

Energy Partners

A monthly look at the happenings of and related to:



New-Mac Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner The power of human connections

Be prepared and informed

We've seen a little white stuff this winter, but so far we've not experienced heavy snow or ice, which halts travel and can cause major issues with the power lines.

But we know in our neck of the woods, it could still happen. Some of the biggest snows experienced in southwest Missouri have occurred in February and March.



So, New-Mac encourages you to be ready for winter's worst. While we might not be able to pinpoint when the major storms will come, something everyone can do is be prepared.

New-Mac encourages customers to keep the following items on hand, and be prepared:

- Flashlight (with extra batteries) and candles.
- Battery-powered radio.
- Bottled water and non-perishable food items.
- Manual can opener.
- Extra medicine and baby items.
- First-aid supplies.
- Back-up heating source – NEVER use a charcoal grill to cook or heat inside!



- Fire extinguisher and smoke detector.

New-Mac also reminds everyone to never approach downed power lines as they may be energized.

In the event of outages, New-Mac customers should have their map number ready and call 451-1515 or 800-322-3849. Don't assume that someone else has already called for your area.

During extended outages, customers can get updates on the restoration efforts by checking our website, www.newmac.com, or through the local media: TV stations (KSNF-16, KODE-12, KOAM-7, Fox-14), radio stations (KBTN AM-1420 and FM-99.7, KMXL 95.1 FM, KNEO 91.7 FM, KZRG 1310 AM, 1230 AM The Talker, Big Dog 97.9 FM, KSYN 92.5 FM, 93.9 FM, KIX 102.5) and newspapers (*Neosho Daily News, Joplin Globe, McDonald County News Gazette, Seneca News Dispatch*).

If you are on social media, updates will come right to your computer or smart phone by *liking* our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/NewMacElectric or by following us on Twitter, [@NewMacElectric](https://twitter.com/NewMacElectric).

Make sure standby generators are installed properly

In the event of an extended power outage, a standby generator can be quite helpful, but proper installation and operation is critical!

Generators come in a variety of sizes. They can range from 500 watts up to several megawatts of output, and run on gasoline, diesel, propane or natural gas. The size of generator needed can be determined by totaling the wattage of the lights, appliances, devices, etc., and then add about 20 percent for the increased start-up power requirements.

Improper installation of a generator puts people, including electrical linemen, at great risk. A whole-house generator – one that is tied directly into your wiring – must have a double-throw transfer switch installed at your breaker panel by a qualified electrician. Without the switch, a generator can backfeed 240 volts to the transformer, where it is then stepped up to 7,200 volts and sent down the lines, creating a life-threatening situation for the linemen trying to restore your power.

The double-throw switch makes it impossi-

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New-Mac Electric Cooperative

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Energy Partners is a monthly publication of New-Mac Electric for the purpose of informing members of the programs, services and happenings of, and related to, the cooperative.

During the next few months, New-Mac Electric Cooperative will be participating in a telephone survey that is conducted every three years to measure the quality of service provided to you, our member. This survey will ask several questions about your energy usage and your satisfaction with the cooperative. It should take approximately 15 minutes to answer all questions.



The call center conducting the survey will identify themselves as calling on behalf of the cooperative. They will be conducting calls Monday-Friday from 5:00 pm until 9:00 pm and on Saturday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Please call before you dig

Digging in areas where there may be an underground electric line can be dangerous! So, before any project that requires digging, call the Missouri One Call System at 800-DIG-RITE.

Those who fail to make this call not only face the chance of electric shock – or even electrocution; they also will be held responsible for any repairs that may be necessary if a line is accidentally cut or damaged.

Assistance is available

If you are having a problem paying your New-Mac account, please call us to make arrangements. Please don't disregard paying your bill. There are programs and options (such as budget billing) designed to assist you. So, please give us a call at 451-1515 or (800) 322-3849.

LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM / EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE Jasper County (417) 781-0352 McDonald County (417) 845-6011 Newton County (417) 451-2206

Help yourself to 'Rural Missouri'

Copies of the latest *Rural Missouri* magazine are always available, free of charge, at either New-Mac office.

Another **STOP** on the lines 

Carved out fame

Local wood carver known across country

If you were a wood carver, you would probably know all about Gerald Sears.

Professional wood carvers boast about his influence in their biographies. One of the choice makers of wood-carving knives, *Helvie*, has created a *Gerald Sears Series* of knives bearing his signature. He's been all over the country as a wood carving instructor at seminars.

This New-Mac Electric Cooperative member, living just outside of Southwest City, is renown ... but you might not know that if you're not a wood carver.

Sears has been carving for over 45 years. He's carved "a little bit of everything," he said. He's done hunting knives, wildlife scenes and many gun stocks. But his specialty has become cowboy caricatures.

