



news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

BE READY FOR WINTER

TIPS TO STAY SAFE DURING THE COLD MONTHS

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 Cooperative cares about your safety, and we want you to be prepared.

Heavy snow and ice can lead to downed power lines, leaving co-op members without power. During extremely low temperatures, this can be dangerous. During a power outage, our crews will continue to work as quickly and safely as possible to restore power, but there are a few things you can do to prepare yourself.

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 keep all prescriptions refilled 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

If an outage occurs, you should plan for an alternate heating source. A fireplace, propane space heater or

See SAFE, page 7

Lincoln Electric is here for you

W^E live in a device-driven world. Our smartphones, tablets, laptops and an assortment of other devices help us communicate and connect. Companies spend billions of dollars pushing out a steady drumbeat of messages and information, and we are constantly bombarded with one-way communication. But is anyone listening on the other end?

At Lincoln Electric Cooperative, we are not only listening, but we are also eager to hear from you. Whether you text us, respond to a survey or social media post, send an email or simply stop by and chat in person, we thrive on your feedback. Connecting with you helps us keep pace with our community's priorities and needs.

Because we are a cooperative, we have a different way of operating. Lincoln Electric exists to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, the members of the co-op. Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members we serve.

We hope you will consider us more than your energy provider, but instead as a local business that supports this community, and powers economic development and prosperity for the people.

You will notice that throughout the year, we create opportunities for you and other community members to attend

See MANAGER'S NOTES, page 8



**Manager's Notes
by Telly Stanger**

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	YEAR TO DATE OCT. 2022	YEAR TO DATE OCT. 2021
kWh SALES	100,679,316	93,095,510
REVENUE	\$10,150,741	\$8,690,189
COST OF POWER	\$4,638,594	\$3,875,315
OPERATING EXPENSE	\$3,537,918	\$2,800,434
MARGINS	\$593,882	\$997,138
NUMBER OF MEMBERS	5,090	4,957
NUMBER OF METERS	6,510	6,352
MILES OF LINE	1,001	986
TOTAL UTILITY PLANT	\$37,901,119	\$35,485,856
MEMBER EQUITY	\$12,593,534	\$11,541,987
OCTOBER AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL USE (KWH)	1,117	1,204
OCTOBER AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL BILLING	\$125.43	\$106.01

BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted on November 21, 2022. A quorum of trustees was present and the board took the following action:

- Approved the 2023 budget.
- Authorized employees to access the cooperative's safety deposit box.
- Approved participation in the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association's prepaid education program for 2023.
- Approved a donation of \$2,400 to TFS Community Hall.
- Approved a donation from unclaimed capital credits of \$500 to the Eureka Early Childhood Development Foundation for early childhood education.
- Approved a donation of \$1,000 and 12 x \$50 energy certificates to Big Hearts, Open Arms.
- Approved a donation of \$750 to Tobacco Valley Food Pantry.
- Authorized a trustee to attend the Montana Council of Cooperatives Annual Meeting and quarterly meeting in Helena.
- Approved employee bonuses and wage increases for non-union employees.

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

Tina Taurman
President

Becky Evins
Vice President

Michael Garner
Secretary-Treasurer

Myra Appel
Joel Graves
Sandi Mason
Rick Peterson
Marianne Roose
Ethel White

Telly Stanger
General Manager

Lincoln Electric's Board of Trustees holds regular monthly meetings at the boardroom in the cooperative office. These are typically scheduled on the third Monday of each month at 6 p.m. 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, JANUARY 16, 2023**



**Lincoln Electric
Cooperative, Inc.**

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

SEND YOUR IDEAS TO:

memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop

SAFE

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wood-burning stove would be sufficient. These are great options to keep you and your loved ones warm, but exercise caution when using, and never leave the heating source unattended. Fuel and wood-burning heating sources should always be vented, and make sure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly. Always read the manufacturer's directions before using.

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.

Be Safe

When an outage occurs, it often means powerlines are down. It is best not to travel during winter storms, but if you must, bring a survival kit along, and do not travel alone. If you encounter downed lines, always assume they are live. Stay as far away from the downed lines as possible, and report the situation to LEC by calling 406-889-3301 if possible.

If you rely on electricity for any life-sustaining equipment, such as at-home dialysis or oxygen, we recommend you plan for extended outages. You can do this by stocking extra tanks, having a generator or battery-backup on hand, or planning access to an alternative location, such as a friend's



Stay away from downed power lines, but call LEC at 889-3301 to report the situation.

house or a hotel.

In the event of large or extended outages, Lincoln Electric will coordinate with the Lincoln County Emergency Management Agency to provide a shelter for members who need it. Please call us or check our website at lincolnelectric.coop for emergency status information.

