an overhead power line. In climbing down from the cab, Flach created an electrical path to ground when he jumped into the field.

He suffered severe burns and eventually died from his injuries.

More than 400 electrical fatalities occur every year, and electrocutions on farms are the fourth highest of any job classification, according to

the National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety. Most of the electrical deaths investigated could have been prevented.

Now the members of Jim Flach's family are working with Safe Electricity, sharing the story of their heartbreaking loss in hopes of preventing future accidents. You can watch their compelling video message – and learn more about the organization's Teach Learn Care TLC electrical safety campaign – at [www.safeelectricity.org](http://www.safeelectricity.org).

"You need to double-check – triple-check – to see what's above you," says Flach's widow, Marilyn. Son Brett adds, "Be conscious of your surroundings. You need to keep your eyes open and be aware of overhead lines."

Agricultural machinery has increased substantially in size during recent years and can come dangerously close to overhead lines when leaving and entering fields. Safe Electricity urges you to keep at least 10 feet away from overhead power

lines when operating large equipment and notes that new standards for some construction equipment require a 20-foot clearance.

In fact, combines and grain wagons with extended augers can reach well into the 10-foot radius around a power line. The antennas on a

farm vehicle with a wireless communication system also can make contact with a power line and energize the vehicle with deadly current. And grain augers can tower over power lines when they're extended to reach the top of grain bins.

"We advise using a spotter – someone with a broader view – when working with extensions or tall loads around power lines," recommends Molly Hall, executive director of Safe Electricity. In addition, she urges farmers to make sure all farm workers know to stay clear of overhead power lines – as well as what to do and who to call if equipment does become entangled with them.

The best action is to stay on the equipment, call for help and warn others to keep away until your local electric cooperative arrives to ensure the line is de-energized. Unless you have that assurance, don't get off the machine – unless there's a fire, which rarely happens.

In the event of a fire, you should jump clear of the equipment, without touching the machine and ground at the same time. Land with your feet together, and hop away to avoid setting up a deadly flow of current. ⚡

Robert A. Dickelman is editor of *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine.



**YOU'D BE  
SURPRISED HOW  
MUCH MONEY CAN  
SQUEEZE THROUGH  
A CRAWL SPACE.**

I'm saving \$155 a year insulating my crawl space. What can you do? Find out how the little changes add up at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).

Touchstone Energy®  
Cooperatives of Iowa  
[www.touchstoneenergy.coop](http://www.touchstoneenergy.coop)



**TOGETHERWESAVE.COM**

## Quote of the Month

“These results indicate that farmers and ranchers are increasingly adopting renewable energy practices on their operations and reaping the important economic and environmental benefits.”

**U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently commented on the 2009 On-Farm Renewable Energy Production Survey, which showed that the number of solar panels, wind turbines and methane digesters on America's farms and ranches has increased significantly during the past decade.**

## About Energy

### Do your part to help reduce peak loads this summer

The hottest days of summer – when energy demand at your local electric cooperative is highest – place a lot of stress on Iowa's utility network. These times of peak loads potentially can lead to limited power supply disruptions, and – with so many people using electricity for air-conditioning at the same time – the price of power during this period may increase because it costs more to generate electricity when consumer demand soars.

The greatest peak loads generally occur from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., when the air-conditioning systems in most buildings are running and families arrive home and start using household appliances. You can help reduce summer peak loads by adjusting your daily routine in a few small ways, such as using small appliances instead of the cooktop or stove for cooking, doing laundry during early-morning or late-evening hours, closing windows and using curtains or blinds during the day to keep the sun from overheating your home. ⚡

## In the News

### Governor meets co-op executives after bill signing

Following the signing of the State Historic Preservation Office Reform Bill last month during REC Day on the Hill, Gov. Terry Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds stopped by the co-ops' dessert social in the capitol's cafeteria. Each year, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives hosts the event to discuss energy-related issues that affect cooperatives and their members with legislators and policy makers.

The State Historic Preservation Office Reform legislation has been a top issue for electric cooperatives for the past few years. It will help streamline storm-recovery procedures, so electric cooperatives can repair damaged lines in a more timely fashion. During the bill signing, the governor thanked the electric cooperatives for their contributions to job creation and economic development and commended the co-ops for their dedication to providing reliable and affordable power to Iowans.



**During the electric cooperatives' dessert social at REC Day on the Hill, Gov. Terry Branstad (left) talked with Larry Quinn, a board member of both Eastern Iowa Light and Power Cooperative and the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.**

### Senate confirms Jacobs for Iowa Utilities Board

The Iowa Senate has confirmed the appointment of former state representative Libby Jacobs to the Iowa Utilities Board. Jacobs served in the House from 1994 to 2008.



Her term at the Iowa Utilities Board will last from May 1, 2011, to April 30, 2017. In addition, Gov. Branstad appointed Jacobs as chair of the board until April 30, 2013. The current chair, Rob Bernstein, will remain on the board as a member.

### EPA announces updated Energy Star standards for lighting

Effective Oct. 1, 2011, light fixtures will need to increase efficiency 30 percent above current standards to qualify for the Energy Star® label. In 2013, performance requirements will increase further, providing 40 percent higher efficiency compared to currently qualified models.

