



By Tim Stewart, CEO/Manager

# FINDING THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY

Electricity. We use it every day, and in today's technological world, we could barely function without it. It seems that prices for just about everything these days are increasing. The cost of rising energy prices is certainly on everyone's minds. It seems like every month we hear about issues ranging from supply chain, inflation at 40-year highs, tighter capacity in the Mid-continent Independent System Operator footprints, and increasing regulatory compliance requirements (such as EPA rulemakings).

## Electricity remains a good value

All of this got me thinking about what the value of electricity really is. At Clark Electric Cooperative the average rate is approximately 11 cents per kWh. But what is a kWh, how long does it last, and what does it do?

A kWh is a measure of electric use. Kilo stands for 1,000. For example a kilogram is 1,000 grams. A kilowatt is 1,000 watts of electricity. So a kilowatt-hour is 1,000 watts of electricity used for one hour of time. An old 100-watt light bulb uses 100 watts of electricity every hour it is on. So, if you left a 100-watt light bulb on for 10 hours it would use one kWh. The newer LED light bulbs use less electricity. A 25-watt LED bulb left on for 40 hours would use one kWh.

So, for 11 cents you get 40 hours of light if you turn it on four hours a day. That's 10 days of light. That's about a penny a day. What if you had 20 of these in your house? If you turned them all on for four hours a day, that would cost you about 22 cents a day. Twenty two cents a day for all that light.

Let's look at some other appliances. A dishwasher uses approximately 2 kWh per day—that's 22 cents per day. A side-by-side refrigerator uses approximately 2 kWh per day—that's only 22 cents per day to keep your food cold/frozen. A coffee maker uses 1-2 kWh per day, again 11 to 22 cents per day. Let's talk about entertainment. A 42" LCD television will use 1-2 kWh per day. An electric water heater with a family of four uses approximately 15 kWh per day. That's about \$1.65 per day for hot water.

The cooperative has not had a change in our base rates going on six years, since March 2017.

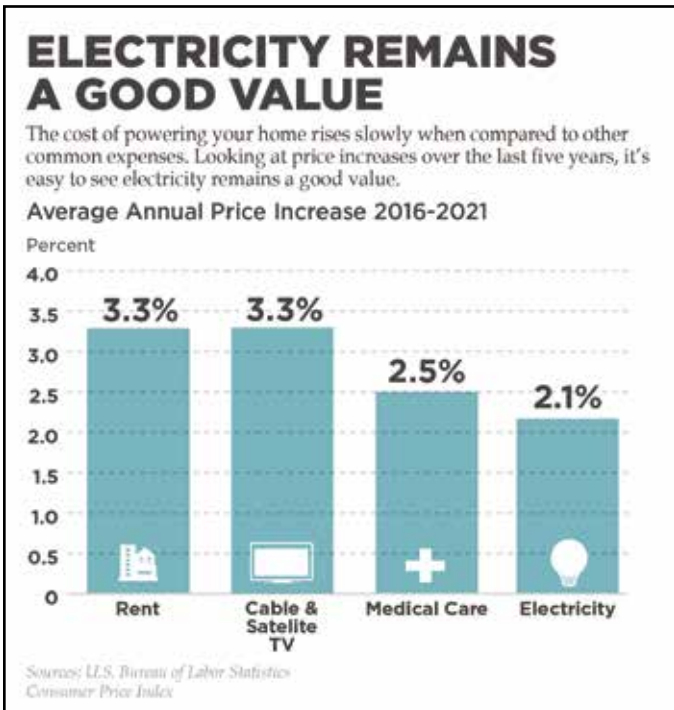
Let's take a look at this another way. If an average residential house uses 1,000 kWh per month that would be approximately \$4.63 per day.  $((1000 \text{ kWh} \times .11 \text{ cents}) + \$29 \text{ fixed charge} = \$139) / 30 \text{ days} = \$4.63 \text{ cost per day}$ . In today's world, you won't find many items that cost less than \$5.

I urge you to think about your daily necessities (housing, electricity, and gasoline to name a few), and then think about the cost of the some of the other items such as fancy latte coffee drinks or a stop at a fast food restaurant. We often don't question the cost of these items, with many of them costing more for that single item than it does to purchase an entire day's worth of electricity.

If at times it doesn't seem that electricity is affordable, remember—even as demand for electricity grows, annual electricity cost increases still remain low, especially when compared to the rising prices of other commodities, such as medical care, education, rent, groceries, coffee drinks, and even hamburgers from a fast food restaurant. Remember—electricity cools and heats our homes, cooks our meals, pumps and heats our water, powers our computers, provides lighting, cleans our clothes, milks cows, and offers a host of other labor-saving applications. Talk about entertainment; electricity powers items such as TVs, VCRs, DVDs, stereos, gaming consoles, shopping centers, restaurants, and casinos.

When you stop and think about what all electricity does and the true value that it holds, electricity provides exceptional value for the cost.

Electricity—where would we be without it?



# OCTOBER IS CO-OP MONTH

This is the month during which Americans celebrate cooperatives to raise awareness about the many benefits that cooperatives bring to our communities.

Cooperatives exist in many forms and deliver a host of products and services such as financial services, grocery/food, dairy, grain, and of course energy. The cooperative movement we know today traces its roots to a set of business guidelines drawn up by Charles Howarth, one of 28 weavers and artisans who founded the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers in Rochdale, England, on December 21, 1844. The tradesmen had banded together to open a store selling food items they could not otherwise afford, starting out with a meager selection of butter, sugar, flour, oatmeal, and a few candles but soon expanding to include tea and tobacco. Eventually, the enterprise was so successful the group was able to open a cooperative factory and textile mill.

When introduced in the United States by the National Grange in 1874, these “Rochdale Principles” fueled a cooperative explosion. After being formally written down by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) in 1937 (and last updated in 1995), they evolved into the seven cooperative principles used today.

Although stated in many ways, the seven cooperative principles hold that a cooperative must provide:

**1. Voluntary and Open Membership:** Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

**2. Democratic Member Control:** Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected representatives are accountable to the membership.

**3. Members Economic Participation:** Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative.

**4. Autonomy and Independence:** Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.

**5. Education, Training, and Information:** Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative. They inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

**6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives:** Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional, and international structures.

**7. Concern for Community:** While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

These seven principles are underpinned by six ideals — the values of Self-Help, Self-Responsibility, Democracy, Equality, Equity, and Solidarity.

## Above and Beyond

Electric co-op membership offers value far beyond affordable, reliable electricity. Here at Clark Electric Cooperative, we work hard to deliver safe, affordable, and reliable electricity to our 9,400 members every day.

But we don't stop there. Because we're a cooperative, we strive to do much more, to find ways of providing real value to you and the communities we serve.

So what exactly does real value mean? Well, in some ways it's basic, like connecting with a real, local person when you call our office. It could be finding a copy of the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News* in your mailbox every month, which keeps you informed about Clark Electric Cooperative, the electric industry as a whole, and what's happening at the state and federal levels. It's also providing the best possible service at the best possible price, returning capital credits on an annual basis, and always remembering that members own this organization.

Real value also means getting the lights back on as quickly as possible and communicating with you as to how outages are progressing. The outage information map on our website allows you to see outages and track our restoration progress. We also offer a service where we text you if you are part of a predicted outage. The application works with smart phones,





tablets, and computers. All you need is access to the internet.

Real value can also be seen with cooperatives helping cooperatives. Electric cooperatives nationwide have executed a mutual-aid agreement that brings line crews in from other co-ops to help us restore power in the event of major storms. You may recall seeing our cooperative principles in action when neighboring cooperatives sent crews to help us restore power after the unprecedented tornado hit our area hard last December.

Real value is commitment to community. In addition to providing opportunities for our youth through scholarships and leadership training, in 2004, Clark Electric Appliance and Satellite Inc. established the Adler-Clark Electric Community

Commitment Foundation to support programs and events that enrich the lives of people in Clark County and the surrounding communities. The mission is to strengthen local communities by aiding not-for-profit and community organizations fund projects that will enhance the quality of life for residents of this area. To date, the Foundation has awarded \$608,210.

October marks National Cooperative Month, when we celebrate co-ops and talk about why our not-for-profit, consumer-owned business model is special. Offering our members real value—and working to improve the quality of life in the communities we serve—is just one way we set ourselves apart. To learn more, please visit [www.cecoop.com](http://www.cecoop.com).

## KNOW THE SIGNS OF A SCAM



It's no secret that consumers with utility services have long been targets for scams.

**Common Types of Scams** A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in-person, by phone, text or email, the scammers want to scare you into immediate payment so you don't have time think clearly.

If this happens over the phone, simply hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, call us at 1-800-272-6188. Our phone number can also be found on your monthly bill and on our website, [www.cecoop.com](http://www.cecoop.com). If the scam is by email or text, delete it before taking any action. Remember, Clark Electric Cooperative will never attempt to demand immediate payment after just one notice.

Some scammers may falsely claim you have been overcharged on your bill and say they want to give a refund. It sounds easy. All you have to do is click or press a button to initiate the process. If you proceed, you will be prompted to provide banking or other personal information. Instead of money going into your bank account, the scammers can drain your account and use personal information such as a social security number for identity theft.

If this "refund" scam happens over the phone, just hang up and block the phone number to prevent future robocalls. If this scam attempt occurs via email (known as a "phishing" attempt) or by text ("smishing"), do not click any links. Instead, delete it, and if possible, block the sender. If you do overpay on your energy bill, Clark Electric will automatically apply the credit to your next billing cycle. When in doubt, contact us.

