



Why do electric bills go up in the winter?

That's a good question. Even if you do not have electric heat, you may notice that your bills are higher during the colder months. The size of your bill and how it is calculated is completely dependent on how much electricity you use. The rates in the winter do not increase, so if your bill goes up in the winter (or summer for that matter), it's because more electricity is being used. In the winter, heating is a large piece of the usage "pie," weather accounting for nearly half of your bill. First, it is important to note, when it's extremely cold outside it takes more energy to warm your home. When it's 70-degrees outside, compared to even a 90-degree day in the summer, the system does not have to work as hard. When it's 10-degrees outside your system must make up the 60-degree difference to make and keep it warm indoors. Your system works harder and cycles more often, making your usage higher. Even if you have a gas or LP furnace, electricity is still needed to run the blower and fans. Here are some additional things to consider when pinpointing where the extra use came 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 have it checked for leaks.
- Heat pumps are very efficient heating systems, yet if it malfunctions, they become electric furnaces that will lead to high electric usage. Verify the outdoor

unit is operating on a weekly basis, keep filters clean and make sure the coils on the unit outside are clean too.

- Christmas can mean company who may not always turn off the lights. Was there any baking or cooking over the holiday season?
- Christmas lights (remember those?)
- Shorter days and longer nights mean that we use lighting more both inside and out.
- Space heaters feel great in basements, garages and bathrooms, but remember they can use a lot of electricity.
- Engine block heaters can be necessary to make sure vehicles and equipment start, but can impact your bill.

Try using SmartHub, our on-line internet portal, on your desktop or mobile device. You can see how much energy you used yesterday, last week or last month, as well as see what the temperatures were like. If your energy use suddenly takes a spike, there may be a problem that you can pinpoint and fix before you get the bill the next month.

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, but it may be worth the additional cost. When reviewing your bill consider that the usage during your billing cycle, is directly reflected in your amount due for that month.





1005 W. Broadway • PO Box 38
Steeleville, IL 62288

10169 Old Highway 13
Murphysboro, IL 62966

800-606-1505
Office hours 8 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. M-F
www.eeca.coop

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Lite-for-a-Bite

For the months of January and February, any member that brings in three non-perishable food items to either of our offices, or makes a monetary donation to the local food pantry here in our office, will receive one Energy Star LED light bulb, 9-Watt with a 60-Watt equivalent! (Limit 3 per account) All proceeds will benefit the Murphysboro Food Pantry.

Why the Murphysboro Food Pantry? Although it is in Murphysboro, it is inclusive and serves people throughout Jackson County. Because of their stable food supplies, made possible from the Pantry's leadership and volunteers, as well as the generous donations from the community, they have maintained this thriving first-class program that those in need can take advantage of. In Jackson County:

- There are about 12,000 food insecure individuals, or 19 percent that reside in Jackson County.
- One in four children in Jackson County qualify for subsidized school meals. The state-wide average is one in six.
- Over 33 percent of children in Jackson County live in poverty, the highest percentage among the largest 40 counties in Illinois.

Who they are, and what they do? They are an all-volunteer, non-profit organization that provide boxes of food to needy individuals and families five days a week who meet eligibility requirement set by USDA. They are also led by a volunteer Board of Directors who are actively involved in expanding their ability to serve those in need. In 2014, they served



almost 38,000 individuals, the majority from the cities of Carbondale and Murphysboro. Because they are a USDA-participating Food Pantry, they receive monthly allotments of surplus food from the St. Louis Food Bank, and are also eligible to purchase additional low-cost items in bulk from the Food Bank. They participate in Feeding America, a partnership between the St. Louis Food Bank and several large retailers including the local Kroger and Wal-Mart stores. In 2014, they spent an average of \$6,300 per month purchasing food to supplement the donations that were made possible by the generosity of many individuals, churches, businesses, local units of government, civic and social organizations. If not here, consider supporting your local food pantry because a little bit of help goes a long way!