You can expect to see a wide range of technology options qualifying under the new Energy Star requirements, including fluorescent and LED lighting. The bulbs in Energy Star qualified fixtures should last at least 10 times longer than standard incandescent lightbulbs, and the fixtures will continue to meet strict performance requirements that ensure quick startup, high-quality light output and reduced toxic materials. Additionally, the fixtures will come with 3-year warranties. ⚡



**The U.S. EPA has launched the “Be an Energy Star” video challenge to encourage you to pick up your video camera and document the energy-saving actions you're taking in your home, workplace and/or community.**

Your video will be featured on the Energy Star® and social networking Web sites, where the public will vote for their favorites. For details, go to [www.energystar.gov/changetheworld](http://www.energystar.gov/changetheworld).

# A whole-house fan can help you keep your cool

To maximize the natural cooling of your home without cranking up the air conditioner, consider installing a whole-house fan. Mounted in a ceiling, the unit will pull hot air from living spaces into the attic, where it's pushed outside through soffit vents. The windows of your home must remain open, so the negative air pressure inside the house can draw in cooler air.

Of course, a whole-house fan only works if the outside air is cooler than the inside air – which is why you'll want to run it at night. Best of all, the fan also cools walls, floors and ceilings to keep your home cooler and delays the startup of your air-conditioning system until later in the day.

Equipment costs for a whole-house fan range from \$150 to \$350, and they use roughly 1 to 5 cents of electricity per hour to operate – compared to 8 to 20 cents per hour for an air conditioner. If you're handy, you can put in a fan yourself, although hiring a professional is recommended.



**Install a whole-house fan to supplement your air conditioning system and reduce your hot-weather power bills.**

Photo: Airscape Inc. ([www.airscapefans.com](http://www.airscapefans.com))

A whole-house fan should be sized to change the air in your home 30 to 60 times an hour; in fact, you could have serious problems if the fan is not sized or installed properly. The fan also can be noisy, so consider installing a larger, multi-speed model. You can operate the two-speed fan on high when you first turn it on to quickly cool your home, but once the temperature goes down, you'll be able to switch to the low speed so it will run more quietly.

By the way, a whole-house fan may not be a good choice for a family with one or more people who have severe allergies or breathing problems, because the windows must remain open for the fan to work properly. Also keep in mind that a whole-house fan isn't meant to function as an air conditioner. Instead, it's designed to supplement your air conditioner, making your house more comfortable and saving money on your electric bill. ⚡

Source: Brian Sloboda, Cooperative Research Network

# Win a pair of high-tech, low-energy, LED light kits



If the trim around your recessed ceiling lights is starting to look a little grungy – and you're ready to replace their 65-watt incandescent reflector bulbs that produce more heat than light – here's a great solution. The Energy Star® qualified EcoSmart LED Down Light combines 575 lumens of warm, white light (2,700K) with new trim in a self-contained unit. To install one, remove the old trim and bulb, screw the new base into the socket and twist the unit into place.

The EcoSmart ECO-575L uses only 10.5 watts of power, runs cool and contains no mercury. It's dimmable, carries a 3-year warranty and is designed to last 35,000 hours. You'll find it at Home Depot stores for \$39.95; for more information, go to [www.homedepot.com](http://www.homedepot.com).

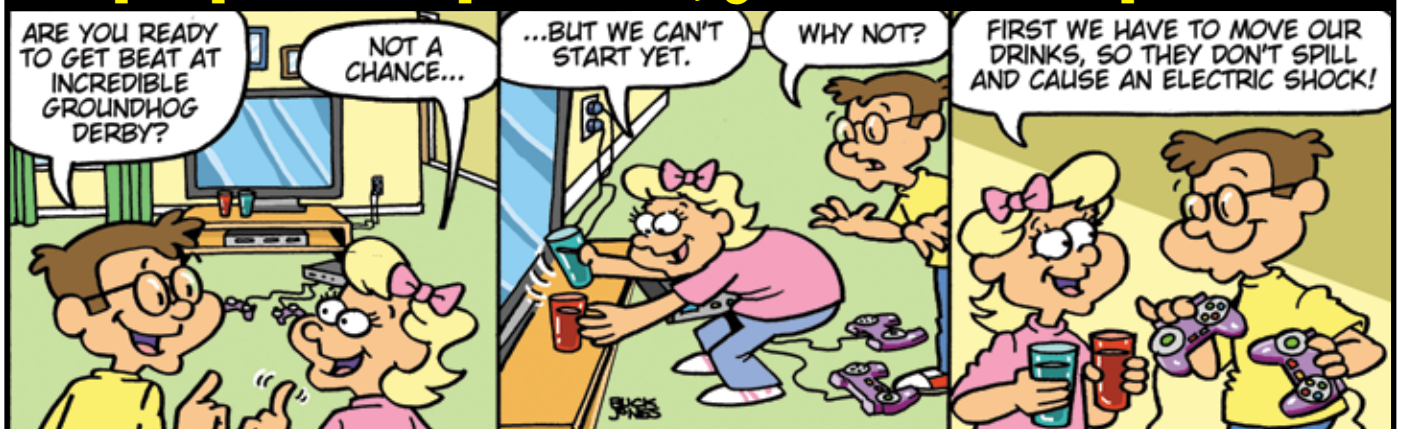
## Visit our Web site, and win!

We're going to give a pair of EcoSmart Down Lights to one lucky electric co-op member this month. To register, go to the Editor's Choice Contest at the *Living with Energy in Iowa* Web site ([www.livingwithenergyiowa.com](http://www.livingwithenergyiowa.com)) and fill out the entry form by May 31, 2011. We'll pick the winner's name at random and publish it in an upcoming issue.

