

Powerlines

Parke County REMC
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



April 2009

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



Degree Days and Your Energy Bill

We have talked with several members this winter about high bill concerns and higher than normal use. The energy bills and per member use for the past four months have been higher than we have seen in the past three years. This colder weather definitely attributed to the higher energy use, but it is sometimes difficult to understand the relationship between the weather and energy use.

One way to determine how much of the energy increase is due to the weather is by using a unit called a degree-day. A degree-day compares the average outdoor temperature to a standard of 65 degrees Fahrenheit. The farther the actual temperature is from this standard, the higher the degree-day and the more energy is needed for heating or cooling your home. Degree-day data is compiled by the National Weather Service and used to provide statistical data and observations to our climate.

To calculate the heating degree days for a particular day, compute the day's average temperature by adding the day's high and low temperatures and divide by two. If the number is above 65, there are no heating degree days that day. If the number is less than 65, subtract it from 65 to find the number of heating degree days. For example, if the day's high temperature is 60 and the low is 40, the average temperature is 50 degrees. $(65 - 50 = 15$ heating degree days.) Basically the more degree days you have in a month the higher use you will have for your heating and cooling needs.

Consider the data printed below for the months November, December and January. This information compares the past two years with the winter we just experienced as well as the normal range for this region. This information was collected from observations in Indianapolis.

November

2008 – 692 heating degree days
2007 – 639 heating degree days
2006 – 579 heating degree days
Normal – 659 heating degree days

December

2008 – 1055 heating degree days
2007 – 952 heating degree days
2006 – 807 heating degree days
Normal – 1020 heating degree days

January

2009 – 1295 heating degree days
2008 – 997 heating degree days
2007 – 774 heating degree days
Normal – 1192 heating degree days

As you can see, the past three months were considerably colder than the same months during the past two years and colder than the normal base figures for this region. For those of you that heat your home with propane or fuel oil, this same data can be used to compare to your fuel use for winter heating.

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How Degree Days Affect Your Electric Bill

GPS Field Inventory of REMC System

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!



Stay Safe After Spring Storms

Along with warmer weather, the advent of spring brings the potential for severe thunderstorms and tornados. Parke County REMC advises members to be mindful of the electrical hazards that storms and flooding can leave behind.

"The danger does not end when the storm does," says Molly Hall, Executive Director of Safe Electricity. "People can be hurt or killed by hazards left behind. Be cautious in any clean up effort."

Stay away from downed power lines and be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. Treat all downed or hanging power lines as if they are energized. Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live. Warn others to stay away and contact the electric utility.

If using electric yard tools in clean-up efforts, do not operate them if it's raining or the ground is wet, or while you are wet or standing in water. Keep all electric tools and equipment at least ten feet away from wet surfaces.

"Before re-entering storm-damaged buildings or rooms, be sure all electric and gas services are turned off," said Jay Solomon, University of Illinois Extension Engineering Educator. "Never attempt to turn off power at the breaker box if you must stand in water to do so. If you can't reach your breaker box safely, call your electric utility to shut off power at the meter."

Never step into a flooded basement or other area if water is covering electrical outlets, appliances or cords. Be alert to any electrical equipment that could be energized and in contact with water. Never touch electrical appliances, cords or wires while you are wet or standing in water.

If after a storm or disaster, the power to your home is out for a prolonged period, know important safety rules, such as never using a charcoal or gas grill to cook inside! And if you use a portable generator, be sure a transfer safety switch has been installed or connect the appliance(s) directly to the generator. This prevents electricity from traveling back through the power lines, what's known as "back feed." Back feed creates danger for anyone near lines, particularly crews working to restore power.

For more information on electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

A Special Holiday For A Special Planet

The first Earth Day took place on April 22, 1970 when nearly 20 million Americans participated in activities calling for action to reduce pollution and protect our land, air and water. The focus on environmental issues contributed to the subsequent passage of the Clean Air Act and the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency.

At Parke County REMC, our challenge is to create Earth Day every day through improved member education, energy efficiency and investment in renewable energy.

Did you know that, when compared to Europeans, Americans use more than twice as much electricity per person each year? Some experts estimate we could save as much as 30 percent of the United States' energy use simply by being more efficient. Saving energy not only saves money, it helps save the planet as well.

Here are some ways you can reduce your electricity use, lower energy bills and celebrate Earth Day every day:

- Switch incandescent bulbs to energy-saving CFL light bulbs
 - Turn up your thermostat in summer, especially when you are away from home
 - Buy only *Energy Star* appliances, light fixtures and electronic equipment. Visit www.energystar.gov for a list of energy efficient products
 - Analyze your home's energy usage with the Energy Calculator at energyadvisor.coop or pcremc.com
- 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 not-for-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 Parke County REMC at 765-569-3133 or (800) 537-3913 or visit us online at www.pcremc.com.
- Make sure your home is sealed tight through proper air sealing measures
 - Support renewable energy options such as biomass and wind power by signing up for our EnviroWatts® program
 - Unplug appliances, electronics and chargers when they are not in use



How Will The Federal Stimulus Funding Benefit You?

Did you know you could receive rebates, direct assistance or tax credits to improve the energy efficiency of your home? Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act—the federal stimulus bill – financial incentives are now available for homeowners who buy energy efficient appliances or weatherize their home.

Making these changes will also make your home more comfortable and reduce your energy bills—putting more money in your pocket in these tough economic times.

Home Weatherization

Sealing air leaks and adding proper insulation could save an estimated 32 percent on the average home's energy bills – about \$358 dollars a year for the typical homeowner. However, home weatherization projects cost \$2,500 on average – beyond the reach of many homeowners these days. Under the stimulus bill, there are two ways to get help with this cost: direct assistance programs or tax credits.

Direct Assistance: First, homeowners with modest incomes (up to 200 percent of federal poverty levels) are eligible for the federal Weatherization Assistance Program. A professional energy consultant will audit your home and make recommendations for improving insulation and your heating and cooling system. The program also pays for the improvements – up to \$6,500 for each home.

To participate in the Weatherization Assistance Program, your income must fall below these levels:

Persons in Family	Maximum Annual Income
1	\$21,660
2	\$29,140
3	\$36,620
4	\$44,100
5	\$51,580
6	\$59,060
7	\$66,540
8	\$74,020

(For families with more than 8 persons, add \$7,480 for each additional person.)

To apply for the Weatherization Assistance program, contact:

Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority

30 South Meridian Street
Suite 1000
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Phone: 317-232-7777
Fax: 317-232-7778

Tax Credits:

If your income is too high for the above guidelines, you are still eligible for income tax credits of up to \$1,500 to offset the costs of energy efficient home improvements. This includes energy efficient windows and doors, insulation, roofs, heating and air conditioning, water heaters and biomass stoves. Hold onto your receipts—up to 30 percent of your investment is eligible for the tax credit on your 2009 or 2010 income taxes.

Additional tax credits are available through 2016 for geothermal heat pumps, solar panels, solar water heaters, small wind energy systems and fuel cells added to existing homes or new construction.

Before you buy, make sure your new appliance or home improvement will qualify for the tax credit. To learn what appliances qualify for the federal income tax credit, visit www.energystar.gov and click on the link to “Tax Credits for Energy Efficiency.” Or, call our office at 765-569-3133.

Energy Star Rebates

Using funds from the federal stimulus bill, some states are also issuing rebate checks to homeowners who purchase ENERGY STAR appliances. Each state's program is different.

Indiana is providing income tax credits up to \$100 for small businesses and homeowners for ENERGY STAR furnaces, water heaters, air conditioners and programmable thermostats. Indiana is also offering rebate checks for energy efficient furnaces, boilers or water heaters in existing homes. The rebate program lasts until April 30 or funds run out, whichever comes first. Find information about Indiana's programs at the Office of Energy and Defense Development: www.in.gov/oed/2379.htm

If you're not sure what project to tackle first, energystar.gov provides information on how to make your home more energy efficient. Remember to save your receipts and any documentation that your purchase is ENERGY STAR rated.

Save
even more with

Parke County REMC Rebate Programs

Water Heater Rebate - To qualify for the bill credit of \$70 (replacing existing electric water heater) or \$125 (new construction or replacing gas water heater), you must be a member of the REMC, and meet the following requirements:

- Install an energy efficient electric water heater (.90 energy factor or higher.)
- Provide proof of purchase of energy efficient electric water heater
- Must be willing to allow Parke County REMC install a load management switch on the water heater.
- A full time residency or business
- New home or business construction
- Replacing non electric water heater

Air Source Heat Pump Rebate (Includes Dual Fuel/Hybrid Heat Pumps. Available for systems installed June 1, 2008 or later.)

Parke County REMC offers a rebate for the installation of a new air source heat pump. The rebate is one per home or business. Rebates will be paid in the form of bill credits after certificate of purchase and installation is provided to Parke County REMC. The air source heat pump has to be a minimum of a 13 SEER rated system.

Parke County REMC reserves the right to inspect the system within 90 days of installation.

Geothermal Heat Pump Rebates (Available for systems installed June 1, 2008 or later.)

Parke County REMC offers a rebate for the installation of a Geothermal HVAC system. The rebate is one per home or business. Rebates will be paid in the form of bill credits after certificate of purchase and installation is provided to Parke County REMC. The HVAC system return air ducts must be insulated to a minimum of R-19 if they are located within an unheated portion of the home.

Attention Parke County REMC Members:

We have a refund pending and a check is being held for REMC member Milford E. Carrier.

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

We're Visiting Your Neighborhood!



Parke County REMC has contracted Davey Resource Group (DRG) of Alpharetta, GA, to do a field inventory of our system in order to implement a digital mapping system that, among other benefits, will help us restore your power more efficiently during outages.

The field inventory will include GPS mapping of our whole electrical system. A contractor will be collecting this data by foot, four wheeler and pickup truck. In order to collect this information our contractor will need to have access to our members' property. We appreciate your cooperation with this project. Please visit our web site at pcremc.com for more information or contact our office at 765-569-3133 with any concerns.

Mark Your Calendar
for the
2009
Annual Meeting



Official Notice Of Annual Meeting of Members

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the members of the Parke County Rural Electric Membership Corporation (hereinafter called the "Cooperative") will be held at the Parke County Fairgrounds approximately one-half mile North of the Town of Rockville on Hwy 41, Parke County, Indiana at 4:00 p.m., Central Standard Time, on Thursday, the 3rd day of September 2009; to consider and act on the following:

- 1.) The reports of Officers, Directors and Committees and acts and doings of said Officers, Directors and Committees of said Cooperative.
- 2.) The election of three (3) Directors of the Cooperative in the following districts:

District 1:	Part of Adams and part of Wabash Township, part of Reserve Township, all of Penn Township in Parke County, Indiana.
District 4:	Part of Madison, part of Washington, part of Warren and part of Cloverdale Townships in Putnam County, Indiana
District 5:	Part of Jackson Township and all of Union Township in Parke County, Indiana; part of Jackson Township and part of Van Buren and part of Brazil Townships in Clay County, Indiana.

Nominating Committee To Meet

The Parke County REMC Nominating Committee will meet June 2 at 6:30 p.m. to consider candidates to be elected to the REMC board of directors at the 2009 annual meeting. The deadline to submit names is May 15.

Director districts up for re-election are District 1, District 4 and District 5. Doug Brown is the current representative of District 1, which includes part of Adams and part of Wabash Township, part of Reserve Township, and all of Penn Township in Parke County, Indiana.

Gordon Hutcheson is the current representative of District 4, which includes part of Madison, part of Washington, part of Warren and part of Cloverdale Townships in Putnam County, Indiana.

Kevin Cox is the current representative of District 5, which includes part of Jackson Township and all of Union Township in Parke County, Indiana; part of Jackson Township and part of Van Buren and part of Brazil Townships in Clay County, Indiana.