



Harrison Rural Electrification Association, Inc.

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partners



www.harrisonrea.com

Wholesale power cost on the rise

An adjustment to HREA's rates has become necessary due to the fundamental price it costs your Co-op to purchase power for our members.

As a not-for-profit business, Harrison Rural Electrification sets its pricing as close to "at cost" as possible, while still maintaining a reasonable margin for unexpected emergencies. Of course, any margins remaining at year-end are allocated to the members' capital credits accounts and then are refunded on a delayed basis. A member in good standing who has been with the Co-op for several years can accumulate \$2,000 to \$3,000, depending on that member's yearly electric use. Because of smaller margins during the past few years, most

capital credits have been retired only to estates. We currently budget \$20,000 a year for this specific type of retirement.

There are two main components of your electric bill: distribution and energy. The distribution cost includes, but is not limited to, the cost of building, operating and maintaining all the hardware needed to deliver electricity to each member. This hardware list includes substations, transformers, transfer switches, line reclosers, lightning arresters, poles, wire, meters and numerous other types of equipment.

Also included in the "cost of building" is operating and maintaining the Co-op's office, warehouse and garage.

In addition, there is the cost of purchasing and maintaining trucks, tools, material, supplies, fuel, radios, telephones and computers. Other costs include salaries and benefits for the employees, as well as many other miscellaneous expenses that are incurred when operating a business.

The energy charge is the component that has caused the need for the planned rate adjustment. As many of you are aware, HREA does not currently own or generate electricity. Consequently, we have to search the marketplace for energy providers that can provide us with a reli-

Manager's Corner

By
Gary Jackson,
CEO/General
Manager



able energy source at a reasonable cost. We've sent out more than 15 requests for bids (RFP) from Florida to Michigan during the last two years searching for the most cost-effective way of serving our members. Unfortunately, we're living during a time when the cost of the fuels used to generate electricity is at an all-time high!

While practically everyone in the United States is seeing major increases in their utility bills, we continue to fall in about the mid-range compared to other states. Our current contract will be in effect for four years, but our members will see the biggest portion of the rate adjustment in the first year of the contract. Based on an average consumption of 788 kilowatt-hours, a member will see an increase of about \$21 a month on their electric bill.

As was reported at the 2008 Annual Meeting, HREA was able to get an amendment passed through the West Virginia State Legislature that exempted us

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Chain saw safety tips

Operating a chain saw is inherently hazardous. Potential injuries can be minimized by using proper personal protective equipment and safe operating procedures.

Before starting a chain saw:

- Check controls, chain tension and all bolts and handles to ensure that they are functioning properly, and that they are adjusted according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Make sure that the chain always is sharp and the lubrication reservoir is full.
- Start the saw on the ground or on another firm support. Drop starting is never allowed.
- Start the saw at least 10 feet from the fueling area, with the chain's brake engaged.

Fueling a chain saw:

- Use approved containers for transporting fuel to the saw.
- Dispense fuel at least 10 feet away from any sources of ignition when performing construction activities. No smoking during fueling.
- Use a funnel or a flexible hose when pouring fuel into the saw.
- Never attempt to fuel a running or HOT saw.

Chain saw safety:

- Clear away dirt, debris, small tree limbs and rocks from the saw's chain path. Look for nails, spikes or other metal in the tree before cutting.
- Shut off the saw or engage its chain brake when carrying the saw.
- Keep your hands on the saw's handles, and maintain secure footing while sawing.

Operating the saw.

- Proper personal protective equipment must be worn when operating the saw, which includes hand, foot, leg, eye, face, hearing and head protection.
- Do not wear loose-fitting clothing.
- Be careful that the trunk or tree limbs will not bind against the saw.
- Watch for branches under tension, they may spring out when cut.
- Gasoline-powered chain saws must be equipped with a protective device that minimizes chain saw kick-back.
- Be cautious of saw kick-back. To avoid kick-back, do not saw with the tip. If equipped, keep tip guard in place.
- Identify your retreat path before cutting a tree.

Source: OSHA Quick Card

Back-to-school shopping

You've made it through most of the summer without going crazy with your spending, but it's time to get the kids ready to return to school, and that can be a big expense for a family with young children.

It's important to be an informed shopper.

One of the first things to do is take an inventory of what you already have. When determining what still is needed, prioritize the list so less-important items can be dropped if the budget is exceeded.

Next you'll want to compare prices. The Internet is an easy way to do this, as are newspaper ads and catalogs. Don't forget to factor in time and travel when going after a "deal."

When looking at back-to-school clothes, keep in mind that active kids can be rough on what they wear. Check for strong buttonholes, secure buttons, reinforced stitching, firmly woven or knitted fabric,

and basic styles. An extra dollar or two spent on more durable clothing will pay for itself — the outfit simply will last longer.

Kids tend to like clothes they can manage themselves, so look for items with front openings, flat buttons, easy-to-reach pockets, elastic waistbands and large necklines. The easier it is for a child to dress themselves in the morning, the less stress for the parent.

Shopping with your children also can be a time to teach valuable lessons in spending habits. Decide on a budget with them and let them do some comparison shopping. When they make the decisions on how to spend their budget, they'll learn about smart shopping.

When you head out to do the shopping, take only the cash you've budgeted and leave the credit cards at home.

With some simple planning, back-to-school shopping can be easy and won't be a budget-buster.

Source: Consumer Credit Counseling Service



Home cooling tips:

Do attic fans really help?

by CHRIS DORSI

Many homes have large electric attic fans to help with summertime cooling. By exhausting hot attic air, they reduce the amount of heat that is transmitted down through the ceiling into your home. If you use air conditioning, this will tend to reduce the length of time that your air conditioner runs, and so reduce its operating cost. But in many houses two other simple measures — insulation and ventilation — are more effective and cheaper in the long run than attic fans.

