

# January 2019 Share Package

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### Wood-Burning Fireplaces an Option for Emergency Heat



Decorative airtight doors on this heat-circulating fireplace improve efficiency and reduce air loss.

Photo by Kozy Heat



This fireplace draws in outdoor air to improve heated air circulation.

Photo by James Dulley



To ask a question, write to **James Dulley**, Energy Report, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH, 45244, or go to [www.dulley.com](http://www.dulley.com).

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*Q: We want an efficient wood-burning fireplace/insert for extra heat and emergencies. Our old masonry fireplace seems to chill the house. What should we look for?*

**A:** It is not just your imagination. Using an open masonry fireplace can cool your house and result in higher overall heating costs. Heated indoor air is drawn into the fireplace opening and lost up the chimney. This draws cold outdoor air into your house through windows, doors and gap.

You may feel comfortable by the fireplace, but your heat pump or furnace can run up to 10 percent more to warm the rest of the house.

I do not recommend using an open fireplace during very cold weather, but if you really like the ambiance of a fire, close all the doors to that room and crack open a window. Some heated air will still be lost up the chimney from the rest of the house, but most of this air will be drawn in the open window. The loss is not as severe during mild weather because the outdoor air leaking in is not as cold.

Burning firewood to heat your home is called biomass heating and it may qualify for some local tax credits. Biomass includes cord firewood, wood pellets, corn, switch grass, peanut shells and cherry pits. It can be burned in a variety of heating appliances. Fireplaces, wood and pellet stoves are most common. If you plan to burn corn, be sure to get a model with a firepot designed to handle corn's unique burning characteristics.

Every efficient wood-burning fireplace or insert has tight-sealing glass doors to minimize the loss of already-heated room air. Some fireplace models can be safely operated with the glass doors opened and just a screen covering the opening. Do not burn it this way often because too much indoor air is lost.

There are many sizes and styles available. A 42-inch wide, EPA-certified wood-burning fireplace can produce from 8,000 to 60,000 British thermal

units an hour depending on how much wood is in the firebox. The overall efficiency can be as high as high as 77 percent. A fireplace this size can handle logs up to 22 inches long.

If you decide on a fireplace, you must decide between a zero-clearance and a masonry fireplace. If your old fireplace is large, you may be able to fit a new insert inside of it, saving hundreds of dollars. If you plan to install a fireplace somewhere else, installing a zero-clearance model is best. These use a double-walled design with insulation to be safely placed against wood wall studs.

A heating-circulating type of fireplace is a must for the best efficiency and more heated air output. Many designs operate without a fan and rely on natural flow of room air around the superhot firebox. As the air gets hot, it becomes less dense and naturally flows out into the room through an upper vent. This pulls cooler room air in a lower inlet to be heated.

For more heat output and better control of the flow of heated air, install an optional blower kit. The better ones have thermostats and variable-speed controls for the best comfort. Select one with at least 100 cubic feet per minute air flow. Each fireplace manufacturer offers its own specially designed blower kit. A blower kit can usually be added by the homeowner after the fireplace is installed.

For the greatest efficiency and fewest drafts indoors, install an outdoor combustion air kit with the fireplace. Make this decision before you install the fireplace because a duct has to run to it to bring in the outdoor air. Installation is simpler with a raised hearth design.

Another efficient option is an airtight insert. These provide the longest burn time and maximum heat output. They typically are not as stylish as other fireplaces, but they provide much better control over the heat output and combustion air used. For air quality considerations, select one that is EPA certified. Pellet and catalytic cord firewood models typically produce the least particulate matter. ■

# Energy Choice Initiative Defeated

*Majority of Nevada voters reverse 2016 decision to amend state constitution*



**Dave Lutrell** is general manager at Lincoln County Power District No. 1 in Pioche, Nevada.

Choice. Everyone wants it. So why would it not be a good idea to be able to choose who you buy your electric energy from?

That was the question recently asked of Nevada voters. In 2016, a few large businesses developed a proposition and funded a campaign to create energy choice through a ballot initiative that would have amended the Nevada Constitution. The explanation that accompanied the initiative suggested competition would result in lower rates. The ballot question passed by a large margin in the 2016 general election. Fortunately in Nevada, propositions to amend the constitution must be approved twice by the electorate.

Energy choice, sometimes called retail choice, is not a new concept. It was a popular idea in the late 1990s. Fourteen states actually restructured their electric utility sectors to provide some version of complete or limited choice. States such as Nevada, California, Montana and others started down the path but pulled back when it became apparent that without proper structure and regulatory oversight, the new energy providers could take advantage of consumers

The reason a few businesses in Nevada pushed the concept again in 2016 was clear: In states that have some form of choice, large businesses that buy significant amounts of power can wield that purchasing power to negotiate lower rates. It also became clear that residential consumers and small businesses in those states usually don't benefit. In fact, data from the U.S. Energy Administration shows the average rate for residential consumers in states with choice are significantly higher than states with the traditional utility model.

Some states with choice are now considering returning to the traditional utility model. Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey recently asked for the end of the retail market in her state because of deceptive sales tactics, saying, "competitive supply has been a really bad deal for individual residential ratepayers."

Nationally, the number of people buying energy from retail energy providers has declined from the peak in 2014.

Outside of the metropolitan areas, most of Nevada is served by electric cooperatives, municipal utilities and power districts. These public power

utilities do not profit from the sale of energy. They were created by and for the people they serve. Decisions regarding energy supply and services offered are made locally by their elected boards.

The proposed constitutional amendment to mandate energy choice for all Nevadans could have prevented public power utilities from selling energy, limited local decision making, and ultimately increased rates for average consumers.

As the general manager of a public power utility in Nevada, I was embarrassed by the outcome of the 2016 vote. It was clear we had not done enough to communicate with our consumers and members about the real impact of energy choice. Using our statewide association as a point of coordination, most public power utilities in Nevada worked hard to educate their consumers and members. Hundreds of meetings were held with town boards, city councils, county commissions, social groups, church groups, service organizations, trade associations, business groups and farm bureaus.

The message was simple: By our very nature, public power provides choice through locally elected boards and offers lower rates than the national average from for-profit retail energy providers. From the feedback at these meetings, it was evident that many people we serve had forgotten what makes public power utilities different and special.

Through educational efforts by public power utilities and many others, the November 6, 2018, general election in Nevada was a complete reversal of the previous results. Sixty-seven percent of the electorate voted against the energy choice initiative. Areas served by public power utilities saw as high as 91 percent voting against the proposition. These results were an affirmation of the value of public power.

Many have watched the events unfold in Nevada these past few years and wondered if a resurgence of 1990s retail choice wave was going to sweep the nation again. We hope the 2018 outcome in Nevada has derailed the movement. But, as with so many things, it is likely to resurface in a state near you. By definition, Ruralite readers are served by a public power utility. When someone proposes retail choice again, get the facts, which show that it does not deliver on its promises for areas served by public power. ■

# Getting it Right

**A new year sees another round of clean energy and climate change proposals across the West**

By Ted Case

For many years, the California Legislature in Sacramento has been at the vanguard of clean energy and climate change initiatives, including a landmark cap-and-trade program and, recently, a goal of 100 percent zero-carbon electricity by 2050.

“You can’t get any cleaner than that,” notes Jessica Nelson, general manager of Golden State Power Cooperative.

Nelson soon may be getting company, as areas stretching from the Olympic Rain Forest to the Sonoran Desert are also poised to tackle carbon emissions in 2019, with proposals as diverse as the Western landscape.

While cutting carbon emissions in the Western states will have, according to experts, a limited impact on a global problem, there is still enthusiasm among some Western elected officials to take a national leadership role in climate change, hoping to spur innovation and jobs in a clean-energy economy.

As gavels prepare to come down in state capitols across the West, electric cooperative legislative representatives are attempting to answer a fundamental question: How do these proposals affect the delivery of safe, reliable and affordable electricity to consumers?

There is no easy answer. In some cases, the proposals are not much more than lofty ideas in a press release. But when unveiled, electric cooperative leaders will scrub the fine print—even in the Pacific Northwest, where the electricity profile is already more than 90 percent emission-free due to a reliance on hydroelectric power and nuclear plants marketed by the Bonneville Power Administration.

Why the vigilance? It seems the definition of clean energy is often in the



**Northwesterners continue to rely on hydropower as a source of safe, reliable and affordable electricity.**

Photo by Kevin Wingert, BPA

eye of the beholder.

Kent Lopez, general manager of the Washington Rural Electric Cooperative Association, says a proposed clean energy standard in the Evergreen State will mandate utilities to be 80 percent emission free by 2035 and 100 percent by 2045.

No matter the target, Lopez is lobbying legislators to make sure any mandate is “technology neutral” and includes the massive dams on the Columbia and

Snake rivers, as well as the Columbia Generating Station nuclear plant. He also wants lawmakers to maintain the reliability of the electric grid.

