SPOON RIVER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

NEWS

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President's Report

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President/CEO

Factors that impact electricity prices

I was recently asked what impacts electricity prices during a discussion about how the daily cost of living seems to have increased across the board.

Just as inflation has impacted everything from the price of gasoline to the price of eggs, costs for the fuels required to produce electricity have also risen. This is a timely topic, so I wanted to help explain some of the factors that impact electricity prices (and energy bills) in this month's issue of Illinois Country Living. While there is no short answer, there are a few key elements that impact electricity prices and rates. Some of these factors Spoon River Electric can manage, some of them you can impact, and other factors are beyond our control. Let me break it down.

There are three primary parts to your monthly electric bill: a line access charge, a delivery charge/kWh charge and a Wholesale Power Adjustment. To understand your total energy costs and what impacts your bill, let's unpack one piece at a time.

The first is a fixed monthly line access charge, which covers the costs associated with providing electricity to your home. This includes equipment, materials, labor and operating costs necessary to serve each meter in Spoon River Electric's service territory, regardless of the amount of energy used. In order to ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local system, including power lines, substations and other necessary equipment. Like many other businesses, we've experienced supply chain issues and steep cost increases for some of our basic equipment. For example, the cost for a distribution transformer (which looks like a long metal can at the top of a power pole) went from $782 in 2021 to $1,510 this year, and wait times to receive this essential equipment are up to 20 weeks. Because we are a not-for-profit cooperative, some of these expenses must be passed on to our members.

Another component of your monthly bill is the delivery charge/kWh charge, which covers how much energy you consume. You've likely noticed the amount of energy you use can vary from month to month and is typically impacted by extreme temperatures. When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling and heating equipment run longer, which increases your home energy use. Regardless, energy consumption is an area that you have some control over, and you can lower your monthly bill by actively reducing energy use. Your thermostat is a great place to start, so be sure to keep it close to 78 degrees during summer months.

The last component of your bill is the Wholesale Power Adjustment, which varies based on kilowatt usage for all co-op members. Wholesale Power Adjustment varies based on fuel type and availability of electricity. The adjustment covers fuel cost fluctuations without having to continually restructure electricity rates.

I hope this information sheds light on some of the factors that impact electricity prices. While we can't control the weather or the rising costs of fuels, please know Spoon River Electric is doing everything possible to keep internal costs down.

We're here to help you, too. Contact us if you have questions about your energy bill.

Spoon River Electric Cooperative

930 South Fifth Ave, PO Box 340,
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8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
309-647-2700 • www.srecoop.org

Spoon River Electric Cooperative – By the Numbers

Miles of line energized: 1,272

Number of members served: 5,022

Number of power poles in territory: 29,361

SPOT THE BIGGEST ENERGY USER

We use electricity every day, but we rarely think about the appliances and electronics that consume the most energy. Can you spot the biggest energy users?

Review each grouping below, then circle the one that you think consumes the most energy.
Check your work in the answer key.

Energy Explorers

1.
A) Heating and Cooling Unit
B) Clothes Washer
C) Refrigerator

2.
A) Refrigerator
B) Water Heater
C) Laptop Computer

3.
A) Desktop Computer
B) Electric Oven
C) TV

4.
A) LED Lights
B) TV
C) Clothes Dryer

Answer key: 1. A 2. B 3. B 4. C

Save Energy!
- Wash clothing in cold water and air-dry when possible.
- Only run full loads in the dishwasher.
- Turn off lights when you leave a room.
- Take short showers instead of baths.
- Unplug electronic devices when not in use.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know ceiling fans can make a room feel 4 degrees cooler? To save energy through ceiling fan use, remember to raise your thermostat a few degrees while fans are turned on. Ceiling fans can help improve comfort year-round. In the summer, operate ceiling fans in a counterclockwise direction. Reverse the direction to clockwise during winter months and set fans on a low speed so warm air can circulate from the ceiling to the lower levels of the room.

Remember, ceiling fans cool people, not spaces. Be sure to turn them off when you leave the room.

Source: energy.gov

Farmers:

Getting proper rest can make a huge difference in staying safe during harvest

For many farmers, fall requires long days in the field and little rest. The pressure to harvest as much as possible, combined with fatigue and looming deadlines, increases the risk of injury. In fact, most injuries occur during the spring and fall when stress and fatigue are common among farmers.

The safety and health of workers, including making time for sleep, should be a priority when considering a farm's productivity, according to Josie Rudolphi, University of Illinois Extension associate research scientist. "Rushing and cutting corners can lead to injury, which no one has time for, especially during the harvest," Rudolphi says.

Rudolphi grew up on a farm and understands the pressures of harvest season. She says that getting proper rest can make a huge difference in staying safe, but during the time crunch of harvest season, farmers sacrifice sleep to work late into the night.

"Sleep deficiency has been associated with increased injury, reduced reaction time and reduced concentration, all of which could impact health and safety, as well as productivity," Rudolphi says.

The demands of harvest are stressful, and a lack of sleep can intensify that and lead to errors in the fields or even on the roads.