For more information on how you can help, please contact Murphysboro Food Pantry, P.O. 671, Murphysboro, IL 62966 or call (618) 687-8258.

Egyptian Electric is looking for the next generation of leaders

What do 1,500 high school students, our nation's capital and electric cooperatives have in common? The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, of course! Youth Tour was established with one thought in mind – to inspire our next generation of leaders. Since 1964, more than 50,000 young Americans have taken advantage of this special opportunity offered by their electric cooperatives. It all takes place in June, when 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.

In January, we will begin the application process to select local students to attend Youth Tour 2017. If you are a high school sophomore,

junior, or senior interested in traveling to Washington, D.C. to experience the trip of a lifetime, please contact us for more information. Perhaps you know of an exceptional student who would be a great candidate for the program. If you do, please share this article with them. Eight students will be chosen to attend the all-expense paid bus trip in April, to meet their elected senators and representatives at the State Capitol alongside their counterparts from other Illinois high schools and communities. From these students, two will be invited to attend the week-long trip to Washington, D.C.

Melissa Crosby, a Chester High school student and an Egyptian Electric's 2016 Youth Tour representative, said "I enjoyed meeting other students from around the state, and it was a memorable experience that I will cherish for the rest of my life. I appreciate being given the opportunity!"

Youth Tour is so much more than a sightseeing trip. Students have repeatedly shared that this experience



has helped them grow into successful professionals. It has also benefited our local communities. Youth Tour participants return home with a deeper understanding and skillset 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, call Brooke at 618-684-2143, email bguthman@eeca.coop, or visit www.eeca.coop.

Touchstone Energy Classroom Grants

Thank you to all the Egyptian Electric Touchstone Energy Classroom Grant applicants, and to the eight winners and their students! We truly appreciate every one of the educators that went the extra mile by taking the time to apply on behalf of their students. The top eight projects that will be awarded \$500 to fund or assist their proposed classroom projects are:

- **Arduino Electricity Kits-Jennifer Cochran of Murphysboro Middle School**
- **A Great Place to Grow-Meteicha Green & Michelle Carter of Carruthers Elementary Attendance Center in Murphysboro**
- **Build a Robot-Sherry Prange of Trinity Lutheran School in Red Bud**
- **Dogfish Shark Dissection-Melissa Purdy of Saint Andrew School in Murphysboro**
- **Engineering Enrichment-David Goetting of Trico Jr. High School**
- **Education City Supplemental Learning-Dawn Seward of Desoto Grade School**
- **Literacy Rotations & Math Stations-Jeri Thomas of Trico Elementary School**
- **Drone in the Classroom-Michele Christman of Christ Our Savior Lutheran High School in Evansville**

Don't compare your electric bills

January is here and you just have or will be receiving your electric bill. You could be surprised it is higher than normal. Your first reaction is to call your neighbor to see if their bill increase is as much as yours, but don't do it. Before comparing, please remember that your home is not your neighbor's home; your family is not your neighbor's family. Life styles, appliances, and the number of people in your household can all cause huge differences. Keep in mind these things can influence electric usage and these can significantly impact it:

- Square footage of, and number of levels in, a home
- Number of windows in the home
- Type of insulation
- The foundation of a home
- Number of people living within the home
- Length of time members of the household are at home

- Direction the home faces
- Number, size and age of water heaters, as well as the temperature its set at
- Heights of ceilings
- Number, type and age of electric appliances in use
- Number, age and type of HVAC equipment
- The temperature that thermostat is set at

Comparing your electric bills with someone else would be like comparing your grocery bill. Everyone eats differently just as everyone consumes electricity differently. The number of loads of laundry you do a week to the make-up of your home, are small and large factors that differ, so don't compare, because it won't make sense.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Consider insulating your water heater tank, which could reduce standby heat losses by 25 to 45 percent and save you about 4 to 9 percent in water heating costs. You can find pre-cut jackets or blankets available from around \$20.

Source: energy.gov



The office will be closed Monday, January 16th, in observation of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.