“We’re worried about the cold night in February when the wind isn’t blowing, the sun isn’t shining and the hydro system is maxed out,” he says. “Preventing a blackout requires some flexibility.”

The Oregon Legislature is taking a different approach than its neighbor to the north, advancing a complex

cap-and-trade program to limit carbon emissions, which is aligned with what California put in place in 2012. A special Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction met throughout 2018 in preparation for the session.

“We’re working to get this right,” says Sen. Mike Dembrow, an influential Portland Democrat who is helping to craft the bill. “I predict this bill will pass this session.”

One thorny issue is how the legislation will affect the transportation sector—the largest slice of emissions in the state. An increase in gas prices could disproportionately affect rural Oregonians who often drive long distances for basic services, such as medical care.

If Oregon’s energy agenda is all but set, the wild frontier of Alaska continues to be wide open when it comes to legislative priorities, says Michael Rovito, director of member and public relations for the Alaska Power Association, which represents electric utilities in the state.

Rovito says the election of a new Republican governor—Mike Dunleavy—and an uncertain power structure in the state House of Representatives creates uncertainty around energy-related issues in Juneau. However, Rovito says APA has communicated with Dunleavy about the importance of rejecting regulations that increase electricity costs for Alaska consumers.

While it appears Idaho, which has one of the lowest electricity rates in the nation, will be quiet on energy issues in its legislature, Nevada will again be at ground zero for a vigorous debate involving electricity providers.

Hank James, executive director of the Nevada Rural Electric Association, says his state’s electric cooperatives are certainly battle-tested after helping defeat Question 3—a controversial “energy choice” measure rejected by voters in November, particularly among voters in rural areas.

“It was the best grassroots campaign I’ve ever seen,” James says.



**When the 20 MW Apache Solar Project in Cochise County, Arizona, was dedicated September 22, 2017, Congresswoman Martha McSally (AZ-CD2) called it a great example of a renewable energy project done right. “This is a great example of a bottom-up, community-driven investment in innovation, and a community-driven commitment to energy diversity, as opposed to a top-down decision made by bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., telling everybody what to do in a ‘one size fits all’ way,” McSally said.**

Photo courtesy of AzGT

Now the Nevada Legislature will focus on strengthening the state’s renewable portfolio standard, even though the ink is barely dry on a 50 percent renewable mandate that passed on the November ballot (known as Question 6).

Like his Northwest counterparts, James wants to ensure legislators include hydropower in the definition of renewable sources of energy.

Arizona’s electric cooperatives are also faced with a clean energy plan, but this debate will not take place in the marbled halls of a state capitol.

Casey Ratlief, director of government relations and grassroots advocacy for Grand Canyon State Electric Cooperative Association, says the Arizona Corporation Commission—comprised of five elected officials—is working to advance a clean energy plan with an 80 percent clean energy target by 2050.

Ratlief says this target poses affordability and reliability problems for Arizona electric co-op member-consumers because of the scarcity of

clean resources in the state. Lacking any viable nuclear, wind and geothermal resources, Arizona electric co-ops are left with only solar energy that, until technology improves, is still an intermittent resource.

“We’re really hoping battery storage will progress quickly,” Ratlief says.

For electric cooperatives in the West, it may take more than luck to succeed in what could be the most dynamic policy debate ever around the issue of carbon emissions. It will take active engagement with elected officials of not only electric cooperative leaders and their legislative representatives, but perhaps a robust grassroots campaign by consumers who could be affected by these decisions.

If policymakers get it wrong, the affordability and reliability of electricity in Western states could be at risk. But if they get it right, the advent of technology and innovation could be around the corner, along with a smooth glidepath to 100 percent clean energy.

It doesn’t get any cleaner than that. ■



## Members Helping Members

### *Operation Round Up continues to help local organizations*

Each April, August and November, the CPI Charitable Trust supports various organizations throughout the area with money members have given to Operation Round Up. This is one of the many ways CPI and members give back to our local community.

Members who participate in Operation Round Up have their bill rounded up to the nearest dollar, with the difference going into CPI's Charitable Trust. For example, if your bill is \$28.78, it will be rounded up to \$29, with \$0.22 going into the trust. The average cost per member is \$6 a year.

Big things are possible when CPI members contribute even a small amount to the trust. Every penny donated goes toward community projects. We hope

every CPI member will participate in Operation Round Up. When more members contribute, more help can be given.

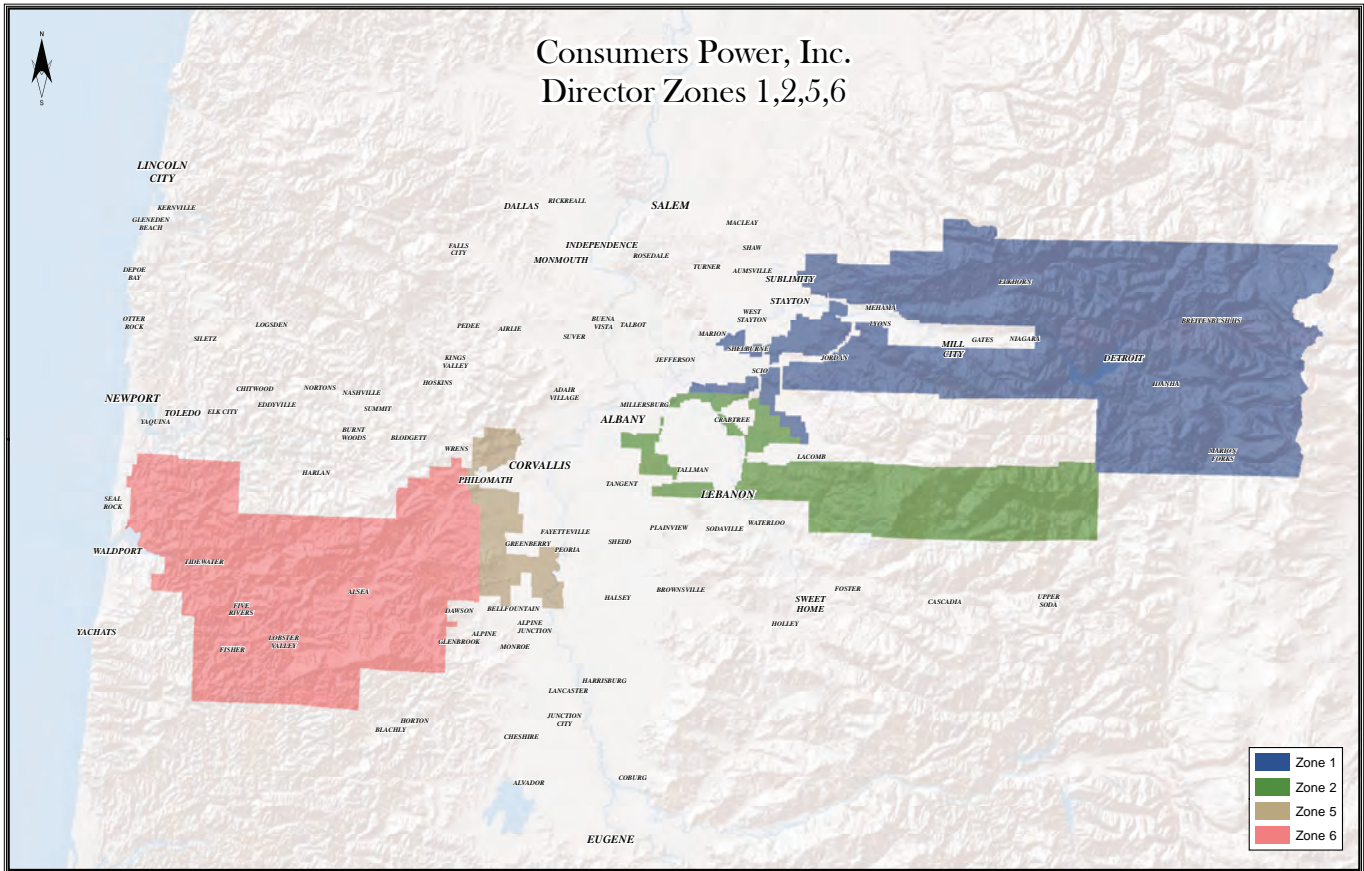
This November, the CPI Charitable Trust gave more than \$12,000 to local organizations. Thank you to our members who have helped these organizations in Benton, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion and Polk counties. You make this possible! Here are a few organizations that members helped this round of giving:

**East Linn Christian Academy.** This educational institution, which teaches K-12 in the Lebanon area, has seen large enrollment growth in the past few years. Because of the growth, it needs to expand its kitchen and cafeteria facilities to feed the increased student population. The Charitable Trust awarded \$5,000 to help

buy new, larger appliances.

**Central Coast Humane Society.** This organization serves all of Lincoln County and provides financial assistance for pet owners to spay and neuter their animals. The society requested funding to offer more support to pet owners on larger dogs as veterinarian costs increase due to animal size. The Charitable Trust awarded \$1,000 to help defray those costs.

