



UNDERSTANDING FACTORS THAT IMPACT YOUR ENERGY BILLS

Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO

February brings some of the coldest weather of the year, and as our home heating systems work harder and longer to keep us warm, we typically see higher energy bills. There are a few key factors that affect electricity prices, as well as a few ways you can make a meaningful impact on home energy savings.

When you receive your monthly bill from Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC), you're provided with a summary of how much electricity you used during the billing cycle. You can even see how electricity use may have spiked on days when you used more electricity, such as a particularly chilly day or when relatives were staying with you, by signing into SmartHub.

But you might be surprised to learn that beyond your monthly energy consumption, there are external factors that can impact the cost of electricity.

Fuel Prices

OEC purchases electricity from our power generation partner, Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC), at a wholesale cost, then we deliver that power to our local communities. The cost of generating and transmitting electricity from our generation partner accounts for a significant portion of the cost to provide electric service to local homes and businesses—and the cost of fuels that are used to generate that electricity, such as natural gas and coal, fluctuate based on supply and demand. While these fluctuations can impact the cost of electricity, we work closely with DPC to plan ahead and help stabilize electricity prices for our members.

Extreme Weather

While we can't control the weather, we can review weather patterns and forecasts to prepare for times of extreme cold or heat, when we know the demand for electricity will increase. But when temperatures become extremely cold and the demand for electricity spikes, the price of electricity can also increase.

Infrastructure and Equipment

To cover the costs associated with providing electricity to your home or business, OEC members pay a daily facility charge. This fee ensures the cost of equipment, materials, labor and daily operations are covered for all members in OEC's service territory. To ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local grid, including power lines, substations and other essential equipment.

Energy Policy and Regulations

Federal energy policies and regulations can have a profound impact on electricity costs. As energy generation

shifts to the use of more renewable sources and stricter regulations for traditional, always-available fuel sources, such as natural gas and coal plants, costly upgrades and technologies must be constructed and deployed. These additional costs are ultimately passed to consumers.

U.S. power consumption is expected to double by 2050. Across the country, electric cooperatives are working with members of Congress to advocate for smart energy policies that reliably power our local communities. We continue to urge the current and future Federal Administration to take concrete steps to bolster the long-term reliability of our nation's grid.





You Have Control

While many of these external factors that impact electricity costs are out of our control, we all have the power to manage our energy use at home. The most effective way to lower use is thermostat management. Since heating and cooling account for a major portion of home energy use, adjusting the thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting can help you save energy and money. Remember to service your heating and

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EFFECTIVE WAYS To Lower Home Energy Use

Outside factors, such as fuel and equipment costs and extreme weather, can impact electricity prices. But you have the power to control home energy consumption by taking proactive steps to reduce energy use.

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Thermostat Management
 Heating/cooling accounts for a big portion of home energy consumption. During winter months, the Dept. of Energy recommends 68 degrees or lower.
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Utilize Off-Peak Energy Times
 Plan energy-intensive chores and tasks during off-peak energy hours. Off-peak times are early in the morning or late evenings.
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Seal Your Home
 Ensure your home has sufficient insulation levels and seal air leaks around windows and doors with caulk and weatherstripping.
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Maintain Equipment
 Maintain your heating and cooling system by regularly replacing dirty filters and scheduling annual inspections for maintenance and necessary repairs.

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cooling system annually and replace dirty filters as needed.

You can also reduce energy use by taking advantage of off-peak periods, when the demand for electricity is lower. Reserve energy-intensive chores for off-peak times, such as early in the morning or later in the evening, to save energy. Be sure to seal air leaks around windows, doors and other areas where gaps are possible. This will help your heating and cooling system work less and improve the overall comfort of your home.

OEC is your local energy partner, and we're here to help. Visit www.oakdalerec.coop to learn about our efficiency programs designed to help you save. As always, we will continue working diligently to provide you with reliable power at an affordable cost.

ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, April 26

Registration - 8 a.m.
Business Meeting - 9 a.m.

Tomah Recreation Park - Recreation (gold) Building
1625 Butts Ave. Tomah, WI 54660

COFFEE DONUTS DRAWINGS MEMBER GIFTS

NOMINATE A LOCAL VOLUNTEER FOR A CHANCE AT \$20!

Do you know someone committed to the community and always available to lend a helping hand? Nominate them for Oakdale Electric Cooperative's Selfless Service Award for a chance at a \$20 bill credit.

The Selfless Service Award Nomination Contest is a reoccurring contest for each quarter. To be eligible, you must be an Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC) member with an active account. The nominee does not have to be an OEC member. Once the award recipient is selected, the OEC member nominator of the awarded recipient will be notified and receive a \$20 bill credit.

Nominations for quarter one must be submitted by **March 15, 2025**.

Scan the QR code for more information or to complete a nomination form.



Contest Rules:

- ONE entry per account number.
- Employees, directors, as well as immediate family of Oakdale Electric Cooperative, are not eligible to receive the \$20 bill credit.