Attic insulation still is one of the best ways to keep your home comfortable in both summer and winter. A thick blanket of attic insulation — 16 to 20 inches — will effectively stop attic heat from moving down into your home. In winter, attic insulation works by slowing heat flow out of your home and up into your attic.

Attic ventilation takes advantage of simple pas-

sive attic vents to remove heat from your attic in summer, as well as removing moisture in winter. Attic vents should be distributed around your attic so heat or moisture don't accumulate in the corners, and they should be split with some high and some low in the attic to encourage natural circulation. If installed properly, they will remove almost as much heat from your attic as a powered fan.

Check your attic insulation and ventilation, or have a contractor do so, and add more if needed. These simple measures will last as long as your home and will improve your comfort year round. They'll also reduce the cost of running an air conditioner or attic fan. Best of all, these two energy-savers don't use a bit of electricity and they are perfectly quiet.

Chris Dorsi is co-author of *Residential Energy — Cost Savings and Comfort for Existing Buildings*. www.srmi.biz

Be aware of conditions in summer's heat

When the body is unable to cool itself by sweating, several heat-induced illnesses such as heat stress or heat exhaustion and the more severe heat stroke can occur, and can result in death.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration offers this look at heat-related illness:

Factors leading to heat stress

High temperature and humidity; direct sun or heat; limited air movement; physical exertion; poor physical condition; some medicines; and inadequate tolerance for hot workplaces.

2008 rate adjustment

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from paying property taxes. This amounts to a yearly savings of \$200,000. Consequently, these funds helped to offset some of the increased costs mentioned above.

While never-ending price increases are occurring daily, electricity still remains a bargain. Moreover, there are things that each of us can do to decrease our electric use, like replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs. Also, turn off lights when not in use; and finally, when replacing appliances, consider buying products that have the highest energy-saving efficiencies.

Symptoms of heat exhaustion

Headaches, dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting.

Weakness and moist skin.

Mood changes such as irritability or confusion.

Upset stomach or vomiting.

Symptoms of heat stroke

Dry, hot skin with no sweating.

Mental confusion or losing consciousness.

Seizures or convulsions.

Preventing heat stress

Know signs/symptoms of heat-related illnesses; monitor yourself and co-workers.

Block out direct sun or other heat sources.

Use cooling fans/air conditioning; rest regularly.

Drink lots of water; about 1 cup every 15 minutes.

Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothes.

Avoid alcohol, caffeinated drinks or heavy meals.

What to do for heat-related illness

Call 911 (or local emergency number) at once.

While waiting for help to arrive:

Move the person affected to a cool, shaded area.

Loosen or remove heavy clothing.

Provide cool drinking water.

Fan and mist the person with water.

Source: www.osha.gov

Don't let a storm catch you unprepared

Harrison Rural Electrification Association does everything it can to keep the electricity flowing and your lights on. Sometimes, though, circumstances are beyond our control.

If a major storm comes through the area, it's wise to have a storm kit prepared to help you cope with the inconvenience while our linemen work to restore your service.

Winter outages tend to cause a little more concern to members, and many already have assembled storm kits to deal with them. If you are one of those people, then you're ready to deal with a summer storm.

If not, here are some suggestions of what you should have ready in case of an emergency:

A battery-powered radio, fresh batteries, a flash-

light, candles, matches, a wind-up clock, bottled water and paper plates and plastic utensils.

Keep a stock of canned food in your cupboard, along with a manual can opener. Consider buying a camp stove and fuel that you can use (outdoors only, please) if you can't cook on your electric stove.

Tape HREA's outage report phone number on your refrigerator so it will be handy if you must report an outage: 304-624-6365.

Teach children to stay away from fallen or sagging power lines, which could be energized and dangerous, even if the power is out.

To make your emergency kit a year-round survival tool, pile a few extra blankets and sweaters together so you can find them easily if the heat goes off.

Remember the kids

If a natural disaster should force you from your home and you have youngsters, don't forget them as you prepare.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency suggests you assemble a Kid's Activity Survival Kit so you will have things to do and share with other kids.

Some suggested items for your Activity Survival Kit:

- A few favorite books;
- Crayons, pencils or marking pens and plenty of paper;
- Scissors and glue;
- Two favorite toys;
- One or two board games;
- A deck of cards;

- A puzzle (one with lots of pieces is good — it takes a long time to do!)
- Small people figures and play vehicles that you can use to play out what is happening during your disaster — such as an ambulance, fire truck, helicopter, dump truck, police car, small boats;
- Favorite stuffed animal or puppet;
- Favorite blanket or pillow;
- Pictures of the family and pet;
- A "keep safe" box with a few treasures that make you feel special.

These all can be stored in a backpack or duffel bag. Just make sure it can easily be carried.

Help your child ready for the return to school

The lazy days of summer are ready to end for students, and it will be back to the routine of heading off to school.

As the new school year approaches, you can help your child get ready with a few simple steps:

About a week before school starts, have them begin a school schedule for going to bed and getting up in the morning. This will be especially helpful for those kids who are up late or who've been sleeping-in most of the summer.

Buy your school supplies early. Many schools post a supply list on their Web site or one can be obtained at the school office.

If a student is headed to a new school, plan on visiting there before the first day. With a kindergartener, it may help to take them through

their new morning routine, including going to the school, a few days before school actually begins. Many times, the principal will allow kindergarteners a chance to come in and see their new classroom before school begins.

For those heading to a new middle or high school, making a visit a few days ahead can be beneficial.

These buildings often are larger and more spread out than lower schools, and taking some time to figure out how to get around the complex can alleviate confusion on the first day.

Also, familiarize yourself with your child's school's Web site. These often provide valuable information, not only before school begins, but throughout the year.

