

# Along these LINES

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2023



## Education for All

West Feliciana High's Career and Technical Education Center prepares students for their futures Page 20

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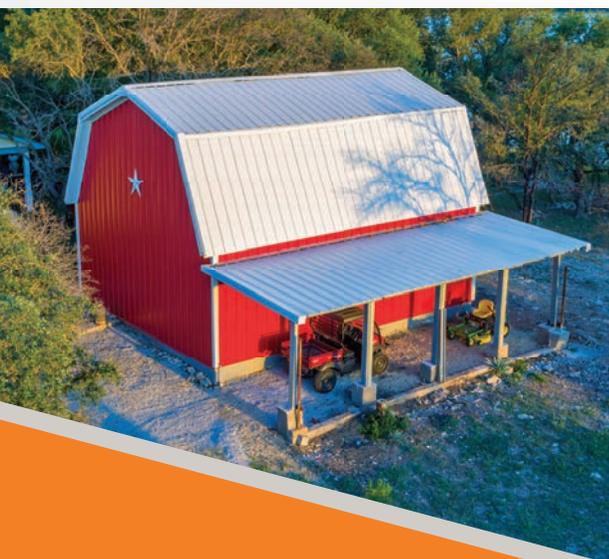
From left, Gabe Lang, Olivia Wilson and Skyler Gilmore learn to apply a splint in the Emergency Medical Responder curriculum. PHOTO COURTESY OF DEMCO

  
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# Powering the Future

The Oxford Dictionary defines senioritis as an affliction of students in their final year of high school or college, characterized by a decline in motivation or performance.

Another side effect of senioritis is the realization a student will be on their own in a few short months, having to make adult decisions. This affliction typically occurs around this time of year for most graduating seniors. Students contend with burnout, exhaustion and the paralyzing fears of what they will do next.

Many graduating seniors don't realize the career opportunities at their electric cooperative. From engineering and technology to finance and communications, the energy industry offers a range of rewarding careers. At your electric cooperative, you'll be part of a rapidly growing industry, with the chance to develop your skills and help bring power to the communities around you.

Electric cooperatives often offer competitive salaries and benefits packages. You'll also be able to develop your skills through training and advancement opportunities. Working in a cooperative means being part of a close-knit team and having the support of your colleagues. Finally, the industry is growing rapidly, offering long-term job stability and potential for career growth.

There is a wide range of electric cooperative careers in utility work to suit different interests and skill sets. Some examples include lineworkers who install and maintain power lines, substation technicians who ensure the proper functioning of electrical equipment, and meter technicians who handle metering and billing processes.

Other career options include engineers, accountants, customer service representatives, attorneys, communicators and safety personnel. No matter your passion or expertise, there is likely a role in utility work within an electric cooperative that is right for you. Requirements for these jobs can vary but typically include a high school diploma or equivalent, being physically fit and able to work well in a team. Some positions may require additional certifications, a college degree or specialized training.

To begin your electric cooperative career, research local electric cooperatives and their job openings. Network with professionals in the industry and attend career fairs to learn more about available opportunities. Discover the inspiring stories of individuals who have found success in electric cooperative careers.



Addie Armato

From lineworkers to customer service representatives, these employees have significantly affected their communities through their dedication and hard work. Learn how they have overcome challenges, developed their skills and found fulfillment in their roles. Their stories serve as a testament to the rewarding nature of a career in utility work.

Once you have identified a position that interests you, tailor your resume and cover letter to highlight relevant skills and experiences. Prepare for interviews by researching the cooperative and practicing common interview questions. Finally, continue learning and developing your skills through certifications and training programs to enhance your chances of success in the field.

The future of electric cooperatives and the job market is bright. As our world becomes more reliant on electricity, the demand for skilled workers in the utility industry will continue to grow.

With advancements in technology and renewable energy, there are exciting opportunities for innovation and sustainability. As a result, the job market for utility work is expected to remain stable and offer long-term job security.

Seniors, don't let the senioritis blues get to you as you head into the last stretch before graduation. Now is the perfect time to take the leap and unlock a world of possibilities.

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## Trails and Tours

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### Volume 38, Issue 6

#### Mission

DEMCO is focused on enhancing the quality of life for members by providing safe, reliable and competitively priced energy services.

**Along These Lines (USPS 4089)** is published bimonthly by the Association of Louisiana Electric Co-ops Inc., 10725 Airline Hwy., Baton Rouge, LA 70816, in partnership with Pioneer Utility Resources.

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DEMCO is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



# Co-ops Vote

As one of America's electric cooperatives, DEMCO understands the value of building relationships with elected officials at all levels of government.

Many important policy issues directly impact electric utilities and ultimately, you, the members we proudly serve. Strengthening our relationships with elected leaders positions us to advocate for our local community.

While DEMCO is a locally owned cooperative, we're part of a larger network of America's electric co-ops. Through our nonpartisan grassroots program, known as Co-ops Vote, we're working to enhance the political strength of electric co-ops and boost voter turnout. When we all show up at the polls, we can voice the issues that matter most to our community.

Voting is a form of personal empowerment that gives you the opportunity to voice your opinion on the issues that matter most to you. Your voice matters.

Let's work to improve our country and community one vote at a time.

DEMCO encourages everyone—regardless of political beliefs—to vote, stand up for the local community and make a collective impact.

I encourage everyone to take the time to cast your vote on November 18. Your vote counts.

As the year draws to a close, the holiday season is upon us, and one celebration that holds a special place in my heart is Thanksgiving. It's a time when families across America come together to prepare and enjoy a wonderful meal, give thanks and spend time with loved ones.

For me personally, I look forward to the opportunity to gather with my children and grandchildren. I look forward to a house filled with the comforting blend of delicious food, cherished family moments and joyful chatter.

At DEMCO, we have office closures scheduled for the holidays, as well as a companywide training day on Friday, November 3. It's been a while since we've had the chance to meet for a day of learning, and we're truly looking forward to it. We appreciate your understanding during these closures.