Please note that the purpose of this contest is to encourage you to visit our Web site and that we cannot accept entries by any other means. In addition, you can enter each contest only once, there is no obligation associated with entering this contest and we do not share contestants' names or entry information with anyone.

The winner of the \$200 Energy-Saving Gift Card in the March issue was Sue Madsen, a member of North West REC.

# Keep liquids away from TV, games and computers





# Will your home pass this safety quiz?

Do you know everything you should about your home's electrical system and the electrical products you use every day? If you're like most people, the answer probably is no.

This quiz was developed by the

Electrical Safety Foundation International to help you identify potential electrical hazards and conditions that can cause electrical fires – and correct them. As a bonus, some of the changes you make to improve safety also can lead to increased

## Build a foundation of safety in the basement

YES NO

- 1. Does your circuit breaker panel or fuse box have a label to indicate the date of your last electrical system inspection?

---

- 2. Are all of your circuit breakers or fuses labeled to indicate their correct amperage and the outlets/circuits/rooms they service?

---

- 3. Have your standard circuit breakers been replaced with arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) that offer a higher level of fire protection?

---

- 4. Did you test your AFCIs this month?

---

- 5. Have you ever received even a slight shock from one of your large appliances?

---

- 6. Do your washing machine and/or dryer move or vibrate excessively when operating?

---

- 7. Is the area around your dryer clean and free of clutter?

---

- 8. Do you clean your dryer lint filter after each load?

---

- 9. Did you have your furnace and air conditioner cleaned and inspected by a licensed, qualified professional this year?

---

- 10. If it's fuel-fired, is your furnace properly vented to the outside?

---

- 11. Do you have a working carbon monoxide alarm on each level and outside each sleeping area?

---

- 12. Is the temperature on your water heater set to 120 degrees or lower?

## Wake up to safety in the bedroom

YES NO

- 1. Do you have working smoke alarms in each bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home?

---

- 2. Have you tested your smoke alarms this month?

---

- 3. Are combustibles such as paper or fabric located near your lamps or lightbulbs?

---

- 4. Do you know the recommended bulb wattages for your light fixtures and lamps?

---

- 5. Are you using lightbulbs with the correct wattages in your light fixtures and lamps?

---

- 6. Are all lightbulbs screwed securely into their sockets?

---

- 7. Is each portable or window/wall air conditioner plugged into a dedicated circuit?

---

- 8. Have you cleaned your air conditioner(s) in preparation for the summer season?

---

- 9. Does your ceiling fan wobble?

---

- 10. Have you dusted and cleaned your ceiling fan recently?

---

- 11. Do you leave portable electronic devices and/or their battery chargers plugged in even after charging is complete?

## What is your home's safety score?

Check the answers on Page 13 to find out!



energy efficiency and lower utility bills.

Please note that this exercise is not a substitute for an electrical system inspection performed by a licensed, qualified electrician. To learn more about home electrical safety, go to <http://virtualhome.esfi.org>.



### Cook up some safety in the kitchen

YES NO

- 1. Are the range, oven and exhaust hood clean and free of debris?

---

- 2. Is the cooking area around the cooktop, oven and/or range clear of combustibles such as towels, napkins and potholders?

---

- 3. Is there enough room for air circulation behind, around and over the refrigerator?

---

- 4. Are the refrigerator coils free of dirt buildup that reduce efficiency and create a fire hazard?

---

- 5. Are there electrical appliances placed near the sink?

---

- 6. Have you tested your ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) this month?

---

- 7. Do you plug all of your countertop appliances into GFCI-protected outlets?

---

- 8. Are all electrical cords in good condition, with no signs of fraying, cracking or other damage?

---

- 9. Are there any appliance cords placed close to hot surfaces such as the toaster, cooktop, oven and/or range?

---

- 10. Do you have appliance cords that are dangling from counters or tables where they could be pulled on or tripped over?

---

- 11. Do you leave your toaster, coffeemaker and other countertop appliances plugged in when you're not using them?

### Plug into safety in the family room

YES NO

- 1. Is your home equipped with tamper-resistant receptacles (TRRs) to reduce the risk of electric shock injuries to children?

---

- 2. Are all of your light switch and outlet cover plates in good condition and not cracked or broken?

---

- 3. Are any of the light switch or outlet cover plates hot to the touch?

---

- 4. Is furniture arranged so that outlets are available for all lamps, entertainment equipment and appliances – without the use of extension cords?

---

- 5. Are you using an extension cord as a permanent power solution?

---

- 6. Do you check extension cords before each use to ensure they're in good working order, with no signs of fraying, cracking or other damage?

---

- 7. Are you using power strips because you have too few outlets to meet your needs?

---

- 8. Do you know the capacity of the circuit to which your power strip is connected and the power requirements of the equipment being plugged in?

---

- 9. Are your computer and other electronic devices protected from power surges by a surge suppressor?

---

- 10. Does your surge suppressor include cable and phone jacks to provide protection for your phone, fax, modem, cable box and television?

---

- 11. Is your surge suppressor plugged directly into a three-prong, grounded outlet?

---

- 12. Do your entertainment center, computer and office equipment have plenty of space around them for ventilation?

---

- 13. Are liquids, including drinks, kept away from electrical equipment such as televisions and computers? ⚡

# RECIPES FOR Salads & Dressings

## Southwestern Corn Salad

- 4 11-ounce cans white or shoe peg corn, drained
- 8 green onions, chopped
- 3 jalapeno peppers, seeded and chopped
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

In a large bowl, combine the corn, onions, jalapeno peppers and cilantro. Combine the mayonnaise, salt and pepper and gently stir into the corn mixture. Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours.

