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## Across The President's Desk

## How extreme winter weather impacts reliability

When outdoor temperatures drop, our electricity use increases. That's because we're doing more activities inside, and our heating systems are running longer and more often to counteract colder outdoor temperatures. Factor in that we all tend to use electricity at the same times — in the morning and early evenings — and that equals a lot of strain on our electric grid.

At Monroe County Electric Cooperative, we work closely with our local generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative in resource and infrastructure planning to ensure you have the power you need whenever you flip a switch, but the electric grid is much larger than your local co-op and G&T.

In winter months, when even more electricity is being used simultaneously across the country, it is possible for electricity demand to exceed supply, especially if an unexpected event like a sudden snow or ice storm or equipment malfunction occurs. If this happens, which is rare, the grid operator for our region of the country may call for rolling power outages to relieve pressure on the grid, and MCEC will inform you about the situation.

MCEC and our G&T take proactive steps to create a resilient portion of the grid and ensure electric reliability in extreme weather, including regular system maintenance, grid modernization efforts and disaster response planning, but it takes everyone to keep the grid reliable.

To help keep the heat on for you, your family and your neighbors, here are a few things you can do to relieve

pressure on the grid (and save a little money along the way):

- Select the lowest comfortable thermostat setting and turn it down several degrees whenever possible. Your heating system must run longer to make up the difference between the thermostat temp and the outdoor temp.
  - **Pro tip:** Seal air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weather stripping. Air leaks and drafts force your heating system to work harder than necessary.
- Stagger your use of major appliances, such as dishwashers, ovens and dryers.
  - **Pro tip:** Start the dishwasher before you go to bed and use smaller countertop appliances like slow cookers and air fryers to save energy.
- Ensure that your heating system is optimized for efficiency with regular maintenance and proper insulation.
  - **Pro tip:** Make sure your furnace filter isn't clogged and dirty. Replace it as needed.
- When possible, use cold water to reduce water heating costs.
  - **Pro tip:** Setting your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees can help you save energy and reduce mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.
- Unplug devices when not in use to eliminate unnecessary energy use. Even when turned

off, electronics in standby mode consume energy.

- **Pro tip:** Plug devices into a power strip so you can turn them all off at once with the push of a button.

As we face the challenges posed by winter weather, understanding its impact on energy demand is crucial for maintaining a reliable power supply. By adopting energy conservation practices during periods of extreme cold, not only can you save money on your electric bills, you can also contribute to the resilience of the power grid, keeping your local community warm and connected.

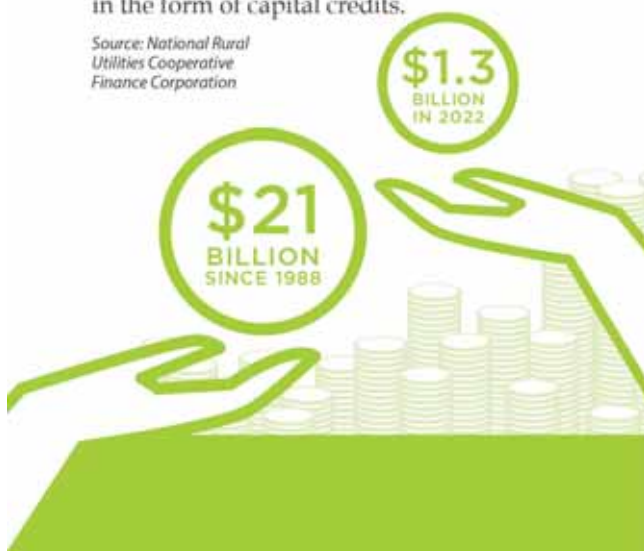


## Did You Know?

Electric cooperatives have retired \$21 billion to members since 1988 – \$1.3 billion in 2022 alone.

Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues (called margins) are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.

*Source: National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation*



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you recently made or plan to make energy efficiency upgrades to your home, you may be eligible for federal tax credits. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 empowers homeowners to save up to \$3,000 annually to lower the cost of efficiency upgrades by up to 30%. A few upgrades covered through the IRA include new exterior doors, windows, insulation, heating/cooling equipment and other major appliances. If you have completed or are considering an efficiency upgrade, visit [www.energystar.gov/federal-tax-credits](http://www.energystar.gov/federal-tax-credits) to learn if you qualify for tax credits.

*Source: energystar.gov*



### BEST BETS FOR Winter Savings

Energy consumption spikes during winter months as we spend more time indoors and heating systems work overtime. You can help reduce demand and strain on the electric grid by conserving during peak energy times. Reducing energy use will also help lower your energy bills.