**Community Outreach Inc.** COI helps provide housing, medical assistance, counseling and food services in Linn and Benton counties. The Charitable Trust awarded \$1,500 to pay for food provided in COI's transitional housing program, emergency food boxes for community members and nutritional meals for kids in other programs. ■



# A Call for Volunteers

One of our most cherished cooperative principles is Concern for Community. This means we work with our members to promote positive community development.

This year, CPI is looking for volunteers who live in the highlighted areas on the map to become a part of the CPI Charitable Trust committee and help show their concern for community. This committee reviews the applications of local nonprofit organizations and decides how much money each will receive. The committee meets at CPI's Philomath office every April, August and November to disburse funds.

To help support Operation Round Up, or if you are interested in volunteering, please call our office at 800-872-9036, Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., mail in the information slip at right, email us at [info@cpi.coop](mailto:info@cpi.coop) or visit us online at [www.cpi.coop](http://www.cpi.coop). You can also note your desire to participate or volunteer on the comments section of your bill. ■

## I Want to Help

Sign me up for Operation Round Up.

I want to volunteer on the Charitable Trust board.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CPI Account Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

Return to CPI at P.O. Box 1180, Philomath, OR 97370



## CELEBRATING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

UEC recently reached an important milestone, 1,000 days without a lost-time incident. To celebrate, ideas were tossed around about a giveaway or a food event. However, the final plan became one everyone can agree is the best way to celebrate this milestone - partnering with our IBEW Local 125 and giving a donation to the Legacy Oregon Burn Center.

This center is the only place in the state capable of receiving patients with electrical or other serious burns. (Please see page 32 for more details.)

## HEROES DON'T ALWAYS WEAR CAPES

Sometimes they're just in the right place at the right time.

Fourteen and a half years. That's how long a former member thought about a single interaction with UEC's Doug Minton (*pictured left*) before deciding she had to find and thank him. Recently, the UEC Facebook page received the following message:

*"Good morning, I know this is a strange request but hopefully it can find the right person. About 14 1/2 years ago while living in Hermiston I had a wonderful man from UEC help me. I was driving my infant daughter to Good Shepherd Hospital. I knew something was not "right" with her. Then all of a sudden she started having a grand-mal seizure. I had to pull over and jump out of my SUV to her seat.*

*UEC was doing work beside the road [in front of UEC's Hermiston Headquarters] and this employee came to see if everything was OK. He took one look at my daughter and he jumped in the driver's seat and took us to the ER at Good Shepherd. Before I knew it this UEC employee was gone. I frequently think about this day he saved us. I would like to know if you know who this was and if we could ever tell him thank you for his gift of kindness."*

A few weeks later a card arrived signed by both mother and daughter with a sincere thank you for his help that day.



# UEC BOARD RETURNS \$3.9 MILLION TO MEMBERS

One of the many benefits of being a member-owner of Umatilla Electric Cooperative is sharing in any margins generated by the business.

In a mailing sent in mid-December, UEC returned \$3.9 million to our membership, which represents the remaining 2003 and 2004 margins. Members who purchased power during those years received a check in proportion to how much they contributed.

UEC is operated on a not-for-profit basis. When you pay your electric bill, you also are accumulating equity in your cooperative. The equity you earn comes from UEC's remaining funds once all the bills have been paid.

If you no longer receive electric service from UEC, please keep us informed of changes in your mailing address so that any future refunds will reach you. If you have questions regarding your refund, please call us at 567-6414 in Hermiston, 481-2220 in Boardman, or 1-800-452-2273 toll-free.



**At UEC, we appreciate the support you have given us in 2018. We look forward to a new year and new opportunities to come our way in 2019!**



## GIVING BACK TO OUR COMMUNITIES

Dave Hughes, Executive Director of Agape House in Hermiston, receives a donation check presented by UEC Customer Service Representatives Lindsey, MaryAnn, Martha and Amy at UEC's Hermiston office. Each year, the UEC Board of Directors identifies local organizations that help serve the hungry and how UEC can help magnify their impact. This fall, donations were provided to Farmers Ending Hunger and to local food banks serving communities throughout UEC territory.



Central Electric Cooperative Energy Specialist Jody Howe drove CEC's Chevy Bolt from Redmond to Roseburg recently, and shares her experience.

Photo by Shane Stenhjem

# Lessons From the Road

*Electric vehicle road trips require planning ahead*

**By Courtney Cobb**

Electric vehicles are changing the landscape for drivers for not only personal commuting, but also long-distance travel. While EVs are low in cost to charge and operate, drivers are finding they need to plan ahead due to the cars' specific travel range and scarcity of charging stations.

This was the case with Central Electric Cooperative Energy Specialist Jody Howe. She recently took a trip from Redmond to Roseburg, driving the cooperative's 2018 Chevy Bolt. The Bolt has a highway range of 238 miles, according

to factory specifications. This doesn't take into account the added demands on the battery due to use of the heating system and radio, the terrain covered, and driver habits.

Jody said she was anxious before the trip because of the distance of the trip. She wanted to make sure she had enough battery life to cover the 177 miles to Roseburg and make it to a charging station.

Jody usually uses the GPS on her phone, but for this trip she planned differently.

"I mapped my trip," she says. "I haven't done that in a long time. I mapped how far I had to go to get to my

different destinations, and what my options were as far as charging."

Kelly Yearick, program manager with Forth Mobility, an organization dedicated to promoting EV integration, says Jody did everything right by creating a plan and setting herself up for a successful trip.

"You need to know when and where you will need to stop to charge in order to complete your journey," Kelly says. "Charging stations tend to be located around businesses, restaurants, restrooms, etc., which allow people to take advantage of these services while they are waiting

for their car to charge."

Despite careful planning, Jody did run into some trouble. She drove to a super charger at a local supermarket, but it was dead. She was unable to locate another super charger and the next charging station she found was with a company she didn't have an agreement for.

"I learned you should always consider having several options to be able to charge," Jody says. "Before another trip, I would look into charger types, find out what's out there and how to utilize them."

Eventually, Jody made it to her hotel for the night and

asked to use its exterior wall outlet for charging. She had planned ahead and carried the Bolt-specific charging cable with her. Charging via the wall would take longer—seven to nine hours—versus the superchargers she hoped to use earlier, which can have two-hour charging times.

Oregon Department of Energy Technology and Policy Manager Jessica Reichers says EV charging infrastructure is needed throughout the state.

“EVs and EV chargers have been and will continue to be a chicken-and-egg issue,” she says.

The state and other entities are working to identify the gaps and leverage funding to increase charging stations around the state. One way the state has already done this is with the West Coast Electric Highway, which developed charging stations along the I-5 corridor.

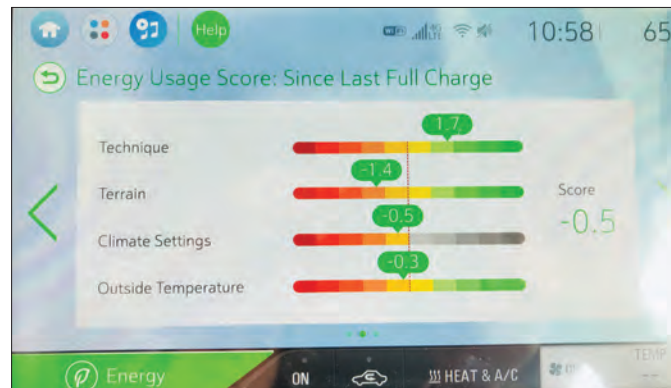
“We also identified additional areas that required chargers to reach travel destinations across the state,” Jessica says.

She believes there is room to expand the network and extend to all portions of the state, adding different types of fast chargers.

### Changes in Habits

Since it was her first long road trip in the EV, Jody also noticed her driving habits changed.

“I didn’t use cruise control and I didn’t think about it because I wanted to be able to use the battery regeneration capabilities on the vehicle,” she says.



**Today’s electric vehicles can monitor your energy usage, energy efficiency, speed and more.**

Photos by Jody Howe

Though the Chevy Bolt she drove has a range of 238 miles and lots of pep, Jody noticed she was conservative in her driving, and tried to be as efficient as possible.

“You learn how the vehicle handles in different terrains and how much energy it uses, say in the mountains or flat areas,” she says.

By the end of the trip, Jody admits her anxiety was gone.

“Driving around town was impressive, and there was very little usage when I drove because the battery was constantly regenerating,” she says. “Getting into an electric car might feel like the first day you are legal to be behind the

wheel, but then you get used to it really quickly.”

Jody says besides planning more in the future for charging stations, one of her biggest takeaways was the lack of emissions from the car.

“I had to pinch myself realizing I was driving around and not distributing any emissions,” she says. “That continues to amaze me!”

### Ready for the EV Revolution?

Jody says she would absolutely buy an EV in the future.

“Once you combine the driving experience with the cost-saving potential and air quality benefits these cars

offer, it becomes an easy choice to make,” Kelly says. “Electric cars are cleaner, more efficient, cheaper to fuel, cheaper to maintain, quieter and more fun to drive than their gasoline counterparts.”

