

Northwestern Electric News

Vol. 68 Number 4

Your Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative 

February 2017

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NWEC announces rate adjustment for 2017 *Increase takes effect with bill due Apr. 10*

Beginning with the February-March billing cycle, Northwestern Electric Cooperative will implement an average rate increase of 2.93 percent (actual increase will vary depending on size and usage). Members will see the new rate reflected on their bills due Apr. 10.

As consumers, the term “rate increase” is not something we like to hear. However, implementing a modest rate increase is sometimes necessary for the Cooperative to remain financially stable for the foreseeable future.

As a responsibly run cooperative, we consider the task of financial management to be one of the most important things we do here. Just like you and your family, NWEC must

pay its bills and be accountable to our lenders. In order to meet our financial obligations while continuing to serve you effectively, we must ensure that we charge our members no more, and no less, than what is necessary to run your electric co-op.

With this important goal in mind, we recently completed a cost-of-service study using an outside consultant, C.H. Guernsey, to examine whether our rates cover our actual cost of service. After reviewing the results prepared by the independent consulting group located in Oklahoma City, we found it necessary to adjust our pricing structure to maintain the quality, reliability and integrity of the services we provide. Consistent with this study, the NWEC Board of Directors voted unanimously to

increase our rates.

This was not an easy decision to make and NWEC employees, staff and trustees share your concerns over rising energy costs. Over half of our employees and 100 percent of our board are rate-paying members also. We understand times are difficult and we will do our best to help minimize the impact of a rate increase by offering different ways you can conserve energy and manage your electric bill.

If you have any questions regarding the rate increase, we encourage you to call us at 580.256.7425 or 800.375.7423. We are here to help you with your concerns. Watch for more information about the rate adjustment in future editions of the *NWEC News*.

Why you should attend your district meeting

It's that time of year again—district meeting time! On behalf of Northwestern Electric, we'd like to personally invite the members residing in districts seven, eight and nine to join us at their district meetings. We look forward to gathering with you to catch up, hear what you have to say and enjoy some good food and fellowship.

The meetings are not only a chance to visit with members of our co-op community—it's also a great opportunity to learn about programs offered by Northwestern Electric and get to know your co-op staff. Our district meetings makes it possible for us to gather feedback from you by providing a forum where you can let us know how we can better serve you and your family.

At the meetings, you will have the opportunity to exercise one of the greatest benefits of being a member of an electric co-op by voting for your board of directors representative.

Having a voice in who makes the major decisions that directly affect your life and your family is a right we all share as Americans. We all vote for our state and federal Congressional representatives, but not every American has the right to vote for those who will represent community interests within their electric utility. You have that right, so why not exercise it?

We remain dedicated to providing you with safe, reliable and affordable electric service, but we encourage you to take part in helping us improve how we deliver that service. So make

it a point to join us at your district meeting. We promise we will make it worth your while!

Important dates

District 7 Meeting

Thursday, Feb. 9, 2017
Meal at 6 p.m. - Meeting at 6:30 p.m.
Buffalo First Baptist Church

District 8 Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2017
Meal at 6 p.m. - Meeting at 6:30 p.m.
Buffalo High School

District 9 Meeting

Monday, Feb. 20, 2017
Meal at 6 p.m. - Meeting at 6:30 p.m.
Gate Community Center

NORTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Operating In Beaver, Dewey, Ellis, Harper, Major, Woods and Woodward Counties in Oklahoma

TYSON LITTAU
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Kenny Knowles, Pres. Arnett
Ray Smith, Vice-Pres. Taloga
John Bruce, Jr., Sec.-Treas. Sharon
Marvin Wilkinson Buffalo
Clair Craighead Woodward
Wayne Hall Mooreland
Duane Henderson Mooreland
Lee Huckaby Selman
Gilbert Perkins Gate

Jonna Hensley Editor
John Meinders Attorney

**IN CASE OF TROUBLE CALL:
24 HOUR EMERGENCY
1-877-9NOPOWER (877.966.7693)**

**OFFICE HOURS
8 AM TO 4:30 PM
MONDAY-FRIDAY**

**ADDRESS
P.O. BOX 2707
WOODWARD, OK 73802
2925 WILLIAMS AVENUE
WOODWARD, OK 73801**

NOTICE

A copy of NWECC Bylaws will be made available for any member upon request.

**Web page: www.nwecok.coop
E-mail: nwec@nwecok.coop**



“NWECC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”

Prepare heart-healthy crockpot meal for your Valentine

February focuses on the heart with Valentines’ Day on the 14th and American Heart Month all month long.