**Defend Yourself Against Scams** Be wary of calls or texts from unknown numbers. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a utility worker who requests banking or other personal information.

Never let anyone into your home that you don't know unless you have a scheduled appointment or reported a problem. Clark Electric linemen often wear high-visibility clothing with the CEC logo, and all others will make appointments with you prior to meeting with you. When we perform work on our members' property or come into your home, our employees are professionals and will always identify themselves.

We want to help protect our community against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense. Please report any potential scams to us so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim.

## HALLOWEEN SAFETY TIPS

- S**tay in groups
- C**ostumes should be well fitting
- A**lways test makeup
- R**emember to look both ways when crossing streets
- E**xamine all treats before eating
- S**tay on sidewalks when possible
- A**void dark houses
- F**lashlights + glowsticks for visibility
- E**njoy with caution!





# ENERGY ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR QUALIFYING MEMBERS

The winter heating season has now begun. It's important for you to make every attempt to keep current on your electric bill. We understand that things do happen that put financial burdens on people. Certain government organizations can offer heating assistance or point you in the direction of a group that can help.

The Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) administers the federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Public Benefits Energy Assistance Program. LIHEAP and its related services help more than 230,000 Wisconsin households annually.

**Eligibility** You may be eligible for weatherization services if:

- You received benefits from WHEAP or your gross income for the last three months is equal to or less than 60 percent of Wisconsin's median income (SMI) for your family size.
- Your dwelling/apartment has not been weatherized before.
- Your household meets certain priorities that may include a high energy burden or use, an elderly or disabled member or a child under six.

## WHEAP Income Guidelines for the 2022–2023 Heating Season (10/01/2022 through 9/30/2023)

60 percent of state median income guidelines

Household Size	One Month Income	Annual Income
1	\$ 2,675.25	\$32,103
2	\$ 3,498.42	\$41,981
3	\$ 4,321.58	\$51,859
4	\$ 5,144.83	\$61,738
5	\$ 5,968.00	\$71,616
6	\$ 6,791.17	\$81,494
7	\$ 6,945.50	\$83,346
8	\$ 7,099.83	\$85,198

For more information and application details, please contact your local office:

<b>Clark County</b> – Department of Social Services.....	715-743-5233
<b>Chippewa County</b> – Department of Human Services/ Economic Support .....	715-726-7862
<b>Marathon County</b> – Energy Services, Inc. ....	715-842-3111
<b>Taylor County</b> – Human Services Department.....	715-748-6123
<b>Wood County</b> – Department of Social Services Wisconsin Rapids office .....	715-421-8600
Marshfield office.....	715-387-6374
<b>Jackson County</b> – Department of Health & Human Services.....	715-284-4301

To learn more or to locate your local agency, call toll free 1-866-HEATWIS (432-8947) or visit [homeenergyplus.wi.gov](http://homeenergyplus.wi.gov). Other Resources for Energy and Weatherization Programs—**CEC Website:** [www.cecoop.com](http://www.cecoop.com), click the Bill Payment Tab and then the energy assistant link; **Focus on Energy Targeted Home Performance with ENERGY STAR®:** 1-800-762-7077 or visit [www.focusonenergy.com](http://www.focusonenergy.com); **Keep Wisconsin Warm Fund – Bill Pay Assistance:** 1-800-981-WARM (9276) or visit [www.kwwf.org](http://www.kwwf.org). (Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration)

## Ten tips to help save on energy costs

- 1 Replace any light bulb, especially ones that burn more than one hour per day, with a light-emitting diode (LED) bulb.
- 2 Seal from the inside. Air sealing is an inexpensive way to lower energy costs and improve comfort. Seal gaps and holes in walls, floors, and ceilings with caulk or foam sealant. Look for cracks around windows and where wires and pipes pass through.
- 3 Plug electronic devices such as cable boxes, printers, and TVs into power strips to turn off during vacations or long periods without use. Smart power strips make it an easy task to save money.
- 4 Close shades and drapes during the day to help keep your home cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.
- 5 Change your central HVAC system filter when dirty according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Dirty filters can impact your home comfort and increase your electricity bill.
- 6 A one degree increase in heating setpoint or reduction in cooling setpoint can increase energy use by 3–5%.
- 7 Have your duct work checked for leaks. Leaks at the return, air handler and supply can be a major source of high bills. In mobile homes check at the grill, cross over duct and down flow air handler, for leaks.
- 8 Set both the upper and lower water heater thermostats no higher than 120 F.
- 9 An electric space heater can cost more than \$100 per month to operate. Minimize their use, except for limited or temporary spot heating. Turn them off when leaving the room.
- 10 Ensure refrigerator door seals are tight. Eliminate unnecessary refrigerators.


Source: Touchstone Energy.com

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