



Kinty Jones Explains the Two Thermostat Settings That Decide a Northwest Arkansas Winter Electric Bill

BELLA VISTA, AR, UNITED STATES, September 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Kinty Jones Heating and Cooling](#) is encouraging homeowners across Northwest Arkansas to understand two thermostat settings before the heating changeover, warning that confusion between them is one of the most expensive and most preventable mistakes a heat pump owner can make.

The distinction matters more here than in most of the country. Northwest Arkansas sits in a mixed climate where heat pumps are common and winter temperatures cross back and forth over the point at which a heat pump needs help. In a consistently mild region, backup heat barely runs. In a severe one, homeowners generally have a furnace. In between, backup heat engages often, and how it engages is largely up to the homeowner.

AUX is the system doing its job

Auxiliary heat is automatic. When demand exceeds what the heat pump can deliver alone, the thermostat brings in a second heat source, and on a common all-electric system the heat pump and the electric strips run together. It also engages during defrost, when the heat pump briefly reverses to warm its outdoor coil and the strips prevent cold air blowing through the vents.

Seeing AUX during a cold snap or a brief defrost cycle is normal. It is the system protecting comfort, and it turns itself off when the house catches up.

EM HEAT is a decision the homeowner makes

Emergency heat differs in one critical way. Selecting it stops the compressor and runs the backup source alone. On an electric system the air handler effectively becomes an electric furnace, the most expensive way to heat a house.

Manufacturer guidance is unambiguous. Trane describes emergency heat as a setting for a true emergency, meaning the heat pump has failed and it is cold outside. Honeywell's thermostat guidance confirms the mechanical difference: AUX can run alongside the compressor, while EM HT stops the compressor and runs only the emergency source.

The pattern the company sees each winter is a homeowner who assumes emergency heat is

simply the stronger setting for cold weather, switches it on in December, and never switches it back. The bill arrives in January.

The setback trap

The second mistake is well intentioned. Dropping the thermostat sharply overnight can backfire on a heat pump, because the morning recovery is a large, sudden demand that calls the strips in to meet it. Whatever the setback saved overnight can be spent recovering from it.

The Department of Energy advises keeping electric resistance backup use to a minimum and recommends heat pump thermostats that ramp temperature up gradually. Manufacturer guidance follows the same logic: keep the thermostat in normal HEAT mode while the heat pump is working, use small setbacks rather than large ones, and raise the temperature a degree or two at a time rather than jumping several degrees on arriving home.

What aux heat can tell you

Backup operation also works as a diagnostic. Short bursts during genuine cold are expected. Frequent auxiliary operation in mild weather is worth investigating, and can point to an undersized system, a dirty filter restricting airflow, or a heat pump needing service. A useful threshold: if it is 40 degrees or above outside and the home will not hold temperature without emergency heat, the heat pump needs attention rather than more backup.

Kinty Jones recommends homeowners confirm now, before the first cold morning, that the thermostat reads HEAT rather than EM HEAT, find out whether their backup is electric strips or a furnace, and have the system inspected while scheduling is open. The company offers an \$89 diagnostic and around-the-clock support at (479) 899-7415.

About Kinty Jones Heating and Cooling

Kinty Jones Heating and Cooling delivers [residential and commercial HVAC services](#) across Northwest Arkansas and northeastern Oklahoma, with branches in Rogers, Arkansas and Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. Services include heating and cooling installation, repair, and maintenance, indoor air quality, and emergency service, backed by more than a century of combined expertise. Northwest Arkansas service areas include Bella Vista, Bentonville, Fayetteville, Lowell, Pea Ridge, Rogers, and Springdale, plus surrounding communities in Benton and Washington counties. The company holds a 4.9-star rating across more than 865 reviews at its Rogers location, was named a Best of Northwest Arkansas Gold Winner in 2024 and 2025, and offers the Kinty Club membership program and financing. Licensed and insured: Arkansas Contractor License 034612, Arkansas HVACR Contractor Class A License 1341160, and Oklahoma Mechanical Contractor License 091004.

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