The value of the electricity continues to shine

by Derrill Holly

How many of us remember dropping into the electric company office with our parents and grandparents to pay the light bill? Whether you do that in person, by mail or online today, paying your monthly bill does a lot more than just keep the lights on.

Electricity keeps us connected to our modern world. Consider all the necessities and conveniences we enjoy in part because of the power lines running to the electric meter outside our homes.

Count up your televisions, desktop, laptop and tablet computers, printers, gaming consoles, music and video players and personal assistant devices. Whether they get used every day or just occasionally, the electricity that keeps them working comes from Northwestern Electric.

Have you looked around your kitchen lately? Between the coffee maker and toaster and the microwave and electric skillet, a lot of us have added several other modern small appliances. (981324001)

If you’ve got a craft nook or workshop, the power tools and machines you use to cut and shape your projects are either plugged in or recharged from the outlets connecting your household wiring to Northwestern Electric.

You use electricity to run all these devices, and we still keep the lights on, use the stove, heating and air conditioning, and get hot water from tap.

The good news is, even as we rely more on electricity, it’s still a bargain, especially compared to other things we pay for regularly.

Since 2011, medical care, residential rental rates and education have increased at rates of three percent or more per year. Butter, meat and egg costs have been up by more than one to two percent annually, and even bread costs have risen better than a half point on average.

Electricity costs rise about one percent a year, but co-ops across the country have reported a decline in average residential use per household since 2010. That means we’re doing more things with less energy.

Kilowatt hour use per household dropped by eight percent between 2010 and 2016, slightly less than the

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ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it’s easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2012-2017

Percent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Rent</th>
<th>Cable/Satellite TV</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Electricity</th>
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<tr>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
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Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Consumer Price Index
The value of electricity continues to shine
Continued from page 1.

nine percent decline reported by all electric utilities, nationwide.

When it comes to value, electricity is a clear winner, and we’re always looking for ways to work with you to make it even better. That’s why Northwestern Electric urges energy efficiency, encourages you to look for ENERGY STAR® appliances, and promotes technology, designed to give members more control over their electricity use.

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 co-op’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 going to become even more important as digital devices and internet-connected technologies become even more important in our lives.

The average home now has 10 Wi-Fi connected devices. That number is expected to explode to 50 by 2020. Technology and the gateways that keep it working use electricity, so you’ll depend upon Northwestern Electric for more than the power that keeps the lights on.

That’s why we’re always working to provide service that’s reliable, keep it affordable, and make it even more valuable to our members— you, your family and your neighbors.

Derrill Holly writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation’s 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Look for LED products and fixtures for outdoor use, such as pathway, step and porch lights. Many include features like automatic daylight shut-off and motion sensors. You can also find solar-powered lighting for outdoor spaces.

Source: energy.gov

May 2018 Operating Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
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<tr>
<td>Revenue - Billing</td>
<td>2,521,989</td>
<td>2,700,719</td>
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<td>Cost of Power</td>
<td>1,482,437</td>
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<td>Miles of Lines</td>
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<td>Members Connected</td>
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<td>Density per Mile</td>
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<td>Average Member KWH</td>
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<td>Average Bill</td>
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<tr>
<td>KWH Purchased</td>
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<td>KWH Sold</td>
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Students experience sights and sounds of Washington, D.C.

Ryan Horn, Brook Pack and Nylyssa Morgan experienced the sights and sounds of the nation’s capital as NWEC’s delegates during the Annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

The tour began June 8, 2018, with a “Get Acquainted Banquet” in Oklahoma City. The 70 winners, representing 25 of the state’s rural electric systems, departed for the nation’s capital the next morning for their week-long adventure.

“My experience was very unique,” said Ryan. “I got to see many things I had always wanted to and some eye opening things that I wasn’t prepared for. Youth Tour helped prepare me for my future and showed me how blessed we are to live in our great nation.”

Brook was proud to represent Northwestern Electric on the tour. “I am very honored to have the chance to tell about my experience on the tour,” she said. “It truly was a life changing experience. I loved Mount Vernon, the Lincoln Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery and the private tour of the Capitol by U.S. Representative Markwayne Mul- lin. I honestly can’t believe I had the chance to go on this amazing trip!”

