

Powerlines

Parke County REMC
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

April 2008

119 West High Street, Rockville, IN 47872 PH: (765) 569-3133 or (800) 537-3913 Hours: M-F 7:30-4:30



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Why are energy prices on the rise?

One of the hottest topics in the news right now is the price of energy. Escalating prices at the gas pumps are a daily reminder that fuel is on the rise. This trend is broad scaled, and all forms of energy are increasing in price. Electricity is no exception.

So why the abrupt change? The answer is a complex one with many facets. Primarily, demand is increasing and supply is not matching it.

The final cost of electricity that the customer pays is a combination of generation, transmission and distribution costs. The cost of generation – or creating the electricity is the largest portion of these costs. The demand for electricity is rising faster than we can produce it, which causes prices to rise.

There are several obstacles to generating more power. To produce more power, we need to build more generation facilities, or power plants. It takes 6 years to build a coal fired power plant. In Indiana, 94% of our electricity comes from coal fired power plants. Half of the nation's power is generated in coal-fired plants. However, no one wants a power plant built in their "back yard," and Congress has authored half a dozen bills addressing emissions of power plants which could add an additional \$50-300 billion in costs annually. Electric companies have already tightened restriction on CO2 emissions in past years, but these bills call for an additional reduction.

Growth in global economies also has an impact on increasing power costs. Many of our natural resources are being shipped overseas to be used in China and India to build power plants. The competition for

these resources will cause a 30% increase per year over the next several years.

The fear of climate change (global warming) is also making it more expensive to produce electricity. Nearly 40% of all power generated in the United States comes from burning fossil fuels. The combustion of fossil fuels releases carbon into the atmosphere.

There seems to be a no-win situation in the ability to generate more power. The perception is that energy from coal is "dirty," nuclear energy is dangerous, natural gas is expensive and renewable forms of energy are limited.

So how are electric co-ops facing these challenges? Co-ops are diversifying their power generation and investing in fuels other than coal. This means the addition of some renewable resources like wind and methane from land fills and dairy farms.

Co-ops are also constantly looking for ways to use energy more efficiently. Our Energy Advisors are on staff to help members use energy more efficiently, thereby reducing their energy bills and making the current supply of energy go farther. Co-ops are also researching equipment that can help business and homeowners monitor electric use.

The way electricity is produced and used will change dramatically over the next several years, but you can be sure your electric co-op will continue to work toward energy smart solutions.

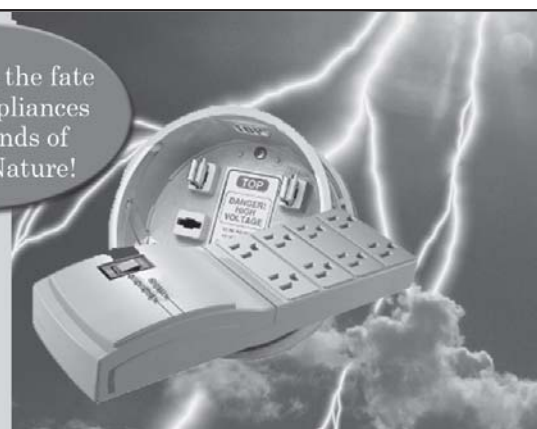
Surge Protection

from

Parke County REMC

Call 765-569-3133 for more information

Don't leave the fate
of your appliances
in the hands of
Mother Nature!



The Easy Way to Calculate Energy Costs

Have you been thinking about buying one of those big-screen plasma TVs, but are wondering what that might do to your electric bill? Curious about what it costs you to keep running that clunky old refrigerator in the garage? Thought about adding insulation, but wondering whether you'll save enough energy to cover the cost?

We know that members have many questions like these. If you do, you'll be glad to know that we've provided an easy way for you to find the answers. Just visit our website, and use our handy HomeEnergySuite online calculators. They put detailed energy efficiency information at your fingertips. All you have to do is input some basic information about your home, and let the calculators do the rest.

Suppose you're thinking about replacing your 12-year-old refrigerator with a newer model. The calculator will show you how much the current refrigerator costs to operate each month, compared to today's higher-efficiency refrigerators. You might be surprised at how quickly a new fridge can pay for itself in energy savings.