To improve sleep, Rudolphi advises farmers to go to bed and wake up at regular times when possible. They can use rainy days to catch up on sleep.

Other sleep health tips include:

- Create a bedroom environment that encourages sleep; keep it quiet, dark and cool.
- Limit electronic device use.
- Avoid large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bedtime.

In addition to improving sleep, managing stress is an important component to injury prevention, health and safety, according to Rudolphi. "By using the 'Four A Method' of avoid (planning ahead), adapt (changing expectations), alter (changing the situation when you can) and accept (acknowledging that a situation is what it is), farmers can successfully manage the stress of long hours and unpredictability," she adds.

For information about safety around electricity, including farm and ranch safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Electricity and heat, both silent killers

It is often said that electricity is a silent killer. This is true, because you cannot see, hear or smell electricity.

Intense summertime heat is also a silent killer. Unlike hurricanes, floods and tornadoes, the dangers of extreme weather strike without much notice. An average of 702 heat-related deaths occur each year in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Heat-related illnesses

Hot weather is associated with an increase in heat-related illnesses, including cardiovascular and respiratory complications, renal failure, electrolyte imbalance, kidney stones, negative impact on fetal health and preterm birth, according to the CDC. Death rates increase during and after heat waves, which is why the number of deaths is attributed to heat-related illnesses.

Heat-related deaths result from:

- Heat stroke and related conditions.
- Cardiovascular disease.
- Respiratory disease.
- Cerebrovascular disease.

Deaths from heat events

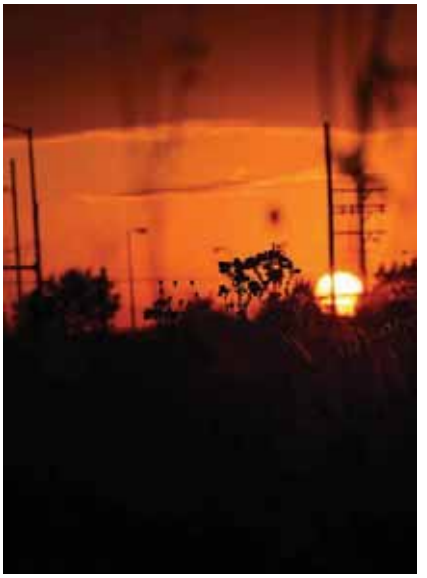
The National Weather Service (NWS) reports that 105 fatalities per year are directly related to extreme heat (based on a 10-year average). Both the NWS and the CDC agree that extreme summer heat events are increasing in the U.S.

Anyone can be at risk of the health effects of heat, but some are more vulnerable, according to the CDC. Those more vulnerable include:

- Pregnant women.
- People with heart or lung conditions.
- Young children.
- The elderly.
- Athletes.
- Outdoor workers.

Heat stroke

Heat stroke is the most serious



heat-related illness, as it restricts the body's ability to cool itself. Body temperature can reach 106 degrees or higher within 10 to 15 minutes, according to the CDC.

Heat stroke can cause permanent disability or death if emergency treatment is not initiated. Symptoms of heat stroke include confusion, altered mental status, slurred speech, hot/dry skin or profuse sweating, seizures, very high body temperature and coma.

If someone is experiencing heat stroke, act quickly to treat the person.

- Call 911.
- Stay with the person until help arrives.
- Move the person to a shaded, cool area.
- Remove outer clothing.
- Cool the person with water.
  - Place cold cloths on the skin.
  - Soak clothing in cool water.
  - Concentrate on cooling the head, neck, armpits and groin.
- Circulate air around the person.

Heat exhaustion

This type of heat-related illness is the body's response to an excessive loss of water and salt, usually due to excessive sweating. Heat exhaustion is most likely to affect the elderly, people with high blood pressure and those who work outdoors.

Symptoms include headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability, thirst, heavy sweating, elevated body temperature and decreased urine output.

If someone is displaying symptoms of heat exhaustion, do the following:

- Take the person to a clinic or emergency room.
- Call 911 if medical care is unavailable.
- Stay with the person until he or she is evaluated.
- Remove person from the heat.
- Give person liquids to drink.
- Remove unnecessary clothing, including shoes and socks.
- Use cold compresses to cool the person's body.
- If compresses are not available, splash cold water on the head, face and neck.

Other heat-related illnesses

Other illnesses related to heat stress include rhabdomyolysis, heat syncope (fainting or dizziness), heat cramps and heat rash. Rhabdomyolysis is a medical condition associated with heat stress and prolonged physical exertion. The condition causes the rapid breakdown, rupture and death of muscle. People who have this condition and experience symptoms (muscle cramps, weakness, dark urine) should seek immediate care at the nearest medical facility.

Severity scale

Heat stroke is the most serious, followed by heat exhaustion and heat syncope (both severe), and then heat cramps and heat rash (less severe).

If you suspect someone is experiencing heat stroke, act right away by calling 911. Heat exhaustion also requires medical evaluation and treatment. In both cases, cool the body as quickly as possible.