

in touch



WITH MEMBERS OF PRAIRIE ENERGY COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Energy adjustment cost to increase

by Darrell Goff, executive vice president/general manager

Prairie Energy continues to face upward rate pressure from its wholesale power providers. The cost of electric power from Corn Belt Power Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative, will increase soon due primarily to the cost of adding new generating facilities. Your cooperative can control internal costs, but we continue to be adversely impacted by environmental and industry regulations. Another factor that has plagued Basin Electric has been record setting levels from snow and rainfall that have slowed thermal generation demand and hindered federal hydropower scheduling and operations. In difficult economic circumstances, it's safe to say that the last thing the member/owners of Prairie Energy (or other not for profit electric cooperatives in Iowa) need is higher electric bills.

There is no simple, single solu-

tion to tackling our nation's energy challenge, and even exciting new technologies like renewable resources aren't a silver bullet. For example, to fully utilize the potential of renewable energy, at least 30,000 miles of high-voltage transmission lines (239 kV and greater) will need to be constructed to move energy generated at remote wind farms and other facilities to urban load centers.

As we have mentioned in prior newsletters Corn Belt Power became a class A member of Basin Electric Power Cooperative located in Bismarck, North Dakota. What drove that decision was guaranteed energy supply well into the future. We have reduced that risk greatly; along with that decision comes cost increases BUT they are significantly less than what would have been had Corn Belt continued to go it alone.

Pricing adjustments are some-

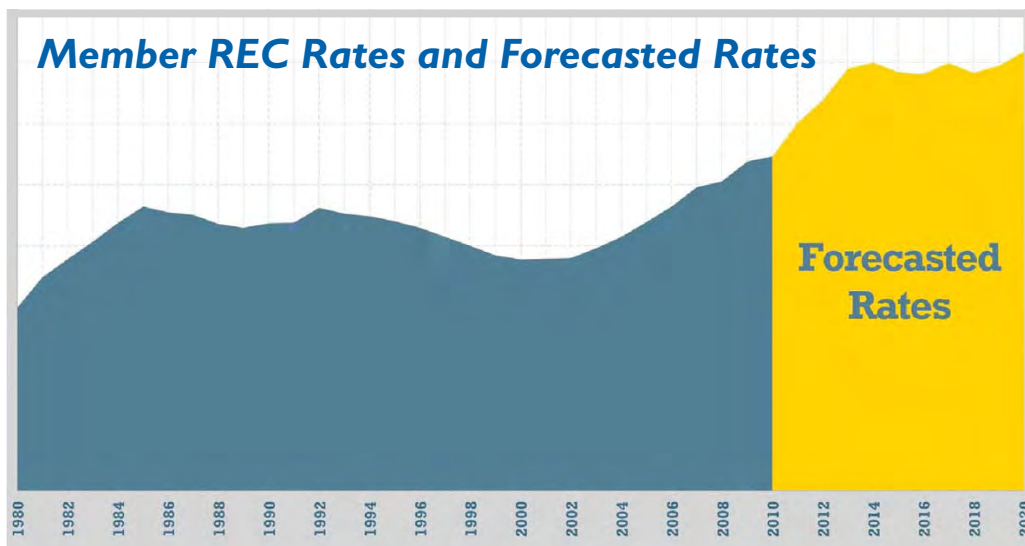
thing we only consider during times when factors indicate it necessary to do so. We have always believed that reliable electric service at a reasonable price is something our member/owners can count on 24/7. To meet these goals we must also protect the financial stability of your cooperative by asking our member/owners to share in those costs.

The last rate adjustment for Prairie Energy's member/owners occurred January 1st of 2007. Since that time we have used an ECA (energy cost adjustment) as an additional component of your monthly bills. This has allowed us to keep pace with wholesale power cost increases. The current ECA is \$.0081 or a little less than 1 cent per kWh. Here's another way to look at this: From January 1st of 2007 through at least September of this year your annual increase per year, over the last 4.75 years, has been a little less than \$.002 (for every 1,000 kWhs of usage, that's an increase of approximately \$2.00 per month per year).