Jessica points out there are many advantages to driving an EV, from reduction in carbon footprint to saving money.

“For example, if you pay \$3 per gallon of gas to fuel an internal combustion vehicle that gets 25 miles per gallon, it will cost you about \$0.12 per mile,” she says. “If you pay \$0.11 per kilowatt-hour of electricity, it would cost you about \$0.03 per mile to fuel a similar electric vehicle. Maintenance costs are much lower, too.”

More than 30 plug-in models with various range capabilities are sold in Oregon. That number is expected to increase as more consumers demand electric vehicles. Jessica says by 2020, many EVs are likely to get more than 300 miles in a single charge.

“Most people drive less than 100 miles a day,” she says.

Both Jessica and Kelly recommend interested consumers test drive an EV.

“They’re really fun to drive,” Jessica says. “They have a lot of torque and great handling, and new models are coming out all the time.” ■

*For more information on electric vehicles and incentives, click the Going Green button at the top of the page at [www.ccc.coop](http://www.ccc.coop) or [www.golectric.oregon.gov](http://www.golectric.oregon.gov).*

# Electric Rates to Change January 1, 2019

**Basic Charge to increase by \$3 for all rate classes; residential kWh rate to decrease (use charge)**

Beginning with bills generated on or after January 1, 2019, members will see a \$3 increase in the basic charge, while the residential kilowatt-hour rate will decrease for December use and thereafter. For residential members, this will result in, on average, a \$2 impact to your monthly bill.

The board of directors concluded this adjustment is necessary due to forecasted lower electricity sales and needed system improvements. An increase in the basic charge (a fixed cost) with a decrease in the kilowatt-hour rate (measuring your monthly energy use) will provide financial predictability, meaning the weather will not have as much impact on your bill.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has predicted that weather patterns for the coming year will be warmer (see adjacent map), which adds up to lower kilowatt-hour sales and smaller revenues available to the co-op to spread across system maintenance. The co-op has fixed costs it must pay and power it must buy to sell to its members. Warmer weather will result in lower energy use which means less revenue for the co-op. The result? Rates must increase to cover the costs of ensuring you have access to safe, reliable power nearly 24/7 (we can't control Mother Nature whose storms occasionally knock out power).

There are two components to look at when considering a rate change: the use charge and the basic charge (defined on the opposite page). The lower the basic charge, the higher the use charge has to be for revenues necessary to cover the cost of the co-op's operations. Conversely, the higher the basic charge, the lower the energy charge. Why? When the basic or "fixed" charge is set at the

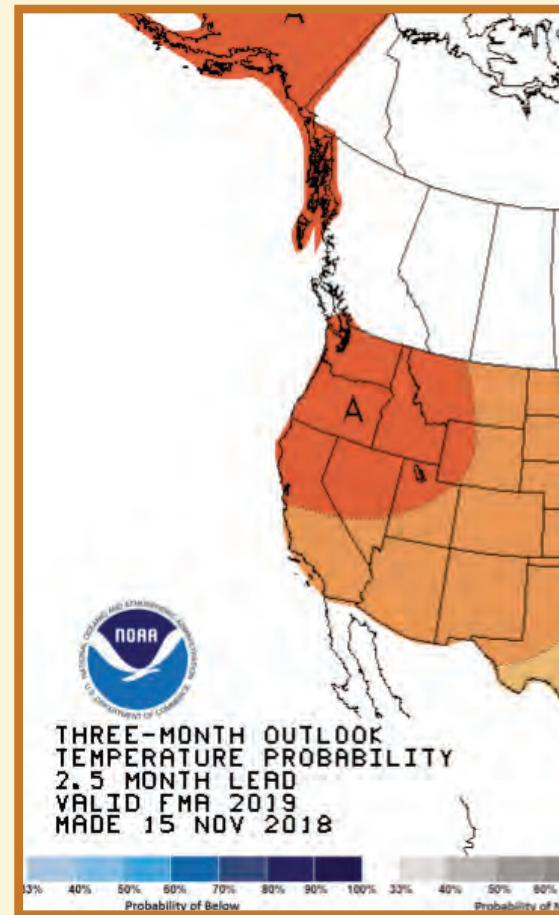
appropriate level, resulting revenues pay for the day-to-day costs of operating the co-op without having to "chase the weather" with energy sales—higher when it's cold and lower when it's warmer. Remember, the co-op has costs it has to pay whether or not it sells a single kilowatt-hour.

At the November board meeting, the board's decision to increase rates was in response to energy use patterns declining with warmer than usual weather, as well as needed infrastructure improvements.

Lane Electric's 2019 budget anticipates more construction, including several undergrounding projects, to improve reliability for decades to come. We borrow to finance these long-term improvements so that each generation of members pays a fair share of the cost and benefit. The change to the basic charge across all rate classes reflects all current members' share of the improvements.

Predictability—for the co-op and for the member—is why the residential kWh rate is decreasing. A lower kWh rate for the first tier of use helps stabilize your bill when cold spells have you using more electricity to stay warm. Also, a lower rate helps Lane Electric collect only the revenue it needs to meet operational goals. The cost to deliver that energy to you across the miles is more appropriately collected in the basic charge that stays the same each month regardless of how much energy you use.

Meeting operational needs with affordable rate structures has been, and continues to be, a focus of the board of directors. The board, and all Lane Electric employees, are committed to operating efficiently to provide you with reliable electric service. We also offer energy efficiency and weatherization programs to help you reduce your energy use



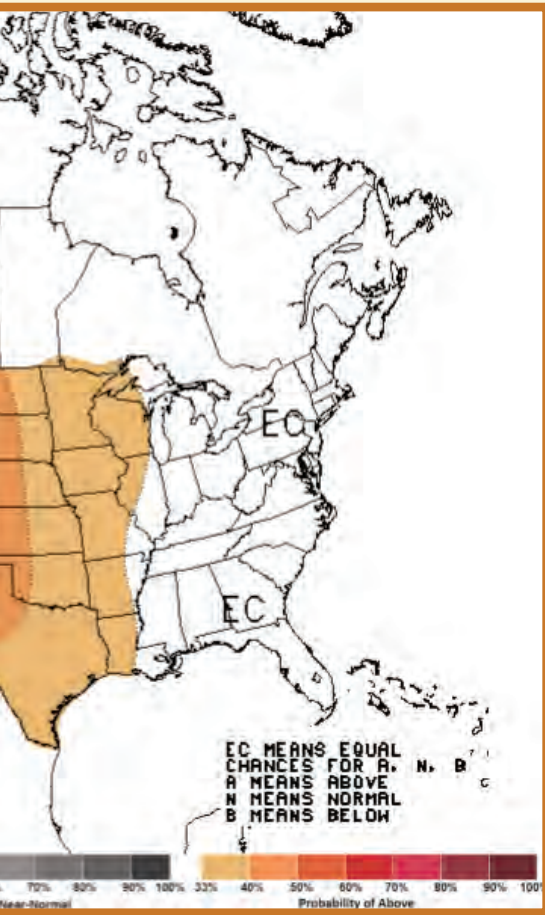
and decrease your monthly electric bill, while increasing the comfort levels in your home.

If you are interested in more information about our conservation programs or need help paying your bill, contact us at 541-484-1151. We offer payment options and financial assistance for those households at or below 60 percent of Oregon's median income.

Detailed rate schedules and sample billings are available at [www.laneelectric.com/rates](http://www.laneelectric.com/rates). ■

## Examples of Monthly Effect on RESIDENTIAL Electric Bills (Including Basic Charge)

Time of Year	Monthly Use kWh	2018 Rates	2019 Rates	Dollar Difference	Percent Difference
Winter	1,500	\$160.65	\$162.60	\$1.95	1.21%
Winter	2,500	\$256.35	\$258.30	\$1.95	1.21%
Summer	1,500	\$163.80	\$165.75	\$1.95	1.21%
Summer	2,500	\$261.70	\$263.65	\$1.95	1.21%



## What is a Basic Charge?

Whether you use one kWh, 100 kWh, or 1,000 kWh of electricity, there are certain expenses that remain the same to bring power to your home or business. These are called fixed costs. Fixed costs do not vary based on the amount of electricity consumed. They include taxes, poles, wires, equipment, trucks, labor and billing systems, all of which must be in place to make sure members receive safe, reliable electric service.

To make sure the recovery of these fixed costs is not solely dependent on kilowatt-hours sold, members' bills include a basic charge to augment the energy or kWh charge.

With January bills, the residential basic charge will increase from \$28.50 to \$31.50. All other rate classes will also see a basic charge increase of \$3.

## How Rate Decisions Are Made

The responsibility for changes in Lane Electric Cooperative's rates resides with the board of directors. Members elect directors to represent the best interests of the entire co-op membership. In accordance with the cooperative's Articles of Incorporation, rate-making is one of their major responsibilities.

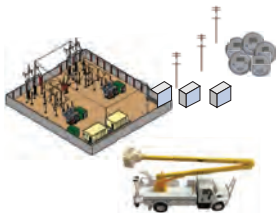
At the direction of the board, cooperative staff develop several alternative rate schedules and provide the impacts each rate schedule would have on a member's bill at varying levels of electricity use. The board evaluates the alternatives for affordability, fairness to all concerned, incentivizing energy efficiency, and aligning the cooperative's cost structure to the rate structure, among other considerations.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The rate change taking effect will show on your January electric bill, which is based on your energy use during December.

## A Simple Look at Fixed Costs and Use Costs and How They Impact Us

### Fixed Cost Analogy ...

Substations, trucks, poles, wires, transformers, meters, etc., (*the co-op's property*) and personnel are referred to as "plant." The co-op finances its plant over 30 years and must make monthly payments whether or not a single kWh is sold. These are "fixed costs."



Whether a complex electric distribution system, or a passenger car for transportation, there are fixed costs for having both in place and available for use at any time.

Generally, vehicles (*your property, or "plant"*) are financed over extended periods of time like the co-op's plant. Monthly payments must be made to the lending institution whether or not the car is driven a single mile. Your monthly car payment is a "fixed cost," just like the co-op's fixed costs.



### Then There's The Use Costs ...

The basic charge pays for the co-op's infrastructure (fixed costs) so you can have electricity at your home 24/7 whether you use any or not. Your appliances then use energy (*kilowatt-hours*) that are delivered to your home over the electric system. You are charged for the kWhs your appliances use and will see this charge on your electric bill.



TVs, ovens, microwaves, electric heat, lights, refrigeration, air conditioning ... they all add up!

Similarly, your car payment provides you with a vehicle (infrastructure) so you can come and go 24/7, if you choose. When you elect to use your car, the other costs begin to mount, adding to your total car expenses for the month. Simply put, the more you drive, the higher your monthly car expense—just like your electric bill. It's the same principle.



Maintenance, fuel, oil, repair bills, tires, insurance ... they all add up!

APPLY NOW



# Washington, D.C. Youth Tour 2019



## Apply Now

High school juniors, would you like a chance to change your life and your community? Every year, Blachly-Lane chooses one high school junior to represent the co-op at National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. Former students who have attended say it has changed their lives. The student must be in 11th grade when applying and live in the home of a parent or legal guardian who is an active Blachly-Lane member living in the Blachly-Lane service area.

We encourage students with an interest in leadership, business, politics, community relations, social services, communications, or the electric utility industry to apply. Applications are on our website at [www.blachlylane.coop/content/youth-tour-0](http://www.blachlylane.coop/content/youth-tour-0). The deadline for entry is Friday, January 25, 2019, but we encourage students to start early, as the application requires some supporting documentation from their school and a letter of recommendation. Change your life—apply today!



Recreation is one of many benefits created by dam reservoirs.

Photo by Jakob Owens

## The Region's Water Storage

*Reservoirs provide energy storage, support wildlife and create recreational opportunities*

Just like when animals gather and store food in times of abundance for leaner months, hydropower operators store water during wet months to prepare for drier conditions. Though squirrels may opt for underground storage, hydropower operators store water behind hydroelectric dams in large pools called reservoirs.

Not all dams have reservoirs, but hydropower system operators work together to make the best use of the available storage and release water to meet multiple needs year-round.

Stored water can be released through turbines to generate electricity. While operations change year to year depending on the conditions, reservoirs generally are drawn down in winter and early spring to provide power and make room for heavy spring runoff. As snowpack melts in April through August, water is stored to prevent flooding and keep communities safe.

Stored water also can be released through spillways, rather than turbines, to increase river flows and help fish

migrate downstream to the ocean.

Reservoirs act like giant batteries that provide energy when needed. Hydropower operators use stored water in the reservoirs behind the dam to adjust the amount of water flowing through turbines to match electricity use. Power forecasters determine how much electricity will be needed during a given time and communicate that to hydropower operators.

The consistent availability of hydropower also helps support other, more variable, types of renewable energy sources such as wind. Dams can quickly ramp up to provide more electricity when the wind drops and can scale back generation when the wind picks up again.

Snowmelt and runoff from upstream mountains in the spring fill reservoirs. This stored water comes in handy during the drier summer months. Water can be released to support energy demand and, in some instances, even reduce stream temperatures to help fish.

Reservoirs also allow barges to move up and down the river, carrying all sorts

of materials—from grain to wood chips to garbage. Wheat is brought from Idaho and Washington to Oregon and even overseas. Barges on the Columbia River move almost half of all the wheat from the United States.

The reservoirs created behind dams are also popular places for recreation.

Water stored in reservoirs can help hydropower operators support the seasonal needs of both young and adult salmon. In winter and spring, operators help ensure salmon spawning grounds have enough water for spawning and to keep their nests covered. In spring and summer, extra water is spilled from the dams to help young fish move quickly downstream to the ocean.

Releasing stored water helps other wildlife, such as lamprey eels, which are an important cultural resource for some Northwest tribes.

Operating the Columbia River hydropower system to support all of these needs is quite the balancing act. The storage capacity of reservoirs is critical to its success. ■

# Longtime Board Members End Their Terms

Tillamook PUD is saying goodbye to two special members of our team, Directors Ed Jenkins and Ken Phillips.

## Ed Jenkins

Ed joined the Tillamook PUD Board of Directors in 1989, nearly 30 years ago. He has seen many changes.

“It’s been a real education,” Ed says. “The electrical utility business is complicated. It can be a challenge staying up to date on all of the changes.”

Ed attended many regional trade association meetings to keep up with current issues.

“Tillamook is not an island,” he says. “You have to be aware of all the issues regionwide.”

Ed is proud of Tillamook PUD and the direction it is heading.

“Tillamook PUD is very much a part of the community,” Ed says. “The staff are deeply connected to the community and work diligently in continuing to make it strong.”

Ed says employee morale is the best he has ever seen it.

“One of our best accomplishments within the last two years was hiring the current general manager, Todd Simmons, to lead the utility,” Ed says.

The utility industry is not without its challenges. Ed says staying on top of pricing issues in the utility industry and changes within the Bonneville Power Administration are things he is concerned about.

Supporting important renewable energy efforts, including buying and delivering community-generated power, will also be a challenge.

Ed also says careful consideration of the infrastructure improvement projects such as the Tillamook-to-Oceanside transmission line are important.

“Addressing our aging system and building infrastructure so that we can meet future load growths and continue to serve our customers with reliable and affordable energy is necessary,” he says, noting the operation and future of the utility depend on it.

“It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve on the board,” Ed says.

## Ken Phillips

Ken has been part of the Tillamook PUD Board of Directors for the past 16 years. During his time as a director, Ken fully immersed himself into the utility industry and the inner workings of Tillamook PUD.

Ken gained knowledge and formed a strong connection with staff members and the community while serving as a director.

“Being a part of the Community Advisory Group was one of the highlights for me,” he says. “The process and the community input during this was really good.”

Ken remembers the trials and tribulations of the 2007 storm that swept across the



Ken Phillips, left, and Ed Jenkins are leaving the Tillamook PUD board this year.

area. He says he will never forget how the staff and community came together.

“The ability of the utility to get things done timely and bring the power back on was remarkable,” Ken says.

Ken enjoyed many aspects of being on the board, but especially working with the staff.

“I have never been involved with such a dedicated and talented group of people,” he says.

Ken recognizes the challenges ahead for Tillamook PUD and the board are some of the same challenges they see today.

Changes within the Bonneville Power Administration regarding fish passage, dam removal and regulations are topics the board will continue to actively follow.

Another challenge Ken sees

ahead for the utility is building infrastructure.

“We, as a utility, have to be able to build infrastructure to serve all of our customers,” he says. “It is not always easy, but if we can’t do that, it is going to hurt all of our customers in the long term.”

Ken sees a bright future for Tillamook PUD as the utility changes and evolves through innovation and new technologies.

“I think public power is an awesome thing,” Ken says. “It just doesn’t get better when it comes to delivering electricity.”

We thank Ed and Ken for their time spent on the Tillamook PUD Board of Directors and serving the community. We appreciate you both so much. Thank you! ■

*Next month we will introduce you to incoming board members Dave Burt and Mike Gardner.*

# SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS



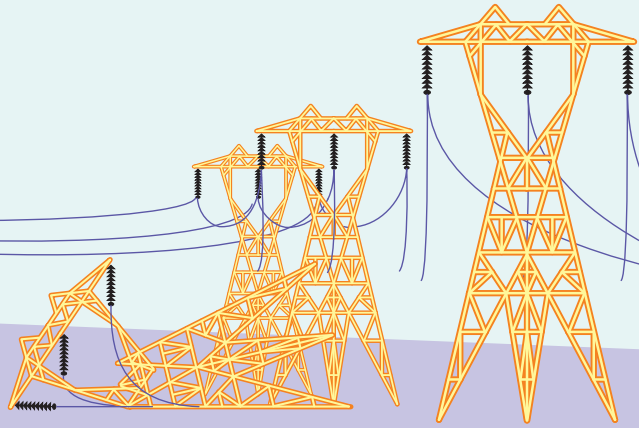
## Informational Meeting Regarding Proposed Tariff Adjustment

The BUECI Board of Directors will hold an information meeting at noon on Monday, January 28, 2019, at the city of Utqiagvik Mayor Emeritus Nathaniel Olemaun Jr. City Hall Administration Building, Council Chambers. The meeting is to allow members to comment on the tariff rate changes proposed to become effective on January 29, 2019.

