



news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Hold Onto Your Checkbook

Beware of prevalent phone scams

The energy industry is undergoing rapid change, and technology is paving the way for innovation in the way energy is used, produced, stored and shared. Consumers are interested in more green energy alternatives while smart homes and apps make managing energy use and paying your electric bill more convenient than ever.

While the changing energy market has created more options for consumers, it has also resulted in more utility scams and misleading information surrounding solar installations in particular. That's because of two factors.

Utility scams are common because of the vast number of utilities that exist. Plus, consumers are understandably anxious when threatened with disruption to their electric, heating or water service. Second, new products and services in the energy industry provide an opening for scammers and pop-up companies to provide misleading information or shoddy products and services.

Avoid Phone Scams

A common phone scam typically begins with a phone number that appears to be from a valid utility company. The scammer will claim you have a past due account and threaten to disconnect service or take legal action. The scammer will typically demand that you use a prepaid debit card or money order, often within a very short, urgent time frame to pay the "past due" amount.

You can first combat this scam by being aware of the status of your account. Never give your banking or personal information over the phone to someone you did not call. Additionally, Lincoln Electric does not accept payments via an employee over the



DOE/NREL

Do you have rooftop solar? You may be a prime scam target

phone. Members who wish to make a phone payment must use our PCI-compliant phone system (833-890-6258).

If you have a question or concern about your energy bill, call Lincoln Electric directly at 406-889-3301. Do not use the phone number given by the scammer.

Avoid Solar Scams

Another scam we see from time to time is related to rooftop solar. Homeowners with rooftop solar may receive a sales call offering an accessory, upgrade, or extended warranty to their solar array. The calls could be from crooks claiming to represent a solar company, promising to replace faulty or broken parts, or improve efficiency.

Again, if you are not expecting the call, don't be fooled. These calls offering misleading information are likely a scam. Call the company that installed the solar array if you think there may

be a problem. Other than occasional cleaning, rooftop solar (if installed correctly) is virtually maintenance-free.

Use Trusted Sources

If you're considering solar for your home, make sure you are working with a reputable company. Because solar is still an emerging industry with evolving technology, there has been a proliferation of pop-up companies in the market to make a quick buck. Representatives of rooftop solar companies may have more sales experience than knowledge of the energy industry, and their primary goal could be making a sale and moving on to the next prospect.

Lincoln Electric can offer a candid assessment to determine whether rooftop solar is right for you. After all, Lincoln Electric has a different "bottom line" that is not directly tied

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Cost of Electricity

We're here to help you save



**Manager's Notes
by Telly Stanger**

Lincoln Electric is here for you, our members. Given the challenging times we've all experienced the last few months, I'd like to share some information and ideas to help you save energy and money.

Summer is a great time to conduct an energy audit of your home and identify ways to boost energy efficiency. Understanding how your home uses energy can help you determine the

best ways to modify energy use and keep more money in your wallet.

An energy audit is one of the best ways to determine how energy efficient your home is. An audit can also identify areas for potential energy savings. With the social distancing restrictions in place, we have temporarily suspended our in-home energy audits.

But that doesn't mean you can't have an audit.

You can perform an energy audit yourself by using EN-ERGY STAR®'s online audit. Visit www.energystar.gov, then enter "home energy yardstick" in the search box to get started. An online audit won't be as thorough as an in-home audit, but it will provide

valuable insight into your home's energy use until an in-home audit can be conducted.

Putting power in your hands

Prepaid metering is intended to aide in budgeting your energy costs. Lincoln Electric members can pay for electricity before it is used, then use the electricity until the credit expires. While you have a credit, you will receive regular feedback on your balance.

You can always check your balance using SmartHub, and you will get low-balance notifications via a method you choose (text, email, phone call).

Industry studies show that consumers who par-

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FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	Year to Date 03/31/2020	Year to Date 03/31/2019
kWh Sales	37,366,969	42,625,547
Revenue	\$ 3,445,231	\$ 3,685,366
Cost of Power	\$ 1,622,164	\$ 1,901,128
Operating Expense	\$ 1,126,290	\$ 1,049,617
Margins	\$ 300,783	\$ 369,366
Number of Members	4,709	4,637
Number of Meters	6,098	6,011
Miles of Line	972	967
Total Utility Plant	\$ 32,821,762	\$ 32,636,138
Member Equity	\$ 9,638,741	\$ 9,625,616
March Average Residential Use (kWh)	1,606	2,019
March Average Residential Billing	\$154.53	\$177.62

BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted on April 20, 2020. A quorum of trustees was present and the board took the following action:

- Approved depositing funds into an education account for the 2020 Youth Tour recipient in lieu of the trip because it has been canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Approved Resolution 2020-12, authorizing LEC to apply for the Payroll Protection Program loan.

LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

CONTACT

1-406-889-3301
info@lincolnelectric.coop
www.lincolnelectric.coop
 Secure Payments: 1-833-890-6258

ALWAYS REPORT OUTAGES TO:

1-406-889-3301

OFFICE

312 Osloski Road
 PO BOX 628
 Eureka, Montana 59917

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday
 7:00 AM - 5:30 PM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Wesly Loughman
 President

Tina Taurman
 Vice President

Myra Appel
 Secretary-Treasurer

Becky Evins
 Michael Garner
 Joel Graves
 Marianne Roose
 Troy Truman
 Ethel White

Telly Stanger
 General Manager

Lincoln Electric's Board of Trustees hold regular monthly meetings at the boardroom in the cooperative office. These are typically scheduled on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 pm. 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, JULY 20, 2020



**Lincoln Electric
 Cooperative, Inc.**

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

SEND YOUR IDEAS TO:

memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop

Save

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ticipate in prepaid metering plans generally use up to 10% less electricity. This is largely due to member lifestyle adjustments. Typically, prepaid members more actively monitor their energy use on a daily basis, instead of receiving a bill more than a month after use.

Once members begin to correlate different activities with energy use, they are more likely to make simple lifestyle adjustments. For example, air-drying clothing instead of using the clothes dryer or only running the dishwasher when it's full.

Take advantage of incentives

Lastly, if you have recently purchased a new ENERGY STAR®-rated appliance or product, make sure you are taking advantage of any special offers or rebates that are available.

As your trusted energy advisor, we're here to help. If you have questions about your bill or additional ways to save energy, please let us know. We're only one click or phone call away.

Telly

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Home cooling makes up a large portion of your energy bills. Try to keep the difference between the temperature of your thermostat setting and the outside temperature to a minimum. The smaller the difference, the more energy you will save.



Unclaimed Capital Credit List

As part of a cooperative, our members are entitled to a return of margins in the form of capital credits for years they had economic participation in the cooperative. However, when members move, they sometimes fail to notify LEC of their address change and the checks are undeliverable. To make every effort possible to find those former members who have capital credits due to them, we are asking our current members to lend us a hand. Please look over the 2019 unclaimed capital credit list of names below, and the full list of names at www.lincolnelectric.coop. If you have a way to contact any of these folks, please contact us at 406-889-3301 or info@lincolnelectric.coop. Thank you for being great members!

2019 list continued from May's Rural Montana

Name	Joint Name
MACK, JOHN	
MAEDJE, KATINA	
MAJOR, BRAD E	
MAKSHANOFF, VICTORIA	MAKSHANOFF, GREGORY
MASTALIO, CURTIS O	
MCCARTY, CHARLES	
MCCULLY, MICHAEL	MCCULLY, ROXANNE
MCDONALD, LEE	
MCFADYEAN, DAVID W	
MCGOUGH, SAMUEL	MCGOUGH, DONNA
MCLEAN, NICOLE P	
MCMILLAN, MICHAEL C	
MEIER, CURTIS M	
MILLENNIUM PLASTICS, INC	
MILLER, CAROLYN E	
MILLER, DARIN G	
MILLER, MARILYN	
MILLSAP, WALTER R	

Name	Joint Name
MORINE, JIM C	MORINE, JOAN A
MORRIS, JEREMY T	
MORRIS, WAYNE S	MORRIS, LORA D
MOYAN, RODNEY W	MOYAN, ROCHELLE D
NAGEL, SCOTT A	NAGEL, KERRY K
NEEDMOR FOREST PRODUCTS, INC	
NELSON, LORNA C	
NELSON, MARK T	
NESS, WILLIAM D	FENTON-NESS, DYNEE L
NEUMAN, MATTHEW	
NEWBURN, ISRAEL L	NEWBURN, SUMMER L
NEWMAN, DEBORAH	
NOEL, MARTHA L	
NOWAK, MARK S	
O'HARA, GAVIN A	O'HARA, CLOVER S
ORMSBY, DEBORAH	
PALMER, JAMIE M	
PAPENFUHS, LEROY O	