She also has some advice to the upcoming juniors of this great state of Oklahoma. “Step out and take the test for this trip. It is an awesome and surreal opportunity. Not only do you get to see our beautiful United States capital, but you also make forever friends who might well be our next country leaders! This trip really opened my eyes to many things. I can boldly say I am proud to be an American citizen of this great country”

For Nylyssa, the trip was a once in a lifetime opportunity. “Seeing all the museums and how they all happened was really breath taking,” she said. “I’m so glad I was able to go and I really recommend applying for it. For some it may just be for the scholarship, but the trip is the best part!”

In addition to seeing all the historic monuments, the teens toured the U.S. Capitol, Smithsonian, Mount Ver- non, Holocaust Museum and enjoyed watching the U.S. Marine Sunset parade.

Youth Tour is designed to help students better understand the values of rural electrification and to become more familiar with the historical and political environment of our nation’s capital.

Hidden account number contest

Congratulations to Carl Foster for recognizing his number in last month’s newsletter. The other number belonged to Mark Clem.

We have hidden two account numbers somewhere in the articles in this newsletter. The numbers will always be enclosed in parentheses and will look similar to this example (XXXXXX).

If you recognize your account number, all you have to do is give us a call on or before the 8th of the current month and we’ll give you a credit on your bill for the amount stated.

This month’s numbers are worth $25 each. Happy hunting!
Got capital credits? We do!
It pays to be a member/owner of Northwestern Electric Cooperative

When you sign up for service with Northwestern Electric Cooperative, you become a member/owner. One of the benefits of being a member/owner is capital credits. When Northwestern Electric makes more money than it needs for operating costs, capital improvements and cash reserves, we return that money to you, our member/owners, in the form of capital credits.

Capital credits are allocated annually based on how much you paid to the co-op for electricity during the previous year. There are two ways capital credits are paid back to you: general retirement (when board approves) and estate retirements (when a member is deceased). The following addresses questions/scenarios we often encounter.

► What’s the difference between allocated and retired capital credits?
Allocations are made annually based on NWEC’s margins (profits) and reflect member equity/ownership. The funds have no cash value until they are retired. When capital credits are retired, a physical check is mailed to the member or credit is given on active electric accounts for the year(s) being retired.

► How often do members receive capital credits?
Northwestern Electric’s board of directors decide every year whether or not to retire capital credits. When the Cooperative is strong enough, the board directs our staff to pay back a portion of past years’ capital credits. In March 2018, our board approved a retirement of $82,000 for the year 1998 along with $85,000 from our power supplier, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative, for the years 1977-1979.

► Do I lose my capital credits in the years the board decides NOT to approve a general retirement?
No. All capital credits are allocated for every year members are served by NWEC and are maintained in individual member accounts until a retirement is approved.

► What happens to capital credits when a member leaves the cooperative’s service area?
The allocated amount is held in the former member’s capital credit account. When the retirement is approved for the year(s) the member received service from NWEC, a check is mailed to the forwarding address we have on file. It is important to leave a valid forwarding address when you move so you can receive your last allocation notice and your general retirement checks years down the road.

► What happens to the capital credits of a member who dies?
The capital credits of a deceased member can be approved to pay without waiting for a general retirement. However, these estate payments are not automatic. A representative from the estate must contact our office or visit our website (www.nwecok.coop Account Services-Capital Credits) to receive a proper form to complete on behalf of the deceased’s estate. Along with the completed form, a certified copy of the death certificate and final decree of a will or a trust is required to complete the application process. These are approved monthly by our attorney and board of directors before being paid out.

These legal documents are required because capital credits are considered to be personal property of the member (NOT whoever is paying the bill). They are distributed according to the will/trust provided for the member(s) whose name is on the account.

When a member passes away, we recommend the surviving spouse or family member contact our offices (Buffalo or Woodward) so a name change on the account can accurately end accruals and start the claim process for capital credits. (20391001)

► Why is it important that my electric service account be in my own name?
The name on the account is the person to whom the capital credits will be allocated and who will receive retirements in the future—whether they are paying the bill or not.