Winter weather can be unpredictable and dangerous, and planning ahead can often be the difference between life and death. Lincoln Electric is ready for what Mother Nature has in store, and we want you to be ready, too. For more information on preparing for winter storms, visit www.ready.gov. RM

RATE INCREASE REMINDER

On March 1, 2023, Lincoln Electric Cooperative members' rates will increase. For traditionally billed accounts, members will see the new rates reflected on the bill they receive at the beginning of April. For FlexAdvantage

accounts, members will see the new rates on March 1.

If you would like to see a rate comparison for your service(s), please contact us at 406-889-3301. For more information, visit our website at lincolnelectric.coop. RM

PRICE CHANGE COMING MARCH 2023		System Maintenance Charge (\$/month)		Kilowatt-Hour Charge (\$/kWh)		Demand Charge (\$/kW)	
Classification	Rate Type	Existing	New	Existing	New	Existing	New
Residential	3-Part	\$49.70	\$49.70	\$0.049570	\$0.051057	\$2.00	\$2.50
Residential	FlexAdvantage	\$66.30	\$69.62	\$0.060135	\$0.063142	N/A	N/A
Small Commercial	3-Part	\$49.70	\$49.70	\$0.056210	\$0.057896	\$2.00	\$2.50
Irrigation	2-Part	\$60.87	\$70.00	\$0.045480	\$0.047754	N/A	N/A
Large Commercial	3-Part	\$62.89	\$62.89	\$0.065560	\$0.067527	\$5.83	\$6.33
Industrial	3-Part	\$355.04	\$355.04	\$0.066650	\$0.069983	\$5.83	\$6.53

Keep food safe when the power goes out

SEVERE winds, lightning and even squirrels can temporarily cause the power to go out. We understand power outages of any length can be frustrating, especially when your fridge is stocked with perishable foods.

Extended power outages are rare, but when they occur, it's important to understand food safety measures to take to avoid illness.

Before an outage

A good rule of thumb is to keep an emergency supply kit on hand. Be sure to include nonperishable food items such as bottled water, powdered milk, canned goods, cereal and protein bars in your emergency kit.

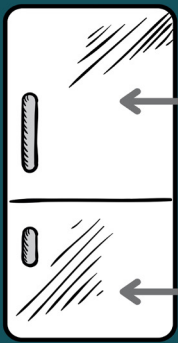
If you have advance warning that an outage is possible, fill a cooler with ice — just in case the outage spans several hours.

During an outage

If an outage occurs, do not open the refrigerator or freezer unless *absolutely* necessary. An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen for about 24 hours, and a full freezer for about 48 hours. If it looks like the power outage will last longer

Keep Food Safe During and After a Power Outage

Refrigerated or frozen foods may not be safe to eat after a power outage. Use these tips to minimize food loss and reduce risk of illness.



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Refrigerated food will last four hours. After four hours, place refrigerated foods in a cooler with ice.


24 OR **48**

Food in a **half-full** freezer will last 24 hours. Food in a **full** freezer will last 48 hours.

Food Safety Tips

- 1.** Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
- 2.** Throw out any food with an unusual odor, color or texture.
- 3.** Throw out perishable food in your refrigerator after four hours without power or a cold source (like a cooler with ice).

When in doubt, throw it out!



than four hours, move your important perishable items to an ice-filled cooler.

After an outage

If refrigerated foods have been exposed to temperatures higher than 40 degrees for more than two hours, the American Red Cross recommends discarding the items.

While most perishable foods should be thrown out after an extended outage, there are a few items that are safe to

consume after a two-hour exposure to 40+-plus degrees: Hard cheeses that are properly wrapped; butter or margarine that is properly wrapped; taco, barbecue and soy sauces; peanut butter, jelly, mustard, ketchup and relish.

The best way to avoid illness from spoiled food during or after an outage is to follow the four-hour rule of thumb. After an outage, always smell and inspect foods before consuming. When in doubt, throw it out. RM

MANAGER'S NOTES

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co-op gatherings and events so we can hear from you. These include our annual meeting and member appreciation event, as well as community events.

Coming in February 2022, we will also host four doughnut and coffee events for our members. These will give you the opportunity to speak with us about your concerns and ideas. Please be on the lookout in next month's *Rural Montana* for event details.

We also conduct a bi-annual survey to gather feedback so that we can plan for new initiatives, technical upgrades

and improvements on existing co-op programs and services. Our planning is led by local members just like you who understand the needs of the community and are looking out for the long-term interests of the larger community.

We are in the midst of significant changes in the energy sector, as technology and the drive for more renewables and a more balanced energy mix are impacting long-term planning. These are complex issues that we will be navigating in the coming years. This is why it's so important that we hear from you and other community members as we plan our course for the future.

Lincoln Electric works to continually learn from our members about their priorities so that we can better serve you — because your electric co-op was built by the community, for the community. But we can only improve, adapt and effectively plan for the future if we have two-way communication.

For our co-op and community to thrive now and into the future, we depend on hearing from you. We hope you will connect with us and let us know your perspective. You can always reach us at memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop or 406-889-3301. We're listening. RM

Telly