

Y-W ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

AUGUST 2023



MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box Y
Akron, CO 80720



STREET ADDRESS

26862 U.S. Hwy 34
Akron, CO 80720



ph 970-345-2291
tf 800-660-2291
fax 970-345-2154
web ywelectric.coop

Y-W Electric Association, Inc.

is dedicated to providing high-quality, reliable electric service and related products to our members at competitive prices. Our members deserve and shall receive quality service unexcelled in our industry. We are committed to maintaining an environment where the Board of Directors and employees can perform at maximum potential to benefit our Y-W community.

Factors That Impact Electricity Prices

BY TRENT LOUTENSOCK GENERAL MANAGER



TRENT LOUTENSOCK

I was recently asked about what impacts electricity prices. We talked about how the daily cost of living seems to have increased across the board.

Just as inflation has impacted the price of everything we use in our daily lives, costs for the fuels required to produce electricity have also risen. This is a timely topic, so I want to help explain some of the factors that impact electricity prices (and energy bills) in this month's issue of *Colorado Country Life*. [Dennis & Laura Lengel 1192902907]

While there is no short answer, there are a few key elements that impact electricity prices and rates. Some of these factors Y-W Electric Association, Inc. can manage; some of them you can impact; and other factors are beyond our control. So, let me break it down.

There are two primary parts to your monthly residential electric bill: a service charge, and an energy consumption/kilowatt-hour charge. To understand your total energy costs and what impacts your bill, let's unpack one piece at a time. [Trent Twiss 441101002]

The first is a fixed monthly service charge, which covers the costs associated with providing electricity to your home. This includes equipment, materials, labor, and operating costs necessary to serve each meter in Y-W Electric's service territory, regardless of the amount of energy used. In order to ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local system, including power lines, substations, and other necessary equipment. Like many other businesses, we've experienced supply chain issues and steep cost increases for some of our basic equipment. For example, the cost for a 35-foot pole that is used for power lines went from \$260 in 2019 to \$1,027 this year, and wait times to receive this essential material went from a two week lead time to 21 weeks. Cross arms used on three phase power lines have more than doubled in cost and lead times from 2019 to 2023. Transformers have nearly doubled in price, but the lead times have extended from a four to six week normal lead time out to over a year for some that we use frequently. Because we are a not-for-profit cooperative, some of these expenses must be passed on to our members. I should note that the service charge is the same for everyone in a rate class, and the costs are shared equally across the membership.

Another component of your monthly bill is the kWh charge, which covers how much energy you consume. You've likely noticed the amount of energy you use can vary from month to month and is typically impacted by extreme temperatures. When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling and heating systems run longer, which increases your home energy use. Regardless, energy consumption is an area that you have some control over, and you can lower your monthly bill by actively reducing energy use. Your thermostat is a great place to start, so be sure to keep it close to 78 degrees during summer months.

I hope this information sheds light on some of the factors that impact electricity prices. While we can't control the weather or the rising costs of fuels, please know Y-W Electric does everything possible to keep internal costs down.

We're here to help you, too. Contact us if you have questions about your energy bill or for advice on how to save energy at home.



Each month, Y-W Electric Association offers its members a chance to earn a \$20 credit on their next electric bill. If you find your name and account number in this magazine, call 800-660-2291 and ask for your credit. It couldn't be easier.

Get acquainted with your account number, read your *Colorado Country Life* magazine, and pick up the phone. You must claim your credit during the month in which your name appears in the magazine. (Check the date on the front cover.)



Congratulations to the winners claiming \$20 from the June issue:

Judith K. Hoyt
Mildred M. Harper
Donald R. Edwards

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Ceiling fans can help improve indoor comfort year-round. In the summer, operate ceiling fans in a counterclockwise direction. Reverse the direction to clockwise during winter months and set fans on a low speed so warm air can circulate from the ceiling to the lower parts of the room. Remember, ceiling fans cool people, not spaces. Be sure to turn them off when you leave the room.

Source: Dept. of Energy



HOW SMART IS A Smart Thermostat?



MYTH VS FACT

My thermostat automatically saves me money.



That depends on how it's programmed and your preferences. It still uses the same amount of energy to reach and maintain temps.

A smart thermostat is smart straight out of the box.



The thermostat needs a little time to learn your heating and cooling preferences.

My thermostat is only as smart as I am.



Sort of. Most models are independent thinkers and adjust the temperature if no one's home.

It's creepy, my smart thermostat seems to know when I'm home.



It's smart for a reason! Geotechnology syncs your thermostat with your arrival. Some models use geofencing technology that tracks your smart phone location and kicks on when you're nearby.

My smart thermostat makes me smarter.



We'll give you this one! It can help you save money and make your home more efficient.

LEARN MORE

 **Safe Electricity.org**



Good Insulation Is More Than Fluff

Ensuring your home is properly insulated can go a long way toward making your home more energy efficient and comfortable. Before you attempt to replace insulation, there are some tasks of the job to research. Important considerations include where in your home you need to insulate, and your comfort level with starting and completing the job correctly.

Should I do the job myself?