Or take that plasma TV you've been dreaming about. Plug in the information, and the calculators will tell you what it might add to your electric bill each month. Most people don't realize that plasma TVs use three to five times as

much energy as conventional TVs.

We've explained that properly sealing your home can have a dramatic effect on your energy usage. The calculators make it easy to see how your current level of air leakage and insulation affects your electric bill compared with how much lower it would be with proper sealing and better insulation. Once you see how much money you can save, you'll want to know more about eliminating air leaks.

The HomeEnergySuite includes easy to read charts that break down how you use energy in your home. Move your cursor over the chart, and you'll see what cooling, heating, lighting, cooking, hot water heating and even those big screen TVs actually cost to operate each month. The calculators also feature built-in links to information about specific appliances, so you can better understand their impacts on energy costs.

Because the calculators consider specific aspects of a home's construction, local weather and utility rates, you can run multiple "what-if" situations to determine which upgrades or modifications would be most effective at reducing your energy costs. You don't have to worry about taking notes, because you can direct the calculators to email the reports to you.

We're committed to providing our members with the most reliable energy efficiency information. With these cal-



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Home Energy Calculator
home energy use costs at your fingertips

culators, we can help members like you make cost-effective energy choices and become more aware of your energy use. If you have questions about the energy efficiency of your home or any of your appliances, our Energy Advisor will be happy to offer help. It's one more way we provide free advice when you want it and help when you need it.

Access-24 Offers Convenience for Members

Parke County REMC members can use an interactive phone service to make inquiries about their electric bill, or make a payment with credit card or electronic check 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This easy and convenient voice response system allows members to speak responses or simply enter information using your touch tone telephone.

Members may also make telephone number updates and payment arrangements using the Access 24 system.

Access 24 is a comprehensive automated Customer Service system that uses "Interactive Voice Response" technology to give members access to the utility 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Here are some of the options available with Access 24:

- Members can use speech or phone buttons to select from a menu of service options.

- Account inquiry allows members to check on their account and provides account balance, amount due and last payment information.
- Customer Information Service allows members to select from a menu of pre-recorded messages providing a variety of utility information, such as office hours and location, available products and services.
- The telephone number update function permits members to quickly and automatically update their telephone numbers. Keeping phone numbers current speeds utility call handling.
- During normal business hours Access 24 provides for quick connection to a Customer Service Representative.

You can use the Access 24 phone system to set up payment arrangements or pay your bill 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

If you choose to pay by credit card, you will need to have your REMC account number and credit card information. If you choose to pay by electronic check, you will need to contact the REMC office so we can set up a profile for you.

ACCESS-24



A Special Holiday for a Special Planet

It's our home, and its land, air and water sustain our daily lives. So every year on April 22, people throughout the world celebrate Earth Day.

Why set aside a special day to recognize our planet, beyond the fact that it's our home? Back in the late 1960s, Americans were beginning to become aware of the damage pollution was causing to the planet's air and water. After U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin witnessed the damage caused by an oil spill off the California coast, he called for a day that would focus the nation's attention on the importance of the environment.

The first Earth Day took place on April 22, 1970. April 22 was chosen because it was the birthday of Julius Sterling Morton, who founded Arbor Day. In addition, the organizers believed that naturalist John Muir had been born on that day, although they later learned Muir had actually been born on the 21st. (Reflecting the political chaos of the times, a conservative group insisted that Earth Day was actually a pro-Communist event, because Soviet Union founder Vladimir Lenin also happened to be born on the 22nd.)

Nearly 20 million Americans participated in activities to commemorate that first Earth Day, and the focus on environmental issues contributed to the subsequent passage of the Clean Air Act and the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Over the years, Earth Day has grown, with particularly large observances in 1990 and 2000. Today, many cities and towns observe the day by holding events that spotlight ways people can make Earth-friendly choices, from replacing incandescent light bulbs with high-efficiency compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) to increasing awareness of local recycling programs.

Electric cooperatives like ours have also been working to help consumers reduce their use of electricity. For example, we promote proper home sealing as a way to lower energy bills while enhancing comfort. Through our power supplier, we have also been investing in renewable energy options such as biomass and wind power.

Why would an electric cooperative care so much about the environment? We live here, too, and we appreciate having clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. Just as important, we're a non-profit membership organization that exists to serve the needs of members like you. Wise energy use and a concern for the Earth improve the quality of our members' lives, now and for future generations.