Rita Brodersen · Charter Oak  
Western Iowa Power Cooperative

## *Congratulations*

to **Rita Brodersen** of Charter Oak, who is a member of Western Iowa Power Cooperative. You are this month's winner of a \$50 credit on your power bill. Thanks for sharing your recipe!  
(We'll pick another winner at random next month.)

## Parmesan Vegetable Toss

- 2 cups mayonnaise
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ½ teaspoon dried basil
- 4 cups fresh broccoli florets
- 1 medium red onion, sliced
- 4 cups fresh cauliflower florets
- 1 can sliced water chestnuts, drained
- 1 large head lettuce, torn
- 1 pound bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 2 cups croutons

In a large bowl, combine mayonnaise, sugar, salt, Parmesan cheese and basil. Add broccoli, onions, cauliflower and water chestnuts; toss. Cover and refrigerate for several hours. Just before serving, place lettuce in bowl and top with vegetable mixture. Sprinkle with bacon and top with croutons.

Lindsey McFarland · Bloomfield  
Southern Iowa Electric Cooperative, Inc.

## Apple Salad

- 1 20-ounce can unsweetened pineapple chunks
- ¼ cup butter
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons cold water
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons poppy seeds
- 8 cups chopped red apples
- 2 cups green grapes, halved
- ¾ cup chopped and toasted pecans

Drain the pineapple chunks, reserving juice, and set pineapple aside. Place juice in a saucepan. Add butter, sugar and lemon juice and bring to a boil. Combine the cornstarch and cold water until smooth. Add to pan, stirring constantly. Return to a boil, cook and stir for two minutes. Chill. Stir in mayonnaise and poppy seeds. In a large bowl, combine pineapple, apples, grapes and cooked dressing; mix gently. Fold in pecans just before serving.

Margaret Dix · Aplington · Butler County REC

**GRILLABLE FRUITS**  
Harder fruits such as apples and pineapples are easiest to grill, but don't be afraid to try softer fruits such as peaches and nectarines. Pick fresh, firm fruits that are just short of being perfectly ripe, and grill them over medium heat on a very clean cooking grate.

TIP

## Mother's Salad Dressing

- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 tablespoons sugar substitute
- ¼ teaspoon salt, optional
- ¼ teaspoon white pepper

Combine all ingredients. Toss with greens equivalent to one head of lettuce and enjoy.

Jean Wadle · St. Mary's  
Clarke Electric Cooperative, Inc.

## Spinach Salad

- ½ cup sliced almonds
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 bags spinach
- 1 pint strawberries
- 2 Granny Smith apples, diced
- 2 cans mandarin oranges, drained
- ¾ tablespoon poppy seeds
- ⅓ cup apple cider vinegar
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup oil

In a small frying pan, add the almonds and ½ cup sugar; cook until sugar melts. (*Note:* This takes time, and you need to stir frequently.) Place spinach, strawberries, apples, oranges and cooled caramelized almonds in a large bowl. Combine remaining dressing ingredients in a small bowl and mix well. Add dressing to salad just before serving.

Angela Jager · Ashton · Osceola Electric Cooperative

## Best-Ever Coleslaw

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ½ cup sugar
- 5 shakes black pepper
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 16-ounce bag coleslaw mix

Beat mayonnaise and sugar with mixer for about 5 minutes. Add pepper and vinegar. Pour over coleslaw mix, cover and refrigerate overnight.

Linzie Morris · Belmond · Prairie Energy Cooperative

## Pear Waldorf Salad

- 1 29-ounce can pears
- 1 red apple, chopped
- ¾ cup chopped celery
- 1 6-ounce package lemon gelatin
- 1 cup hot water
- Pear juice, plus enough cold water to make 1 cup liquid
- ¼ cup light mayonnaise
- ⅛ teaspoon ground ginger

Drain pears, reserving liquid, and chop. Add apple and celery to pears. In another bowl, dissolve lemon gelatin in 1 cup hot water. When gelatin is dissolved, add pear juice/water. Whisk in mayonnaise and ginger. Cool dressing before adding chopped mixture. Chill until firm.

Mary Belle Davis · Bloomfield  
Southern Iowa Electric Cooperative, Inc.

## Favorite Dressing

- 1 can tomato soup
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon celery seed
- ⅓ cup vinegar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ⅛ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard

Blend all ingredients in blender until well mixed. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Marjorie Bruhn · Denison  
Western Iowa Power Cooperative

**TIP**  
TOPSY-TURVY EGG  
To tell if an egg is raw or hard-cooked, spin it. If the egg spins easily, it's hard-cooked; if it wobbles, it's raw.

**TIP**  
COOKTOP SAFETY  
Never put a glass casserole or lid over a burner. If the glass gets hot and explodes, it can send shards of glass in all directions and cause a serious injury.

**TIP**  
DON'T STAB IT!  
On the grill, use tongs to turn meat (rather than a fork) to avoid piercing and losing juices.

## Wanted: ETHNIC RECIPES The Reward: \$50



Please share your favorite ethnic recipe with co-op cooks across the state! If we run your recipe in the magazine, you could receive a \$50 credit on your power bill; we'll choose one winner at random from all the recipes we publish. See "Submitting a Recipe" in the yellow How to Contact Us box on Page 2 for instructions on sending your recipe. The deadline is May 31, 2011.