Whether or not you take on the job yourself depends on several factors, according to the North American Insulation Manufacturers Association. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Where are you going to be replacing/adding insulation?
2. Is the space you want to insulate open and accessible?
3. What is your comfort level with working in that space?
4. What is your comfort level with being able to complete the job? [Page Packer 4421001010]
5. What type of material do you want to use? (Batts or rolls are often installed by homeowners, while other types of insulation often require professional installers.)

Do the work safely

Even if you are considering installing insulation in an open area that is easy to access, the space should always be inspected first. If you find the following conditions or issues, a professional should

be called in to correct problems and complete the job.

- Wet or damp insulation
- Moldy or rotted attic rafters or floor joists
- Vents that exhaust moist air directly in the attic space instead of outdoors [Vickie Hillyer 2571004000]
- A history of ice dams in the winter
- Little or no attic ventilation
- Knob-and-tube wiring (homes built pre-1930)
- Unsealed and uninsulated recessed (“can”) lights (special care must be taken when insulating around these)
- Possible presence of asbestos (see next tip)

What is the age of my home?

If your home was built around 1975 or earlier, the insulation may be vermiculite, which can contain asbestos. It is a lightweight, pea-sized, flaky gray material, according to the NAIMA. If you suspect you have this type of insulation, do not disturb it. Hire a professional to test it. Your local health department might be able to help locate a reputable testing company. If asbestos is found, the insulation will need to be removed by a professional.

For more tips on energy efficiency and electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

BILLING CORNER ON TIME BILL PAYING

Each year, Y-W Electric must write off the balances left unpaid by members disconnecting their services. While this amount is not an exceptionally large amount, the cost to the cooperative is a burden carried by all member-owners. Over the years, this cost has been lowered by: First, doing a better job collecting amounts due; second, administering a more consistent deposit procedure; third, educating our members so that they realized that paying the electric bill is as important as paying the mortgage.

Many times, paying your bills is a simple matter of priorities. Shelter is the number one priority for most people. Next would be heat, lights, food, and basic clothing. We at Y-W Electric think your electric bill payment should be taken as seriously as your mortgage or rent payment. Paying

on time helps our cash flow, and helps the cooperative run as efficiently as possible; plus it helps to keep rates as low as possible. When you pay late or don't pay at all, you affect the rest of the Y-W Electric members. *[George Homm 1193602801]*

We have an average of 750 consumers each month who receive delinquent notices. Over 1,200 notices are printed. The cost of these notices and the postage required is a cost to the cooperative that is paid by all members. Sometimes, it is simply a mail delay; however, more than 100 members each month require another a second contact. This is by telephone, direct lineman contact, or door tag. Our collection employees treat everyone with respect while they impress upon the member that payment is needed to prevent disconnection.

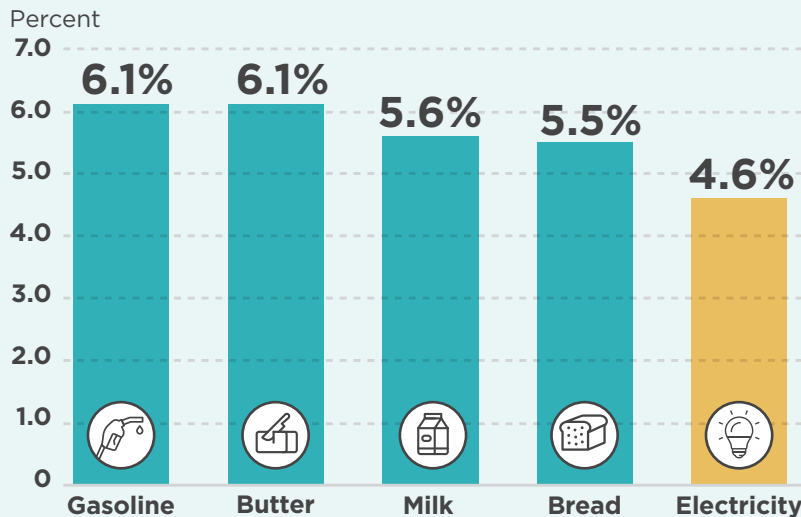
Y-W Electric has more than 3,700 members, and more than 8,500 meter locations. At least 80% pay on time. We truly appreciate those members who treat their electric bill with the seriousness it deserves. We hope that those consumers who wait for that extra nudge to pay their bill will come to understand that a late bill payment is a cost that affects the amount everyone has to pay for electric service. By paying on time, every consumer avoids the possibility of a contact charge, or even an after hours charge for re-connection.

If you need help with your bills, please call the billing department. Payment options are available, including budget plans and automatic bank payment plans. Help us keep our costs at a minimum so everyone will benefit from being a member of Y-W Electric Association.

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

Although inflation has led to increasing costs in many areas of our lives, the cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common goods. Looking at price increases over the last five years, electricity remains a good value.

Average Annual Price Increase 2017-2022



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

REBATES

Did you know Y-W Electric offers rebates for outdoor power equipment?

Low noise and low maintenance — it's a great time of year to make the switch to electric!

For more information about Y-W Electric's rebate program and eligible products, visit ywelectric.coop/rebate-program-information

Y W ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative