



# news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## Bundle Up For Winter Storms

By Abby Berry

Are you ready for winter's cold grasp? Snow and ice are inevitable when dealing with winter storms, but being prepared can make a world of difference. Lincoln Electric recommends the following tips to help you prepare for wintery blasts.

### Winterize your home

- Winter storms wreak havoc on your home. By winterizing your living space, you'll be prepared for extreme cold and hazardous conditions.
- Remember to maintain and inspect heating equipment and chimneys every year to ensure they're working safely and properly.
- Caulk and weather strip doors and windows to make the most of your heating system.
- Freezing temperatures often cause water pipes to burst. Remember to insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic. Allow faucets to drip during extreme cold to avoid frozen pipes.
- Consider installing

storm windows for better insulation. You can also cover windows with plastic (from the inside) to keep the cold out.

- Make sure everyone in your family knows where the home's fire extinguisher is located and how to use it properly. House fires occur more frequently during winter months, as people tend to use alternative heating methods that may not be safe.

### Prepare a winter survival kit

- Severe winter storms often bring heavy accumulation of ice and snow, which can lead to downed power lines and extended outages. Lincoln Electric crews will work hard to restore power, but having a winter survival kit on hand is a smart idea.
- Food: Store food that does not require cooking, such as canned goods, crackers, dehydrated meats and dried fruit. Keep a large supply of water on hand. Ready.gov recommends five gallons per person.

• Medication: Be sure to refill all prescriptions in the event of a major power outage.

• Identification: Keep all forms of identification handy, such as driver's

licenses, photo IDs and social security cards. Bank account information and insurance policies are also good to have on hand.

- Other items: First Aid Kit, blankets, flashlight, battery-powered radio and extra batteries.

### Stay warm and safe

If an outage occurs, you should plan for an alternate heating source. A fireplace, propane space heater or wood-burning stove would be sufficient. Fuel and wood-burning heating sources should always be vented, and make sure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly. Always practice extreme caution when using alternate heating sources.

If you decide to use a portable generator during an outage, make sure it is placed outside the home for proper ventilation. Be careful not to overload the generator. Use appropriate extension cords that can handle the electric load.

Follow these tips, and your family will stay warm in the event of a power outage. For more information on preparing for winter storms, visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

*Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service organization for the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*



Photo courtesy of Certain Teed

NOVEMBER 2017

### Electrical Fire Safety

About 28,600 home electrical fires occur during a typical year, leading to \$1.1 billion in property losses. Faulty electrical outlets and old wiring are the main causes of electrical fires, as are damaged cords, plugs, switches, and light fixtures.

The number one priority in a fire is to escape safely.



#### Only use a fire extinguisher if:

- The fire department has been called.
- Everyone has exited the building.
- The fire is confined to a small area, such as a wastebasket, and is not growing.
- The room is not filled with smoke.

Not all fire extinguishers are alike. Only a Class C extinguisher can be used on an electrical fire. Remember the word **PASS**:

**P**ull the pin. Hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you and release the locking mechanism.

**A**im low. Point the nozzle toward the base of the fire.

**S**queeze the lever slowly and evenly.

**S**weep the nozzle from side-to-side.

#### Remember: Know when to go.

Make sure you have a home fire escape plan and working smoke alarms.

Source: U.S. Fire Administration, National Fire Protection Association

# LINCOLN ELECTRIC RATE CHANGE UPDATE

Over the course of last year LEC conducted eight community meetings to explain the need to change the rate structure. These meetings were accompanied by numerous articles in the Rural Montana to try and reach out to all the membership.

As you recall, the cooperative introduced a five year plan to adjust rates to fairly and evenly spread its fixed operational costs across the membership. This is being done to help ensure a positive financial position going forward amidst an uncertain energy future and inconsistent national and regional energy policy.

Beginning in May 2017, the rate will be adjusted annually until it reflects our true cost to serve each residential service on the LEC system. As long as the wholesale power cost remains stable this process is revenue neutral. This

means that the rate adjustment brings in the same level of revenue as before, but in a more even fashion. The real caveat here is “if” the wholesale rate remains stable, but that has not been the case.

A couple of months ago I wrote a column about another wholesale power rate increase from the Bonneville Power Administration. At that time the estimated increase for LEC was at about six percent. Since then BPA has re-worked their numbers and our increase is now at just over eight percent.

However, with the possible additional court-ordered spill the number could be closer to ten percent. These numbers are both extremely frustrating and disappointing. Bonneville has been a very good partner in the past but the rate of increase that LEC has seen over the last six years is unsustainable going forward.

Wholesale power costs make up roughly 50 percent of all expenses here at LEC. The magnitude of this increase will be difficult for LEC to absorb.

We will do all we can to find cost savings elsewhere, but there is no way we can maintain the same level of exceptional service without additional retail rate increases. We are currently in the budget process for 2018 and we will thoroughly examine the impacts of this increase and report back to you later this year.

It is our desire to serve you to the best of our ability and do all we can to keep to our mission statement, “To provide reliable energy at reasonable rates, with exceptional member service and a commitment to the communities we serve.”

Please continue to read your *Rural Montana* as we will provide rate change updates as they become available.

Thanks for your membership,

Ray



**Manager's Notes**  
by Ray Ellis

## News & Views

*Published monthly by Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.*

Lincoln Electric's Board of Trustees hold regular meetings monthly at the Eureka office. These are typically scheduled on the third Monday of each month at 7 pm. All members are encouraged to attend. If you have any items of interest, please contact the general manager prior to the meeting.

### Next Meeting Date:

**Monday, November 20, 2017**

### Board of Trustees

- **Mike Workman** - President, Dist. 5, Koochanusa Shores-Pinkham
- **Wesly Loughman** - Vice President, Dist. 4, Eureka-Tobacco Plains
- **Courtney Pluid** - Secretary, Dist. 3, Fortine-Glen Lake
- **Myra Appel** - Dist. 1, Flathead
- **Joel Graves** - Dist. 5, Koochanusa Shores-Pinkham
- **Marianne Roose** - Dist. 3 - Fortine-Glen Lake
- **Tina Taurman** - Dist. 2, Trego-Stryker
- **Ethel White** - Dist. 4 - Eureka-Tobacco Plains
- **Open Seat** - Dist. 4 - Eureka-Tobacco Plains
- **Open Seat** - Dist. 1, Flathead

### General Manager Ray Ellis

**In case of power outage:  
Always call 406-889-3301**

312 Osloski Road  
PO Box 628  
Eureka, MT 59917

www.lincolnelectric.coop  
info@lincolnelectric.coop

## BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted on September 18, 2017. A quorum of trustees was present and the board took the following action:

- Approved Trustee Marianne Roose as LEC's MECA alternate board member.
- Approved Trustee Ethel White as the LEC representative of Western Montana G&T.
- Approved a \$500 donation to the Prostate Cancer Awareness Organization.
- Authorized a \$1,000 donation to Fortine School for a scoreboard.

	Year to Date 08/31/2017	Year to Date 08/31/2016
Year to Date kWh Sales	78,944,673	66,945,088
Year to Date Revenue	\$ 7,028,342	\$ 6,267,702
Year to Date Cost of Power	\$ 3,430,748	\$ 2,951,641
Year to Date Operating Exp	\$ 3,512,650	\$ 3,264,609
Year to Date Margins	\$ 168,554	\$ 71,119
Number of Members	4,542	4,477
Number of Meters	5,878	5,775
Miles of Line	957	952
Total Utility Plant	\$ 32,427,304	\$ 32,874,916
Member Equity	\$ 8,974,550	\$ 8,730,404
Aug. Average Residential Use (kWh)	844	821
Aug. Average Residential Billing	\$95.67	\$94.44

# Digital Devices Impact Energy Use

By Tom Tate

**A**h, the Digital Age. We have gadgets galore, the ability to manage our homes in new and innovative ways, brilliant images and captivating sounds of modern entertainment options and of course, the internet. Clearly, digital devices reign supreme. Yet these cool new capabilities come with a couple of pitfalls; vampire loads and the issue of “technology reincarnation.”

Over the course of the Digital Age, electricity use has continued to increase. Families have multiple televisions. Computer prices have plummeted, meaning many homes now have multiple computers. Everyone in the family needs a cell phone. Gaming consoles and set top cable/satellite boxes satisfy our desire for entertainment.