# Go green when you remodel your kitchen

BY JOHN BRUCE

Making a kitchen “green” often brings to mind super-extravagant or unusual-looking remodeling jobs, but neither is necessarily true. In reality, an earth-friendly strategy can work wonders for the looks and functionality of your kitchen, without breaking the household budget.

An eco-friendly kitchen also means a healthier kitchen. Eliminating or reducing invisible and odorless toxins in cabinets, paints and countertops is an important step in dramatically improving indoor air quality, which – according to the EPA – can be 2 to 5 times more polluted than outdoor air.



Photo: Amy Weirick

## Seal the cabinets

For example, most kitchen cabinets are made of particleboard. The material is made with urea formaldehyde resin, a known carcinogen that can emit the toxin for the life of the cabinet. Worse, whenever formaldehyde is exposed to heat from nearby appliances such as a refrigerator, oven or dishwasher, the gas becomes more concentrated and toxic when released.

A cost-effective remedy is to make the particleboard airtight by applying a water-based polyurethane sealant to all surfaces of the cabinets. It's best to complete this project outdoors, if possible, or during warmer months with the windows open so the kitchen can air out. Removing doors, handles and hinges is a must for a complete job and offers an opportunity to update the hardware for a fresh new look.

For new wood cabinets, look for cabinetry that's certified by the Forest Stewardship Council for responsible forest management practices. Another green option is bamboo. Its fast-growing properties make it one of today's most popular and sustainable choices for kitchen cabinets.

## You don't have to be a chemist

Paints and sealants emit chemicals called volatile organic compounds (VOCs), even for years after they dry. The good news is that some paints

## Is it time to buy new appliances too?

If you haven't been in the market for new appliances during the past several years, you're going to be surprised at how innovative and energy-efficient appliances have become. Plus, you'll find energy-smart appliance choices in almost all price ranges.

Before heading to the local appliance retailer or “big-box” store, measure the space each new appliance will occupy to make sure it will fit – and that there's

enough room to fully open the door, as well as adequate clearances for ventilation, plumbing connections and other hookups. Then go to the appliance manufacturers' Web sites to look at product information, and make a list of questions and “must have” and “nice to have, but not essential” features.

With the measurements, questions and features list in hand, head for the store.

- Look at product brochures and the actual appliances to evaluate the features, performance capabilities and capacities of different brands and models. Confirm the measurements too. Then ask questions about how different models operate. Are they noisy? What safety features do they have? What about repair histories? How much water do they use? How do the energy-saving cycles work?

Countertops of 100 percent recycled glass are an unusual and beautiful option for a green kitchen.

Photo: Coverings Etc.

pose far fewer hazards than others – and all are safer than they were 20 years ago.

VOCs in paints and sealants allow for durability and easy application, but their fumes can be harmful and are classified as greenhouse gases. Fumes from today's paints contain fewer cancer-causing chemicals such as benzene, formaldehyde and methylene-chloride than they did during the 1990s, thanks to federal regulations.

Even better, most major paint manufacturers now offer low-VOC paints that emit less than one-fifth as many harmful gases. They compare well with the pricing and performance of conventional paints.

A paint's material data safety (MDS) sheet states the VOC content under the physical data or chemical properties section. MDS information often is available on the Web sites for paint manufacturers and retailers too.

Buy only the amount of paint needed for the job, and properly store leftover paint for future use. If the paint cannot be reused in the next few years – before its quality degrades – donate it for reuse or take it to a hazardous waste facility.

### Consider new-age countertops

Countertop materials such as granite are unsustainable, and most

laminates can't be recycled and they emit formaldehyde or other VOCs. Green choices include concrete, recyclable stainless steel, glass and a wide variety of other eco-friendly surface materials.

One advantage of a concrete counter over a marble or granite one is that it's completely customizable. You can do the work yourself and sculpt, mold and texture a one-of-a-kind countertop.

A concrete countertop also can be sustainable, as long as the aggregate is made from recycled stone, crushed glass or other recycled materials. You even can make a counter from a mixture of cement and recycled newspaper pulp. To prevent stains, the finished concrete counter needs to be coated with a natural, oil-based sealant.

Can't picture concrete in your kitchen? Fortunately, there's a strikingly variety of commercially available, sustainable countertop surfaces available today. Get started by requesting samples to test for stain-resistance and durability. Keep them in your kitchen awhile, and see for yourself how the materials hold up as food preparation surfaces; resist common staining ingredients such as balsamic vinegar, catsup, coffee, oil and lemon juice; and withstand the use of sharp knives.

Some brands of commercially available, renewable countertops include:

- **Alkemi** – aluminum milling scrap ([www.renewedmaterials.com](http://www.renewedmaterials.com))
- **Avonite** – certified post-industrial scrap, equal to a recycled content value of 20 percent ([www.avonitesurfaces.com](http://www.avonitesurfaces.com))
- **Bioglass** – 100 percent recycled glass ([www.coveringsetc.com](http://www.coveringsetc.com))
- **EcoTop** – recycled paper and renewable bamboo ([www.kliptech.com/ecotop.html](http://www.kliptech.com/ecotop.html))
- **EnviroGlas** – post-consumer and industrial glass ([www.enviroglasproducts.com](http://www.enviroglasproducts.com))
- **IceStone**, 100-percent recycled glass in a cement matrix ([www.icestone.biz](http://www.icestone.biz))
- **Lithistone** – natural mineral binder, sand, stone, recycled material and organic mineral pigments ([www.lithistone.net](http://www.lithistone.net))
- **Richlite** – recycled paper and sustainable forest products ([www.richlite.com](http://www.richlite.com))
- **ShetkaStone** – recycled paper ([www.shetkastone.com](http://www.shetkastone.com))
- **Trinity Glass Products** – recycled glass and low-carbon cement ([www.trinityglassproducts.com](http://www.trinityglassproducts.com))
- **Vetrazzo** – recycled glass with cement, additives and pigments ([www.vetrazzo.com](http://www.vetrazzo.com)) ⚡

John Bruce is a professional writer who lives and cooks in Columbia, South Carolina.

