



## Why do my electric bills go up in the winter?

That's a good question with a fairly simple answer. Higher usage.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, an independent statistics & analysis resource, there are many factors that affect the amount of energy a household uses year-round:

- Geographic location and climate
- Type of home and its physical characteristics
- Number, type, and efficiency of energy-consuming devices in the home, and the amount of time they are used
- Number of household members

During southern Illinois winter months, home heating can account for nearly half, more or less, of your utility bill. Aside from the flat charges listed on the monthly statement, residential monthly bills are calculated using the published rates multiplied by each month's electric usage. Temperatures and usage are variable and can be unstable and unpredictable in nature. As cold temperatures set in, more kilowatt-hours (kWhs) are consumed on the member-side of the meter, which directly affects overall costs in a given period.

It is important to note that when it is extremely cold outside, it takes more energy to warm your home. In the summer, when your thermostat is set at 70 degrees inside, compared to even a 90-degree day, the system does not have to work as hard to make up the 20-degree difference. On the flip side, when it is 10 degrees outdoors, your heating system(s) must create and maintain the 60-degree temperature variance



to manage comfort indoors. When the heating system(s) work harder and cycle more often, it will result in increased energy usage. Should you have a gas furnace, electricity is still used to run its blowers and fans.

We get several calls during the cold months from consumer-members contemplating the possibility of a faulty meter to blame. Further investigation in most instances leads to a discovery that usage is proportional to recorded temperatures based on the described make-up of a member's home, its characteristics and the desired level of comfort. Other times, when the usage is not easily explainable or still seems incorrect, it could later be attributed to a member's equipment malfunction, failure or another unforeseen issue.

Here are some additional things to consider when pinpointing where

higher, or unexplainable, usage could be coming from:

- Warm baths or showers feel great on cold days — and heating extra water can increase your consumption and your electric bill. Be sure your water heater is properly insulated if it is in an unheated space, and turn down the temperature on the thermostat.
- Heat pumps are very efficient heating systems, yet when they malfunction, they can become electric furnaces that will lead to very high electric usage. Regularly verify the outdoor unit is operating properly. Keep filters clean and

► *Continued on 18B*



Egyptian Electric  
Cooperative Association  
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

1732 Finney Road  
Murphysboro, IL 62966

Business hours/After hours  
800-606-1505

24/7 Automated Pay-by-Phone  
844-759-3977

Office hours 8 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. M-F  
[www.eeca.coop](http://www.eeca.coop)

## Board of Directors

Paul Hicks, President  
Kevin Liefer, Vice-President  
Randall Campbell, Secretary-Treasurer  
Rick Asaturian  
Kevin Bame  
Mary Jo Homan  
Ken Jarrett  
Steve Prest  
Paul Pyatt



**Shane Hermetz**  
General Manager

## Choose your payment option!

- At our office lobby, drive-thru, drop-box, or payment kiosk
- Mail to: 1732 Finney Road, Murphysboro, IL 62966
- Set up recurring bank draft or credit card payments
- Use SmartHub portal, online or mobile app
- By phone at 844-759-3977, using credit card or checking account
- Off-site kiosks located at 2301 N. Reed Station Parkway and 1815 W. Main in Carbondale

## "Why do my electric bills go up in the winter?" continued from page 18A

make sure the coils on the unit outside are clean, too. HVAC malfunctions can be costly to repair, and when they linger over long periods of time, it can be costly to your electric bill.

- Do you have a smart thermostat? What temperature do you keep your home thermostat set at throughout the day and night? Comfort levels vary person to person and can have a significant impact on usage. Also ensure that your thermostat is in the most economical location inside your home. Turning down the temperature can also help with energy usage.
- Shorter days and longer nights cause more energy usage from Christmas lights and lighting in general, inside and out.
- Space heaters feel great, but they can use a lot of electricity. If you are using a space heater extensively, you could be compensating for problems in your home, such as inadequate insulation, drafty windows, doors or an inefficient heating system.
- Engine block heaters can be necessary to make sure vehicles and equipment start but can impact your bill.
- Older mobile homes and modular homes statistically use more energy than many traditional built homes due to the nature of construction. Make sure the underbelly of the home is securely insulated.
- We have observed many instances when metal duct work is left uninsulated or placed in uninsulated environments, such as under the home or in attic spaces. Energy is wasted when warm to hot air

travels through cold ducts, or through holes and/or loose or detached duct work.

If you don't already, we urge you to utilize SmartHub, our online internet portal, on your desktop or app on your mobile device. You can, on demand, see how much energy (kWhs) you used yesterday, last week or last month. You can also view what the temperatures were like on corresponding days. If your energy usage suddenly spikes, there may be a problem that you can pinpoint and fix before you see the repercussions on your bill. **Charlotte Scott**

We also show detailed information on our bills to help better communicate the relationship between usage and temperatures. You can see your monthly usage, with temperatures, a two-year monthly usage comparison graph, average daily usage and average daily costs.