Major appliances aside, most digital devices do not use 120-volt power, which is the standard voltage of a home outlet. They actually use a lot less. So, trying to plug your brand new smart-phone directly into an outlet is going to lead to a fried device and lots of tears from someone. This is why low-voltage devices come with a power adapter. These “wall warts” as some term them, take the 120-volt electricity supplied by Lincoln Electric and convert it to say, five volts. Unfortunately, most folks leave their adapters plugged in to make recharging easier. The problem with this approach is that the seemingly innocuous wall wart uses power even when it isn’t charging a device.

This invisible energy consumption

is often called “vampire load.” Studies show that 5 to 10 percent of the average home’s energy use is from vampire loads. The only way to stop this is to unplug the power adapter when it is not in use or employ smart power strips. These look like the typical power strip but with a twist—only one socket gets power all the time. When the device or appliance connected to it turns on and starts using power, the remaining sockets receive power too. This is perfect for entertainment systems, computer set ups and a variety of other situations.

Technological advances have steadily increased energy efficiency and reduced purchase prices. On its face, this seems like a good thing. Unfortunately, when replacing a product at the end of its life, the tendency is to go bigger, or continue to use the old tech. This is the second issue I noted—technology reincarnation.

For example, flat screen television prices have plummeted as technology has evolved—and so has the amount of electricity they use. Consumers wander into the big box store and are dazzled by walls of giant, brilliant televisions. What they used to pay for the paltry 32” model now might net them a 50” giant. And who doesn’t want to see their favorite show or sports event in near life size? But if you spring for the bigger TV, you won’t benefit from the increased energy efficiency of the newer technology. The bigger model uses as much juice as the older, smaller TV, which likely ends up in another room (reincarnated in another setting) still

Lincoln Electric will be closed

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10**

Thank you to all our Veterans for your service

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23**

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24**

Happy Thanksgiving!!

using power.

Or refrigerators. These are the showpieces of the evolution of smart appliances. Many new models include touchscreens and cameras; they communicate over the internet and probably even keep food cold and make ice. Yet what often happens is the old refrigerator ends up in the basement or garage, reincarnated as a dedicated beverage unit or overflow.

I’ll offer a couple words of advice to help you avoid—or at least reduce—the effects of vampire loads and technology reincarnation. Invest in smart power strips or make a point to use outlets where you can conveniently unplug power adapters when not in use. Don’t oversize your replacement appliances and entertainment gear unless family needs dictate the larger capacities. And recycle the replaced appliances and equipment to stem technology reincarnation. You will enjoy the Digital Age for a lot less.

*Tom Tate writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation’s 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*

LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

## Enter to win a FREE\* trip to Washington, D.C. as part of Youth Tour 2018!

 AIRLINE COMPANY		BOARDING PASS	
 No: 12345678900000000000	NAME : LEC STUDENT      SEAT FLIGHT : 95678A      GATE : 02 SEAT : 22 D      TIME : 06 : 30	22 D	
	FROM : USA      TO : DCA	BOARDING PASS FLIGHT : 95678A      FROM : USA SEAT : 22 D      TO : JPN GATE : 02      SEAT : 22 D TIME : 06 : 30	
	 No: 12345678900000000000		

If you are a high school sophomore or junior AND Your parent or legal guardian is a member of Lincoln Electric, you can enter to win an ALL EXPENSES PAID\* weeklong trip to our nation’s capital on June 9-15, 2018.

\*The trip includes flights, charter buses, hotel accommodations, tours, food (including most snacks), and t-shirts each day while in D.C.

°Application packets can be found at [www.lincolnelectric.coop](http://www.lincolnelectric.coop) or at the LEC office at 312 Osloski Road, Eureka

Applications must be returned to LEC by 5:00 pm November 30, 2017

\*LEC’s Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. trip begins in Great Falls, Montana. The winning student and/or their parent/guardian is responsible for their transportation to and from Great Falls.

# Powering Up After an Outage

When the power goes out, we expect it to be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm or natural disaster causes widespread damage, extended outages may result. Our line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark:



AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

## 1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines:

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

## 2. Distribution Substation:

A substation can serve hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself or if problems exist further down the line.

## 3. Main Distribution Lines:

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

## 4. Tap Lines:

If local outages persist, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes.

## 5. Individual Homes:

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issue.