- Check the operating manuals for the models on display. This will tell you how each appliance operates and outline what you need to do about regular maintenance and care. Also make sure the appliance's operation meets your family's needs and will accommodate your favorite cookware.
- Consult the yellow EnergyGuide labels to compare the annual energy

- costs of different models; look for Energy Star® labels too. The more energy an appliance uses, the more it will cost to run; the difference on your power bill could be significant.
- Uncover both price tags for the appliance – the one for the purchase price and the one for the operating cost (utility bills plus maintenance expenses). Consider both in evaluating the unit.

- Read the warranty. Does it cover the entire product or only certain parts? Is labor included?
- Find out the cost of delivery, installation and removal of the appliance you're replacing.
- Finally, ask about manufacturer rebates, special local financing programs and energy-efficiency incentives from your local electric cooperative. ⚡

## Electrical Fire Safety

About 28,600 home electrical fires occur during a typical year, leading to \$1.1 billion in property losses. Faulty electrical outlets and old wiring are the main causes of electrical fires, as are damaged cords, plugs, switches, and light fixtures.

**The number one priority in a fire is to escape safely.**



### Only use a fire extinguisher if:

- The fire department has been called.
- Everyone has exited the building.
- The fire is confined to a small area, such as a wastebasket, and is not growing.
- The room is not filled with smoke.

Not all fire extinguishers are alike. Only a Class C extinguisher can be used on an electrical fire. Remember the word **PASS**:

**P**ull the pin. Hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you and release the locking mechanism.

**A**im low. Point the nozzle toward the base of the fire.

**S**queeze the lever slowly and evenly.

**S**weep the nozzle from side-to-side.

### Remember: Know when to go.

Make sure you have a home fire escape plan and working smoke alarms.

*Source: U.S. Fire Administration, National Fire Protection Association*

## Product Recalls

# Hazardous box fans and soldering irons recalled

In cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the companies named below have initiated recalls on the products described here. If you own one of these fans or soldering irons, stop using it immediately and follow the directions shown. For details on other product recalls, go to the CPSC Web site at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) or call the agency's Hotline at 800-638-2772.

### Four Models of Lasko Box Fans

**NAME OF PRODUCT:** Box fans

**UNITS:** About 4.8 million

**MANUFACTURER:** Lasko Products Inc., of West Chester, Pa.

**HAZARD:** An electrical failure in the fan's motor poses a fire hazard.

**INCIDENTS/INJURIES:** Lasko has received seven reports of fires associated with motor failures – including two house fires and one barn fire – resulting in extensive property damage. No injuries have been reported.

**DESCRIPTION:** This recall involves Lasko box fans with model numbers 3720, 3723 and 3733, as well as Galaxy box fans with model number 4733 and the date "2002-03" or "2003-04" stamped on the bottom of the metal frame. "Lasko" or "Galaxy" is printed on the front of the fans. The model number is either stamped or printed on the bottom of the fans.

**SOLD AT:** Mass merchandisers nationwide from July 2002 through December 2005 for \$12 to \$25

**MANUFACTURED IN:** United States

**REMEDY:** Immediately stop using the recalled fans and contact Lasko to receive a free safety adapter with a fused plug.



**CONSUMER CONTACT:** For additional information, contact Lasko Products Inc. toll-free at 877-445-1314 anytime, or visit the company's Web site at [www.laskoproducts.com](http://www.laskoproducts.com).

### Cooper Tools Stained Glass Soldering Irons

**NAME OF PRODUCT:**

Soldering irons

**UNITS:** About 69,000

**IMPORTER:** Cooper Tools LLC of Apex, N.C.

**HAZARD:** The power cord can break at the flex point where the cord

attaches to the handle, posing a burn hazard to consumers.

**INCIDENTS/INJURIES:** The firm has received three reports of the power cord breaking at the flex point, resulting in three reports of minor burns.

**DESCRIPTION:** The recalled product is a 100-watt, 120-volt stained glass soldering iron with "Weller" and the model number W100PG, W100P3 or W100PGMX written on the light blue handle. The model number is located under the Weller brand name on the iron's handle. Only certain date codes are included in the recall.



**SOLD AT:** Authorized distributors nationwide from August 2006 to May 2010 for between \$50 and \$60

**MANUFACTURED IN:** Mexico

**REMEDY:** Consumers immediately should stop using this product and contact Cooper Tools to send the product to the company for an inspection and a free replacement soldering iron.

**CONSUMER CONTACT:** For more details, contact Cooper Tools toll-free at 800-476-3030 between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. Central Time, Monday through Friday, or go to the company's Web site at [www.cooperhandtools.com](http://www.cooperhandtools.com). ⚡

## 15-Minute Energy Saver

# Update recessed lights from energy wasters to energy savers

Installing an LED downlight kit in an existing recessed ceiling fixture is almost as easy as screwing in a lightbulb – and it takes just a couple of minutes. We used a Sylvania Ultra RT6 Downlight Kit from Lowe's.

