

-Major and Blaine Counties-

Gearing up for Fall Home Energy Management

Oklahoma residents know they'll be running the air conditioner and fans in their homes for several more weeks, but that doesn't mean fall energy management preparations should be put off.

Nearly half of the energy used in your home goes to heating and cooling.

Making smart decisions regarding your home's heating and cooling system can have a big impact on utility bills. A few simple steps around the home can pay big dividends when the weather cools down. Think back to the deep freeze Oklahoma experienced in February this year and remember how your utility bills reflected the increased energy usage.

The easiest and least expensive way to increase system efficiency is to change the air filter regularly. Check it once per month and change it, at minimum, three times per year.

A dirty filter slows down air flow and makes the system work harder to keep you warm or cool. A clean filter also will prevent dust and dirt from building up in the system, which could lead to a costly repair or an early system failure.

Just like people go to the doctor and get a yearly checkup or schedule their vehicle for a tune-up, it's important to do the same for your HVAC system. In the fall, check all gas or oil connections, gas pressure, burner combustion and heat exchanger. Improper connections can be a fire hazard and can contribute to health problems.



A smart thermostat is a great investment for homeowners to help lower utility bills.

A smart thermostat lets you control the home's heating and cooling temperature settings from a smart device such as a cell phone, tablet or computer. These thermostats are Wi-Fi enabled, which allows access to its temperature and other features through an app downloaded on your smart device.

Another option is a programmable thermostat that allows homeowners to set the temperature for different times of the day. For example, the heat can be set to automatically turn down to a specified temperature when everyone goes to bed and automatically turn up in the morning.

Another area to check on is the ductwork in the home. The ducts that move the air often can be big energy wasters. Sealing and insulating ducts can significantly improve the efficiency of your air system. Start with the ductwork that runs through unheated/uncooled parts of the home such as the attic, crawl spaces and garage, then move to heated/cooled spaces in the home.

Have your heat and air system evaluated by a professional if it is older, or simply isn't heating and cooling effectively.

Major County OSU Extension Center

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Courthouse Suite 3
Fairview, OK 73737

Phone- 580-227-3786

Fax- 580-227-4786

Email-

dana.baldwin@okstate.edu

Website- extension.okstate.edu/major

Facebook page-

Major County OSU Extension

Blaine County OSU Extension Center

212 N. Weigle Ave.
Courthouse Suite 101
Watonga, OK 73772

Phone- 580-623-5195

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Email-

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Website- extension.okstate.edu/blaine

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Blaine County OSU Extension

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Cleanliness Helps Prevent Foodborne Illness

Spring has long been the time of year for annual cleaning projects around our homes. However, when it comes to safe food handling, everything that comes in contact with food must be kept clean all year long.

Food that is mishandled can lead to foodborne illness. While the United States has one of the safest food supplies in the world, preventing foodborne illness remains a major public health challenge.

Prevent foodborne illness by following these four easy steps:

- Clean: Wash hands and surfaces often.
- Separate: Don't cross-contaminate.
- Cook: Cook to proper temperatures.
- Chill: Refrigerate promptly.

Cleanliness is a major factor in preventing foodborne illness. Even with food safety inspection and monitoring at Federal, State, and local government facilities, the consumer's role is to make sure food is handled safely after it is purchased. Everything that touches food should be clean. Listed below are steps we can take to help prevent foodborne illness by safely handling food in the home:

1. Wash hands with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds:
 - before and after handling food
 - after using the bathroom
 - after changing a diaper
 - after handling pets
 - after tending to a sick person
 - after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
 - after handling uncooked eggs or raw meat, poultry, or fish and their juices.
2. If your hands have any kind of skin abrasion or infection, always use clean disposable gloves. Wash hands (gloved or not) with warm, soapy water.
3. Thoroughly wash with hot, soapy water all surfaces that come in contact with raw meat, poultry, fish, and eggs before moving on to the next step in food preparation. Consider using paper towels to clean kitchen surfaces. If you use dishcloths, wash them often in the hot cycle of your washing machine. Keep other surfaces, such as faucets and counter tops, clean by washing with hot, soapy water.
4. To keep cutting boards clean, wash them in hot, soapy water after each use; then rinse and air or pat dry with clean paper towels. Cutting boards can be sanitized with a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water. Flood the surface with the bleach solution and allow it to stand for several minutes; then rinse and air or pat dry with clean paper towels.