If you need to make a payment while our offices are closed, you can conveniently do so by logging in to your MyDEMCO account via a web browser or through the mobile app, or you can call 844-MyDEMCO and select option 2.

On behalf of everyone at DEMCO, we extend our warmest wishes for a joyful holiday season.



## HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSURES

### THANKSGIVING

Wednesday, Nov. 22 at noon  
Thursday, Nov. 23  
Friday, Nov. 24

### CHRISTMAS

Friday, Dec. 22 at noon  
Monday, Dec. 25  
Tuesday, Dec. 26

### NEW YEAR'S

Friday, Dec. 29 at noon  
Monday, Jan. 1

## Jacob Overhultz Elected as SAIA President

DEMCO congratulates Safety and Loss Control Supervisor Jacob Overhultz who was elected as president of the Southern Area Instructor's Association from September 2023 to September 2024.

Jacob served as vice president from September 2022 to September 2023 and has been a member of SAIA since 2015.

SAIA is a professional association comprised of electric utility safety instructors from the southern region of the United States. The group includes more than 150 members representing 20 states. ■



## Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

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(4) Other Classes	-0-
c. Total Paid Circulation	
(Sum of 15b(1) through 15b(4))	89,155
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution	
(1) Outside County	-0-
(2) In-County	-0-
(3) Other Classes	-0-
(4) Outside the Mail	-0-
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution	
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g. Copies Not Distributed	25
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(4) Other Classes	-0-
c. Total Paid Circulation	
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d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution	
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f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)	92,176
g. Copies Not Distributed	25
h. Total (Sum of 15f and 15g)	92,201
i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)	100%

I certify the statements made by me are correct and complete.  
Addie Armato, Editor



## INSPIRING YOUTH!

### Youth Cooperative Ambassador Program

DEMCO IS CALLING ALL 9<sup>TH</sup> & 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS.

DEMCO is now accepting applications to its Youth Cooperative Ambassador Program (YCAP), an all-expense-paid leadership and educational program for 9th and 10th-grade students.



**ENTRIES DUE BY NOV. 17.**

For more information, eligibility requirements and to apply, visit [DEMCO.org/YCAP](http://DEMCO.org/YCAP)



## 2024 DEMCO Essay Contest

DEMCO IS CALLING ALL JUNIORS!

High school juniors can enter the 2024 DEMCO Essay Contest. Winners will receive an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C.! Applications will be accepted starting November 1, 2023.

**ENTRIES DUE BY JANUARY 19, 2024.**

For eligibility and to apply, visit [DEMCO.org/Community/DEMCO-Essay-Contest](http://DEMCO.org/Community/DEMCO-Essay-Contest)

# Save on Your Holiday Electric Bill

Follow these nine tips to make your holiday season merry and bright with an energy bill that won't cause you fright

By Leon Espinoza

## Tip 1: Dim Your Bill With LED Lights

This one's a no-brainer. LED holiday lights topple traditional incandescent lights for efficiency, which can mean big savings on home lighting bills. How big? Here's the estimated cost of running each type of light string for 12 hours a day for 40 days:

- Standard C-7 (125 bulbs, 4 watts each)—\$25.13.
- Mini incandescent lights (300 bulbs, 0.4 watts each)—\$6.03.
- LED holiday lights (280 bulbs, 0.04 watts each)—\$0.56.

Beyond costing pennies on the dollar, LED lights are safer, sturdier and longer lasting. They are much cooler than incandescent lights, reducing the risks of combustion; are made with epoxy lenses, not glass; and, according to the Department of Energy, could still be in use 40 holiday seasons from now.

## Tip 2: Tap the Sun and Save A Buck

Speaking of LED lights, depending on where you live and the weather, solar-powered LED holiday lights can brighten an outdoor tree without tapping your electricity.

## Tip 3: Use Reflective Decorations

You don't need electricity to bring holiday shine. Silver bells, reflective ornaments, menorahs and tinsel reflect their own glow.

## Tip 4: Use a Timer

You can save a bundle by simply limiting the time your lights stay on. You don't have to rely on memory. Use a timer.

Experts recommend setting timers to automatically go on when it gets dark and off in the middle of the night, with eight hours being a sweet spot for savings. Timers are available at a price that typically won't break the bank.

## Tip 5: Cook Up Savings in the Kitchen

Cooking can account for almost 5% of home energy use. Add holiday gatherings to the mix, and that's a recipe for higher energy bills. What's a holiday host to do? Here are a few tricks:

- Have a big holiday cooking day, baking many of the season's delights—cookies, pies, fudge and more—all at once. This not only creates family fun time, but a chance to save energy because appliances don't waste energy repeatedly heating up.
- When possible, skip the conventional oven and use a microwave or range top, which use less energy.
- Resist the urge to peek. Every time the oven door opens, the temperature inside is reduced by as much as 25 degrees, forcing it to work even harder—and use more energy—to get back to the proper cooking temperature.

## Tip 6: Let Your Visitors Warm Things Up

People create their own heat. Your holiday guests are likely to be wearing sweaters and other layers. When your guests arrive, turn down the thermostat. The combination of hot food and warm bodies should keep your home plenty toasty.

## Tip 7: What About the Fireplace?

Want a lower energy bill? Make sure the damper is closed when your fireplace is not in use. Sorry, Santa. Otherwise, it is like having a window open in your house. Keep in mind that once a fire dies down, the chimney begins to suck remaining warm air from the room, forcing your heater to work overtime.

## Tip 8: Turn Down the Temp Before You Leave

Before you go to see Grandma or Grandpa, turn down the thermostat, unplug electric devices and turn off lights and fans. Also, put your water heater on vacation mode.

## Tip 9: Cozy Up

Save on heating by wearing a holiday sweater and a comfy pair of slippers around the house. There is a science to it. Heat escapes from your feet. Keeping them insulated will keep you warmer. When you see your winter bill, your heart may grow three sizes. ■



# Co-ops Helping Co-ops

On August 31, South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Association, DEMCO, Washington-St. Tammany Electric Cooperative and Claiborne Electric Cooperative sent crews to Tri-County Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Madison, Florida, to assist with power restoration in the aftermath of Hurricane Idalia, a Category 3 Hurricane that hit Florida near Cedar Key. Crews were stationed there for 10 days.

