

Y-W ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY 2024



MAILING ADDRESS

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STREET ADDRESS

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Thursday
7:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

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.

How Extreme Winter Weather Impacts Reliability

BY TRENT LOUTENSOCK GENERAL MANAGER



TRENT LOUTENSOCK

When outdoor temperatures drop, our electricity use increases. That's because we're doing more activities inside, and our heating systems are running longer and more often to counteract colder outdoor temperatures. Factor in that we all tend to use electricity at the same times — in the morning and early evenings — and that equals a lot of strain on our electric grid.

At Y-W Electric Association, we work closely with our local generation and transmission cooperative in resource and infrastructure planning to ensure you have the power you need whenever you flip a switch. We do our best to provide local level data to our G&T for resource planning. However, the national electric grid is much larger than your local co-op and G&T, and it may be affected by storm and weather events far from our local area.

In winter months, when even more electricity is being used simultaneously across the country, it is possible for electricity demand to exceed supply; especially if an unexpected event like a sudden snow or ice storm or equipment malfunction occurs. If this happens — which is rare — the grid operator for our region of the country may call for rolling power outages to relieve pressure on the grid. Y-W Electric will keep you informed you about the situation. *[William & Valerie Winters xxxxx0402]*

Y-W Electric and our G&T take proactive steps to create a resilient portion of the grid and ensure electric reliability in extreme weather — including regular system maintenance, grid modernization efforts, and disaster response planning. But it takes everyone to keep the grid reliable.

To help keep the heat on for you, your family, and neighbors, here are a few things you can do to relieve pressure on the grid during extreme weather events and save a little money on your electric bill:

- Select the lowest comfortable thermostat setting and turn it down several degrees whenever possible. Your heating system must run longer to make up the difference between the thermostat temperature and the outdoor temperature when outside temperatures are extremely cold.
- Seal air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weatherstripping. Air leaks and drafts force your heating system to work harder than necessary.
- stagger your use of major appliances such as dishwashers, ovens and dryers. For example, start the dishwasher before you go to bed and use smaller countertop appliances like slow cookers and air fryers to save energy.
- Ensure that your heating system is optimized for efficiency with regular maintenance and proper insulation. Make sure your furnace filter isn't clogged and dirty. Replace it as needed. *[Carlos Camacho & Nathan Witte xxxxxx3213]*
- When possible, use cold water to reduce water heating costs. Setting your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees can help you save energy, and reduce mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.
- Unplug devices when not in use to eliminate unnecessary energy use. Even when turned off, electronics in standby mode consume energy. Plug devices into a power strip so you can turn them all off at once with the push of a button.

As we face the challenges posed by winter weather, understanding its impact on energy demand is crucial for maintaining a reliable power supply. By adopting energy conservation practices during periods of extreme cold, not only can you save money on your electric bills, but you can also each contribute to the resilience of the power grid, keeping our local community warm and connected.



Win a Bill Credit

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 November issue:

Danielle Olofson
Chanelle Reese
Stuart E. Tyner
Earl D. Harwood

Signing up for Service with Y-W

When a new consumer comes into the Y-W Electric Association office or calls on the telephone to connect an account into his/her name, the information given at that time is very important. The first step is filling out and signing an application for service and membership with Y-W Electric. This information is used to set up your membership and billing records. It is imperative to set it up correctly and with the correct information. Following are some situations to consider when filling out the application:

1. If you are a husband and wife, and only one spouse's name is on the application, all bills and capital credit allocations and future refunds will go to the one person whose name is on the account. If both parties sign the application, any capital credits accrued for that membership are considered jointly owned, and checks will be made payable to both names. Credit history is being recorded for everyone whose name is on our records.
2. If you are a roommate and paying part of the bill, but your name is not on the application, Y-W Electric has no record of you. When capital credit refund checks go out, they are made out to the person whose name appears on the application. If you apply for service in the future, you would be considered a new consumer. *[Kirk Norman xxxxx6101]*
3. Payment of the bill is the responsibility of the people who signed the application. If a deposit is paid, any amount refunded will go to the name on the account. If the bill is not paid, this name will then go to the collection agency.
4. Irrigation accounts are always connected to the landowner's name. The responsibility of payment for electric usage on the service is ultimately the landowners. However, bills can be mailed to one or both parties.

These are just a few of the things to consider when signing up for electric service with Y-W Electric. Your membership record with us is carefully created and monitored throughout your service term and years beyond. Please consider carefully how you want our records to reflect your membership.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office in Akron at 970-345-2291 or if outside our calling area call 1-800-660-2291.

BILLING CORNER SMARTHUB BILL PAY

For your convenience, Y-W Electric Association offers the ability to pay your account with the SmartHub app. This service allows you to pay your bill electronically with a credit or debit card or checking account. This is also a great place to get account information. Information on billing history, usage, payment history and past billing invoices are available. There is also a link to sign up for auto payment.