To view the notice, go to [www.bueci.org/2019rate/](http://www.bueci.org/2019rate/) or pick up a copy from the front office at 1295 Agvik Street, Barrow, Alaska. ■

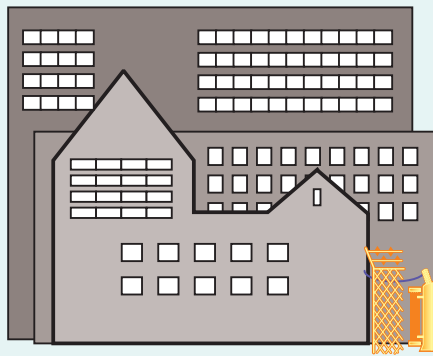
# How

Make sure you report any outage to your utility, even if you think a neighbor already has called. This will help line crews isolate and repair the problem as soon as possible.



## HIGH-VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION LINES

1. Transmission towers and lines that supply power to one or more transmission substations rarely fail. However, when damage does occur—usually due to high winds or ice buildup—these towers and lines must be repaired before other parts of the distribution system are inspected because they serve thousands (or tens of thousands) of people.

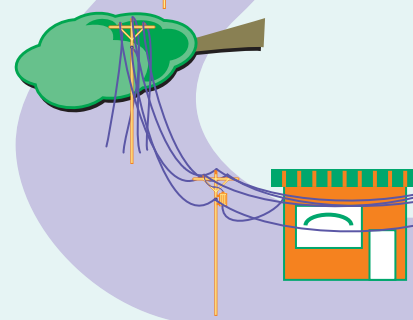


LARGE INDUSTRIAL USER

If you or a family member depends on life-support equipment, call your utility immediately. Your utility can try to prioritize power restoration to you or advise you to take shelter elsewhere.

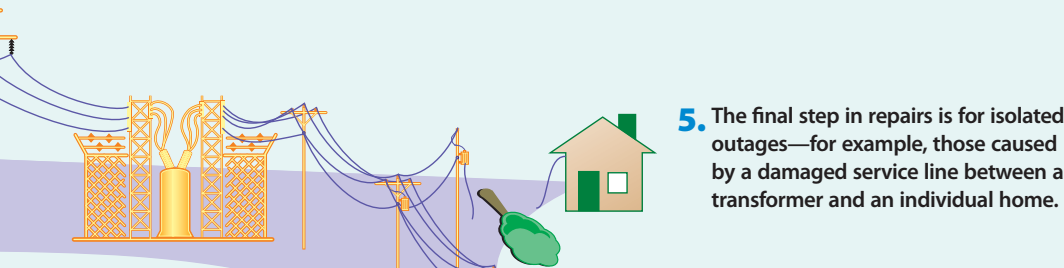
**Restoring the power after a severe storm involves much more than just flipping a switch at a substation or pulling a fallen tree off a downed power line.** Highly trained workers from local utilities and crews from neighboring states work together around the clock to restore service.

Shown here are the steps utilities follow to restore power. At each stage, the primary goal is getting the greatest number of consumers back online in the shortest time possible.



SMALL BUSINESSES

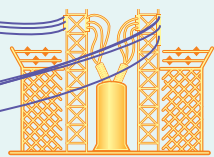
# Power is Restored After an Outage



**5.** The final step in repairs is for isolated outages—for example, those caused by a damaged service line between a transformer and an individual home.

## LOCAL DISTRIBUTION SUBSTATIONS

**2.** A utility usually has several local distribution substations, each serving hundreds or thousands of consumers. When there is a major outage, these substations usually are checked first to see if the problem is in the transmission system to the substations or the substations themselves.

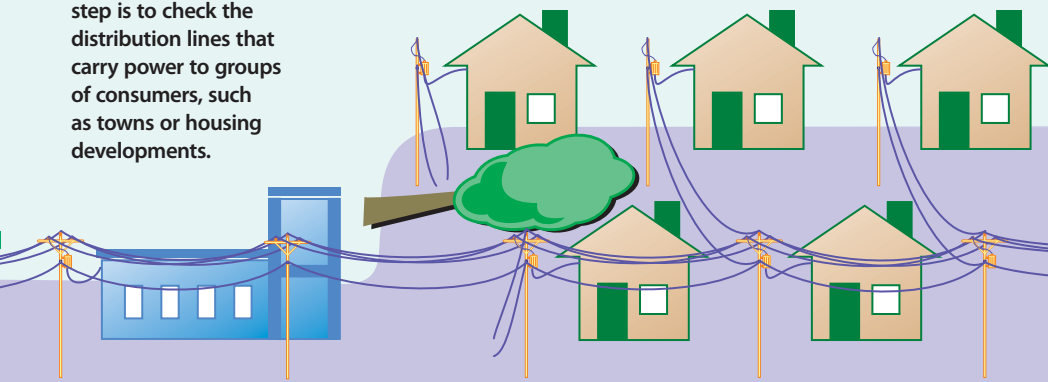


## LOCAL DISTRIBUTION LINES

**3.** If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, the next step is to check the distribution lines that carry power to groups of consumers, such as towns or housing developments.

Do not connect a generator directly to household wiring. The power from a generator can backfeed to power lines and injure or electrocute lineworkers making repairs.

**4.** Line crews work on outages that are more localized by inspecting the final supply lines—called tap lines—that carry power to utility poles or underground transformers outside small businesses, schools and homes.



SCHOOLS

HOMES

## Be Prepared!

Equip yourself with the proper supplies in the event of a power outage, emergency or disaster. Consider adding the following items to a kit you can use at home or take with you in case of evacuation.

- Water: one gallon per person, per day
- Food: nonperishable, easy-to-prepare items
- Flashlight
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio
- Extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Medications and medical items
- Multipurpose tool
- Sanitation and personal hygiene items
- Copies of personal documents (pertinent medical information, proof of address, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates, insurance policies)
- Cell phone with charger
- Family and emergency contact information
- Extra cash
- Emergency blanket
- Maps of the area
- Medical supplies
- Baby supplies
- Games and activities for children
- Pet supplies
- Two-way radios
- Extra set of car keys and house keys
- Manual can opener

For more information, go to [www.redcross.org/prepare](http://www.redcross.org/prepare).



A snowy path can be hazardous to LMUD meter readers as they follow their route. If they cannot access a meter, an estimated reading may be required.

## Keep Your Meter Clear

*Help LMUD meter readers avoid hazards and ensure an accurate meter reading*

Living in a rural area comes with challenges, especially for those whose jobs take them outside and into the elements.

Lassen Municipal District's meter readers and fieldman know this all too well.

Toni Merrill, Lisa Hay and Cindy Elliott make up LMUD's meter readers and fieldman. Though they may be a small crew, they are a mighty force. They are committed to giving the best possible service to LMUD customers. This drive keeps them

going and pushes them to overcome whatever challenges they find in the field.

When it comes to dealing with challenging conditions, veteran LMUD meter reader Toni Merrill has seen most everything.

"Meter reading is tough on a good day, but throw in snow and ice and it turns dangerous," Toni says. "A few days after a big snowstorm I was trying to get a read from a meter that was blocked by a 6-foot snow berm."

The snow had slid off the home's metal roof, blocking the meter. Toni had to climb up the berm to get a look at the meter. The slippery snow sent her tumbling down.

Fortunately, Toni wasn't injured. The home's residents didn't understand that by not clearing the path to the meter they were creating a hazard.

"Our biggest challenge really is clear access to the meter," says fieldman Cindy Elliott. "Especially gates, there are so many meters that are

behind locked gates."

Meter readers and fieldmen need access to your meter, regardless of its location. If your meter is behind a closed or locked gate, please make sure LMUD personnel can get to it.

"I understand that people are concerned with privacy, but I'm just there to do my job. Usually it's just a quick in and out," Cindy says. "I'm focused on my job and not on the yard—mostly looking down, keeping an eye out

for potential hazards. Most people never even know I've been there."

Even though Cindy is focused on her work, she has had occasions where she noticed something out of the ordinary and averted a potential tragedy. She once was in a yard where the dryer vent was clogged with lint and on the verge of starting a fire. Cindy was able to let the customer know what was going on and they were able

to correct the issue.

In addition to creating an undo hazard, if the meter on your home or business is not accessible, you are subject to an estimated read—the average between your prior month's electric use and the same month last year.