## ALEC NAMED '5-STAR CO-OP' BY NATIONAL TRADE ASSOCIATION

Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives has been named a "5-Star Co-op" by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

The five-star designation recognizes ALEC's high level of participation in Co-ops Vote, a national get-out-the-vote campaign. The nonpartisan campaign seeks to engage voters and boost voter turnout in areas served by electric co-ops across the country.

The Co-ops Vote program can make a difference in our communities. Visit [www.vote.coop](http://www.vote.coop) to learn more.





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# Q&A

## Public Service Commissioner Davante Lewis

*Building a more affordable, reliable and sustainable utility structure for all Louisianians has been Public Service Commissioner Davante Lewis' main focus since taking office in December 2022. His history of civic engagement dates to his youth in Lake Charles, where he served as one of the first members of the Louisiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council and as former President Barack Obama's 2008 campaign Louisiana High School Coordinator. At 18 years old, he ran for Calcasieu Parish School Board. Although his first campaign was unsuccessful, he continued to serve his community by championing for young people.*

*He is currently a board member of the Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault, New Leaders Council of Louisiana, LIFT Louisiana and the Friends of the Capitol Park Museum.*

**Q. What would you say are your most significant achievements?**

Bringing awareness and attention to the Louisiana Public Service Commission.

We have been a quiet agency for some time but are very important in people's lives. All of these decisions we make, somebody's life is at the end. Our job is to ensure that your lights come on, your water stays running and is clean, and that you can afford your bills. We are protecting people.

**Q. How have you continued to work to promote social justice and civic participation?**

By teaching people how power really does lie at their hands.

I worked for years to tell people to vote and run for office. I like to demonstrate the power people have by staying connected to the community and using my status to bring awareness to issues that matter to people. I'm talking about ways to ensure communities are safe and engaging churches and schools on how they can reduce their energy consumption. I really try to use my role as a conduit of information and connectivity to people.

**Q. Broadband expansion has become a hot topic. How will you play a role in expanding access to high-speed internet?**

It is vitally important that we look at this as a full picture. A lot of focus has been on rural broadband, but what I'm really concerned about is some of our inner cities.

We saw during (COVID-19) how many families that lived in my district did not have access to broadband and had to do their online learning in a McDonald's parking lot. We need to take an all-hands-on-deck and a full approach to ensure that every child (and) every person has access to it.

We are moving away from cash, which means everything we buy is mostly through digital platforms. If we don't have good broadband and internet services, we are going to harm our economic development.

We are looking at it from an education, public right, and also economic development and workforce standpoint.

**Q. You have actively promoted renewable energy and energy-efficiency programs. Why?**

Renewable energy doesn't mean we are only throwing out what we know; it's proving to be



cleaner for the environment and our health—and sustainable.

Renewable energy is a way forward. It allows us to store solar and wind power for a day when it's raining. Energy efficiency is how we tackle affordability. We can't lower people's bills if we don't touch their usage and demand. Energy-efficient products and tools are about lowering bills and improving the entire system

**Q. What goals do you have for your next term?**

I am really looking to modernizing our systems and ensuring we take political spending out of our utility bills. I am also passing a Ratepayer's Bill of Rights that says we are consumers and all have basic protection and guidelines in our right to utility services.



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# Celebrating the Art

By Cheré Coen



Dixie Poché

Cajun cooking and traditions are in Dixie Poché's blood, and so is her love of writing. She found it natural to delve into Louisiana foodways with several books. Dixie visited Acadiana restaurants in "Classic Eateries of Cajun Country" and explored the state's unique desserts in "Louisiana Sweets," both containing recipes and published by Arcadia Publishing.

Her latest food tome is "Cajun Pig: Boucheries, Cochon de Lait and

Boudin," examining the tradition of communal hog butchering and pork dishes in Cajun country.

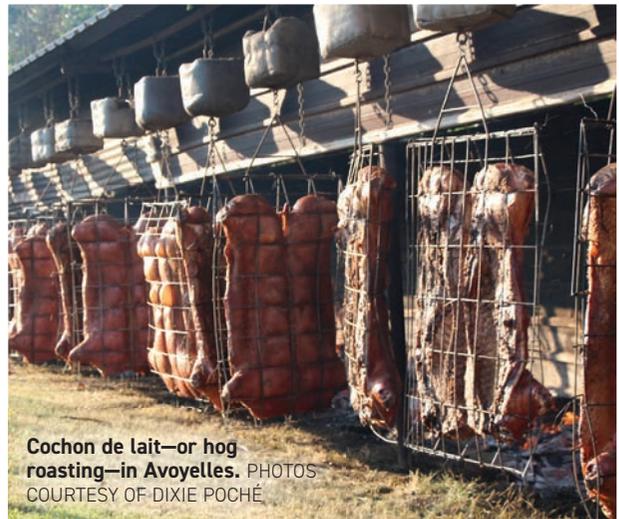
For decades in South Louisiana, family members gathered to butcher a hog each winter. The patriarch of the group would shoot the pig after a priest gave the blessing to both the feast and its participants. The family would then bleed the pig, begin the butchering and make many dishes, including hog's head cheese, boudin, blood sausage and bacon.

"Everybody had an assignment, even the kids," Dixie explains. "It was a big family reunion."

In years past, boucheries were held in late fall and winter because homes lacked refrigeration and electricity. At the conclusion of the

boucherie, everyone returns home with pork items and every bit of the pig is used.

"Even the piggy tail can be used in mustard greens or red beans and rice," says Dixie, a Cecilia native who grew



Cochon de lait—or hog roasting—in Avoyelles. PHOTOS COURTESY OF DIXIE POCHÉ



Cracklins are made from fried pork skin with a little bit of fat left on.

up in St. Martinville and learned much from her aunt and uncle's meat market. "It's corny, but we have a saying, 'We use everything but the oink.'"

