

Increasing comfort and saving energy dollars begins with one call

When it comes to Owen Electric Cooperative's Button-Up program, you have nothing to lose and plenty to gain with just one phone call. Requesting a free energy audit of your home, and then following up on weatherization recommendations, can lower your electric bill and improve your comfort this winter.

Last fall, Alan and Carol Corgiat requested a Button-Up audit after reading about the program in this magazine.

"We had nothing to lose," Alan says about the decision to request an evaluation of their three-bedroom log home situated along Kincaid Lake. Within a couple of days, Jude Canchola, our Residential Services manager, was at their home testing for air leaks through floors, walls, ceilings, doors, windows, and other areas.

The Corgiats had already installed new windows and tightened up their home's main level, but Canchola

detected air loss in the basement where Alan's workshop is located. The energy advisor suggested a simple way to insulate the walls of the basement, and the Corgiats followed the recommendation.

Alan noticed an immediate change in the workshop where he spends about 10 hours a week. "It has made quite a difference in the comfort," he says.

Making the recommended changes lowered the Corgiats' power bill about 10 percent.

It also earned them a Button-Up rebate for every 1,000 BTUs of electricity saved. The program has saved them around \$200 a year on their total annual electric bills and an additional \$365 because of the rebate from Owen Electric.

"We're well-pleased with that," Alan says. "The payback was immediate, and we love the much improved comfort of our home."

Was the call to his electric co-op worth it? "Certainly," says Alan. "Who doesn't want to save a little money and be more comfortable?"

Are you ready to save some money and be more comfortable this winter? Call us at (800) 372-7612 and tell us you're ready to button up. We have an energy advisor ready to help you.

Button-Up before winter

Properly sealing and insulating your home can save up to 20 percent on energy costs. For help, call Owen Electric and ask about our Button-Up program. If your home qualifies, we'll conduct a free energy audit to detect air-loss problems and suggest ways to fix them. Call (800) 372-7612 today for help in lowering your electric bill and learn how to earn a rebate just for making energy-efficiency improvements.



Alan and Carol Corgiat with Owen's Residential Services Manager Jude Canchola.

Mark Stallons
President/CEO

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

John Fitzgerald: Systems operator by profession; search dog team member by passion



John calls Kaden back after successfully locating the mock victim and rewards him with attention and praise.

John Fitzgerald is versed in many things. He is a husband to Meg and a father to Levi and Leah Kate, and a systems operator for Owen Electric Cooperative. He's quiet and calculated, and a valued team member, relied upon by co-workers and members alike when it comes to communicating between headquarters and crews when the power is out.

But if you ask John what he's doing outside of working hours, he'll likely mention working his search dog, Kaden.

Three and a half years old, the silky, solid black German shepherd is very much a family dog, and plays with his "siblings," Levi and Leah Kate, as they wait to begin training with fellow human and dog members of Grand Paws Search Dog Association. Tonight,

the training ground is at Owen Electric.

There are 25 acres of varying topography that make up much of Owen Electric's walking trail and crew training grounds—perfect for working active search dogs to training up-and-coming pups.

"We do a lot of our training on Owen Electric's property. It has just about every scenario we run into on searches, from grown-up areas to clear spots; ditches; buildings to hide in; and water. It has been a big asset to the group," John says.

John has spent nearly three years working with Grand Paws Search Association, something he enjoys alongside a lifetime of owning and working with dogs. Based in Owen County, Grand Paws was started in

September 1994. With more than 20 years of searches under its belt—live and cadaver—the volunteers and their dogs are often called upon by both local and state emergency response crews.

Joining Grand Paws was an easy decision for John, saying, "I always had German shepherds and like watching them work on TV. I thought this would be something I'd enjoy doing to help others."

John began training Kaden at 8 and a half weeks old, adding that there is no set point at which a dog can be started in search exercises.

"It's whenever you feel they are ready. We started training Kaden with basic commands, and at 6 months old, we started doing some easy searches for

a person. At about 9 months there was no doubt about him being able to locate a missing person,” John says.

Search dog training is a family activity in the Fitzgerald household.

“My family is a big part of the training; we started Kaden searching for Levi and Leah Kate in the yard to get him used to what we were wanting him to do—it helped because he knew their scent,” John says. “Meg and the kids go to the regular trainings and sometimes they’ll play victims for the other dogs in the group to search for.”

It’s not “all work and no play,” though, for this family dog—John’s kids

enjoy using Kaden during games of hide-and-go-seek with friends, although Kaden’s friendly seeking services have been called “cheating.”

However, when the call comes in and it’s time to go to work, Kaden and the Grand Paws search dogs do something humans cannot, using their keen sense of smell, stamina, and ability to access places no one else can. Aside from physical demands, though, the search for a missing person can evoke a number of emotions for both the dog and the volunteer.

“It’s kind of a mix of emotions when you get called for a search because you’re excited that you can take your

dog to assist, but then there is a feeling of worry for the victim and the family,” John says.

Dogs can also experience stress while working—particularly with cadaver searches. They are given breaks when necessary by being taken away from the search area and given a healthy distraction of praise for a job well-done and affection.

“Kaden knows when it’s time to work and when it’s time to play,” John says. “He knows when his orange search vest goes on, it is time to do his job—and he loves it.”

Grand Paws Search Association is always looking for people who would like to be a part of the team. For more information or to find out when you can come watch them train, contact GPSA President Patricia Petzinger at (502) 484-3755.



Above and below: As Levi hides, posing as a “victim” during training, Kaden works quickly and thoroughly, following a scent trail.



Meg, John, Leah Kate, Kaden, and Levi stop for a photo before a night of exercise and training with Grand Paws Search Association.

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