Although technically, his works would be considered caricatures (that is characters with exaggerated features),

Sears would contend his carvings fall somewhere between realistic and distorted. And, if you look closely, you'd have to agree.

Sears' cowboys feature ornate detail from the folds in their hats to the intricate designs of their chaps. Such realism doesn't come easily.

"I've got a lot of books on anatomy and cowboy gear – saddles, boots, spurs, hats," he said. "So, when I do something, it's right."

Most of his wooden statues are around a foot tall – his largest have been twice that, and they've sold for as much as \$2,000. Sears said when you're competing against other professionals, it is the little things that make the difference.

"It's got to be good and it's got to be accurate," he said. "If you're carving a bull rider, they have certain spurs. If you're doing a *Winchester* gun, you better have it right and the right year."

He knows a few things about guns too. That's how he got started in wood carving.

"I hunted a lot, had a lot of guns, and went to gun shows," he said. "I was walking out of a show, and at the last table by the door, someone had tried to carve a duck head in a gunstock... I saw that and thought, 'Boy that's neat. I believe I can do that.'"

So, he went home and started carving animals on his own gun stocks. Living in Kansas (where he was raised), he supported his wife Barbara and two kids by working at the *Goodyear Tire* plant in Topeka. There, he did piecework and often finished his duties with time to spare, so he'd spend it carving in the lunchroom. Word spread of his talents at the 3,500-employee plant and

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Gerald Sears has finished pieces on display in his shop (above), as well as other projects in various stages of completion (shown in photo below with Gerald).



○ Wood carver

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soon his co-workers saw to it he had no shortage of gun stocks to carve.

In the late 70s, the Sears family rented an RV for a vacation and traveled through Warsaw, Mo., which was home to a pair of major gun factories owned by rival companies, *Bishop* and *Fajen*. They stopped at both, and Gerald showed his gun stocks. That day, he was offered a job by both gun makers.

"I've often wondered what would have happened had I done that," he said. "But I had a good job at *Goodyear*. I was making good money and I had good benefits. I couldn't quit."

In 1980, he was laid off from *Goodyear*, and the Sears family bought the farm they call home today. It's 12 miles from where Barbara was born and raised, prior to moving to Kansas where she met Gerald as a teenager. Early in their marriage, they bought another farm down the road from where they are now, but after four years of tending to laying hens, they decided to move back to Kansas.

This time around, they made a go of it as poultry farmers. In fact, it worked out just fine after another family trip led to even more work for Gerald.

While at Silver Dollar City, Gerald showed a few carvings to the man in charge of the wood carving at the theme park, who also owned shops in Branson, Osage Beach and Gatlinburg, Tenn.

"They gave me an order that day for close to \$4,000 worth of carvings and they wanted them now," he said. "So, I started carving, and Barb was taking care of the chickens. Of course, I was helping her. It just kind of built from there."

For the next 25 years, Gerald worked as a guest carver at Silver Dollar City.

"I'd take off in the morning and go spend the day and then come back that night."

Much of what Gerald would sell in Branson were smaller carvings designed as souvenirs, however he was also carving bigger, more elaborate works that were being finished by another up-and-coming artist – Barbara.

In fact, Barbara has been painting Gerald's work for over 40 years, and that's not all.

"She does the paint. She does the phones. She deals with the people," said Gerald.

And they've done well as a team, especially since 2000 when they decided to stop raising chickens. At that point, they began to travel the country as instructors. Much of this opportunity came from Gerald's time at Silver Dollar City, where he was seen by tourists from all over the United States.

"Every little town in the country has a woodcarving



At left, in addition to his caricature carvings, Sears has also made his own wood-carving knives, complete with his scrimshaw work in the handle. Below left, Sears talks about a roughout pattern, seen along with the finished work it's been fashioned after.



club, and they want you to come and spend the weekend with them," he said. "We did that for several years."

Nowadays, Gerald and Barbara generally stay close to home, and their customers come to them through the internet. You can find them at www.gnbsearswoodcarving.com. There you'll find many of their works from past years, and some are available for purchase. You will also find a large inventory of *roughouts* – a product that has been growing in popularity among wood-carving enthusiasts.

Basically, a roughout is a jump-start on a carving project. Gerald will carve an original piece, then make a simplified version as a pattern without any of the fine details. The pattern is mass-produced by a duplicating machine. Then people purchase the "rough" version, along with photos of what the finished product is supposed to look like and commence to carving themselves.

Gerald has found demand all over the country from people wanting to carve "ugly" cowboys for themselves,

however his top seller has come from another line of carvings. He thought he'd carve some Santas and snowmen once, and he hasn't been able to stop. Gerald and Barbara have sold more of a piece called "Cowboy Santa" than any other roughout they offer.