At this time Basin Electric Cooperative has proposed an increase of approximately one-half cent per kWh to all of their Generation and Trans-

Continued on page 4.

Average REC member system cost, including substation charge; calculated average REC rate reflects power sold to municipals and others served by RECs.





Fall planting can save energy next summer

Most of us plant trees and shrubs in the spring, but cool temperatures and lots of rain make fall a good time for planting, too.

Planting shade trees near the windows on the sunny side of your house can block heat and damaging UV sunrays from getting inside during air conditioning season. Evergreens near the house can block the wind and keep it from blowing through windows when you're trying to keep your home warm in winter.

A few tips for fall planting:

- Plant in September and early October to allow enough time for roots to establish before the cold weather stops the tree from growing.
- Start your trees and shrubs in burlap or containers rather than planting their bare roots into the ground in the fall.
- Ask a landscaper or an expert at your garden center which varieties of trees do well when planted in the fall. Some, like red maple, birch, poplars, and some oaks, do much better when planted in the spring.
- Water plants frequently and thoroughly after planting. They need about an inch of water a week until the ground is frozen.
- Wrap the trunks of young trees with burlap or plastic in late November to protect them from frost, sunburn, and animals. Remove the wrap in the spring.
- Spread a thick layer of mulch around newly planted trees so freezing and thawing of the soil won't heave them out of the ground.



Special pricing is available for a limited time on ENERGY STAR® Qualified CFLs

Special pricing on ENERGY-EFFICIENT CFL purchases for co-op members

The offer lasts through mid-December or while supplies last.

Residential customers of many utilities in Iowa, including your local electric co-op, are eligible for instant, in-store rebates on the purchase of up to 12 ENERGY STAR rated CFLs at participating stores. The offer begins this fall and runs through mid-December.

Co-op members can purchase the CFLs from any participating retailer in Iowa. To see a list of participating stores, go to www.iowachangealight.com or call 800-339-6856.

With this special pricing, many CFLs can be purchased for as little as 99 cents each.

Decisions are made at the store level regarding the variety of bulbs sold at the special pricing. To save time, call the store ahead of time to ask about selection and availability.

Go to www.iowachangealight.com or call 800-339-6856



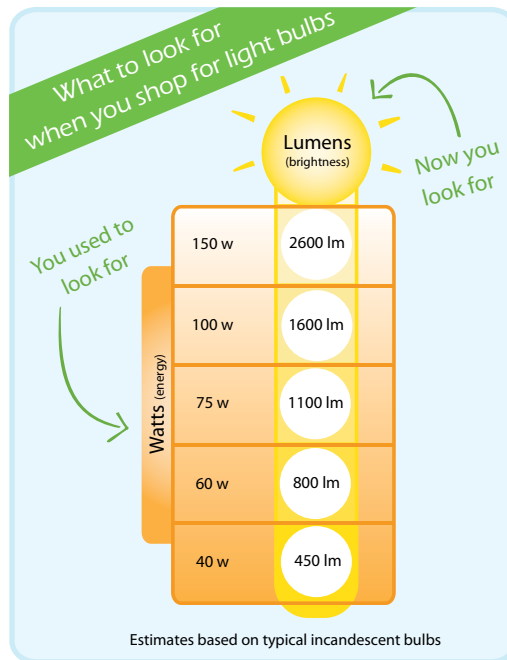
Shopping for light bulbs?

Learning about *lumens* is a bright idea

Light bulbs are getting better

Newer bulbs — like halogen incandescents, CFLs, and LEDs — last longer and use less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs, saving you money on your energy bills. In fact, beginning in 2012, everyday light bulbs have to meet new Department of Energy standards for how much energy they use. Bulbs that don't will be phased out over the next couple of years.

Along with this move to more efficient bulbs comes a new way to shop for them.



What Are Lumens?

