



JACKSONELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



The Family Snowshoe Day is a great way to get the whole family moving and enjoying the trails at Wazee Lake Recreation Area.

and it's flat if you stay on the main trails," says Kathleen. "The Black River State Forest, Castle Mound, Skyline Golf Course, Millston trails, and Levis Mound in Clark County are also great for winter recreation."

Not into cross country skiing or snowshoeing? Maybe you're a runner or walker. You can still do those activities outside in the winter, and you may have more confidence in braving the pavement with the right equipment. Kathleen recommends using a product like YakTrax to aid in your footing. These are lightweight ice grips worn over your regular shoes to walk or run outside to give you traction.

"We have a new map that highlights the trails and playgrounds in town. There are 22 parks alone identified in the Black River Falls area," adds Dawn. "JIA really does try to be mindful of connecting the community with low-cost opportunities to move."

In addition to the snowshoe event, Jackson in Action also provides several other organized programs throughout the year, including the Pace and Pedal, a Laces and Leaders course in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club, a Hunter/Hiker Fitness Program, Move With a Doc events, and Harvest of the Month. "The Pace and Pedal event is held at Wazee and includes a 5K Color Fun Walk/



Walking in a [Jackson in Action] Winter Wonderland

It's time to get walking in a winter wonderland with Jackson in Action (JIA). From snowmen, snow angels, to snowball fights, there are so many winter activities that involve snow. Have you ever tried your hand, or should we say, foot, at snowshoeing?

It's a form of hiking that burns calories, is low impact (safe for those with injuries), and supports mental well-being.

"JIA is a community coalition founded in 2011 based on county health ranking data. The coalition promotes good nutrition and active living," shares Dawn Jacobson, JIA coalition member from Black River Memorial Hospital. "Our initial focus was creating activities, developing the Harvest of the Month program, and helping community members build pallet gardens. Over the years, we've added new activities."

One of those new activities is the

annual Family Snowshoe Event held at Wazee Lake Recreation Area in January. The event typically allows community members to meet at a designated time to participate in a guided group snowshoe experience. With COVID-19

In past years, snowshoes were provided for participants. However, due to this year's setup, participants will need to locate their own snowshoes, which may be borrowed or possibly rented from a sporting goods store.

restrictions in mind, the event will be formatted a little differently this year than the traditional group event.

"We're planning to have a Winter Wonderland Triple Snowshoe Challenge," shares Kathleen Clemons, JIA coalition member from Ho-Chunk

Health. "The events will be held on three different weekends at different courses, and the courses will be marked ahead of time."

When it comes to winter fitness activities, Jackson County is fortunate to have an abundance of outdoor recreation options. "Besides snowshoeing, Wazee is also great for cross country skiing,

MY CO-OP



Left: The Hunter/Hiker Fitness program introduces participants to the trails that the Jackson County area has to offer.



Right: The Pace and Pedal is Jackson in Action's largest event and only fundraiser.



Run, a 1-mile Youth Color Fun Run, and Duathlon Event. It's our largest event and our only fundraiser," shares Dawn. "We had to go virtual in 2020, but the event usually brings in well over 300 people."

Laces to Leaders is an eight-week running program that teaches third- through fifth-graders how to run a 5K. The Boys and Girls Club staff provides the classroom instruction portion of the program, and JIA provides the fitness portion. "It's about teaching positive self-esteem, healthy lifestyles, and goal setting," says Dawn. "It also culminates running the Pace and Pedal at the end of the program."

A popular activity commencing in August and ending in October is the Hiker/Hunter Fitness Program, and JIA was fortunate to be able to run the 2020 program with social distancing. Kathleen leads participants through 10 sessions, where they meet at different locations and hike. The outdoor fitness class prepares hunters for the season and lets hikers know what kind of trails are available in the area. "The first day is orientation, and then we start meeting at different locations that get progressively harder," explains Kathleen. "Participants also

Ways to get involved

- JIA can always use volunteers for their events, especially the Pace and Pedal when the in-person event resumes.
- If there's something you're truly passionate about, JIA will take on community members who want to be a committee member.

have fitness homework to complete between sessions."

