

COLUMBUS CURRENTS

Home Lighting 101

By Abby Berry

Lighting is something most of us don't think much about—until it's wrong. Maybe the living room feels too dim for reading, or the kitchen lights cast an odd yellow glow. We often grab whatever bulb or fixture looks good without considering how it will actually perform in the space. But with a little planning, you can make your home brighter, cozier and more energy efficient.

Watts vs. Lumens When you're shopping for lightbulbs, it's easy to focus on watts, but watts only measure how much energy a bulb uses. When it comes to brightness, what really matters is the lumen count. Lumens measure the actual light output. For example, an 800-lumen bulb gives off about the same amount of light as an old-fashioned 60-watt incandescent bulb. (You've likely replaced all incandescent bulbs with long-lasting, energy efficient LEDs, but if not—it's time to make the switch!)

A helpful rule of thumb: higher lumens mean brighter light, while lower watts mean less energy consumed. Remember to check wattage ratings for fixtures and only install bulbs that meet the fixture's wattage safety requirements.

Color Temperature and Consistency Light bulbs also vary in color temperature, which ranges from warm yellow to cool white or even bluish tones. This detail often gets overlooked—until you replace one bulb and notice the new light doesn't quite match the others. If mismatched tones drive you crazy, consider buying and installing bulbs of the same brand and wattage in a room at the same time. That way, the look stays consistent, and you won't be stuck hunting for a perfect match later.

Dimmers and Switches Installing dimmers instead of standard on/off switches can be a game changer. Dimmers give you more control over brightness, help save energy and create a more comfortable atmosphere. Not all bulbs are dimmable, so double check labels before buying.

While you're thinking about switches, consider whether you have enough of them—and in the right places. A light you can only turn off from one end of a hallway quickly becomes annoying. For new installations or upgrades, it's best to hire a licensed electrician to ensure everything is wired safely and efficiently.

Fixtures: Form Meets Function

Bulbs are only part of the equation—fixtures matter too. Each type serves a purpose. Ambient lighting, like sconces or glass-covered ceiling fixtures, provides general illumination. Task lighting, like pendants, desk lamps or track lighting, focuses light where you need it most.

When choosing a fixture, think beyond looks. Ask yourself: does this light provide the right amount of brightness for the space? A beautiful chandelier might look perfect over the dining table but leave the rest of the room too dim. Alternatively, an oversized fixture could flood the room with more light than you need, wasting both energy and money.

Smart Lighting: Energy Efficiency Meets Convenience

Smart lighting adds another layer of control for illuminating your home. But the real magic is convenience. With smart bulbs, you can adjust brightness, set schedules or even change colors—all from your phone or a voice assistant like Alexa or Google Assistant. Want the lights to dim automatically for movie night? Or to turn on before you get home? Smart bulbs make it easy.

Smart lighting also lets you personalize your space. You can go classic with warm white tones or experiment with colors to set the mood—anything from a soft glow for winding down to vibrant hues for a party. Remember, smart bulbs still rely on power from your wall switch, which needs to stay in the "on" position for remote controls to work. If you prefer using a physical switch, consider pairing smart bulbs with a smart light switch. Many of today's smart switches also come with motion detectors, adding another level of efficiency and convenience.

Good lighting doesn't just make your home look better—it makes it feel better too. With a little planning, you can create spaces that are welcoming, functional and energy efficient. Whether you stick to traditional bulbs and fixtures or explore the flexibility of smart lighting, thoughtful choices today will brighten your home for years to come.

November 2025 www.columbusco-op.org Vol. 37, No. 11

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative





Columbus Electric Cooperative is now accepting applications for the 2026 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

For over 60 years, electric cooperatives have sent high school students to Washington, D.C., to discover their voice, step into history and begin writing the story only they can tell.

This once-in-a-lifetime experience isn't just about seeing the nation's capital. It's about preparing students to lead, to grow and to make their mark on the world.

This year, New Mexico will be in Washington D.C. June 15-21, 2025, and Youth Tour delegates will spend their time touring monuments, visiting museums, meeting with elected officials, learning about the cooperative business model, and getting to know young leaders from all over New Mexico and 44 other states!

The best part? All expenses—travel, lodging, meals, program costs and spending money—are covered by Columbus Electric Cooperative. The program is coordinated by New Mexico Rural Electric Cooperative (NMREC) and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Applications for the Youth Tour are available on our website, at our Deming office or the student's high school counselor. For questions, please call our office at 575-546-8838.

The deadline to submit an application is January 15, 2026

MAKE
Youth Tour
YOUR
2026
MARK



Board Highlights

The Board of Trustees met on October 28th. Representatives of Bolinger, Segars, Gilbert & Moss were present to review the 2025 financial audit and the Cooperative's 2024 Form 990 tax return. The Cooperative received a clean audit opinion. Trustees reviewed and approved the monthly financial and operations reports for September.

Heat Pump Rebate Reminder

Have you recently had a new air or ground source heat pump installed in your home or business? Don't forget CEC offers rebates for heat pumps to all its members. Rebates are also offered for whole house fans, evaporative coolers and more. Members have 90 days from date of install or purchase to submit their rebate applications! To learn more about Columbus Electric Cooperative, Inc. rebate programs call us at 1-800-950-2667 or online at columbusco-op.org/rebates

HAPPY
THANKS
GIVING



Power Your Future! Apply for the Columbus Electric Cooperative Scholarship Program

Columbus Electric Cooperative offers educational scholarships to active members of CEC and their immediate family members. Scholarship recipients can receive financial assistance for up to eight semesters of undergraduate studies at the college of their choice. Applicants must complete an application and submit letters of recommendation. Applications may be obtained by contacting our office, the student's high school counselor or at columbusco-op.org/scholarships. If you are currently receiving a CEC scholarship, you must reapply to be considered for the next academic year. **The deadline to apply for new and renewal applicants is March 4, 2026.**

For questions, please call our office at 575-546-8838.

***Scholarship Applications will be accepted beginning December 2, 2025 for the 2026-2027 school year.**

Our office will be closed November 27th and 28th in observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday. Wishing you a safe and Happy Thanksgiving!

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

With the holiday season approaching and more time spent in the kitchen, consider ways to save energy in the heart of your home. When possible, cook meals with smaller, energy efficient appliances, such as toaster ovens, slow cookers and air fryers. When using the range, match the size of the pan to the heating element. Keep range-top burners and reflectors clean so they reflect heat more efficiently. After your holiday meals are complete, load the dishwasher fully before starting the wash cycle.

Source: energy.gov

Emergency Response Number
1-800-228-0579

Toll - free Office Number
1-800-950-COOP (2667)

www.columbusco-op.org