Celebrate both by preparing a heart-healthy meal for your special someone—in a crockpot.

Since the company Rival introduced slow cookers in 1971, they have been celebrated as savers of both time and electricity. Plus, crockpot-prepared meals, because they are cooked at low temperatures for long periods, are nutritious, as the fresh meats and vegetables retain their natural juices.

Here are four reasons to dust off your crockpot this winter and use it to make soups, stews and entrees.

1. Although it takes all day for a crockpot to cook a meal, you don’t have to do anything except toss in the

ingredients. Once you prep the pot, you can walk away until the food is done. (16928001)

2. Electric slow cookers use less energy than a conventional oven. Cook in a crockpot in the winter to create hot, hearty meals. When it’s warm outside, use it instead of the stove or oven, and keep your kitchen cooler.

3. When you’re invited to a pot-luck supper, prepare your donation in the crockpot. Once the food is ready, leave it in the slow cooker, let it cool and bring the whole thing to the party.

4. You’ll eat fewer processed foods if you get used to cooking with a crockpot. That means you’ll eat less salt, fat and calories.

And don’t forget to check out this month’s recipe for healthy slow-cooker Tex-Mex sloppy joes.

What does five dollars get you?

Five dollars doesn’t seem to buy much anymore. But when you become a member of Northwest-ern Electric Cooperative, five dollars allows you access to several benefits.

When you first established electric service with NWECC, you filled out the membership application and paid a \$5.00 membership fee. This fee means you are provided reliable and safe power from a company that is dedicated to member service.

You also have the opportunity to elect your board representative at your district meeting every 3 years. You get a say on policy issues NWECC sup-ports or opposes. And you are always welcome to attend NWECC’s annual meeting each April where you can let your voice be heard.

The best part about being a member of NWECC—you are actually an owner, and that is the power of a \$5.00 co-op membership.

November 2016 Operating Report

	2015	2016
Revenue - Billing	2,295,810	2,535,551
Cost of Power	1,386,370	1,491,054
Miles of Lines	4,982	4,997
Members Connected	11,926	11,859
Density per Mile	2.4	2.4
Average Member KWH	1,915	2,164
Average Bill	193	214
KWH Purchased.....	24,841,702	26,335,172
KWH Sold.....	22,840,299	25,662,555
Income per Mile.....	463	509
Expense per Mile	502	505



Representatives from area fire departments received a \$1,000 donation each from Northwestern Electric during a banquet held in their honor. Accepting the checks on behalf of the departments in their communities are (back row) Jerry Hunter, Harmon; Rowdy Waite, Arnett; Troy DeWitt, Gate; Roger Robinson, Camargo; Sheldon Stahlman, Catesby; Grant Baker, Taloga; Michael Petty, Ft. Supply; Shane Sander, Seiling; and David Trimble, Vici; (second row) Mike McIlvain, Selman; Donny Yauk, Buffalo; Ted Bozarth, Laverne; Tom Marcum, Mooreland; C.J. Breon, May; Charlie Starbuck, Slapout; Leslie Feerer, Fargo; and Terry Shuman, Rosston; (front row) NWECE CEO Tyson Littau; Rep. Mike Sanders; Sen. Bryce Marlatt; Stanley Irving, Freedom; Tim Good, Gage; Sheri Nickel, Shattuck; Kevin, Mitchell, Mutual; and Steve Day, Woodward. The rural fire departments depend on donations, grants and fundraisers to purchase necessary equipment. Holding a banquet and giving a donation is Northwestern Electric's way of saying thank you in person and showing appreciation for the service the fire departments offer our members.

Hidden account number contest

Last month's number went unclaimed. They belonged to Kory Taylor and Howard Aitken.

For those of you who aren't familiar with the contest, this is how it works. We have hidden two account numbers somewhere in the articles in this newsletter. The numbers will always be enclosed in parentheses and will look similar to this example (XXXXXX).

If you recognize your account number, all you have to do is give us a call on or before the 8th of the current month and we'll give you a credit on your bill for the amount stated.

This month's numbers are worth \$50 each. Happy hunting!

Country cooking

Healthy Slow-Cooker Tex-Mex Sloppy Joes

1 can (16 oz) spicy chili beans in sauce, undrained
1 lb. extra-lean (at least 95%) ground beef
1 cup chopped green pepper
1 cup chopped red bell pepper
1 cup chopped onion

1 jalapeño chile, seeded, diced
1/4 cup ketchup
1 teaspoon chili powder
1/4 teaspoon pepper
2 teaspoons fresh lime juice
8 whole wheat burger buns

Spray 3 1/2- to 4-quart slow cooker with cooking spray; set aside. Pour chili beans into medium bowl. With potato masher or fork, mash about half of the beans; set aside.