JIA focuses on getting active and good nutrition. The Move with a Doc once-a-month event in the summer provides participants with an opportunity to hear a physician speak on a topic and concludes with a walk to chat and ask doctors questions.

Community members can learn about nutrition and try out a new food through the Harvest of the Month program. "Every month a seasonal fruit or vegetable is highlighted with recipe ideas to encourage people to eat a food they may not otherwise eat," shares Dawn. "Some of the area school districts even try to incorporate that food into their menu."

Like most organizations, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed many of the coalition's plans, but JIA has not given up on its mission. "We held most of our events virtually," Dawn says. "In September, we created Tour De Jackson County, a 60-mile walk or 130-mile bike ride challenge throughout Jackson County with an online platform to log miles."

"We are looking forward to offering the three snowshoe events," says Kathleen. "We are really doing all we can to keep people active during the pandemic."—*Brandi Shramek, Member Relations Advisor*

For the most current information on Jackson in Action's upcoming events:

- Follow their Facebook page: @JacksonInAction5210
- Visit their website: www.jacksoninaction.org
- Email: jacksoninaction12@gmail.com

RECEIVE LOAD MANAGEMENT EVENT NOTICES

Full load control, also known as peak alert events, can happen on any weekday during the months of December, January, and February. When issued, the hours of water heater and electric heat interruption are 5 to 8 p.m. Receive notice of these alerts by enrolling in Jackson Electric's load management notifications program.

Members can be notified by email, text, and/or phone call of a load management event. Please contact the office to request a load management enrollment form or go to www.jackelec.com/dual-fuel-program to download a form. This form must be on file at Jackson Electric for you to receive notifications.

YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Jackson Electric offers a \$1,000 scholarship to each of the following high schools:

- Alma Center-Humbird-Merrillan
- Black River Falls
- Blair-Taylor
- Melrose-Mindoro
- Neillsville
- Osseo-Fairchild
- Sparta
- Whitehall

Please contact your high school guidance counselor for scholarship requirements. Recipient is selected by the respective high school.

Home-Schooled, Private School, and Open-Enrolled Students: A \$1,000 scholarship is also available to students in this category. Scholarship applications can be downloaded from www.jackelec.com, under the Your Cooperative tab or requested from our office.



WINTER WONDERLAND TRIPLE SNOWSHOE CHALLENGE

On each of the weekends listed below, we will have a snowshoe course marked at one of our beautiful local parks. Gather up your family and snowshoe/hike the course anytime between Saturday 9am thru Sunday 3pm. Enjoy a scenic stroll through our winter wonderland this season! Complete all three courses to be entered in a grand prize drawing! Event registration is FREE.

JANUARY 9-10: WAZEE LAKE
STARTING LOCATION: WAZEE LAKE SWIM BEACH

JANUARY 23-24: SKYLINE GOLF COURSE
STARTING LOCATION: GOLF COURSE PARKING LOT

FEBRUARY 6-7: CASTLE MOUND PARK
STARTING LOCATION: CASTLE MOUND PARKING LOT

Jackson In Action


FOR FULL DETAILS, LOCATIONS, AND TO REGISTER, VISIT:
WWW.JACKSONINACTION.ORG/WINTERWONDERLAND

QUESTIONS? CONTACT KATHLEEN AT 715-299-0870




Dashing through the Snow ...with Energy Efficiency

The holidays have passed us by and so has the official first day of winter. In the same vein as Santa's list, we're making our winter energy usage list and checking it twice to help you discover what may be contributing to your home's winter energy usage and ways to reduce it. While everyone's energy usage is as unique as a snowflake because of habits, household size, and other factors, there are universal places to start. Like the cooling costs that the summer heat and humidity bring along, winter has its own set of energy usage culprits, some of which may be out of sight and out of mind.