For practical ideas on ways to improve the efficiency of your home while reducing the demand for electricity, contact your local Energy Advisor. On Earth Day and every day, we're here to provide free advice when you want it, and help when you need it.



Objects, Signs on Poles Pose Hazard to Line Workers

Being a lineman is no simple task. Climbing poles and stringing electric wire is a daily job, in spite of weather. Even when weather isn't a problem, linemen have a dangerous job. As a member of Parke County REMC, you can help make their jobs safer. Power poles are a dangerous place to advertise garage sales, hang 'no hunting or trespassing' signs or even a place to show your patriotism by flying a flag. All these objects greatly increases the risk of serious injury to linemen.

Linemen wear protective clothing, including special gloves, to prevent electrical shock. Protruding nails, heavy staples, hooks or fence wire can tear their equipment, which increases their chance of electrocution. When linemen climb poles, they wear special boots and climbing gaffs. If these gaffs hit metal they could be deflected and cause a fall, which could result in a serious injury to the worker. Electric poles are the property of Parke County REMC, and maintenance crews have been instructed to remove signs or other nonessentials from the poles.

Parke County REMC urges our members to remember, utility linemen are employed to assure you of quality, reliable electric service. When you pound nails, hooks or fence wire into poles, you jeopardize your service and their safety.



Attention Parke County REMC Members:

We have refunds pending and checks are being held for the following REMC members:

Earl Chamberlain
Rhoda M. Frazier
Annie and Frank Gardner
Jack L. Hobbs
Stephen W. Jones
Ralph Killingbeck
Jon W. Lancaster
Steve Newman
Clyde Poole
Dennis Robards
Celesta R. Upleger
William Whalen

At this time, we are unable to contact these members, due to insufficient forwarding address information. If you have any information regarding these REMC members, please contact the REMC office at 1-800-537-3913.

Nominating Committee to Meet

The Parke County REMC Nominating Committee will meet June 3 at 6:30 p.m. to consider candidates to be elected to the REMC board of directors at the 2008 annual meeting. The deadline to submit names is May 16.

Director districts up for re-election are District 3, District 7 and District 8. Janean Deplanty is the current representative of District 3, which includes all of Greene, Washington, Howard, Sugar Creek Townships and part of Liberty Township in Parke County and part of Mill Creek and Jackson Townships in Fountain County.

Mark Evans is the current representative of District 7, which includes part of Franklin, Monroe and Greencastle Townships in Putnam County.

Perry Mager is the current representative of District 8, which includes part of Florida and Raccoon Townships in Parke County, part of Dick Johnson Township in Clay County and part of Otter Creek and Nevins Townships in Vigo County.

Mercury Vapor Security Lights Being Phased Out

Due to provisions in the 2005 Energy Act Parke County REMC will no longer be able to purchase mercury vapor security lights. The Energy Act bans the production and import of mercury lamp ballasts, which in turn bans the sale of new mercury vapor fixtures.

The mercury vapor security lights that are currently in use will still be allowed on the system. Parke County REMC will be able to replace bulbs as long as we have them in our inventory. However, if the fixture is not repairable, it cannot be replaced and the light will have to be changed to a sodium vapor light at no charge or be removed.

Parke County REMC has begun installing high pressure sodium vapor security lights to replace the mercury vapor lights in cases where repair is not an option. Some customers have commented that they do not like the pink or orange glow the high pressure sodium vapor lights emit. This is a characteristic of the way the lamps operate to produce

light. A different type of high pressure sodium vapor light is available that produces a more natural white light, but these lights have a higher purchase cost, shorter life and lower light efficiency.

The goal behind the federal legislation is to improve energy efficiency and help eliminate a potential threat to the environment. The bulbs and ballasts have been taken off the market because of the mercury content. Improperly disposing of mercury vapor lights can create health hazards in the soil and ground water.

Mercury vapor security lights also generally have a higher wattage than other types of security lights and therefore consume more electricity. For example, a typical mercury vapor security light is 175 watts while a typical high pressure sodium vapor light is only 100 watts.

Parke County REMC will continue to research other options that can improve security lighting. We will continue to publish information in the newsletter to keep members informed.

Want to reduce energy costs?

Consider upgrading to newer,
efficient home appliances.