Dixie got the idea for her latest book after attending one of chef John Folsé's Fête des Bouchers, where butchers and chefs from around the country visit his White Oak Plantation near Baton Rouge to perform and preserve this time-honored Cajun tradition.

"I recognized at that event that boucheries was much of my heritage," Dixie says.

For those unfamiliar with the tradition, boucherie means to slaughter a pig, and cochon de lait refers to its roasting.

"Cajun Pig" covers the hog butchering traditions, its Cajun French origins and explains its resulting pork products, such as hog's head cheese that's similar to a Cajun pate; ponce, or the pig's stomach;

# of the Boucherie



Hog's head cheese, known as a specialty product, is made of boiled scraps of pig to ensure little of the hog is wasted.

and cracklins. The book also serves as a travelogue to Cajun country, listing events such as boudin cook-offs and festivals and spotlighting those who keep the boucherie tradition alive.

“I highlight the porky event of Cadien Toujours, a nonprofit based in Mermentau that promotes the French language and Cajun traditions by hosting an annual boucherie as well as a Courir de Mardi Gras run,” Dixie says. “And I cover the history of some of our pork dishes, such as boudin.” ■

*Cadien Toujours hosts its seventh annual boucherie January 7, 2024. For more information, visit [www.cadientoujours.net](http://www.cadientoujours.net).*

*Dixie's books are available at Louisiana bookstores and participating Walgreens.*

## Butter Beans With Pickled Pork or Smoked Ham Hocks

Recipe courtesy of Camelia Beans, published in “Cajun Pig: Boucheries, Cochon de Lait and Boudin”

- 1 pound Camellia-brand large lima beans
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 pound pickled pork or smoked ham hocks
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 quarts water
- 2 bay leaves
- Salt, pepper and hot sauce, to taste
- Cooked rice
- Hot buttered French bread, sliced

Rinse and sort beans. Optional: Soak beans using your preferred method. Heat oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. If using pickled pork, add to pot. Saute 5 minutes or until browned. Add onions and garlic, and saute 5 to 10 minutes. Add 2 quarts water, bay leaves and, if using, smoked ham hocks. Bring to a boil. Add beans, and stir well. Return to a low boil. Cover. Reduce heat to low, and simmer 2 to 2½ hours, or until beans are soft and creamy, stirring occasionally. Adjust seasonings to taste with salt, pepper and hot sauce. Serve over hot cooked rice with buttered French bread.



# Louisiana Trails and

Enjoy the state's culinary treasures up close

By Cheré Coen

Angela and Chad Portier have ties to the Louisiana shrimping industry dating back to their youth. Chad started shrimping when he was 15, and Angela grew up in a shrimping family, so she claims toddlerhood as her beginning.

The couple runs Faith Family Shrimp Co. in Chauvin.

"It's definitely in our blood," Angela says. "It's a passion and our way of life."

The couple opens their doors to visitors with their tours, explaining the history of Louisiana shrimping, the process of catching the Gulf bounty and

how the industry may be changing. The Portiers are among the many Louisiana farmers who raise and grow Louisiana products and give visitors an insider's perspective on how it's done.

It's all part of the state's agritourism, a way to bring visitors to sources of their food to learn more about its production. State and local tourism agencies have instituted culinary trails to increase interest in Louisiana foodways and to promote local restaurants and markets.

## Shrimp

In addition to the Faith Family Shrimp Co. tour, Down the Bayou Shrimp Tours brings visitors into its facility to see

how shrimp is processed, stored in the icehouse and shipped. The company is located on Bayou Dulac with shrimp boats docked on the side so visitors can view shrimping vessels as well. They can even sometimes watch shrimpers unload their bounties.

The goal is to educate the public, says Kim Chauvin, who organizes the tours.

"Sadly, there are a lot of young people who don't know where their food comes from," Kim says. "In their world, they're only seeing their food in the grocery store."

Once visitors witness the capture of Gulf shrimp, it's only natural they want to taste a few. That's where the Shrimply Delicious Food Trail comes in handy. The trail was



Faith Family Shrimp Co. tours are a great way to learn about the history of Louisiana shrimping.



# Ma Tours



Louisiana is the largest producing state of wild American white shrimp in the Gulf of Mexico.

created in May to promote restaurants, markets and truck stops from Jeanerette down Highway 90 to Morgan City and Amelia. Participating establishments run the gamut from fine dining, such as Cafe Jojo's in Morgan City and The Forest Restaurant in Franklin, to Chick's Burger in Baldwin, where shrimp po' boys are a specialty.

Here's how it works: Visit any of the 30 designated restaurants on the trail and enjoy a shrimp meal, then turn over five receipts to Cajun Coast Tourism for a Shrimply Delicious T-shirt.

## Crawfish

The Crawfish Trail begins at Houma and moves down the bayou through

Thibodaux, Dulac, Montegut and Chauvin all the way to the Gulf. Along the way are seafood markets, places to buy boiled crustaceans and Cajun restaurants serving delectable crawfish dishes.

Burt Tietje grows a variety of crops on his farm outside Jennings, but come crawfish season, he invites others to share in the experience. Burt is part of the annual Crawfish Farm Tours offered by Jeff Davis Parish, where visitors learn all about the state's favorite mudbug, from harvest to consumption.

"The group tour will start at Mr. Burt's Pond, where he will educate you on all things crawfish," says Randy Whetstine, vice president of destination development and community engagement for Jeff Davis Parish. "From there, you travel west to the I-10 Crawfish Cooperative, where Mr. Burt or someone from our office is there to explain how the crawfish get from the farm to the table or pot."

