



country living

FOR MEMBERS OF EAST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Questions, Answered

Winter Weather and Electric Bills

Why do some electric bills go up in the winter? What is a power cost adjustment and why is it so much? What can I do to lower my electric bill? And how can I get help making ends meet this winter?

These are perfectly normal questions to ask. Our member service team hears these every year.

Luckily, you are a member of an electric cooperative. You are a co-owner of the institution that delivers your power. So when you have questions, you are entitled to real, honest answers.

Here are some of our members' most common winter electric bill questions, answered.

1. Why do some electric bills go up in the winter?

The number one answer is genuinely the weather. Heating our homes,

outbuildings, and our water makes up a combined 42 percent of our annual electric bill. Even the most energy efficient systems have to work hard to keep us comfortable and use a lot of energy in the process. Many gas and propane heating systems also use electricity to distribute heat around the home.

2. What is the power cost adjustment and why is it so much?

There are four main charges on every electric bill, which you can monitor to see if your usage goes up. If you don't receive a paper bill, you can access a digital copy via SmartHub to see this for yourself, even if you're on prepay.

The energy charge is the total amount of kilowatt-hours used in your home multiplied by the electric rate you are on, plus a \$17.50 customer charge. The

energy charge makes up the largest portion of your electric bill each month.

The power cost adjustment (PCA) is a pass-through cost based on the wholesale cost of fuel. The PCA is set monthly by our wholesale power suppliers and changes based on the cost of fuel used to generate electricity.

Wholesale power suppliers generate electricity from many sources including hydroelectric dams, solar and wind farms, coal-powered steam generators, and steam generators powered by oil and natural gas. When the cost to generate power goes up, as it typically does in the winter months when demand outweighs supply, so does the PCA.

The third charge you may notice on your bill is the gross revenue surcharge. This charge is required in place of

Winter Weather, Continued on Page 3



To learn more about your elected trustees, or to view a district map, please visit ecoec.com. To contact your trustee, please call 918-756-0833.

notes from the chair



by Lowell Hobbs, President, East Central Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees



Giving Thanks for Those Who Make an Impact

I'm sorry I did not get my story ready for the last Country Living. I was so sick. I did not answer my phone or return any calls. The doctor said I had pneumonia and bronchitis. I am better at this time, but still not up to par. I do plan to get better and return to normal soon. In the meantime, East Central Electric has progressed well without me, and our ecoLINK is nearing completion. Our new building is complete and serving us well.

By the time you read this Thanksgiving 2022 will be in the past. I trust you were able to say thanks to many of the people who have contributed to your happiness and wellbeing.

One man has been on my mind, worthy of applause for his part in many endeavors to make a better life for many of us. Tom Gayland Duncan was instrumental in bringing many of the city benefits to country folks. He actively participated in getting telephone service and water to our rural people. While working as the Okmulgee Conservation Officer he was responsible for getting rural trash pickup. He later served on the Soil Conservation Board. As County Commissioner he improved drainage

on our country roads and made many intersections safer by improving the visibility at neglected intersections. He served the Okmulgee County Cattlemen's Association as director, vice president and president, and he is our in-house entertainer on our tours. Tom served our country in World War II in the Navy.

Tom's family has positively influenced scores of students. His wife was teacher and superintendent at Liberty Morris for many years. His 2 daughters and son taught school for decades. His brother Ray faithfully cared for my sons as their early bus driver. The road on the north end of Haskell is named Duncan Road in honor of his family.

“Together we can help our members achieve a higher quality of life with dependable, reasonable cost of electric power as well as our most recent venture of high-speed internet to the home of each member that has requested it.”

- LOWELL HOBBS

These are the kinds of things others bring into our lives that often go unnoticed and unappreciated. I thought it would be fitting to take this opportunity to say “Thanks, Tom, for the part you and your family have had in making our lives better. Also, thanks for being my friend.”

Lowell Hobbs represents ECE District 2. To reach him, please call his cellphone at 918-695-5289.

The holiday season can be difficult.

The Cooperative spirit is about members helping members when times get hard.

By donating to Give A Watt, you can help a fellow co-op member who is struggling to pay their electric bill. Recipients and donors remain anonymous.

