

# COLUMBUS' CURRENTS

## Smart appliances offer convenience, but have a ways to go

It seems like everything is “smart” these days; cars, the grid, watches, houses, phones and...appliances. When I hear the term “smart appliance” the Jetsons - with their fully automated home - immediately come to mind. Dinner was cooked, laundry done and dishes washed by a smart machine.

In reality, smart appliances utilize modern communications technology to make functions faster, cheaper and more energy efficient.

The annual Consumer Electronics Show features more smart appliances every year. Refrigerators, stoves and ovens, freezers, washers and dryers, garage door openers, dishwashers, water heaters - the wave is coming.

Even though today’s smart appliances can give many of us sticker shock, experts predict these new technologies will deliver major benefits in energy efficiency, convenience and maintenance. So what makes today’s smart appliances stand out from others?

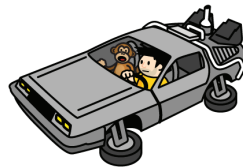
From the smart screen on your dazzling new refrigerator, you can check the weather while grabbing your orange juice. You can even browse the internet for recipes - all on the conveniently placed touchscreen.

Remotely monitor your oven to turn it on and adjust temperatures. Running late from work and need to get the kids

somewhere? Stop for a frozen pizza on the way home, and preheat the oven so you can pop it in upon arrival. That’s pretty neat. And of course, the panic moment while winging off on vacation of, “Did I leave the oven on?”, will be a thing of the past.

Eventually, I see smart appliances becoming extremely useful to the average homeowner. A refrigerator that reads the bar codes of what you put in and tracks consumption could recommend a shopping list if it noticed something getting low or out of date. No more cracking open the milk to sniff for freshness. I can go for that!

Maintenance is an area of huge potential. Let’s say one of your smart appliances is feeling sickly. One day it may call the manufacturer and get a diagnosis. You won’t have to wait at home for a technician who may or may not find the problem - or have the right parts. With your permission, the tech can show up to your home with everything needed to make the repair. How convenient that will be!



Finally, from an energy efficiency and load management point of view, smart appliances present an opportunity to manage energy load more discretely in the quest to give co-op members the highest possible quality of service at the lowest possible price. Sure, the Jetsons flying car is a long way off - but not their appliances.



AMERICA'S ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVES

# ELECTRICAL SAFETY QUIZ



Energy  
Explorers

May is National Electrical Safety Month! Test your electrical safety knowledge by taking the quiz below.

- 1) Smoke alarms in your home should be tested \_\_\_\_\_ to ensure they work properly.
  - A. Once a month
  - B. Once a year
  - C. Once a day
- 2) Electrical cords should be placed under rugs or carpet to keep them out of the way.
  - A. True
  - B. False
- 3) What should you do if you are outdoors and hear thunder?
  - A. Hide under a tree
  - B. Seek shelter indoors and wait at least 30 minutes
  - C. Stand still
- 4) It is safe to leave the kitchen with a burner on, as long as it is a short amount of time.
  - A. True
  - B. False



Be an *Electrical Safety Ambassador!* Cut out the safety badge and tell your family and friends about the importance of electrical safety.

Answers: 1) A. 2) False. 3) B. 4) False. You should never leave a kitchen burner unattended. Electrical cords should never be placed underneath carpet or rugs because they are potential fire hazards.



## Tip of the Month

Avoid placing lamps or TV sets near your room air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the air conditioner to run longer than necessary.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

Emergency Response Number  
1-800-228-0579

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