And if you want a good carving knife to work on your roughout, Gerald's got some of those that he has designed, and sure enough, they happen to have ornate carving right on the handle.

Who knows? Maybe you'll decide to be a wood carver too. If so, you already know all about Gerald Sears.

Energy Partners' *Recipe of the Month:*

APPLE AMBROSIA

Submitted by New-Mac member: **JoAnn Niblett**

3 grated apples
 ½ cup coconut
 1 sm. can pineapple (crushed)
 ¼ cup (or less) sugar (depends on sweetness of apples)
 splash of orange juice

Stir together. Chill for a couple hours.

Send your recipe, along with your name and account number, to: Recipes, c/o New-Mac Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 310, Neosho, MO 64850; or recipes@new-mac.com. If your recipe is selected, New-Mac will apply a \$15 credit to your bill.

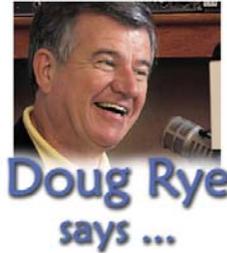
It's best when you keep things simple

About an hour before Professor Tom Hunt and I went on the air recently to host our weekly radio program, we were discussing our show preparation for 2013. Of course, our goal is to help as many of you as possible. We have been teaching energy efficiency for more than 25 years and realize that as advancements in "building science" are discovered, there is more to teach and reveal.

We share our knowledge with you in this newsletter, with a weekly radio broadcast, scheduled seminars and individual phone calls and e-mail responses. Each week, Tom and I receive numerous calls, letters and e-mails from the radio show listeners and readership of this column. Most are letters of appreciation. However, sometimes we get letters from folks who still have some questions regarding our suggestions. Here is an excerpt of a letter I received from a listener. He said, "I added cellulose insulation in our attic and installed geothermal heating and cooling, and my electric usage went up instead of down. I'm not happy. Please call me."

There was a time in my distant past that I would have been nervous about returning his call. However, I was anxious to talk to him because I have learned that energy-efficiency measures, properly installed, work every time. He was a little surprised that I returned his call so promptly. He made the improvements 11 months ago and had good records of electricity use. I asked him questions for about 10 minutes and didn't yet have the answer. I asked him if his previous system was a heat pump or electric resistance heat. He answered that the previous system was a propane furnace and no central cooling. Here's an "ah ha" moment!

I asked him what his monthly propane bill was in the winter months of the previous year and he said about \$130 per month. I asked



him what his propane bill was so far in this winter. He said he didn't have a propane bill anymore. Then he got excited and almost shouted, "Oh wow, now I understand. My electric bill went up \$35, but my propane bill went down \$130."

I then suggested that he have a sub meter installed on his geothermal system so that he could know exactly how much electricity the geothermal unit uses each month. He was very appreciative and kept thanking me. This fellow had already solved his problem but just needed a little help to understand it. I think that we now have a fellow who may recommend what he did to improve his house.

Unfortunately, many folks just can't afford to make energy-efficiency improvements. It usually hinges on income challenges. As one caller told me, "I am one of those who has to choose between food, medicine and utility bills every month. I cannot afford all three." But even in this case, I try to help in some way. I am always humbled that they would call me for help.

So, Tom and I decided that we would not assume that folks already know the answer, and we would always try to keep our teaching as simple to understand as possible. In these next few issues, I will continue to teach and help you understand energy efficiency, from the very basic laws of physics to the application of energy-efficiency improvements for your house. I can hardly wait and hope that the information will help you.

Doug Rye is a licensed architect living in Arkansas and the popular host of the "Home Remedies" radio show – heard Saturdays at 9 a.m. on KBTN 1420 AM & KQYX 1450 AM. If you would like advice from Doug, call his office at 501-653-7931. To order Doug's videos, call 1-888-Doug-Rye.

provide peace-of-mind, but they must be installed correctly. Please also consider the following safety tips involving generators:

- Follow the instructions included with your generator.
- Make sure your generator is properly grounded.
- Never overload the generator.
- Never add fuel while it is running.
- Never use a generator indoors.
- Always keep a fully-charged class ABC fire extinguisher nearby.
- Turn off all appliances powered by your generator before shutting it down.

○ Generators

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ble to have both the generator and the power supplier service connected at the same time. It opens one to close the other.

Another reason for having a qualified electrician hook up your generator is for the protection of everything you plan to have powered by it. Improperly connecting to the generator could damage all of your appliances, electronics, etc.

When weather threatens, generators can



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Or visit us on the Web at
www.newmac.com.

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Call our consumer services department for information on the following services:
Autowithdrawal Payment
Levelized Billing
Rental Light
Meeting rooms available at both locations
Credit Card Acceptance
Safety Programs (upon request)
Surge Protection
Green Power

Questions? Comments?

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A whole-house generator requires a double-throw switch