Be sure to turn off the power at the breaker panel before you start! ⚡

A reasonably competent home do-it-yourselfer should be able to complete this project in a relatively short time period. If you are uncomfortable with the techniques mentioned here or the product manufacturer's instructions, please contact a professional technician, licensed electrician or qualified contractor for assistance.

**Tip No. 1:** LED recessed downlighting kits are just now finding their way to home centers and other retailers' shelves. Expect to pay about \$40-\$50 per unit.

**Tip No. 2:** As with CFLs, different LED lighting colors – warm white and daylight, for example – are available. In addition, the LEDs use less power and should outlive CFLs.



**Remove the old trim and unscrew the incandescent bulb. If the socket is attached to a bracket, mounting plate or reflector, you'll have to remove that first.**



**Following the directions that came with the kit, measure to make sure the new unit will fit properly. Then screw the adapter wire for the new light into the socket.**



**Plug the wire into the LED unit. Carefully push the excess wire into the housing and squeeze together the torsion springs to fit them into brackets on each side.**

## Safety Matters

# Prevent battery-swallowing incidents in toddlers – and seniors

Small, coin-sized batteries – sometimes called "button batteries" – are used in many products around the home and office. A recent study conducted by the National Capital Poison Center found that button battery-related injuries and fatalities have increased sevenfold since 1985.

Unfortunately, young children and senior adults unintentionally are swallowing the round, flat batteries – and in some cases the consequences are immediate and devastating. Children gain access to batteries from games, toys, calculators, remote controls, light-up watches, musical greeting cards, jewelry



and other items left within their reach. Senior adults sometimes swallow the tiny button batteries used in hearing aids after mistaking them for pills.

Symptoms of swallowing a battery are difficult to diagnose, resembling common ailments such as an upset stomach and fever. In some cases, there are no symptoms at all.

Occasionally, a swallowed battery will pass through the intestine. Most often, however, batteries become lodged in the throat or intestine and generate and release hydroxide, resulting in dangerous chemical burns. ⚡



## What is your home's safety score?

### Answer Key

Check your answers and total them to find out how your home scores!

#### Basement

1-Yes; 2-Yes; 3-Yes; 4-Yes; 5-No; 6-No; 7-Yes; 8-Yes; 9-Yes; 10-Yes; 11-Yes; 12-Yes

#### Bedroom

1-Yes; 2-Yes; 3-No; 4-Yes; 5-Yes; 6-Yes; 7-Yes; 8-Yes; 9-No; 10-Yes; 11-No

#### Kitchen

1-Yes; 2-Yes; 3-Yes; 4-Yes; 5-No; 6-Yes; 7-Yes; 8-Yes; 9-No; 10-No; 11-No

#### Family room

1-Yes; 2-Yes; 3-No; 4-Yes; 5-No; 6-Yes; 7-No; 8-Yes; 9-Yes; 10-Yes; 11-Yes; 12-Yes; 13-Yes

Basement correct answers: \_\_\_\_\_

Bedroom correct answers: \_\_\_\_\_

Kitchen correct answers: \_\_\_\_\_

Family room correct answers: \_\_\_\_\_

**Total correct answers:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Scoring

**44 or more correct answers:** Keep up the good work! Continue to make electrical safety a priority in your home.

**37 to 43 correct answers:** You're off to a good start. Focus on the areas where your home didn't score as well. A few simple changes can make a big difference in safety.

**36 or fewer correct answers:** You've got some work to do. Consider calling a licensed, qualified electrician to help you improve the electrical safety of your home.

# Natural ventilation cuts cooling costs

BY JAMES DULLEY

No matter how much of the sun's heat you block from windows and doors and how effective the ventilation is in a house without air-conditioning, a house with air-conditioning and a reasonable humidity level will be more comfortable during the hottest summer days. However, with proper ventilation, you may be able to reduce the amount of air-conditioning you need.

Direct and indirect heat transmitted through windows and doors significantly can increase the temperature inside your home. Even the most energy-efficient windows and doors have an insulation R-value much lower than that of a typical exterior wall. There also are gaps around doors and windows – even though they're sealed with weather stripping and caulk – that allow in some hot, humid outdoor air.

Because you can't stop all the energy gain at windows and doors, you might as well make maximum use of their ventilation attributes on all but the most humid days. Try to get the breeze flowing from window to window on opposite sides of the same floor or from lower-level windows through second-floor windows. The air coming in will be warm and probably humid, but it will make you feel a little cooler as it flows over your skin. If there's no cooling sensation, it's time to crank up the air conditioner.

The wind blowing over your house creates higher pressure on the upwind side and lower pressure on the downwind side. On the main floor, completely open your windows on the downwind side, but open the ones on the upwind side halfway or less. This **cross-ventilation** may reduce the total airflow, but it increases the speed of the air coming in. In the summer, the higher speed of a breeze across your skin creates more cooling effect. If you have casement windows, crank them out to just a partial angle to catch more breezes.

For **through-ventilation** from the main floor to the upper level, open windows on the upwind side of your house. (This also works reasonably well on a calm day.) Also lift the **attic access cover**, which often is located in a bedroom closet ceiling, and rotate it to create ventilation gaps in the corners of the opening. The less-dense warm room air naturally will exhaust out the opening. However, don't totally remove the cover; that would allow a direct downward route for radiant heat from the roof into the room.