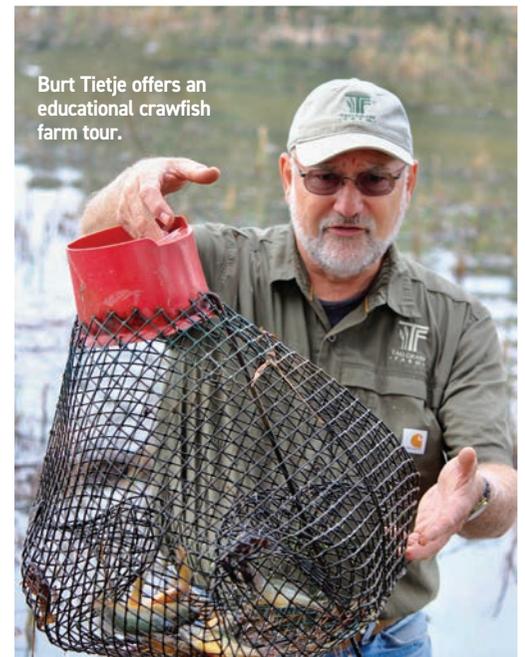
There's lagniappe, as well.

"No tour would be complete without a stop at the parish's Gator Chateau to hold a baby alligator and watch the adult alligators hang out in the lazy river," Randy added.

The tour costs \$10 per person for groups of 10 or more.

"If you are not part of a group, calling and checking the schedule never hurts," Randy says. "We can

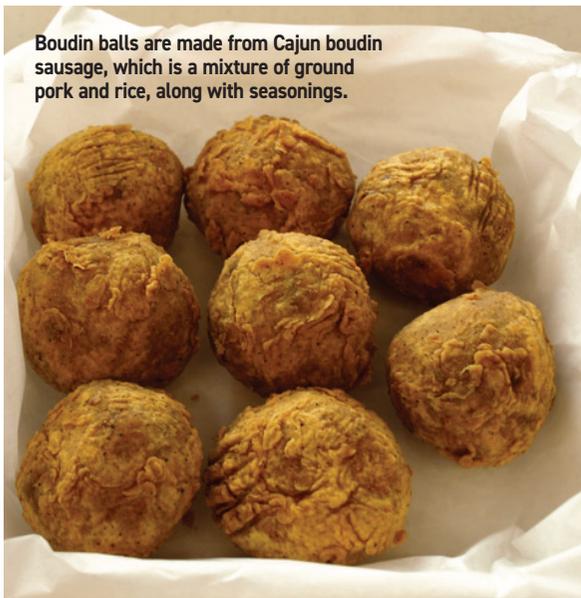
always add you to an already scheduled group. We don't want anyone to miss out on this amazing experience."



Burt Tietje offers an educational crawfish farm tour.



Crawfish boils are a time-honored tradition.



Boudin balls are made from Cajun boudin sausage, which is a mixture of ground pork and rice, along with seasonings.



### Boudin

There's a friendly competition between boudin proprietors along Interstate 10 west of the Atchafalaya Basin.

Robert Carriker at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette compiled a list of boudin makers in the Lafayette area as part of the Cajun Boudin Trail and hosts a boudin cookoff every fall.

Visit Lake Charles created the Southwest Louisiana Boudin Trail in 2009 to spotlight the area's boudin establishments.

To top it all, the Louisiana State Legislature designated Scott as the "Boudin Capital of the World." The city known for its array of restaurants, markets and suppliers that marry cooked rice, pork, onions, green peppers and seasonings and stuff their special blends into sausage casings.

Boudin is so popular in Acadiana that in addition to the traditional sausage, the meat and rice mixture has been fried into boudin balls, used in Carnival king cakes, placed inside egg rolls and used as a pizza topping.

A word of advice to visitors—beware of asking locals for their

favorites. It's likely to start a lively argument about whose recipe is the best.

### Andouille

The River Parishes Tourist Commission designated the Andouille Trail to honor the unique sausage that originated on the German Coast along the Mississippi, upriver from New Orleans.

There are 37 sites from St. Rose to Convent boasting the red sausage routinely used in Cajun and Creole cuisine, from gumbo and jambalaya to red beans and rice. In addition, the Andouille Festival is held every fall in LaPlace.

Over in Vacherie, Maitland "Spuddy" Fauchaux instructs visitors on the andouille he produces in his establishment and how to cook it. He hosts groups at Spuddy's Cajun Cooking Experience, teaching guests how to make andouille, gumbo and jambalaya, along with presenting a history lesson on the Germans who settled the area and contributed their culinary culture.

### Gas Station Eats

Good food can be found in the most unlikely places in Louisiana. In the once-lawless region known



Maitland “Spuddy” Fauchoux, right, hosts groups at Spuddy’s Cajun Cooking Experience.



as “No Man’s Land”—a once-disputed area in West Louisiana where Spain and the United States couldn’t settle on a boundary after signing the Louisiana Purchase— finding a great meal often means visiting gas stations and convenience stores.

The Gas Station Eats trail extends through all seven parishes of No Man’s Land, and the dishes range from Cajun and seafood in the southwest to barbecue and more traditional Southern dishes around Toledo Bend and above. There are

tamales at Lakefront Grocery in Zwolle, goods baked by Mennonites at Back Home Collection in DeRidder and hand-dipped ice cream at the Anacoco Mercantile. ■

# For more information:

## Faith Family Shrimp Tours

[www.facebook.com/p/Faith-Family-Shrimp-Company-100064786326055](https://www.facebook.com/p/Faith-Family-Shrimp-Company-100064786326055)

## Down the Bayou Shrimp Tours

[downthebayoushrimptours.com](https://downthebayoushrimptours.com)

## Crawfish Trail

[crawfishtrail.com](https://crawfishtrail.com)

## Crawfish Farm Tours

[www.jeffdavis.org/tourism](https://www.jeffdavis.org/tourism)

## Boudin Trail

[www.lafayettetravel.com/discover-lafayette/boudin-trail](https://www.lafayettetravel.com/discover-lafayette/boudin-trail)

## Andouille Trail

[www.andouilletrail.com](https://www.andouilletrail.com)

## Spuddy’s Cajun Cooking Experience

[www.cajuncookingexperience.com](https://www.cajuncookingexperience.com)

## Gas Station Eats

[www.visitnomansland.com/plan-your-trip/gas-station-eats](https://www.visitnomansland.com/plan-your-trip/gas-station-eats)

Ensure holidays remain merry by childproofing your home before young visitors arrive. PHOTO BY PEXELS/PIXABAY



# Home for the Holidays

Embrace safety for a joyous celebration

It is easy to get caught up in the hectic pace of holiday entertaining: cookies to bake, decorations to hang, presents to wrap.