The estimate is usually accurate, unless something different or unusual has occurred. For instance, using electric heaters or a leaking water pipe can cause

anomalies in your electric use. When the meter readers can access the meter again, a true reading occurs.

LMUD is converting all of its traditional meters to automated meters. AMI meters are installed in nearly two-thirds of the service territory. The final phase of the change-out will take place in 2019. Once these meters are installed, meter readers will rarely have to access meters in the field.

As LMUD proceeds with the AMI install, it is important that meter technicians have clear access to each meter so it can be changed out in an efficient and safe manner. Look for more information about this project in the coming months.

Keeping the path to your meter clear is crucial. Clear access to your meter means an accurate reading for you and ensures the safety of LMUD's employees. ■

## Keep Your Account Up to Date

As you ring in 2019, consider making a resolution to update your LMUD account. Here are a few tips to help us provide you with the best service possible.

**Keep your account information fresh.** Do we have your current contact information? If you have changed phone numbers, disconnected your landline or changed your mailing address, please let us know. If we need to discuss your account with you, we need to be able to contact you in a timely manner. Have you changed your name or do you need to add your new spouse to your account? It is important that we update the information in our system. If you would like to have someone listed on your account as a contact, we need your verbal permission.

**Credit where credit is due.** LMUD offers customers

the convenience of paying their electric bill with a debit or credit card. This time-saving service is free. We can store your card information, which saves extra steps and time. When submitting your bill, make sure you fill out all of the required fields. To process your payment, we need the full card number and the expiration date. Many customers have multiple accounts. To correctly credit each account, we need you to note each account number and the amount you want credited to each one. When making a payment at our office, it is helpful to bring your bill. We can find you in the system much faster and shorten the length of your visit. If you pay bills through your bank's online bill pay option, make sure you use the correct account number. Each time you change service



Customer Service Representative Marissa DeFabrizio helps Roy Butterfield pay his bill while LuLu waits patiently.

locations, your account number also changes.

**Opening, transferring or closing an account.** Are you moving this year? Whether you are moving to a new house in our service territory or leaving the area, we need to have your forwarding address. This is where we send your final bill, or if you have

an account credit, your refund check.

If you need to contact us, our customer service department is available Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You can visit our office at 65 S. Roop St., or call us at 530-257-4174. We can also be reached via email at [cservice@lmud.org](mailto:cservice@lmud.org).

## Keep It Safe

# Resolve to Eliminate Electrical Hazards

*Check your plugs, outlets, cords and fuses to ensure a safe living space*

Protecting your family from electrical shocks, house fires and tripping hazards is easier than losing 20 pounds or quitting smoking, so make safety New Year's resolution No. 1.

The Energy Education Council offers these simple ways to do that:

- Inspect your outlets.

Loose-fitting plugs can surprise someone with a shock or even start a fire. If your wall plate is broken, replace it so wires are not exposed. Insert plastic safety caps into unused outlets if your family includes young children.

- Make peace with plugs.

If a plug does not comfortably fit into an outlet, do not force it. Never remove the grounding pin (third prong) to fit a three-prong plug into a two-prong outlet.

- Be careful with cords.

They are not designed to last forever. Discard frayed or



**Make safety the first New Year's resolution on your list.**

cracked cords. Move them out from under carpets or rugs.

- Pack up extension cords.

They are fine for connecting strands of holiday lights together and helping decorations reach plugs during December, but pack them up and store them on January 1. Extension cords are designed for temporary use.

- Watch your wattage. The lightbulbs in your lamps and overhead fixtures should match the specifications on those fixtures. A bulb whose wattage is too high can overheat.

- Upgrade the wiring. Faulty electrical wires start many house fires. If you hear popping or sizzling sounds behind the walls or if light switches feel hot, do not use those fixtures or switches until a licensed electrician replaces them.

- Find no fault.

Ground-fault circuit interrupters are a must in every outlet in the kitchen, bathrooms, laundry, basement, garage and outdoors.

- Fuss with your fuses. If you do not know if your fuses are the right size for the circuit they are protecting, call an electrician.

- Adjust appliances. If a circuit trips every time you plug in your hair dryer, or if your coffeemaker has ever shocked you when you plugged it in, you either have faulty appliances or an overloaded circuit. An electrician can identify and solve your problem.

- Get what you need. Unless you live in a new house, you probably use more electricity than the builder ever dreamed you would. Call an electrician to determine whether your home needs more electrical capacity. ■



**Extension cords are intended for temporary use. If you need additional outlets, call an electrician.**

## Use Energy Wisely

# Plan for a Year's Worth of Savings

*Small changes add up to big savings when it comes to energy efficiency*

Got cabin fever? Make your home more energy efficient this winter and start saving for your summer vacation.

You can trim your electric bill by taking a few simple steps. Following are recommendations for year-round energy and money savings from Escambia River Electric Cooperative and Touchstone Energy Cooperatives.

**January:** Lower your thermostat a few degrees during winter and save as much as \$85 a year. Programmable thermostats make it easy to save by offering pre-programmed settings to regulate a home's temperature throughout the year.

**February:** Adjust your water heater. Turning down the temperature gauge to below 120 F can heat up your savings.

**March:** Stop air from escaping your home and money from escaping your wallet. Head down to your home's basement and seal leaky ducts.

**April:** A little caulk can go a long way. Air leaks add up. Caulking cracks and openings to the outside could save more than \$200 a year.



Used properly, programmable thermostats typically pay for themselves within a year due to money saved on heating and cooling.



Give your refrigerator a thorough cleaning. For maximum efficiency, keep the temperature between 37 and 40 F.

**May:** Put your refrigerator on your spring cleaning to-do list. Throw out expired items, clean the refrigerator inside and out, and check the temperature gauge. For maximum efficiency, a refrigerator's temperature should be between 37 and 40 F.

**June:** When was the last time you changed a filter? Replacing furnace and air conditioner filters regularly can have a big effect on a home's energy use. Dirty filters restrict air flow and reduce the overall efficiency of your cooling system, forcing it to work harder on hot summer days.

**July:** Heading out of town on vacation? Unplug all of your electronic devices, such as computers, monitors, printers, TVs and cable boxes, DVD players and microwaves. Electronics with digital displays and instant-on features consume energy even if not in use.

**August:** Your home's cooling costs can skyrocket in summer, right along with the

temperature outside. Keep your thermostat set between 78 and 80 F to save up to 8 percent monthly on cooling bills.

**September:** Be a "fan-atic." While they do not replace an air conditioner or a heat pump, fans move the air so everyone feels more comfortable. On a milder day, a fan is a more energy-efficient choice than cranking up the air conditioning. Fans cool people, not rooms, so turn them off when you leave the room.

**October:** Get ready for winter by insulating your attic. Adding 9 or more inches of insulation could save \$150 a year.

**November:** As the weather cools down, pull up your window shades. Keeping blinds open during cold weather lets heat from sunlight in, reducing the need to turn up your home's thermostat.

**December:** Top your Christmas wish list with an Energy Star appliance. Upgrading appliances such as washing machines to Energy Star-rated models can save up to \$140 a year. ■

## A Word About Water

# Look for Ways to Conserve

*Changing behaviors is crucial to saving water*

Being vigilant in inspecting equipment and changing behaviors can help you use less water. Consider these tips.

- Check faucets and pipes for leaks. A small drip from a worn faucet washer can waste 20 gallons of water a day. Larger leaks can waste hundreds of gallons.
- Check your toilets for leaks. Put a little food coloring in your tank. If the color appears in the bowl within 30 minutes without flushing, you have a leak that should be repaired immediately. Most replacement parts are inexpensive and easy to install.
- Use your water meter to check for hidden water leaks. Read the house water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is used. If the meter does not read exactly the same, there is a leak.
- Put plastic bottles or a float booster in your toilet tank. To reduce water waste, put an inch or two of sand or pebbles inside each of two plastic bottles

to weigh them down. Fill the bottles with water, screw on the lids and put them in your toilet tank, safely away from the operating mechanisms. Or buy an inexpensive tank ball or float booster. This may save 10 or more gallons of water a day. Be sure at least 3 gallons of water remain in the tank so it will flush properly. If there is not enough water to get a proper flush, users will hold the lever down too long or do multiple flushes to get rid of waste. Two flushings at 1.4 gallons is worse than a single 2.0-gallon flush. For new installations, consider buying low-flush toilets, which use 1 to 2 gallons a flush instead of as much as 7 gallons. Replacing a 4.75-gallon-per-flush toilet with an ultra-low volume 1.58-gallon flush model represents a 70 percent savings in water flushed and cuts indoor water use by about 30 percent.