 **Heating** You probably enjoyed the mild temperatures between summer and winter when you didn't have to run your home's cooling system anymore, and it was still warm enough that you didn't have to kick on the heat. But by mid-fall, the heat was turned on and you likely noticed an increase in your usage. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), heating alone represents 16.3% of your energy costs. There are ways to reduce your heating energy costs without compromising comfort.

While you are home, it's recommended to keep your thermostat as low as you can comfortably set it or around 68 degrees. But, if you are away from the home, lowering the thermostat just a few degrees can decrease your energy consumption by 3-5 percent. That's why programmable thermostats have gained popularity in their ability to work with your schedule. Some even allow you to change your home's setting from your mobile device. However, it's not efficient to drastically change your thermostat's setting, as that can put a strain on your heating system.

Keeping your bill lower in the winter can also be as simple as using those key hours of sunlight to your advantage. Leaving your curtains open during the day to let the warmth in and closing the curtains at night to keep off the chill could be a small change with a big impact.

 **Lighting** It's easy to forget how much the end of daylight savings time influences our winter energy habits. When you wake up on a winter morning before the sun rises, what's the first thing you do? Flip on a switch? At the end of the workday, when you arrive home, does it seem like the daylight fades away quickly? Soon you are flipping on the kitchen lights to prepare supper.

It may not have crossed your mind, but with colder, shorter days comes more time spent indoors with the lights on, as opposed to the days of summer when you spent most of your time outdoors. To help make your lighting more efficient, consider upgrading to LED bulbs. It is said that an LED bulb uses 90% less energy than other bulbs, and they last longer. Another simple tip is not to light an empty room and turn off any switches that are not necessary.


Appliances, Computers, and Other Electrical Equipment

According to the EIA, these items alone (washers and dryers, dishwashers, computers, small appliances) comprise 39% of your energy usage.


Laundry – When winter arrives it's time to pack away the shorts and tanks of summer, replacing them with sweatshirts and jeans. You dig out your fleece blankets and cozy up in the living room. When it's time for the wash, these items are heavier and bulkier. This may mean less clothing in a load, more drying time, and more energy usage. While there's no getting around the inevitable laundry, you can wash your clothes in cold water to save on water heating energy, and when it's time to dry, try a drying rack or invest in a wool dryer ball, which may reduce static and drying time.

Dishwashing and small appliances – Now that winter has arrived, you likely are not grilling out like the previous days of summer. More time spent indoors means more cooking indoors and more dishes. To combat kitchen energy usage, breaking out the slow cooker can help. They are a much more efficient substitute to heating the oven for a small dish or simmering a pot of soup for hours on the


stovetop. When it's time to clean the bowls from the crock pot chili or roast you made, make sure to only run the dishwasher with a full load.

 **Refrigerators and Freezers** It may sound simple, but when's the last time you cleaned your refrigerator or freezer's condenser coils? If the coils are full of dust and blocked, your appliance is going to work harder, thus use more energy. A quick clean, at least annually, could add some extra change to your wallet.


You'll also want to think about the age of your appliance. It may seem to be working great, but it could actually be using an ample amount of electricity. One way to tell is by using a kill-a-watt reader, which reads how many kilowatt hours your appliance is using. You can compare that to the standard monthly usage for newer appliances.

 **Water Heating** Like the thermostat for your home's heating system, setting your water heater's temperature to 120 degrees is the recommended temperature to reap water heating energy savings. Some sources indicate you can save up to 22% in energy costs per year by following this tip alone.

While you don't have to compromise on showers, do be mindful of shower length. On average, 2.5 gallons of water are used per minute of shower time. Reducing your shower time by just a few minutes can save you in water heating costs over time.