Don't overlook safety during the rush. The winter holiday period marks peak time for home fires and preventable injuries.

The good news: It is not difficult to make your home ready to safely host all of your favorite holiday activities. Follow these tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International:

- Take time out from your party preparations to test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Both should be installed on every level of the home and outside each sleeping area. Smoke alarms also should be inside each bedroom.
- Discuss your family fire escape plan with any overnight guests.
- Inspect all decorations, cords and outlets for damage before use. Keep electrical cords out of doorways and high-traffic areas where they pose a tripping hazard. Do not damage cords by pinching them or attaching them with staples or nails.
- Arrange your holiday decorations to avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many

lights, cords or appliances.

- Keep young visitors safe by preparing your home before they arrive. If your home is not already childproof, install tamper-resistant receptacles or use safety covers on all unused electrical outlets.
  - Put away small items, such as buttons, coins and jewelry, which are choking hazards.
  - Store breakables, candles, matches and other potentially dangerous items in inaccessible or locked areas out of reach.
  - Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs to keep babies and toddlers safe.
  - Safety does not stop when the party starts. Keep decorations, gifts and other combustibles at least 3 feet from heat sources or open flame.
  - Never leave the kitchen when something is cooking.
  - Make sure children are supervised at all times in the kitchen and anywhere space heaters, candles or fireplaces are being used.
  - Turn off and unplug all decorations before leaving home or turning in for the night.
- A safe and happy holiday remains the best gift you can give friends and family. ■

# DID YOU KNOW ...

Power surges coming into your home through the power line can destroy or cause extensive damage to your electronics and appliances?

What if you could find a way to protect your home electronics and appliances from power surges?

DEMCO offers a meter-based surge protector that does just that.

For \$7.95 a month, DEMCO will install and maintain a meter-based surge protector on the electric meter of your home or shop.

If the device ever fails to stop a power surge from entering your home through the meter, damaged electronics and appliances may be warrantied up to \$50,000.

“It’s a great way to protect your valuable electronics and appliances inside the home from any surge in power trying to enter through the meter,” DEMCO Subsidiary Services Coordinator James Macias says. “Whenever I see a device like this one (see photo), I’m so happy for the member because I know it works and I know they were protected.”

Meter-based surge protectors only guard against surges coming in through the electrical service, but when used with auxiliary surge protectors on telephone lines, cable services and individual devices, they are an essential part of a whole-home surge-protection strategy.

For more information or to schedule installation, visit [DEMCO.org/meter-based-surge-protection](http://DEMCO.org/meter-based-surge-protection). ■



DEMCO’s James Macias holds a meter device damaged by a voltage surge from a nearby lightning strike. The meter-based surge protector prevented the surge from entering the home. The member reported no items damaged at the location.

## MyDEMCO Registered Member Accounts

Congratulations to these DEMCO members, winners of the random drawing for a \$50 gift card. You will each receive a gift card in the mail! **Jamie O, Halee L, Alyssa D. and John G.**