- Don't use the toilet as an ashtray or wastebasket. Every time you flush a cigarette butt, facial tissue or a small bit of trash, water is wasted.
- Insulate your water pipes. It is easy and inexpensive with pre-slit foam pipe insulation. You will get hot water faster and avoid wasting water while it heats up.
- Take shorter showers. Turn off the shower after soaping up, then turn it back on to rinse. Long showers use 5 to 10 gallons every minute.
- Install water-saving showerheads and low-flow faucet aerators. They are inexpensive and easy to install. Low-flow means it uses fewer than 2.5 gallons a minute.
- Turn off the water after you wet your toothbrush. There is no need to keep the water running while brushing your teeth. Just wet your brush and fill a glass for rinsing.
- Rinse your razor in the sink. Fill the sink with a few inches of warm water.



**Don't let the water run while washing dishes. Fill one side of the sink with soapy water for washing and the other side with clean water for rinsing.**



**Don't waste water while brushing your teeth. Turn the water off after you wet your toothbrush.**

This will clean your razor with far less wasted water.

- For optimum water conservation, use your dishwasher and clothes washer for full loads only.

- With clothes washers, avoid the permanent press cycle, which uses an extra 5 gallons of water for the extra rinse. For partial loads, adjust water levels to match the size of the load. Replace old washers. Energy Star-rated models use 35 to 50 percent less water and 50 percent less energy per load. If you are in the market for a new washer, consider buying a water-saving frontloader.

- Minimize the use of kitchen sink garbage disposal units. In-sink units require lots of water to operate properly, and add considerably to the volume of solids in a septic tank, which can lead to maintenance problems. Start a compost pile as an alternate method of disposing of food waste.

- When washing dishes by hand, do not leave the water running for rinsing. If you have a double basin, fill one with soapy water and one with rinse water. If you have a single-basin sink, gather washed dishes in a dish rack and rinse

## Statement of Nondiscrimination

Escambia River Electric Cooperative Inc. has filed with the federal government a compliance assurance in which it assures the Rural Utilities Service that it will comply fully with all requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; all requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; all requirements of the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; all requirements of the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to the end that no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color or national origin, or solely by reason of such person's handicap, or on the basis of age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination in the conduct of its program or the operation of its facilities.

Under this assurance, this organization is committed not to discriminate against any person on the ground of race, color or national origin, solely by reason of such person's handicap, or on the basis of age, in its policies and practices relating to applications for service or any other policies and practices relating to treatment of beneficiaries and participants including employment, rates, conditions and extension of service, admission or access to or use of any of its facilities, attendance at and participation in any meetings of beneficiaries and participants or the exercise of any rights such beneficiaries and participants in the conduct of the operations of this organization.

The person in this organization responsible for coordinating the nondiscrimination compliance efforts of this organization is General Manager/CEO Clay R. Campbell.

Any individual, or any specific class of individuals, who feel subjected by this organization to discrimination prohibited by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, by the Age Discrimination Act or by the rules and regulations of the U. S. Department of Agriculture may personally, or through a representative, file with the Office of the Secretary, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250; the Office of Advocacy and Enterprise, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250; or this organization, or all, a written complaint. Such complaint must be filed not later than 180 days after the alleged discrimination, or by such later date to which the Secretary of Agriculture of the Administrator of the Rural Utilities Service extends the time for filing. Identity of the complainants will be kept confidential except to the extent necessary to carry out the purposes of the rules and regulations of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

them with a spray device or a pan of hot water. Dual-swivel aerators make this easier.

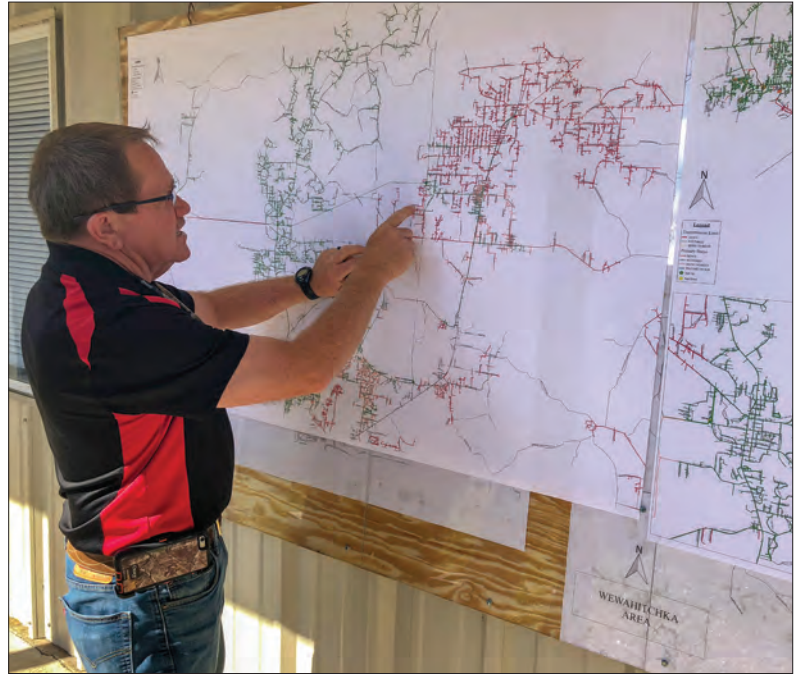
- Do not waste water by rinsing dishes before loading the dishwasher.
- Don't let the faucet run while you clean fruits and vegetables. Instead, rinse them in a stoppered sink or a pan of clean water.
- Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator. Running the tap simply to cool it for drinking is wasteful. ■

Source: [www.eartheasy.com](http://www.eartheasy.com)

# Rebuilding the System

*When Hurricane Michael leveled Gulf Coast Electric Cooperative's electrical infrastructure, employees and management worked virtually nonstop for weeks to restore service*

By Pam Blair



Manager of Operations Andy Dick reviews the color-coded service map indicating which areas have power and which are still being worked on.

Photo by Kristin Evans



Gulf Coast Electric Cooperative Construction Foreman Josh Pitts pulls downed power lines out of fallen trees along Edwards Road in Southport.

Photo courtesy of PowerSouth Energy Cooperative

When one member of the family needs help, other members and even extended family rally. That happened in the weeks following Hurricane Michael.

The near-Category 5 hurricane's 155 mph winds annihilated PowerSouth Energy Cooperative's power transmission lines and substations serving Gulf Coast Electric Cooperative, decimated GCEC's distribution lines and knocked out communications.

As GCEC members assessed damage and began to clean up, the cooperative's management team and employees left their families behind and put their personal situations on hold to tackle the arduous task of rebuilding an electrical system left in ruins.

"Our dedicated cooperative employees worked around the clock for weeks restoring our distribution system for our co-op members," says CEO John Bartley. "They worked tirelessly to repair our system. Only after they restored each member that could safely receive power did employees begin heading home at night and on weekends to see their families and begin working to repair damage to their own homes."

Like many members, several employees were left with homes that are unlivable.

"We didn't have a meter on," says Chief Operating Officer Francis Hinson. "It was a huge challenge, and everybody stepped up. It is a testament to our employees to come to work, do their job and know they have nothing to go home to."

While their loved ones worked 16- to 20-hour days, spouses provided supplies for some of the 1,600 workers who came to help. Community members also pitched in, providing drinks and food to crew members, along with blankets, coats and sunscreen.

"The community wanted to help in any way they could," Francis says. "Our members are A-plus."

Staff at GCEC's generation and transmission cooperative, PowerSouth, helped tremendously, says Kristin Evans, vice president of marketing and communications.

PowerSouth flew in three satellite phones and bought GCEC prepaid cellphones. Three PowerSouth employees stayed in the area and documented hurricane damage using a drone to capture aerial photos. Back at headquarters in Alabama, other employees helped with social media posts and communications—especially critical immediately following the storm.

"To get back to normalcy will take years," Francis says.

The Tyndall office was condemned. Francis expects the Southport office to follow suit because of the moisture. The



**Chief Operating Officer Francis Hinson awaits the delivery of satellite phones from PowerSouth Energy Cooperative's helicopter.**

Photo by Kristin Evans

Wewahitchka office sustained extensive roof damage.

"Offices are leaking every time it rains," Francis says. "They have sour, musty smells. Four contract crews are working daily with us hooking up members who had been unable to receive power. It's going to take awhile." ■

## **A New Appreciation for His Co-op Family**

Three weeks to the day after Hurricane Michael made landfall, Lineman Jason Curry's 17-year-old son, Wes, was helping folks clean up a rental property. The work was unrelated to the hurricane. A co-worker poured gas on a debris pile. Fumes settled 10 feet away and combusted, leaving Wes with second-degree burns. He was transported to a hospital in Mobile, Alabama, for treatment. Wes has recovered fully.

CEO John Bartley and Chief Operating Officer Francis Hinson

called Jason daily to find out how Wes was doing. In Alabama, Baldwin EMC CEO Karen Moore personally delivered a care package to Jason and offered him a place to stay. People from Carroll EMC in Georgia also delivered a care package.

"No words can describe the emotion, the gratitude," Jason says. "That's what humanity should be every day. My management, my company, my family and my extended family all took care of me. It will be easier from here on out. When you know your company has your back, you know things are going to be fine."