2024 Selfless Service Award Recipients:



Dave Stutzman

Selena Meacham

Stephen and Leanne Honish



This award is presented to individuals who engage in community volunteerism, performing valuable services that benefit and improve quality of life within the communities served by OEC. The award, a \$250 check and plaque, will be presented to one individual on a quarterly basis.

Awards will not be granted, for example, to:

- An individual in a paid position with a nonprofit organization
- A volunteer who assists another individual (i.e. lawn mowing, snow shoveling, etc.)
- Self-nominations

SCORE KITCHEN SAVINGS ON GAME DAY



Super Bowl Sunday is upon us and that means indulging in all types of food. A way to score in the kitchen is by utilizing smaller appliances like crockpots instead of the stove or oven. Here are some game day recipes you might want to add to your offensive plays, courtesy of Oakdale Electric Cooperative employees.



MY CO-OP



JALAPEÑO POPPER DIP

Courtesy of Engineering Services Administrator Breanna Linzmeier

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (8 oz) cream cheese
- 1 (16 oz) sour cream
- 1 (4.25 oz) can chopped black olives
- 1 (4.25 oz) can chopped jalapeños
- 1 (1.1 oz) package of fiesta ranch seasoning
- 1-2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

INSTRUCTIONS

Mix all the ingredients together and serve warm or cold with tortilla chips, veggies, or your go-to crackers.

REUBEN DIP

Courtesy of Billing & CIS Specialist Tina Von Haden

INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz corned beef, chopped
- 10 oz sauerkraut, drained
- 8 oz Swiss cheese, chopped/sliced
- 1 cup mayo
- 1 Tbsp Lawry's
- 1 tsp garlic salt

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: Add all ingredients to a crockpot and stir. Cover and cook on high for 1 ½ - 2 hours, stirring every half hour until all cheese has melted.

Step 2: Stir to combine all ingredients; turn heat to warm.

Step 3: Serve hot with your favorite bread, crackers, or veggies.



CROCKPOT SWEET POTATOES

Courtesy of Executive Assistant/HR Administrator Deana Protz

INGREDIENTS

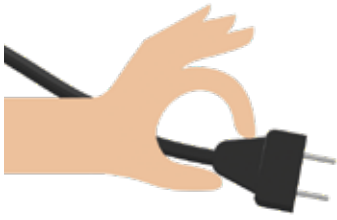
- Sweet Potatoes
- Butter
- Salt
- Pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: Wash the sweet potatoes (no need to dry). Poke with a fork 6-8 times per sweet potato in various spots throughout the sweet potato. Place the sweet potatoes in a crockpot.

Step 2: Cover and cook on low for 6-7 hours or on high for 3-3.5 hours until a knife can easily be inserted and removed, and the sweet potatoes are soft when gently squeezed.

Step 3: Add toppings you prefer such as brown sugar, honey cinnamon butter, or mini marshmallows; serve and enjoy.



PLUGGED IN

The Importance of Vegetation Management

The powerline running either on or near your property plays a pivotal role in delivering the energy that services your home. At Oakdale Electric Cooperative (OEC), it is our duty to ensure safe, reliable electricity, which includes our vegetation management program that requires regular maintenance like trimming trees and clearing or spraying brush that grow near the powerlines.

An electric right-of-way (ROW) is a strip of land an electric utility uses to construct, maintain, or repair a powerline. OEC has a 20-foot ROW on each side of the powerline. OEC is governed by many State and Federal regulations and regulatory bodies, such as National Electric Safety Code and the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources that require us to maintain these ROWs.

The tree trimming aspect of the vegetation management program is on a 5-year rotation. This entails that we have tree trimming contractors that come to your area once every 5 years. The contractor is instructed to clear 20 feet on both sides of the powerline. They also will remove trees or tree branches that hang over the lines as well as trees and brushing growing in the ROW. Trees that are dead, dying, or lean heavily towards the line are considered hazard trees and will need to be removed even if they are outside of the ROW.

Please note that crews hired by Oakdale Electric Cooperative are currently conducting line clearance. Zielies Tree Service is working in the Armenia area, and Asplundh Tree Expert, LLC are working in the Finley to Babcock areas. Members have been notified via a mailed letter in December of 2024.

Mark Mercer,
Vegetation Supervisor

EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS

Employee service awards are a celebration of the hard work and dedication of cooperative employees reaching milestones in their years of service. Oakdale Electric Cooperative would not be operable without the dedication of its employees.



John Ollendick – Operations Director, 25 years



Tina Von Haden – Billing & CIS Specialist, 25 years



Eric Flock – Journeyman Lineman, 10 years



Dalton Linzmeier – Journeyman Lineman, 10 years



Deana Protz – Executive Assistant/HR Administrator, 10 years




Kurt Spolum – Data/GIS Analyst, 10 years



Ryan Betthausen – Journeyman Lineman, 5 years

Chris Tackmann, General Manager & CEO


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Jackie McGlin, Editor



Oakdale Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
24-Hour Emergency Power Restoration: 800-927-6151
Toll-free Online Bill Payment 855-938-3610

Diggers Hotline: For underground cable locates and power line clearance information, call 800-242-8511.