Non-porous acrylic, plastic, glass, and solid wood boards can be washed in a dishwasher (laminated boards may crack and split). Even plastic boards wear out over time. Once cutting boards become excessively worn or develop hard-to-clean grooves, replace them.

5. Don't use the same platter and utensils that held the raw product to serve the cooked product. Any bacteria present in the raw meat or juices can contaminate the safely cooked product. Serve cooked products on clean plates, using clean utensils and clean hands.
6. When using a food thermometer, it is important to wash the probe after each use with hot, soapy water before reinserting it into a food.
7. Keep pets, household cleaners, and other chemicals away from food and surfaces used for food.
8. When picnicking or cooking outdoors, take plenty of clean utensils. Pack clean, dry, and wet and soapy cloths for cleaning surfaces and hands.

Because bacteria are everywhere, cleanliness is a major factor in preventing foodborne illness. By keeping everything clean that comes in contact with food, consumers can be assured they are helping to do their part to be food safe.

Food Handlers: Food Safety Training

Choose from one of these 2021 dates:

-August 26 -October 28 -December 9

-2:30 P.M. -Online Format Only (Zoom)
(participants will need internet access)

Everyone is welcome to participate in any of these **free online** Food Handlers Food Safety classes presented by Major and Blaine Counties OSU Extension. These are basic food safety classes that will last about an hour. Anyone working in any capacity with food service and/or regularly cooking for large groups is encouraged to attend. Participants passing a quiz will receive a certificate.

Please register by the Monday prior to the class you plan to participate in. We will need your name, phone number and email address.

Major County OSU Extension– 580-227-3786

Blaine County OSU Extension– 580-623-5195

Training presenter is: Dana Baldwin,

OSU Extension Educator



Blaine County OHCE *News and Notes*



Lesson Leader Trainings

The lesson for your September meetings is a state one titled "*Attracting Pollinators to Your Butterfly Garden*". It is a mail-out and group packets will be ready by August 26.

The Lesson Leader Training in September (for your October meetings) will be on Thursday, September 23 at 10:00 a.m. at the Watonga Library. The lesson topic is *Spices From Around the World*. Please make plans to attend if can.

Fall Association Meeting

The Fall Association Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 5 beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Noble House in Watonga. This date is a change from what is in your yearbooks, so please make note of that.

Volunteer Hours

Please continue to keep track of your volunteer hours—and thank you to those that have turned in forms! These are beneficial for report efforts.

Cheese Food Contest at the Cheese Festival

The Watonga Cheese Festival is October 8 and 9 this year and we are once again conducting and sponsoring the Cheese Food Contest. Be looking for the opportunity to sign-up to volunteer to help with the contest! Thank you in advance!

Officers and Dues for 2022

County and group officer lists for 2022 will be due by October 15 as well as membership forms and dues for 2022. Group Presidents will be receiving more information soon.

Cake Auction

Don't forget the Cake Auction to be held at the Blaine County Fair on Friday, August 27 at 6:00 p.m. Bake your cake and invite others to attend!

Check us out on Facebook and our Website!

Facebook: *Blaine County OSU Extension*

Website: <http://extension.okstate.edu/county/blaine>

The **2021 Blaine County Fair is set for August 26, 27 & 28-** are your exhibits ready?