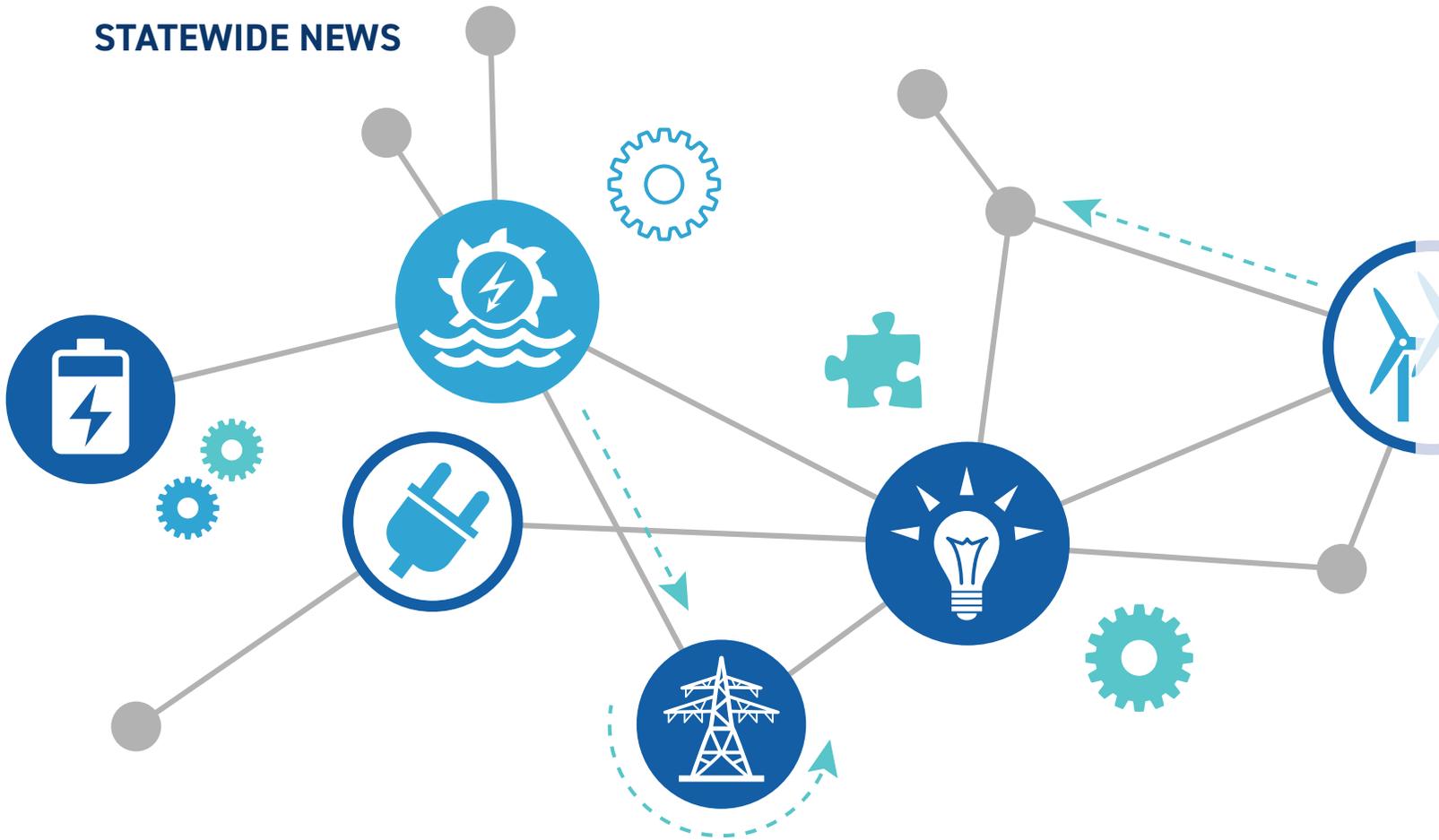

### Meter-Based

## SURGE PROTECTION

Protect your valuable electronics and appliances from power surges with meter-based surge protection for \$7.95 + tax per month.

For more info visit [DEMCO.org/Member-Services/Meter-Based-Surge-Protection](http://DEMCO.org/Member-Services/Meter-Based-Surge-Protection).





# ELECTRICITY 101

Understanding how power works can help you save

By Jennifer Paton

Close your eyes and let your imagination take over for a moment. The room is dark, quiet and peaceful. There's no hum of a freezer, no background music, no shouts from a noisy gaming system. No text alerts interrupt your thoughts.

Open your eyes, but imagine the room is still dark. You have to navigate with a flashlight or candle. Hopefully, you know where to find the spare batteries and matches. Your ice cream has melted, and you have no access to social media.

While the dark scenario has its merits, the truth is, most of us dread the version lacking electricity. While we could live without it, we don't want to.

You don't need to know how electricity works to enjoy it, but understanding some basics can affect your consumption.

## The Basics

Electricity is the flow of electrical power or charge. It is considered a secondary energy source because it comes from the conversion of other primary sources of energy.

These primary sources include coal, natural gas, nuclear, hydroelectric and oil. Some energy sources—such as sunlight, wind and water—are renewable and can be replenished. Others—such as oil, natural gas and coal—are nonrenewable and cannot be replenished.

## The Path of Electricity

In simplest terms, the power you receive originates at a generating plant. Transformers at the plant increase the voltage up to 345,000 volts. High-voltage transmission lines carry the electric energy over long distances.

After substation transformers reduce the

electricity to 7,200 to 14,000 volts, distribution lines carry it to transformers that reduce power levels to 120/240 or 120/208 volts for use in schools, farms, homes and small businesses.

## Measuring Electricity

Electricity can be measured three ways.

- Volts (V): A unit of electric force that measures the pressure of electricity. House electricity is 120 volts. Flashlight batteries are 1.5 volts. Car batteries are 12 volts.

- Watts (W): The measure of power an electric current can generate. Most appliances are labeled with the wattages they use. Many have a range of settings, so the actual power consumed depends on the setting used. For example, a fan uses more power at a high speed than it does at a low speed. A kilowatt (kW)

# The Costs of Energy

Use these formulas to calculate your energy use and projected costs.

## Calculate Energy Consumption:

Power x Time = Energy

Example: Using a 100-watt bulb for 10 hours equals 1 kWh. (100 watts x 10 hours = 1,000 watt-hours or 1 kilowatt-hour.)

## Calculate Energy Costs:

Power (kW) x Time (hours of operation) x Price (\$/kWh) = Cost of operation.

Follow these five easy steps to determine how much it may cost to run a specific appliance. You are billed per kWh, or for how much electricity you use in one hour. Examples are based on an average cost of \$0.144 per kWh.

1) Obtain the wattage (watts) from the appliance nameplate. Example: A space heater with a nameplate of 1,500 watts.

*Note: If listed as kW, skip to step 3. If amps are specified, multiply amps x voltage to obtain watts.*

2) Divide the number of watts by 1,000 to get kW.

Example: 1,500 W ÷ 1,000 = 1.5 kW.

3) To find out how many kWh the appliance uses, multiply the kW times the number of hours\* the appliance runs each day.

Example: The heater runs for 10 hours per day = 1.5 kW x 10 hours = 15 kWh per day.

*\*If the appliance operates for less than one full hour, divide the number of minutes by 60. Example: a hair dryer is used five minutes daily, or 5 ÷ 60 = 0.083 hours per day. A 1,250-watt hair dryer = 1.25kW x 0.083 hours per day = 0.1 kWh per day.*

4) To calculate the daily operating cost, multiply the kWh of the appliance by the average cost per kWh.

Example: Space heater daily cost = 15 kWh x \$0.144 = \$2.16 per day.

5) To calculate the monthly operating cost, multiply the daily cost by the number of days the appliance is used during the month.

Example: If you run the 1,500-watt space heater 10 hours a day, 30 days a month = 15 kWh x \$0.144 x 30 = \$64.80.

ADOBE STOCK IMAGES BY J-MEL AND BORIS

is equivalent to 1,000 watts. A kilowatt-hour (kWh) is a measurement of energy consumption. It is the amount of power used over time and the basis for how electric bills are calculated.

- Amperes (amp): The measure of how much electricity moves through a conductor. Amperes equal watts divided by volts. A typical household electrical outlet is 15 amps.

See above to learn how to calculate your energy use and projected costs.

## Phantom Power

According to the Energy Information Agency, the typical U.S. household uses more air conditioning, appliances and consumer electronics than ever before. The average home contains 10 or more internet-connected devices.

There are many small ways to save energy, such as turning off the lights, ceiling fan or TV when you leave the room. A more encompassing way to save energy is to reduce phantom power.

Even when turned off, most electronics consume a small amount of electricity if they are still plugged in. Chargers for

mobile devices consume electricity if they are plugged in, even when not actively charging the device.

This wasted energy, called phantom load, accounts for as much as 10% of a home's total electric use.