For years, people have chosen light bulbs by the watt, learning over time about how bright a typical 40-watt or 60-watt bulb is. But wattage tells you only how much energy a bulb uses — not how bright it is.

With newer light bulbs designed to use less energy, wattage is no longer a reliable way to gauge a light bulb's brightness. That takes lumens.

lumens = brightness
watts = energy

Lumens measure brightness. A standard 60-watt incandescent bulb, for example, produces about 800 lumens of light. By comparison, a CFL bulb produces that same 800 lumens using less than 15 watts.

How Bright a Light?

The chart above shows the number of lumens produced by common incandescent bulbs. If you're looking to buy a bulb that will give you the amount of light you used to get from a 60-watt bulb, you'll now look for 800 lumens.

You can use lumens to compare the brightness of any bulb, regardless of the technology behind it, and regardless of whether it's a halogen incandescent, CFL or LED. Using lumens helps you compare "apples to apples" when you shop for light bulbs. Once you know how bright a bulb you want, you can compare other factors, like the yearly energy cost.

Source: Federal Trade Commission



What Are My Lighting Options?

Starting in 2012, lightbulbs must be more energy efficient.

The three most common bulb options consumers will find on store shelves are:



Halogen incandescents

Energy Savings: * 25 percent
Lifespan: * Three times longer
Annual Energy Cost: \$3.50



Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs)

Energy Savings: * 75 percent
Lifespan: * 10 times longer
Annual Energy Cost: \$1.20



Light-emitting diodes (LEDs)

Energy Savings: * 75-80 percent
Lifespan: * 25 times longer
Annual Energy Cost: \$1

*As compared to traditional incandescent bulbs

Learn more at energysavers.gov/lighting

Prairie Energy linemen assist with storm damage



Tanner Riedesel, in the white, lineman and Nick Dennler, right, apprentice lineman assisted East Central Iowa REC with the Storm damage.

Storms that blew through central Iowa early on July 11, took a toll on the utility infrastructure in the counties of Benton, Tama, Marshall and Story and put into effect the Iowa REC Disaster Plan. Prairie Energy Cooperative responded to this call along with thirteen other Iowa cooperatives.

Prairie Energy sent two crew members to Vinton, Iowa with a digger truck to help with the restoral process. The storm caused such extensive

damage that it took four 16-hour days to get most people back on with electric service. At one time there were about 40 percent of meters without service following the damaging storm.



When buying a new appliance, check the black and yellow EnergyGuide label. This label provides an estimate of the product's energy consumption and efficiency. It also shows the highest and lowest energy efficiency estimates of similar models.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

County Fairs

Prairie Energy Cooperative employees cooked pancakes at the Hancock and Wright County Fairs. Approximately, 165 people were served at the Hancock County Fair and 250 at the Wright County Fair.



Delia and Celeste Swanson wait patiently as Manager Darrell Goff cooks pancakes at the Wright County Fair, on July 11. Partially hidden is Todd Foss, key accounts director for Prairie Energy Cooperative.



Hancock County Fair Queen Kelsie Pringnitz, Garner, was one of the 165 served on Aug. 1. Darrell Goff, right, VP/GM; Don Kamrad, member service representative and Director Ted Hall, partially hidden, helpd serve.

Cost adjustment continued from page 1

mission Cooperatives (Corn Belt included). You can expect the increase to be added to the ECA at the same time Corn Belt elects to pass this increase on to Prairie Energy. As of this newsletter we do not have a definite time frame, but it could be as early as your October 2011 usage which would show up on your November 1st billing statement.

I apologize for not having a better handle on the timing of the increase but at this time we have not received a definite date for implementing the increase. Please bear with us; hopefully the timing of the increase will be available for the October newsletter.

Survey Winner



Jane Johnson

Be sure to enter the monthly survey in the Living With Energy in Iowa magazine and you could be a winner just like Jane Johnson, Britt. Jane won a Solar-Powered Flashlight and Outdoor Timer.