



Current Matters



Nobles Cooperative
Electric

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July 2020
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Managing home energy use through a summer of social distancing

If you want to save money on your energy bill, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) can show you where to start.

For nearly half of the electricity Americans use in their homes, 43 percent goes to heating and cooling, along with air and water. Nearly a third of our electric use, 31 percent, goes to running our heating and air conditioning systems. Another 12 percent powers our water heaters.

In second place for residential electricity use is a grab bag of appliances and lighting. One-fifth of the electricity we use in our homes goes to refrigeration (6 percent), lighting (5 percent), clothes drying (4 percent), along with TV and video games (4 percent).

That means if you want to get the quickest and biggest return on energy savings, focus on how you use your heating and cooling system, and your water heater.

Other appliances and devices consume even smaller shares of our total energy use. Eight percent of residential electricity use comes from a combination of computers, freezers, washing machines, dishwashers and cooking ap-

pliances. Other home energy users include a range of devices like small appliances, exterior lights, outdoor grills and spa heaters.

Even with the recent disruptions to daily life during the COVID-19 pandemic, the advice to focus on heating and cooling to save energy holds up. With more (504-37-194) people staying home, you might expect residential sales to increase, and they will, but not enough to overcome the weather.

During summer months, setting your thermostat a few degrees higher than normal can make a significant difference in energy use. The Department of Energy recommends setting your thermostat to 78 degrees or higher when possible. Consumers can achieve additional energy savings by investing in a smart or programmable thermostat.

Small changes to energy use habits, like turning off lights when you leave a room or unplugging devices when not in use, can help you save. But to make the biggest difference in energy use—even during a global pandemic—pay attention to how you heat and cool your home. That’s where the biggest potential for saving energy lies.

Energy saving tip

Spending more time at home? Try an online energy audit to assess the overall efficiency of your home. Visit www.energystar.gov, then enter “home energy yardstick” in the search box to get started.

Mark your calendar

July 25 Electric bills due



Find your location number and win a \$10 credit

If you find your location number (as it appears on your monthly electric bill) in this issue, you will receive a \$10 credit.



Manager’s Message



Electricity remains a good value



Annual pole top rescue training



A word from your General Manager **Adam Tromblay**

Before digging be sure to call Gopher State

Don't assume you know what is below the ground. Whether you are a professional excavator or homeowner with a project that requires digging, your first step is to contact Gopher State One Call at 800-252-1166. It is the law.

Once the utilities have been located, you'll see a variety of paint markings or flags on the ground. Respect the marks! No one should ever remove flags before work is completed for the safety of all digging in the area.

Never use mechanized digging tools when you are digging within 24 inches of the markings. Only use hand tools.

Whatever your project may be, contacting Gopher State before starting your project may (22-66-67) allow you to avoid costly damages to underground facilities.

WHITE	Area of Proposed Excavation
PINK	Temporary Survey Markings
RED	Electric
YELLOW	Gas, Oil, Steam, Propane
ORANGE	Communication, CATV, Fiber
BLUE	Water
PURPLE	Reclaimed Water, Irrigation
GREEN	Sewer

Electricity brings value every day

Even though I work in the energy industry, like most people, I still don't think much about the electricity I use. I expect the lights to turn on when I flip the switch and the coffee maker to work each morning. Because electricity is so abundant, we don't think much about it. Since many of us have been spending more time at home over the past few months, we have likely been using more energy. And yet, we still expect an endless supply of power with uninterrupted service 24/7. The only time we really care about electricity is when the power goes out or perhaps when the monthly bill arrives.

Given how electricity powers our modern lifestyle every day, it's a great value, especially when compared to other common services and expenses. For example, think back to the cost of a gallon of gasoline 20 years ago. Consider the cost of groceries or a cup of your (6-22-44) favorite specialty coffee from a few years back. In comparison, the cost of electricity has remained largely flat, unlike most other consumer goods.

Like many of you, I have a cell phone to stay connected, and I subscribe to cable channels so I can enjoy more viewing options. Many of us consider these necessities for modern day life. We can see what we're getting for our money, and we pay the price for those services. In contrast, when we use electricity, we don't necessarily "see" all that we're getting for our money.

But considering what electricity does for us, it's a tremendous value for our quality of life, as well as our budgets. For comparison, consider that the average rent increase was nearly 4 percent (from 2014-2019) according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI). The cost of medical care was increased 3 percent during this time, and education was not too far behind at 2.6 percent. So, where did electricity rank? According to the CPI, electricity increased by less than half a percentage point, 0.4 percent.

The bottom line: electricity brings everyday value. Considering that electricity is something that we all use around the clock, I'm very proud of our track record. At the same time, we

are striving to increase our service reliability, reduce those brief interruptions and reduce costs.

Nobles Cooperative Electric (NCE) provides the reliable service you expect and deserve as valued members of the cooperative. And as your trusted energy advisor, we want to help you save energy and money.

We recognize that the past few months have been challenging for many of our members and we're here to help. If you have questions about your account or are looking for ways to save energy at home, please give us a call. We are your electric cooperative and our sole purpose is to serve you and the needs of our community. That's everyday value.

NCE Board transparency

If you wish to speak with NCE's Board of Directors and have an item that you would like to have placed on the agenda, please contact a board member at least seven days prior to the meeting.

Board meeting highlights are available on our website under "Transparency" for member review.

The value of electricity continues to shine

Medical care, residential rent and education costs have increased over the last decade with rates at about 3 percent or more per year. Butter, meat and egg costs have gone up by more than 2 percent annually.

Electricity costs rise about 1 percent a year, but cooperatives across the country have reported a decline in average residential use per household since 2010 due to investments in energy efficiency. That means members are doing more with less energy.

Kilowatt-hour usage per cooperative household—that is, the amount of energy it takes to run an appliance per hour—dropped by 8 percent in the last 10 years.

When it comes to value, electricity is a clear winner, and NCE is always looking for ways to work with you to make it even (30-11-55) better. That's why NCE urges energy efficiency, encourages you to look for ENERGY STAR® appliances and promotes technology designed to give members more control over their electricity use.

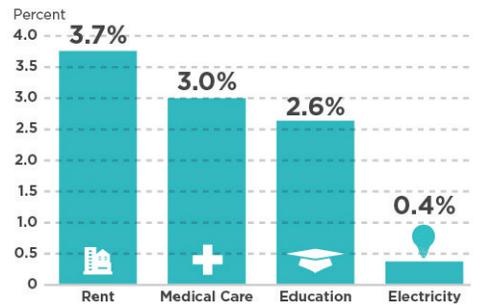
As an example, residential home lighting shifted from less-efficient lighting—primarily incandescent bulbs—to more energy-efficient lighting, like LEDs, between 2009

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

When you look at price increases of common expenses over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!



Average Annual Price Increase 2014-2019



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

and 2015 according to data from the Energy Information Administration. In the 2009 survey, 58 percent of all households used at least one energy-efficient bulb indoors. In 2015, 86 percent of households reported using at least one LED bulb and 18 percent of households reported they had no incandescent bulbs in their homes.

Energy performance dashboards, smart thermostats and power strips, and appliance settings that shift most water heating, laundry and dishwashing outside of peak rate periods help reduce the cooperative's overall power demand. They also give you opportunities to control or even trim your monthly utility bills.

That's good for families, couples and individuals trying to live within their budgets. And it's become even more important as digital devices and internet-connected technologies are included in our daily lives.

Today, U.S. households own an average of 11 connected devices, including seven with screens to view content (e.g., smartphones or TVs), a study from Deloitte found. Technology and the gateways that keep it working use electricity, so you'll count on NCE for more than the power that keeps the lights on.

We Have a Winner!

June Auto Pay winner
Steven Elias

Take a minute to sign up for Auto Pay and you may win a \$25 bill credit. A winner is chosen each month.



NCE linemen perform pole top rescue exercises

With blue skies above, NCE linemen buckled on their fall-restraint equipment belts and dug into the utility pole with their steel “spikes.” NCE held their annual pole top and bucket rescue safety training June 3. Each lineman must balance their skills with safety, climb a pole and rescue a training mannequin. The linemen (2-35-16) must then secure the mannequin using ropes and pulleys and safely deliver them back to the ground. The cooperative always places safety first, and by performing safety trainings, the cooperative is assuring that the linemen are properly trained to handle nearly any situation.



DO YOUR PART TO HELP KEEP LINEMEN SAFE



Never plug a generator into an indoor or outdoor wall outlet, which can cause voltage to back feed.



Workers need to efficiently and safely restore power when it goes out; please be patient.



Do not post signs on a utility pole, especially with staples and nails, which can puncture protective gear.



Slow down and move over in utility work zones. Crowding workers can cause accidents.

Learn more:



Country Cupboard All Season Fruit Salad

Darlene Hammerschmidt
Fulda

Section 2 or 3 navel oranges the night before and refrigerate with a #2 can of pineapple tidbits, drained. Add 1/2 c. sugar and soak in the refrigerator overnight. Add 2 bananas. To the drained juice, add 2 T. cornstarch and 1 T. lemon juice. Cook until clear and thick, stirring constantly. Refrigerate sauce to cool, then add to fruit and mix. Refrigerate until it is ready to serve. Decorate with red cherries before serving, if desired.

Send your favorite recipe with **green peppers** in it to Nobles Cooperative Electric, ATTN: Tracey, P.O. Box 788, Worthington, MN 56187-0788. Entries must include your name, address, telephone number and NCE location number. All entries must be received by July 25. The winning recipe will be featured in the next edition of *Current Matters* and the winner will receive a **\$10 credit** on their electric bill.



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Summer office hours

7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday
May 1 - September 30

24-Hour outage service

800-776-0517

Gopher State One-Call

800-252-1166 or 811

Electrical inspectors

Murray County
Randal Maha - 507-274-5261
Nobles County
Adam Feste - 507-690-2741

General Manager

Adam Tromblay

Board of Directors

Ronald Schwartau, President - 734-3052*
Lee York, V. President - 879-3497*
Cindy Hokeness, Sec./Treas. - 478-4965*
Bruce Barber, Director - 329-2991*
Jerry Beckering, Director - 227-4074*
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Next Board Meeting

August 12, 2020

*This cooperative is an equal
opportunity provider and employer.*