We have various online resources on [eeca.coop](http://eeca.coop), on our energy efficiency page, such as tips, digital downloads, audit information and virtual tools. We also have booklets in our lobby to help you recognize shortcomings within your home "envelope" with suggested worksheets and methods to address them. We offer free walk-thru energy audits, conducted by our employees, to help identify energy efficiency issues.

Remember, there is value in comfort and convenience. For us to be comfortable in our homes, many things in our homes will most likely be working harder and longer in the winter months. When reviewing your winter bills, please consider these factors, monitor your usage and assess the possible factors that could be causing high energy consumption. As always, please contact our office during business hours, to speak with a member service representative about any questions you might have.





## LIHEAP

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a heat and electric assistance program through the state of Illinois that is a benefit payment program, per heating season, that is intended to help with a portion of a qualified household's heating and electric costs.

The benefit amount depends on household size, income and energy costs where the benefit is applied as a credit directly to the household's Egyptian Electric account. Qualifications are based on income and household size, if your household's combined income is at or below the levels shown on this chart. To apply for assistance, go to [helpillinoisfamilies.com](http://helpillinoisfamilies.com) for the online application or contact your local administering agency at the applicable phone number below. Applications for the 2024 LIHEAP season are available until funding is exhausted.

**Paul Gentry**

Are you eligible? If your household income is within 200% of the federal poverty level for the 30 days prior to the application (gross income for all household members, before taxes are deducted) you could be eligible.

Jackson/Perry/Randolph/Monroe Counties ... 618/965-3458

St. Clair County ..... 618/277-6790

Washington County ..... 618/532-7338

Williamson/Franklin Counties ..... 618/937-3581

Union/Johnson Counties ..... 618/634-2201

### Illinois LIHEAP income guidelines for the 2023–2024 heating season

Family Size (total # in household)	30-day Income	Annual income
1	\$2,430	\$29,160
2	\$3,287	\$39,440
3	\$4,143	\$49,720
4	\$5,000	\$60,000
5	\$5,857	\$70,280
6	\$6,713	\$80,560

## IEC scholarships

Sixteen IEC memorial academic scholarships will be awarded again to high school seniors this school year. Each scholarship is worth \$2,000. Deadline to apply online is Dec. 31, 2023.

**10** scholarships are awarded to students who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative.

**5** scholarships are reserved for students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors.

**1** scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, is awarded to a student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative employee or director.

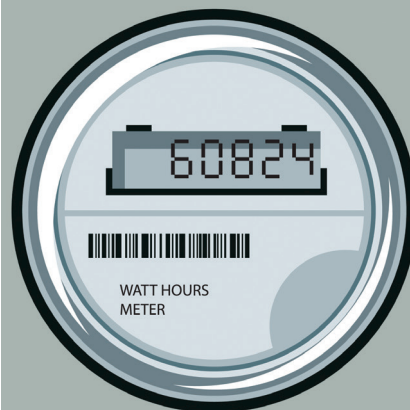
Information has been shared with area high school guidance counselors. For more information or to apply online, go to: <https://aiec.coop/iec-scholarship/?coop=EGT>



## DO NOT TAMPER WITH YOUR ELECTRIC METER

Meter tampering is not only illegal, but also incredibly dangerous!

- Never break a meter seal.
- Never open a meter base.
- Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.



## MEMBER PRIZES

Every month we will have three member names hidden throughout our Egyptian Electric News section. If you find your name, call our office and identify yourself and the page that it is on and you will win a \$10 credit on your next electric bill.

## Youth Tour 2024

For over 57 years, more than 50,000 young Americans have taken advantage of the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour offered by their local electric cooperatives. At least 1,500 high school students will be invited to Youth Tour 2024!

Each June, hundreds of electric co-ops across the country send participants to Washington, D.C., for a chance to learn about the cooperative business model and a full week of sightseeing. While in D.C., participants have a chance to meet with their elected officials and discuss the issues that are important back home. Without a doubt, Youth Tour has grown into an invaluable program that gives young Americans an experience that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. This month we will begin the application process to select local students to attend Youth Day on March 20, 2024 and Youth Tour June 14-21, 2024.

If you are a high school sophomore, junior or senior interested in traveling to Washington, D.C., to experience the trip of a lifetime, consider applying! **Myles M. Blair**

Students will be chosen to attend the all-expense-paid bus trip to Youth Day this spring to meet their elected senators and representatives at the State Capitol alongside their counterparts from other Illinois high schools and communities. From these students, at least two will be invited to attend the weeklong trip to D.C. Youth Tour is so much more than a sightseeing trip. Students have repeatedly shared that this experience has helped them grow into successful professionals. Youth Tour participants return home with a deeper understanding of what it takes to be a leader. As a result, they put these skills to use right here in our community.

Help us find the next generation of leaders by sharing the Youth Tour opportunity with a promising student.



For more information  
about Egyptian Electric's  
Youth Tour program,  
email [rcroxell@eeca.coop](mailto:rcroxell@eeca.coop),  
or visit [bit.ly/2nZqPr5](https://bit.ly/2nZqPr5).