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Unclaimed list continued from page 7

Name	Joint Name
PFEIFFER, HEATHER M	
PHILLIPS, JOANN G	
PIOREK, JAMES	
POLLARD, RICHARD R	
PRICE, GARY L	PRICE, SANDY K
PRICE, WILL F	
PULSE, JEFF J	
RACKLEY, DARRELL L	
RADISH, DALRUS M	
RANDOLPH, ROBERT E	RANDOLPH, SUNSHINE E
RHODES, KENNETH J	
RIGGLE, MICHELLE D	
ROCKWELL, ELIZABETH D	
ROOSE, JUY V	
RYNEARSON, AMBER J	
SAVAGE, KAREN	
SCANZO, LAURA	
SCHWARTZ, CHARLES A	
SEDERDAHL, KENNETH	EISENMAN, DOROTHY
SEE, ALLEN L	
SETZER, LINDA L	
SHARP, DONNA C	
SHELTON, DONNA K	
SHERWOOD, FRANCIS H	SHERWOOD, BETTY M
SIELER, MIKE J	
SMILEY, J J	
SMITH, AARON B	
SMITH, DERRICK B	SMITH, SUZANNE C
SMITH, JONATHAN B	
SNODDERLY, HARRY L	SNODDERLY, JUDITH A
SPITZER, RICK	SPITZER, ELIZABETH
STACY, CARL F	STACY, DIANE E
STACY, GALE	
STARLING, RUPERT G JR	STARLING, HIR H
STEVENS, LEN J	STEVENS, SUSIE M

Name	Joint Name
STOLTZFUS, M A	STOLTZFUS, SHARON I
STREETER, THAIS	
SWAN, TOO	
TANNER, MITCHELL	
TAYLOR, PHYLLIS L	
TEAL, J R	
TENNISON, LINDA K	
THOMAS, BETTY L	
THOMSEN, LYLE D	
TINKLER, C WAYNE	TINKLER, HEATHER
TRACEY, BRIAN	TRACEY, JANICE
TURNER, KELLY L	
VANLEISHOUT, JERRY	
VREDENBURG, LEVI	
WAGONER, WADE W	
WARNER, DIANNA L	
WELDELE, DARRYL	
WELLER, VICKI K	WELLER, MIKE
WEST, CHARLES M	WEST, PAMELA J
WESTWOOD, CARRIE	WESTWOOD, REX B
WHITE, JAMES R	WHITE, CARLA M
WILD, RENEE K	
WILLIAMS, LESLIE S	
WILLOW FIRE RANCH	
WILSON, ADAM W	
WINCHEL, MARK H	WINCHEL, LAURIE R
WIXON, KRISTEN M	
WOODWARD, WOODY W	
WRIGHT, EDWARD W	WRIGHT, SHAWN T
WRIGHT, MICHAEL T	WRIGHT, DIANA L
WYZARD, CONSTANCE	
YARGUS, SARAH E	
YARY, ANTHONY R	YARY, JAMIE S
YOUNG, JAMES W	
ZUGEL, DAVID A	

Scam Alert

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to the sale of a product or service. We take a more holistic, objective view of how to achieve energy and cost savings for our members, and that may or may not include rooftop solar.

Make a Report

If you receive a scam phone call, do not give out any personal information, including financial or banking details. Hang up, and call your utility (Lincoln Electric, Interbel, etc) directly to determine your account status. You can also login to SmartHub to check your

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account.

If you'd like, you can also file a scam report with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) online at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov. They rely on filed complaints for prosecution. From FTC's website, "Because of your reports, the FTC and its law enforcement partners are able to investigate the people and companies that trick people into paying money. Your reports help build and bring those cases, which also helps us enforce laws that stop scams and other dishonest business practices

that take people's money."

Your Trusted Partner

In this ever-changing environment, it's important to remember you have a trusted energy advisor - your local electric cooperative. We are a community-focused organization that works to efficiently deliver affordable, reliable, and safe energy to our members.

Remember, we're just one call or click away, so please reach out with any questions about your electric service or bills - we're here to help.