Reporting an outage is also available on SmartHub. This information goes directly to the Y-W Electric operations department in an email. This helps to leave our phone lines open for those who do not have SmartHub available.

SmartHub is compatible with iPhones and Android devices. Visit our website at www.ywelectric.coop for more information.

GUARD AGAINST UTILITY SERVICE SCAMS, OTHER FORMS OF FRAUD, AND IDENTITY THEFT

It is the world we live in today — the necessity to pause and consider before we click, answer or respond to someone seeking information. No industry, person, or business is off limits to scammers who try to con their way into the utility industry.

The Better Business Scam Tracker reports that victims typically lose \$274 in all types of scams and \$500 in a utility scam.

When it comes to power bills, scammers make threatening phone calls to consumers to demand immediate payment, or else! (Or else their service will be shut off, they threaten.) This deceiving claim is often made during the height of summer or winter, when people want to stay comfortable during the extreme heat or cold.

UTILITY SCAMS: HOW THEY GET YOU

Scammers often request that immediate payment be wired, loaded on a reloadable gift card or debit card, or sent using cryptocurrency. Only scammers request this type of payment and threaten immediate service disconnection. Do not provide any information — including your utility account number — or agree to immediate payment. Instead, hang up and check with your utility by using the phone number listed on your power bill. Fake numbers and links can appear in emails and texts.

Utility bills that double the amount due may be a utility scam. Utilities are closely regulated and may not have the right to raise prices substantially. Consumers should trust their gut reaction — if it seems like a fraud, it probably is.

PROTECT PERSONAL INFO

When supplying your utility, a business, or person with sensitive information such as a social security number, proof of address, or death certificate, do not email the information. Do not give out sensitive information to anyone who calls you. Verify the phone number and call the utility directly to discuss any matter that would involve providing personal information. In general, some companies do have password-protected, secure methods to obtain personal information via an app or portal, but always verify this before using.

AT YOUR DOOR

The famous song by Paul McCartney, titled “Let ‘Em In,” features the artist’s welcoming plea, “Someone’s knockin’ at the door; Someone’s ringin’ the bell ... Do me a favor; Open the door and let ‘em in.” That is not always great advice these days.

Door-to-door scams may involve impersonators of utility workers saying the meter is broken or offering to perform other repairs or an energy audit — all at the consumer’s cost. Your utility will contact you in advance, prior to arriving at your home for service or for any other reason. Do not let someone in the house without an appointment.

SCAMS IN GENERAL

The American Association of Retired Persons warns that phishing emails and texts attempt to convince individuals to make payments or provide personal information. Thieves use stolen information to open accounts and pass charges on to the victim.

CALLER ID CAN FIB

Over the phone, calls appearing to be local are not always an accurate assessment of who is calling. AARP has a fraud watch network that provides alerts of new frauds — do an internet search for the fraud watch network to learn more.

SCAMS ARE EVERYWHERE

Other non-utility scams may include the announcement of an inheritance or pop-ups on a computer warning that technical support is needed. There are even puppy purchase cons when cute and often sought-after breeds are offered in all their puppy cuteness, but scammers take your money and run. There are student loan forgiveness scams and onetime password bot scams.

Hackers will even prey on the many smartphone users who have cracked screens. It is called the “chip in the middle attack,” and scammers get a hold of a screen replacement and install it on your phone with a spyware chip. Always take your phone to a store or servicer you trust. If the company cannot be verified by a search engine, do not trust it.

No matter the scam, the goal of the scammer is to gather personal information. Do not share Social Security numbers, account details, credit card numbers, bank information, death certificates, or birth dates. Thieves can use this information to steal their victim’s identity.

[Kristy K. McNulty xxxxx1602]

If you become a victim of a scam, report it to the local police and your bank. Consumers can protect themselves by blocking unknown callers and keeping software updated on phones and computers.

NEVER EMAIL PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please bring any sensitive information to our office and do not email it to us. We want to help you keep your personal information secure.



Safety Tip

Did you know that mylar balloons can damage the power grid and cause power outages? Mylar and latex balloons eventually fall back to earth and their remnants can cause harm to animals and marine life. Consider alternatives to balloon releases and enjoy balloons indoors.



**Safe
Electricity.org**

Bedazzle them with Balloons... Safely



Metallic balloons make great Valentine's Day presents, but you must dispose of them in the trash. Do not release them outdoors — you could cause a power outage and damage utility electrical equipment. Because of the metallic coating, they conduct electricity and can short out circuits in your community's power system. You and your neighbors could lose power, traffic lights could go out, and entire blocks of homes and businesses could go dark. *[Michael Hooper xxxxxx4002]*

Source: SafeElectricity.org