 **TVs and Related Equipment** Your phone is done charging. You disconnect it from the charger, but you leave the charger plugged into the outlet. You turn the television off, but you leave that and your receiver, DVD player, etc. plugged in all the time. Maybe you also have a radio, speaker or surround sound system to add to the list. All of these electronics are considered phantom or vampire loads because even when they are in the off mode, they are still using energy when they're left plugged in.

Instead, you may want to consider completely unplugging these items when they're not in use, especially if you don't use them on a daily basis, or investing in smart power strips that feature "always-on" outlets and outlets that automatically switch off energy to them when the device is not in use. While unplugging some things and plugging them back in every time you want to use them may seem inconvenient, it can be an otherwise overlooked contribution to your monthly electric bill.

 **Monitor Your Daily Usage** Have you ever wanted to track your daily energy usage? Now you can with Jackson Electric's online portal, SmartHub. Washed a load of laundry on Saturday? Had company over on Sunday? You may be able to correlate your usage to your habits by checking on a weekly basis.

To set up your account, go to www.jackelec.com.

1. Click Account Login at the top of your screen.
2. Click the New User link.
3. Type your information into the fields. You will need your billing account number.
4. Once you are logged into your new account, go to the My Usage tab and select Usage Explorer. Search by monthly or daily usage with the date range tools.



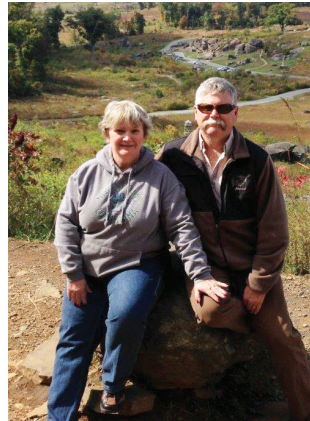
"I LOVE WORKING WITH THE MEMBERS!"

Member relations advisor says goodbye after 14 years

After over 14 years of member service to Jackson Electric, Member Relations Advisor Pam Bjerke is answering her last call on January 8. Pam started as a receptionist at the front desk, taking payments and answering phones. "I started working at the old headquarters building downtown and had a small workspace," shares Pam. "It was a big change to come out to the new building."

When Pam joined the Jackson Electric team, she brought with her years of experience in customer service. When her husband was in the Marine Corps, she moved around the country with him over a span of 18 years. "I worked for the federal government at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point and Fort McCoy, and previously at the Chamber of Commerce in Black River Falls," says Pam. "Most of my jobs involved customer service, and I brought that experience with me to Jackson Electric."

Pam has been part of the member services team for several years. You may have talked to her about a new membership, rebates, or your water



During her retirement, Pam plans to do more traveling with her family. One of her more recent travels was to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

heater at some point. During that time, she has witnessed several changes in the industry. "We had meter readers when I started, and now we can read the meters from the office," Pam recalls. "We now offer several payment options, compact fluorescent lightbulbs have been replaced with LEDs, and air source heat pumps and mini-split systems have become more popular."

While Pam looks forward to her retirement, she notes that she will miss her co-workers and the members she has come to know over the years. "I love working with the members. I knew many

of them before I started but have gotten to know many others over the years," she shares. "I also enjoyed working with our new members that were building or moving onto our lines and explaining all the programs Jackson Electric offered."

Asked what she plans to do with her free time in retirement, Pam already has ideas. "I plan on vacationing a lot! Hopefully we can travel in 2021. I'm thinking that I'll spend some time volunteering with Interfaith and the Karner Blue Garden Club," she says. "I also have enough yarn to last beyond my lifetime."

2021 ENERGY EFFICIENCY REBATES

This year's rebates for the purchase and installation of qualified energy efficient appliances, lighting, heat pumps, and more are available. Visit www.jackelec.com to determine if your item qualifies or contact our office. More details on this year's rebates will be announced in next month's *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News*.



TAX EXEMPTION FORMS

If your business qualifies for tax exemption, a Wisconsin Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certificate must be on file at our office for the sales tax to be exempt from your electric account. You can download the form at www.jackelec.com, under the My Account tab.



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