To participate please:

1. Drop your donation at the ECE drive-thru window or night drop at 2001 S. Wood Drive in Okmulgee.
2. Mail your donation to
East Central Electric
Attn: Give A Watt
PO Box 1178
Okmulgee, OK 74447-1178

If donating by check, please make your check payable to East Central Electric and write Give A Watt in the memo area.





Winter Weather

Continued from Cover

state taxes and is allocated by the state government to local schools.

You may also see any local government taxes, such as a city franchise tax, that East Central is required to collect on your electric bill and distribute to your local government.

More information about the details of your electric bill and East Central's rates and pricing structure can be found on our website under, "My Account."

3. What can I do to lower my electric bill?

The most impactful way to lower your electric bill during the winter is to manage your thermostat settings. For every one degree increase in the heating set-point of your home, there is a 3 to 5 percent increase in energy use.

But there are other easy and affordable changes you can make that will have a significant impact on your electric bill.

Regularly changing your HVAC air filter; finding and sealing air leaks in walls, floors, and ceilings; and having your duct work checked for leaks; can all be done on a budget to keep your home toasty.

Setting your water heater thermostat no higher than 120°F keeps your water hot without making your machine work too hard.

And it's worth noting that small electric space heaters may seem like an affordable alternative when heating your home, but they can cost more than \$100 per month to operate. Limiting their use except for temporary spot heating when you are awake and in the room can save you money and prevent potential fire hazards.

4. How can I get help making ends meet this winter?

The Cooperative spirit is about members helping members when times get hard. If you find yourself struggling to pay your electric bill by the due date, give East Central Electric Cooperative a call for judgment-free support. Our helpful service representatives will discuss various payment arrangements and assistance programs that are available to you.

East Central Electric Cooperative operates on four billing cycles throughout the month. If you are on a billing cycle that is routinely due right before your paycheck comes in, we can quickly and easily change your due date at no cost to you to one of four available due dates. This can only be done once per year.

East Central Electric Cooperative follows the guidelines set by the Oklahoma Corporation Commission with regard to our deferred payment plan. We can defer a large bill over the course of three months. The member pays one-third of the deferred bill plus the balance that is due during each of the three months until the deferred bill is paid in full.

East Central serves several members who qualify for the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). You can check your eligibility for LIHEAP on the Oklahoma Department of Human Services website.

During the holiday season, East Central Electric Cooperative hosts the Give-A-Watt program. East Central members who are in a position to lend a hand voluntarily donate to the electric accounts of anonymous members who are going through rough times. If you would like to be considered as a recipient of Give-A-Watt, contact the Cooperative.

While Concern for Community is one of our driving principles, many of our members need assistance services we are not equipped to provide. We partner with assistance organizations throughout our 9-county service area to help members get connected to the help they need. For a list of assistance organizations in our service territory, you can contact the cooperative or visit our website at www.ecoec.com/assistance-programs.





Operation Roundup funds support local charitable organizations, civic groups, youth programs, community services, and needy families. For more information on this voluntary bill roundup program, please visit us online at www.ecoec.com.

APPLICATIONS REVIEWED
1,328

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED
\$304,500

APPLICATIONS GRANTED
926

AVERAGE MEMBER CONTRIBUTION
48¢



Hodge Podge Soup

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. hamburger meat
- 2 cans Ranch Style chili beans
- 3 cans minestrone soup
- 1 can Rotel
- 1 can tomatoes and green chilies
- 1 medium onion

DIRECTIONS

Brown hamburger and onion. Drain. Mix all ingredients and cook in a crock pot or on top of a stove until hot. For tastiest results, serve with cornbread.

SOURCE: ECE 80TH ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOK

Submit your recipes for the 85th anniversary cookbook to kharrison@ecoec.com.



ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Severe winter storms and auto accidents can bring down power lines. If your vehicle comes into contact with a power line, staying in your vehicle is usually the safest place to be. If your vehicle is on fire, make a clean jump from your vehicle and hop away with your feet together as far as you can.

SOURCE: SAFELECTRICITY.ORG



East Central ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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Monday-Friday, 8 am - 4:30 pm.

Power Outage Hot-line
(918) 756-0833

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Pay online using SmartHub.

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Pay with cash or credit/debit card at participating Moneygram or Pay Site locations. Convenience fee associated with payments.

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Pay via automatic draft of your checking or savings account. Sign up online or download the ebill form at www.ecoec.com, or set up online payments through your bank. No convenience fee.