In 12-inch skillet, cook beef, green and red bell peppers, onion and jalapeño chile over medium heat 8 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until beef is brown; drain.

Pour beef mixture into slow cooker. Add beans, ketchup, chili powder and pepper. Stir to thoroughly combine. Cover; cook on Low heat setting 2 1/2 to 3 hours or until heated through (165°F). Stir in lime juice.

Divide beef mixture among buns (about 1/2 cup each). Serve immediately. *Yield: 8 servings*

Top five energy users in your home

A starting point for savings

By Anne Prince

While most homeowners would like to be more energy efficient and save money, often it feels overwhelming because many people don't know where to start. How can the average family use less energy, lower their utility bill and still meet their daily energy needs? To help jumpstart your effort, it is useful to know what the top energy users are in your home. With this knowledge, you can choose a path that works best for your family.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Agency, the top five energy users in U.S. homes are:

1. Space cooling
2. Space heating
3. Water heating
4. Lighting
5. Refrigeration

Adjust the temperature

Together, home heating and cooling use the most energy and take the biggest bite out of your energy budget. On the bright side, there are ways you can achieve at least 10 percent savings

by taking a few simple low-cost or no-cost steps.

- During cold weather, set your thermostat to 68 degrees Fahrenheit.
- During warm weather, the recommended indoor temperature is 78 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Cleaning the filters of your HVAC system can cut costs from five to 15 percent.
- Clean the coils around your electric baseboard heater to maintain maximum efficiency.
- Caulk and weather-strip around windows and doors to prevent heat from escaping to the outdoors.

No matter what the climate or time of year, proper use of a programmable thermostat can save you 10 percent on your monthly utility bill.

Shine the light on savings

Take a fresh look at the lighting in your home. If you still use incandescent lighting, your light bulbs are operating at only 25 percent energy efficiency. Replacing your home's five most frequently used bulbs with

Energy Star-certified LEDs can save you \$75 per year. Another easy way to save is to always turn lights off in rooms that are not being used.

Water heating efficiency

Just as it is energy-wise to insulate your roof, wall or floor, it also pays to wrap your hot water heater with an insulating blanket. This is all the more critical if you have an older unit. Make sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions. For additional efficiency and savings, insulate exposed hot water lines and drain one to two gallons of water from the bottom of your tank annually to prevent sediment build-up.

Put cold hard cash back in your wallet

If your refrigerator was purchased before 2001, chances are it uses 40 percent more energy than a new Energy Star model. If you are considering an appliance update, a new Energy Star refrigerator uses at least 15 percent less energy than non-qualified models and 20 percent less energy than required by current federal standards.

Regardless of the age of your fridge, there are additional steps you can take to save energy and money. For example, don't keep your refrigerator too cold. The Department of Energy recommends temperatures of 35 – 38 degrees Fahrenheit for the fresh food compartment and 0 degrees Fahrenheit for separate freezers (used for long-term storage). (7077001)

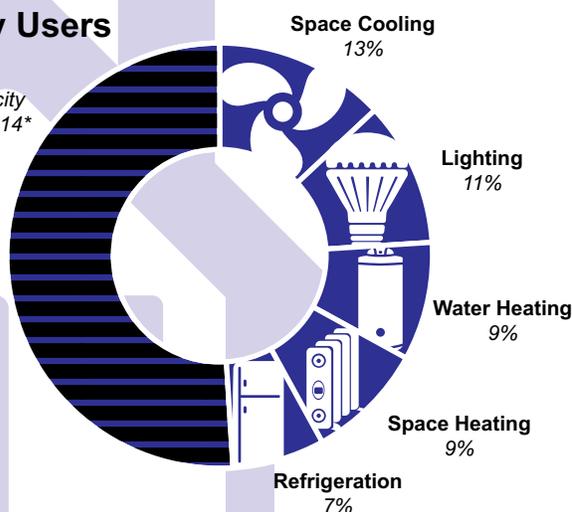
By understanding how your home uses energy, you can determine the best ways to modify energy use and keep more money in your wallet.

Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Top Five Energy Users in U.S. Homes

Estimated residential electricity consumption by end use, 2014*

Other uses include TV, set-top boxes, home entertainment and gaming systems, monitors and networking equipment, clothes dryer, small electric devices, heating elements and motors.



*Source: EIA