COLUMBUS CURRENTS

Optimize Your HVAC System

By Abby Berry

As November settles in and temperatures begin to drop, your HVAC system will soon become one of the hardest-working appliances in your home. Before your system undergoes all that extra work this winter, now is a great time to ensure it is optimized and ready to go.

Start with something simple. One of the easiest and most effective measures you can take is checking filters. A clogged or dirty filter makes it harder for air to move through your system, which can cause it to work longer and harder than necessary. Check filters regularly and replace them according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Vents matter too. Take a look around your home to make sure furniture, curtains, rugs and other household items aren't blocking any supply or return vents.

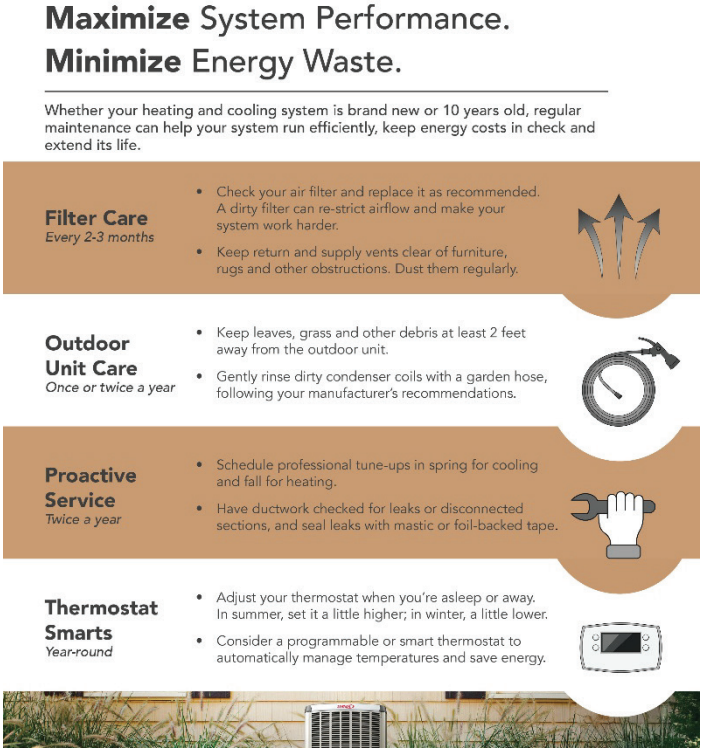
If you have a heat pump, your outdoor unit also deserves extra attention this time of year. Falling leaves, limbs and other debris can collect around the unit and restrict airflow, so keep the area around your outdoor unit clear. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning recommendations. If you have a traditional central air conditioning system, your outdoor unit will likely remain idle during winter months, but it's still good practice to keep it clear of debris.

Don't overlook what you can't see. With forced-air systems, ductwork plays an essential role in delivering heated air throughout your home. Leaks, gaps or disconnected sections can allow conditioned air to escape before it reaches the rooms where you need it. If you've noticed rooms that never seem to get comfortable or unusually high energy use, ask an HVAC professional to inspect your ductwork.

Fall is also an ideal time for a professional tune-up. A technician can inspect your heating system, identify potential problems and make sure it is operating safely and efficiently before the coldest weather arrives. Regular professional maintenance can also help extend the life of your equipment.

Finally, take more control of your energy use by proactively managing your thermostat. There's no reason to heat an empty house. Lowering the temperature when you're asleep or away can help reduce energy use. Better yet, a programmable or smart thermostat can make those adjustments automatically, taking one more thing off your to-do list.

Your home heating system has an important job this winter. Giving it a little extra attention this fall to help the system operate more efficiently, reduce unnecessary energy use and potentially prevent an inconvenient breakdown on a cold winter night.



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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Columbus Electric Cooperative is now accepting applications for the 2027 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

MAKE YOUR MARK!

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 15-22, 2027, 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, 2027

Board Highlights



The Board of Trustees met on Friday, October 23rd. They reviewed and approved the annual financial audit performed by Bolinger, Segars, Gilbert & Moss. They reviewed contract closeout documents for two pole replacement contracts, and approved 2026 pole inspections.

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



Our office will be closed November 26th and 27th in observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday. Wishing you a safe and Happy Thanksgiving!





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, 2027.**

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

Scholarship Applications will be accepted beginning December 2, 2026 for the 2027-2028 school year.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Adjust your water heater settings to save energy. As cooler weather arrives, your water heater may be working harder to keep up with longer, hotter showers. Check its temperature setting and consider lowering it to 120°F, which the U.S. Department of Energy recommends for most households. A lower temperature setting can reduce energy use while also helping prevent scalding. Always check the owner's manual before making adjustments.

Source: Dept. of Energy



Emergency Response Number
1-800-228-0579

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

www.columbusco-op.org