



# ENERGY CONNECTIONS

OCTOBER 2013



## 2013 Plan Where You Plant Program

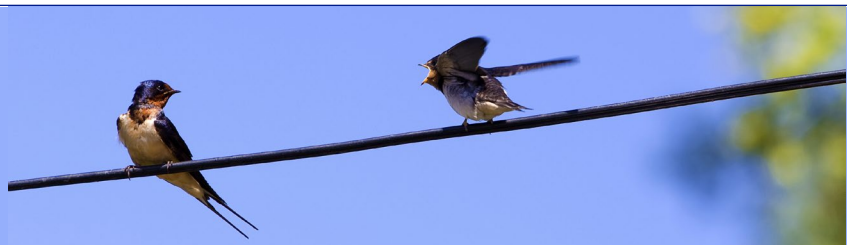


This fall, employee volunteers have been planting trees throughout our service territories. Twelve tree-planting events were held in Montana and South Dakota as part of the second annual Plan Where You Plant safety campaign.

The tree plantings aim at community beautification and provide an opportunity for NorthWestern to share the importance of planning before you plant to avoid later issues with power lines. The events also serve as a reminder to homeowners and others to call 811 before they dig to avoid hitting underground utility lines.

Overall, more than 300 trees were planted in parks and along trails in communities across our service territory.

## Join the Conversation



Tweet! Tweet! NorthWestern Energy is now on Twitter! We have three handles – one for each of our state service territories. We tweet about outages, restoration times and during major events. If your power goes out, check Twitter to see what might be happening in your area.

## Safety Tips For Changing Seasons

As the leaves change and the air becomes more brisk, we can expect anything from heavy snowfall and severe ice storms to strong winds. You can help avoid needless injury by making sure your whole family is educated on the following basic safety rules.



- Treat all fallen lines as if they are energized and deadly – stay away and call 9-1-1 immediately. Keep other people and pets away too.
- Keep anything you may be holding or using at least 10-feet away from any power line, whether the line is above or has fallen on the ground. This is especially important to remember when doing fall cleaning around your home and you might be up on ladders or carrying items overhead.
- Ensure your meter is free and clear of all debris.
- If your power goes out, contact NorthWestern Energy immediately to report the outage. We are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

# Energy Vampires Haunting Your Wallet?

Do you ever get up at night and find that you don't need to turn on the light? You are guided by twinkling little lights, digital displays of various appliances and electronic devices. Only these devices are like vampires silently sucking away energy even when they are turned "off." This wasted energy, known as standby power, energy vampires, or phantom energy loss, represents a relatively small but growing percentage of an individual home's electricity use.

According to ENERGY STAR®, the average U.S. household spends \$100 per year to power devices while they are off (or in standby mode). On a national basis, standby power accounts for more than 100 billion kilowatt hours of annual U.S. electricity consumption and more than \$10 billion in annual energy costs.

Some of the biggest energy wasters in most homes are the adapters that come with rechargeable battery-powered cordless phones, cell phones, digital cameras and music players, power tools, and other electronic devices. Most draw power whenever they're plugged into an outlet, regardless of whether the device battery is fully charged—OR EVEN CONNECTED. Other culprits include appliances or electronic equipment with standby capability (such as televisions and computer monitors), a remote control, and/or a digital clock display (such as microwaves, DVD players, and stereo systems).

So what can you do to stop it?

**Unplug it!** Unplug your phone, camera, portable media player, and/or power tool charger.

Unplug your television and attached electronics. Figure out which devices are causing the most phantom energy loss and unplug them when they're not in use. To save yourself some hassle, plug all of your home entertainment system and computer components into a power strip. Just don't forget to flip the switch off when it's not in use. Unplug kitchen appliances with clocks. If you see a clock, then your kitchen device is using power. If possible, keep these appliances unplugged to prevent phantom energy usage. Surge suppressors still protect against power spikes when plugged in, even if switched off. Unfortunately, some devices such as battery backup systems and computer network servers must be left on at all times to ensure proper functioning.

**Check the label.** When buying an appliance or electronic device, choose the model that uses the least standby power. Choose ENERGY STAR labels because they use less energy for both regular and standby operation. If standby power is not included on a given product label, check the U.S. Department of Energy's online database of manufacturer-supplied information. Being a smart consumer can really make a difference down the road to your bottom line.

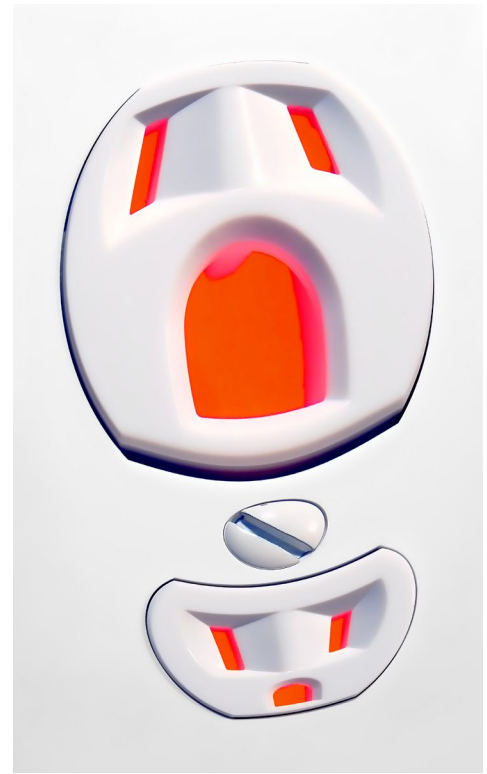
**Keep it simple.** Avoid buying products that include "bells and whistles" you don't need. Some of these extra features might waste energy.

## Sign-Up Now for LIEAP

Many people are eligible for assistance to meet their energy needs but may not be receiving that help. NorthWestern Energy customers whose income meets certain guidelines may qualify for help paying energy bills or home weatherization.

The best resource to contact to find out if your household qualifies for assistance is your local Human Resource Development Council (HRDC). They can inform you about current income guidelines and helpful programs that are available such as the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP), the Free Weatherization Program and Energy Share. Find your local council, by contacting The National Energy Assistance Referral service (NEAR). It provides individuals with contact information for the local Human Resource Council or agency nearest them. Call 1-(866) 674-6327 or TTY 1-(866)-367-6228.

*PLEASE NOTE:* As we get into this year's heating season, if you find yourself falling behind on your bill – don't wait until your balance is long overdue, and the payment amount is too large for you to handle. Our Customer Service Representatives will work with you to set up a reasonable payment schedule, so you can avoid having your services disconnected. Call our Customer Contact Center toll free to learn more.



## Contact us...

### MONTANA

Customer Contact Center (888) 467-2669  
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F  
Emergency 24/7 Service  
Call Before You Dig 811  
Energy Efficiency (800) 823-5995

### NEBRASKA

Customer Contact Center (800) 245-6977  
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F  
Emergency 24/7 Service  
Call Before You Dig 811

### SOUTH DAKOTA

Customer Contact Center (800) 245-6977  
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F  
Emergency 24/7 Service  
Call Before You Dig 811

### PAYMENT

Automated Phone  
Payment Option: (800) 218-4959  
(via checking, savings, or money market account)  
SpeedPay Automated  
Phone Payment Option: (877) 361-4927  
(via credit card account)

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Energy  
Delivering a Bright Future