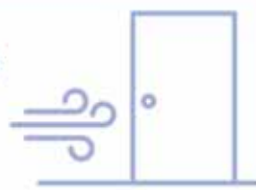
#### UNPLUG WHEN POSSIBLE



Turn off unnecessary lights and electronics when you aren't using them.

#### ELIMINATE DRAFTS AND AIR LEAKS

Seal air leaks and drafts around windows and exterior doors.



#### MAINTAIN HEATING EQUIPMENT

Maintain your heating system by replacing dirty, clogged filters and scheduling an annual inspection for necessary maintenance.

#### USE APPLIANCES WHEN ENERGY DEMAND IS LOWER

Run large appliances like clothes washers, dryers and dishwashers early in the morning or before you go to bed.



#### LOWER THE THERMOSTAT

Home heating accounts for a large portion of energy consumption. Adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting (68 degrees or lower).





## National First Responders Day

National First Responders Day, observed annually on Oct. 28, is an excellent time to recognize and honor the vital role of first responders. They make it their business to take immediate action when disaster strikes.

First responders play a crucial role in protecting public safety and responding to emergencies. These dedicated professionals include firefighters, police officers, emergency medical technicians and paramedics. They face numerous challenges and make significant sacrifices to safeguard our communities.

It's important to note that utility workers, including those in the electricity sector, are also considered first responders. In 2003, President George

W. Bush officially recognized public works professionals as first responders, highlighting the critical role utility workers play in emergency response and recovery efforts.

### **Utilities and first responders — an important partnership**

Utility companies and traditional first responders often work hand in hand during emergencies. When natural disasters strike or accidents occur, utility workers are frequently among the first on the scene, working alongside firefighters, police and medical personnel to ensure public safety and restore essential services.

When traffic accidents, high winds, ice storms and other events involve

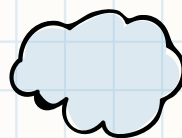
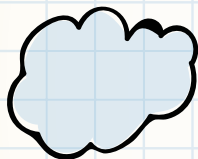
downed power lines or power outages, they can cause both visible and hidden hazards that can put everyone at risk. It's important for utility workers and other first responders to work together to minimize risk.

First responders have a critical role in keeping communities safe. National First Responders Day serves as a reminder of the importance of collaboration, preparedness and mutual support in times of crisis.

To all who selflessly serve as first responders to keep us safe — we share our gratitude on National First Responders Day and every other day of the year.

Learn more at [SafeElectricity.org](https://SafeElectricity.org).

MCEC line outages August 2024	Date	Duration	# Out	Map Location	Cause Desc	Substation
	08/05/24	3:10	473	New Athens Northwest	Other, Faulty Equipment	New Athens
	08/13/24	1:26	6	Sugar Loaf Hill Rd	Other, Deterioration	E. Carondelet
	08/13/24	0:15	151	Gall Rd/Cedar Ridge	Vehicles or Machinery	N. Waterloo
	08/15/24	1:02	9	Kropp Rd	Lightning	Millstadt
	08/15/24	1:30	71	Cedar Ridge	Lightning	N. Waterloo
	08/15/24	1:41	13	Mullins Rd	Lightning	E. Carondelet
	08/16/24	1:38	4	Chalfin Bridge	Lightning	Fults
	08/28/24	1:07	2	Triple Lakes Rd/ Wagner Rd	Trees, Other	Millstadt
	08/28/24	1:00	5	IL Rt 159	Unknown	New Athens
	08/30/24	0:56	3	Ahne Rd	Lightning	Waterloo



# CLASSROOM GRANTS



Enter our Classroom Empowerment Grant Program and your submission could win a \$500 grant for classroom and education projects!

Classroom Empowerment Grants totaling \$7,500 are being funded by Monroe County Electric Cooperative, Inc. for the 2024-2025 school year. For more information about the grant program, go to our website at [mcec.org](http://mcec.org). You can also contact Julie Rohr at [jrohr@mcec.org](mailto:jrohr@mcec.org).

**Grant applications will need to include the following information:**

- A description of the project and what it will accomplish
- The estimated cost of the project
- An explanation of why outside funds are necessary to complete the project

- Whether other funding options have been pursued, and if so, how
- When project will be completed
- The number of people affected by the project
- If the project's goals are measurable, and how
- How the project ties in Touchstone Energy's four core values of Integrity, Accountability, Innovation, and Commitment to Community

**Photos and supporting data are required. Grant applications must be received at Monroe County Electric Cooperative by November 8 2024. Entries will be evaluated by an impartial panel of judges. Awards will be announced mid-December.**



**APPLY  
ONLINE!**



**SCAN ME**