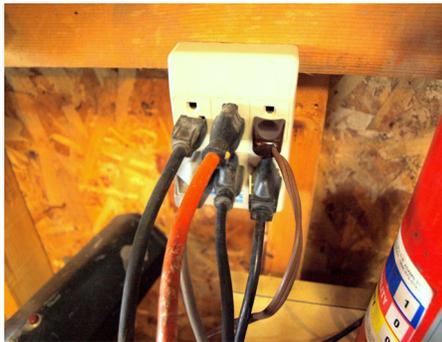




## Avoid Overloading Your Home's Electrical System

We're often told to not overload our schedules or our plates, but what about our home's electrical system? Turns out it is not a good idea, since doing so can cause damage and put your family at risk.



Overloading the circuits in our home is sometimes not as obvious as cramming too many events on our calendar or overfilling our ice cream bowl (although it can be!).

An overload simply means that you have too many things running on one or more electrical circuits or pathways in your home and there is more demand than supply. When this happens, it can cause a minor inconvenience like damage to an appliance or a major one like a power outage or a fire.

To prevent overloading circuits, consider the following tips offered by Wheat Belt Public Power District and Safe Electricity:

- Although tempting, don't plug too many things in by using extension cords, power strips and multi outlet converters. Overdoing it can overload and overheat a circuit.
- Be on the lookout for loose connections or damaged or corroded wires, which can also cause an overload or fire.
- If you continually upgrade your home with more lighting, appliances, and electronics, your home's circuits may not be able to handle the increased load.
- Do not plug in multiple devices or appliances into

*Continued on 12-D*

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*Editor - Kelli Chaon*

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## LUCKY DRAWING

Congratulations to Shirley Jurgens, our November "Lucky Draw Winner"!

Shirley has been a farmer in Cheyenne County for the last 69 years. She has one son, Bradd Jurgens; who is the owner/mechanic of Plains A & D (north of Sidney), one daughter, Jennifer Jurgens, and one granddaughter, Katy Jurgens.

In her spare time, Shirley enjoys quilting, yard work and spending time with her grand dog, Piper Jo.

Shirley received a \$50 credit on her account for her prompt payment. If you would like to be included in our next drawing, and avoid a \$5 delinquent fee, please send your payment before the 16th of the month.

For your convenience, we offer several payment options. Please give us a call at 308-254-5871, or visit [wheatbelt.com](http://wheatbelt.com), and select the Customer Engagement page for more information.



# The Truth About Smart Meters



By Andy Kuhns  
AMI/IT Technician

Electric smart meters began deployment in the United States in the mid 2000's. Unlike my flip phone and compact disc collection, smart meters have steadily gained in popularity and now account for over 65% of installed meters. A smart meter's main function is the same as its predecessor, measuring the amount of energy used. Where it differs from a traditional meter is in its ability to communicate remotely with the utility. This communication eliminates the need for onsite meter reading.

Evolving technology often leads to concerns, misunderstandings, and even some myths. Let's take a closer look at some of these below.

### Do smart meters provide any real benefit to the customer?

Yes! Smart meters provide accurate, real time and interval energy data. This information can help customers troubleshoot equipment issues, adjust usage schedules and more. Smart meters also improve outage detection by electronically reporting the time and location of an outage. This improved notification leads to faster, more efficient power restoration.

### Who left the hall light on?

Smart meters are not surveillance devices. They measure the amount of electricity used and the time of day that it was consumed. Smart meters do not monitor what activities, devices, or appliances are using the energy. Sadly, these meters are not able to answer some of life's most burning questions: Why is the TV on if nobody is watching it? Who keeps turning up the thermostat? And seriously, am I the only one that sees that light on?

### Are they safe?

Many smart meters use radiofrequency (RF) to communicate with the utility. RF exposure limits are set and regulated by the U.S. Federal Communications Commission with input from other federal health and safety agencies. Studies have shown that RF emitted by smart meters is well below the FCC exposure limits. The amount of RF is comparable to many household devices such as cell phones, Wifi routers and microwaves. For more information on this topic you can visit: <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/wireless-devices-and-health-concerns>

Hopefully this helps to shed some light on what a smart meter is and what it is not. As technology advances there will undoubtedly be more changes and improvements to the smart grid on the horizon.

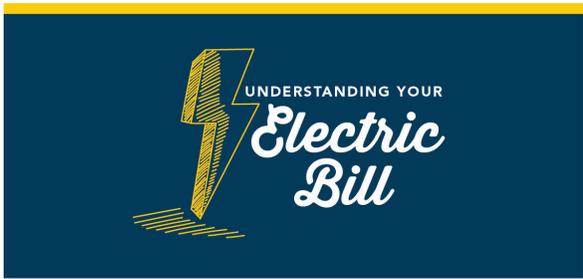
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To view the 2023 rates that were determined using our Cost-of-Service Study conducted in 2022, use the QR code, contact our office, or visit [wheatbelt.com](http://wheatbelt.com).





As the new year begins, learn how to save throughout the year by reducing your energy use.

**RUN A FULL LOAD**

Wash clothes and dishes only using full loads; partial loads waste energy and water.

**AIR DRY LAUNDRY**

Why not air dry clean clothes? It will reduce energy costs and it may help keep clothes looking new.

**PLUG SMARTER**

Plug TVs and electronic devices into an advanced power strip. These 'smart' strips sense when devices are not being used and shut off power.

**COOK EFFICIENTLY**

Use a microwave or toaster oven to heat leftovers or small portions. Small appliances use less energy and can heat food more quickly.

**KEEP YOUR DRYER CLEAN**

Clean the lint filter after each dryer load; this will increase air circulation and improve dryer efficiency.

Utilize the following tips and find additional tips at [wheatbelt.com/together-we-save](http://wheatbelt.com/together-we-save)



To view the 2023 rates that were determined using our Cost-of-Service Study conducted in 2022, use the QR code, contact our office, or visit [wheatbelt.com/rates](http://wheatbelt.com/rates).

## LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

LIHEAP helps low income households stay safe and healthy by providing financial assistance to offset the costs of heating and cooling.

**WHAT IT DOES**

- Heating assistance
- Cooling assistance
- Deposit/Reconnect fee assistance
- Year round crisis assistance
- Emergency furnace repair and replacement
- Fan program
- Weatherization services

**TO QUALIFY**

LIHEAP maximum allowable income (October 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023)

Household size	LIHEAP gross income limit (150% of Federal Poverty Level)
1	\$20,385
2	\$27,465
3	\$34,545
4	\$41,625

**CONTACT**

Fill out an application at:  
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800-383-4278  
[accessnebraska.ne.gov](http://accessnebraska.ne.gov)

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**Avoid Overloading Your Home System cont'd from 12-A**

an outlet at the same time, exceeding the outlet's capacity. Do not use extension cords with major appliances.

Consult an electrician if you notice the following:

- Warm or discolored outlets or outlet cover plates
- Flickering, dimming or blinking lights or any other strange lighting behavior
- Items in your home frequently cause a mild shock
- Other strange happenings like a burning odor that has no source or unusual sounds coming from outlets
- Fuses that blow or trip frequently

Do what you can to avoid overloading the circuits in your home. Although the majority of a home's electrical system is out of sight, out of mind, don't take overload symptoms lightly and consult an electrician with concerns.

*For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).*



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[wheatbelt@wheatbelt.com](mailto:wheatbelt@wheatbelt.com)

**SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

We are happy to announce our 2023 Scholarship Program. Wheat Belt Public Power District, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Tri-State G&T, and Arbor Wealth Management, Inc. team up each year to offer several scholarships. **Visit [Wheatbelt.com/news&events/youth](http://Wheatbelt.com/news&events/youth) info to download an application or contact our office.**

**\*SUBMIT\***

- Deliver - 11306 Road 32, Sidney
- Mail - PO Box 177, Sidney NE 69162
- Fax - (308) 254-2384 (include cover page)
- Email - [wheatbelt@wheatbelt.com](mailto:wheatbelt@wheatbelt.com)

**\*SCHOLARSHIPS\***

**Wheat Belt Public Power District**

- One - \$2,000 Lineman or
- Two - \$500 Vocational/Technical

**Basin Electric Power Cooperative**

- One - \$1,000

**Tri-State Generation & Transmission Assoc.**

- Two - \$500

**Arbor Wealth Management, Inc.**

- One - \$500

**\*GUIDELINES\***

Dependent of a Wheat Belt PPD customer ~ College Freshman - Senior, Fall status ~ Enrolled in a full-time undergraduate course of study ~ Enrolled at a 2-yr. community or junior college, 4-yr. college or university, vocational/technical school or lineman school.

**Wheat Belt scholarship only:** must be enrolled in a technical field course of study.

## Our Mission

**Deliver electricity safely, reliably and efficiently.**



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