Thursday, August 26

4:00-6:30 p.m. Non-livestock entries taken

7:30 p.m. Exhibit Room closes

Friday, August 27

7:30 a.m. No-livestock entries taken

8:00 a.m. Commercial Exhibits open

10:00 a.m. ALL exhibits must be place

11:00 a.m. Judging of OHCE, 4-H, Agriculture, and Open Class exhibits

12:00 p.m. Entries for Pie Baking Contest taken

6:00 p.m. Cake Auction, Foley Building

6:00-7:00 p.m. Livestock Weigh-ins

7:00 p.m. ALL livestock must be in place

7:30 p.m. Mini Beef Show

9:00 p.m. Exhibit Room closed

Saturday, August 28

8:00 a.m. Commercial & Fair exhibits open

8:00 a.m. Swine Show; Goat and Sheep Show will begin 30 minutes after the conclusion of the Swine Show;

Beef Show will begin 30 minutes after the conclusion of the Sheep Show

4:00 p.m. Foley Building entries picked up



2021

Lunchtime Learning Sessions

-Major and Blaine Counties-

*Featuring Seasonal Make-and-Take Activities
and a brief Educational Program
that focuses on a Self-Improvement Topic*



One hour sessions from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.

Major County: at the Fairgrounds in Fairview

Blaine County: at the Watonga Public Library



Watermelon Door Hanger & “Brain Activity”

Monday, July 26 in Major County

Tuesday, July 27 in Blaine County



Americana Porch Sign & “Tuning Into the Times”

Tuesday, August 24 in Blaine County

Wednesday, August 25 in Major County

Pumpkin Tulle Wreath and “Sleep”

Tuesday, September 28 in Blaine County

Wednesday, September 29 in Major County



**Bring your own lunch and come take part in these programs.
\$10.00 fee per person per session to cover the cost of supplies.**

**Register by calling either the Major County or the Blaine County OSU Extension Center.
(Major County- 580-227-3786/Blaine County- 580-623-5195)
RSVP at least one week prior to the session you plan to attend.**



For parents and other caregivers where the following topics will be addressed:

- Being an Active Parent
- Building Courage & Self Esteem
- Cooperation & Communication
- Understanding & Redirecting Misbehavior
- Responsibility & Discipline
- Active Parenting for School Success

2021 Class Session

October 7, 14, 21, 28 at the Major County Fairgrounds in Fairview

Participants must attend all four classes in a session to complete the program.

Classes will consist of group discussions, video presentations, and hands-on activities.

Dana Baldwin, Major and Blaine County OSU Extension Educator-FCS/4-H & Major County CED is the program facilitator.

Fee for the class is \$30.00 per participant per entire session.

Please pre-register 3 business days prior to the session.

(at least 4 people must be pre-registered for the classes to be held)

If interested, complete and return the bottom portion of this flyer with the class fee to the Major or Blaine County OSU Cooperative Extension Center. If you have questions, please call 580.227.3786 (Major County) / 580-623-5195 (Blaine County).

Oklahoma State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, State and Local Governments Cooperating. Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age disability or status as a veteran and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Yes, I plan to attend the **Active Parenting** class!

Enclosed is my \$30.00 class fee, payable to "OSU Extension Center".

Name _____ Address _____

Phone Number _____ Number & Ages of Children _____

Return at least 3 business days prior to the session you plan to attend:

**Major County OSU Extension Center
500 E. Broadway, Courthouse Suite 3
Fairview, OK 73737**

or
**Blaine County OSU Extension Center
212 N. Weigle Ave., Suite 101 Courthouse
Watonga, OK 73772**



EXTENSION



Blaine County OSU Extension Center
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 EXTENSION SERVICE**

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 and Major County Extension Director

Family & Consumer Sciences assists communities, families, youth and individuals address issues of health, wealth and well-being through research-based Extension education and programs that are proven to work.



Oklahoma Home & Community Education, Inc. (OHCE) is a local and state wide partner with Cooperative Extension which brings the best knowledge from OSU to its members. Join a local OHCE group and enjoy programs that help make Oklahomans be their best.
www.OHCE.okstate.edu