Save money by unplugging your electronics when you are done using them. Using a power strip can help you unplug multiple devices at once. Smart power strips automatically cut off phantom loads.

Another way to combat phantom power is with the use of smart plugs. Smart plugs are inexpensive and can be used to control items through a smartphone app.

With smart plugs, you can manage lighting, home office equipment and video game consoles.

## Large Appliance Use

The combined use of large appliances such as dishwashers, dryers and washing machines account for the largest percentage of electricity use in the average U.S. home. Small steps will help save energy when using these appliances.

Only run full loads in the dishwasher, and thoroughly scrape food from dishes

before loading. Dry towels and heavier cottons separate from lighter-weight clothing, and clean the lint screen after every use. Wash clothing in cold water to save energy used to heat water.

## Lightbulbs

You can't talk about saving energy without considering lightbulbs.

Switching from incandescent bulbs to LED smart bulbs can help save energy and money over the long run, despite a higher initial cost. LEDs come in a variety of colors and brightness levels, lasting 15 to 25 times longer than incandescent bulbs.

As we switch to more-efficient bulbs, we must change how we shop for them.

In the past, we selected lightbulbs based on wattage. But wattage indicates how much power is used rather than the bulb's brightness.

The term to learn is lumens. Lumens measure the amount of light produced by the bulb. Use lumens to compare the brightness of any bulb.

Once you know the brightness you need, you can shop wisely and get the most for your money. ■

# Education For All

West Feliciana High's Career  
and Technical Education  
Center prepares students  
for the future



Students Eliana Shidaker, Jackson McKell, Matthew Leet, Sarah Tyson and Emma Bush work on sanding a project before applying a wood finish.

**K**arolyn Taylor graduated in 1996 from West Feliciana High School in St. Francisville. Back then, students studied the traditional subjects of math, English, history and science, with the addition of electives like typing and home economics.

Today's West Feliciana High is very different from 27 years ago. Even the building has been renovated to create a new entrance and floor-to-ceiling views.

"I find myself trying to remember what was here when I'm walking around," Karolyn says.

She started teaching at the school in 2006, and has served as principal for the past five years. She's seen traditional teaching change to a more hands-on, immersive approach.

The opening of a new Career and Technical Education Center in 2021 gives students the option to explore careers, including welding, emergency medicine and the culinary arts.

The center contains 15 welding booths, a full commercial kitchen, an ambulance and more. Programs include culinary, certified nursing assistant, medical assistant, emergency medical responder, agriculture, carpenter and electrical, welding, and a firefighter program that's new for 2023.

In the firefighter program, students can earn certifications for hazmat operations, hazmat awareness, firefighter I and II. After earning the emergency medical responder certification and upon graduation, the student is eligible to begin work as a firefighter.

Certifications are designed for students who may not plan to go to a four-year college, but any student can take a class that fits their interests as an elective. Karolyn uses the example of a student who was interested in carpentry so they could work with their dad on the weekend.

One of the best things about the new center—located in the school's old gym—is that it houses all the certification programs under one roof. Before, students interested in welding had to travel about 20 minutes to Jackson.

"They were losing time due to transportation and scheduling, but now that it's on campus we don't have that

loss of time," Karolyn says. "We can open up that opportunity to any of our other students."

Media arts, one of the campus' most popular certification programs, is housed in the main building of the school.

"Our media arts program is one of our most successful programs," she says. "Our students can receive certifications in Illustrator and Photoshop, and once a student has earned both certifications, he or she is considered an Adobe visual design specialist."

The center is part of an entirely renovated campus at West Feliciana High that includes a freshman academy, new art room, gallery, gym and science labs. A new athletic fieldhouse for the outdoor stadium is in the works as well.



Dr. Paul Theriot, second from left, holds the tape measure as Mason Adams, second from right, measures a deer stand alongside Adam Johnson, far left, and Antoni Torres. Seen in the background is Adam Beauchamp. PHOTOS COURTESY OF DEMCO

Karolyn says there's a sense of pride in the renovated school and new center.

"The students know that they're being prepared for what's next," she says. "The parents that I have spoken with have been just blown away by that part of the building and are just very appreciative of the opportunities that we are being able to not just give to our students but make available to our community as well."

This past summer, West Feliciana began offering night classes in welding for anyone in the community. Karolyn says that was the intention all along, and the school plans to open even more classes to all ages in the future.

"Every year, we look to add new courses to the schedule based on student interest as well as industry demand," she adds. ■



ADOBE STOCK PHOTO BY GPOINIS JUDIO

## Prepare Your Feasts With an Eye Toward Efficiency

Baking pies, roasting a turkey and heating side dishes for your family's holiday feasts can be hard on your electric bill if you rely on your oven to do all the work.

This year, consider using your stovetop, barbecue grill, microwave oven, slow cooker, toaster oven, pressure cooker, electric skillet, and even your blender or food processor to prepare your bird and trimmings.

Here are more energy-efficiency tips.

- Treat your family by smoking, grilling or frying your turkey outdoors. It is a quicker way to cook a bird. The flavor is a nice change from a traditional, oven-roasted turkey.
- Use the microwave to heat vegetables, potatoes and other side dishes.
- Bake everything at the same time: pies, bread, ham and potatoes. The more your oven can do at once, the less time you will need to use it. Leave enough space between items for air and heat to circulate.
- Consider serving some food that doesn't need to be cooked. The turkey, dressing and potatoes will be hot. Add variety by preparing a few cold salads and raw vegetables with dip. Experiment with simple desserts, such as frozen peanut butter pie or no-bake cheesecake.
- When you use the oven, resist opening the door. Every time you peek inside you let out heat, and the oven has to work harder to get back to the proper temperature.
- Choose glass or ceramic pans for the oven. They cook food at temperatures as much as 25 degrees lower than metal pans.
- The burners on your cooktop will work more efficiently if you match the size of the burner to the size of the pot. Placing a small pot on a large burner wastes heat from the part of the burner that does not touch the pot.
- Clean the burners and the oven. If you use the self-cleaning function on your oven while it is still hot after you use it to prepare a meal, it will use the residual heat and work more quickly. ■



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