If security isn't an issue, open one or more exterior doors and allow the air to flow through **screen doors**. For additional security, drill a hole directly over a floor joist in the floor slightly inside each door. Slip a short steel rod in the hole, so the exterior door only can be opened a couple of inches.

If you don't like the appearance of screen doors or don't want to spend the money to install them, consider installing **retractable, spring-loaded screens** that pull horizontally across the doors and fasten to magnetic strips on the other side. The vertical housings that hold the screens are only a couple of inches wide, so they're barely noticeable. The spring holds the screening taut over the doors.

Adding **awnings** is also a good way to reduce the amount of heat coming in through windows. The proper size of the awnings depends on your home's orientation to the sun. An awning contractor should be able to help you determine the proper size.

Installing an awning over a door also helps reduce heat gain in a couple of ways. First, the awning blocks the sun's direct rays from heating the

Natural ventilation created by remote-controlled, motorized venting skylights can be much more effective than opening a couple of windows. The chimney effect created by the open skylights exhausts humid, stale air while admitting healthy, natural light.



Photo: Velux (www.veluxusa.com)

door or shining in an open screened door. Second, the sun's heat on the outside of an insulated composite door may cause it to bow. When this happens, the weather stripping may not seal well when the air-conditioning is running.

For windows exposed to the sun, install **sun-control screening** on the inside or outside of your windows. They often are made from strong polymers and have a dense weave to block more than half the sun's heat, but you still can see through the screening.

If you have **window blinds**, rotate the slats so they slope to the outside, from bottom to top. As the air between the window and blind slats gets hot, it will tend to flow upward and stay between the window and the slats. During the winter, reverse the slat angle so the cold air stays against the window. 🌿

Have a question? Send inquiries to James Dulley, *Living with Energy in Iowa* magazine, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 – or visit [www.dulley.com](http://www.dulley.com).

# Pansies bring a special magic

BY GARY ANDERSON

Growing up in a small town can be hard on adults if they're looking for urbane sophistication. But for kids, small towns can be filled with adventure – coupled with a high degree of safety and nurturing they might not get in the big city.

As a kid, the tiny Iowa town in which I lived consisted of 20 houses, two churches, one building containing four apartments and a general store much like the one Ike Godsey owned on Walton's Mountain. The store in our town didn't have a name, and even though I didn't realize it as a kid, it definitely was smaller than Godsey's General Merchandise.

We just called it Hoffmaster's. It was the kind of place that had a little bit of everything, but not very much of anything. That little country store was a magical place to me as a kid, no matter how unbelievably small it was, in reality, when I returned to my childhood town after 30 years.

Mr. Hoffmaster's son, Donald, was in my class, and since his family had one of the nicest houses in town (which, of course, wasn't saying much), I assumed his father was a rich man. After all, he owned a store! I now know that they probably struggled as much as any other family, but you couldn't have convinced me of that at the age of 10.

One day about thirty years later, while talking to a childhood friend who still lives in the area, I learned something about Mr. Hoffmaster that had escaped me when I was young – but brought a tear to my eye when I heard the story. It concerned pansies – and something special Mr. Hoffmaster did for the children of the town.

Every year in early May, Mr. Hoffmaster set two racks of flowers in front of his store. There were a number of varieties – but the flowers



on the left rack were priced at 79¢, while the identical ones on the right rack bore a sign that read "10¢ – 12 and under."

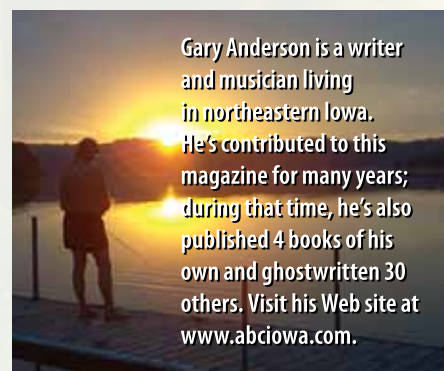
Year after year, I never gave any thought to the very specific way those right-side signs were phrased. All I saw was "10¢," which meant I could buy my mom her favorite flowers, purple pansies, for Mother's Day.

Only during that many-years-later conversation did my friend remind me of those racks and the disparity in the prices. Mr. Hoffmaster, in his own wonderful, caring way, was making sure all the kids in our little town would have an opportunity to give flowers to their moms for Mother's Day.

My friend then confided in a hushed tone, "I'll tell you something else – something I've never told anyone. When I was nine, my dad was out of work and we had no

money at all. Although no one told Mr. Hoffmaster about it, everyone in town knew. That year he gave me a pansy for my mom, but he made me promise not to tell anyone, and I never have – until now."

All I could do was shake my head and smile through the tears in my eyes. Sometimes, when we least expect it, we find ourselves in the midst of angels – angels holding 10¢ pansies in their hands. ⚡




Gary Anderson is a writer and musician living in northeastern Iowa. He's contributed to this magazine for many years; during that time, he's also published 4 books of his own and ghostwritten 30 others. Visit his Web site at [www.abciowa.com](http://www.abciowa.com).



# EVIDENTLY, KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON MEANS TURNING THEM OFF.

I'm always looking for ways to save my business money. This one was a no-brainer. I'm saving us \$745 a year by turning off a few switches at night. What can you do? Find out how the little changes add up at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).

Touchstone Energy®  
Cooperatives of Iowa   
[www.touchstoneenergy.coop](http://www.touchstoneenergy.coop)

[TOGETHERWESAVE.COM](http://TOGETHERWESAVE.COM)