

Electricity Use Rises With Summer Temperatures



MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT/CEO RYAN BARTLETT

DO YOU REMEMBER THE ELECTRICITY BILL YOU RECEIVED AFTER THIS winter's cold spell? It gave many of our members a bit of sticker shock. Of course, we all use more kilowatt-hours to stay warm when the cold and ice of January come knocking. The unfortunate result is higher-than-usual bills.

Now, during the hot days of summer, a reverse weather pattern holds the potential to cause higher-than-normal bills again. "Compared with last summer," the U.S. Energy Information Administration predicts, "this summer's temperatures are forecast to be warmer." The EIA expects Americans will use more electricity this summer than last and pay more for it. The agency forecasts the typical residential electricity bill to increase 3.4 percent over last summer's bill.

In addition to higher temperatures increasing demand, we also face the possibility of higher wholesale electricity prices. That's because three coal-fired power plants that supplied part of Texas have been shut down.

Now add in the demands of the fast-growing state economy, and you have all the makings for higher electric bills.

No one knows how much extra your co-op might have to pay, but the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, which oversees 90 percent of the state's power grid, is predicting record-breaking peak power usage. To keep the system reliable, ERCOT prefers to maintain a small percentage of generation capacity beyond what is needed to meet peak demand. This extra energy capacity is called the "reserve margin," and it measures the system's ability to meet demand for power during the hottest days. The current projections for hotter summer weather and increased demand could test the reserve margin.

With that in mind, we all need to get ready for summer by managing our electricity use.

A few home improvements and simple changes to day-to-day habits can add up to big savings this summer. For example, a few tubes of latex or silicone caulk for your windows will help keep cooler air inside your home and the hot air outside where it belongs. If you insulate your hot water pipes, you can cut water heating costs by 4 percent. And remember to set your air conditioning system's thermostat to 78 degrees and maybe even a little higher if you're planning to be away from the house for a while.

Would you like to make an even greater impact on your bill? Check your home's insulation. According to energystar.gov, the insulation in your home's attic should cover joists and be evenly distributed.

It is also important to use insulation with a recommended R-value of 30–60. You will not only feel the difference in your home, you'll help offset peak demand.

At energystar.gov, you'll find a variety of tools and tips to help maximize your home's energy efficiency.

Most importantly, Taylor Electric Cooperative is a not-for-profit power provider. That means our mission is to provide you with the electricity you need to improve your quality of life—not turn a profit for investors. An important part of that mission entails providing you with tools to manage your electricity use. We want you to stay comfortable this summer with power bills you can afford.



Happy Independence Day

Our offices will be closed Wednesday, July 4, in observance of the holiday.



ND3000 | ISTOCK.COM

Power Tip

Except for fans that are designed for continuous operation, turn off kitchen, bath and other exhaust fans within 20 minutes of cooking or bathing.

Taylor EC Announces Scholarship Winners

Taylor Electric Cooperative congratulates our 2018 scholarship winners. These five member students were awarded a \$1,000 scholarship each. Congratulations and good luck as you begin college!



Matthew Atkins
Wylie High School



Brady Cluck
Cooper High School



Jaycie Fortune
Clyde High School



Hudson Payne
Jim Ned High School



Kaleigh Wilson
Wylie High School



Taylor Electric Cooperative

226 County Road 287 • P.O. Box 250
Merkel, TX 79536

PRESIDENT/CEO

Ryan Bartlett

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cecil Davis, Board Chairman, *Zone 1*
Leland Robinson, Board Vice Chairman, *Zone 1*
David McFall, Secretary-Treasurer, *Zone 2*
Garland Carter, *Zone 2*
Richard Petree, *At-Large*
Kathy Rainey, *Zone 3*
Gayla Simons, *Zone 3*

HANDY WAYS TO PAY YOUR BILL

Online

taylorelectric.com

Taylor Electric App

Available on your Apple or Android device

By Phone

(325) 793-8500

Visa, MasterCard, checks accepted.
Payments credited immediately.

In Person

Main office hours:

7:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m., Monday–Friday

226 CR 287, off I-20, west of Abilene Wells Lane exit 274 between Tye and Merkel

Abilene office hours:

7:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Monday–Friday

7966 Highway 83, Abilene 79602

Visa, MasterCard, checks, cash and money orders accepted.

Payments credited immediately.

Drop Box

Main office drop box at front gate: 24/7

Abilene office drop box (next to middle door): 24/7

Checks and money orders accepted.

Payments credited next business day.

Pay Stations

- **United Supermarket**, 521 S. Access Road, Clyde
- **Food Plaza #4**, 109 S.E. Fifth St., Cross Plains
- **Cash Saver**, 155 Sayles Blvd., Abilene
- **United Supermarket**, 2160 Pine St., Abilene
- **Check Express**, 906 E. Broadway Ave., Sweetwater

Cash, checks, money orders and debit cards accepted.

Payments credited next business day.



Summer Safety Hodgepodge

WE ALL ENJOY TAKING PART IN FUN ACTIVITIES AND outings over the relaxed days of summer. Bear in mind these tips to do so safely.

Shelter From the Sun

Long, sunny days spent outdoors leave us susceptible to heat exhaustion and heatstroke, especially when the mercury surges into triple digits. To prevent these serious conditions, limit sun exposure on hot days.

If it's unavoidable, observe the following practices:

- ▶ Drink more liquid than you think you need and avoid alcohol.
- ▶ Wear loose, lightweight and light-colored clothing. A hat helps shield you from the sun's rays, too.
- ▶ Replace electrolytes lost through perspiration by drinking fruit juices or sports drinks.
- ▶ Try to avoid spending time outside during the hottest part of the day, usually 11 a.m.–3 p.m.
- ▶ Wear sunscreen. A sunburn can negatively affect the body's ability to cool itself.
- ▶ If running or doing any other strenuous activity, pace yourself.

Fend Off Itchy—and Hazardous—Bites

Justifiably considered the bane of summer by many, mosquito bites are more than just a slightly painful nuisance. They also can transmit serious illnesses, including West Nile and Zika viruses. **Reduce your risk by taking the following preventive measures:**

- ▶ Use Environmental Protection Agency-registered insect repellent with DEET, being sure to apply as directed.
- ▶ Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants in bug-ridden areas.
- ▶ Do not leave open unscreened doors or windows.
- ▶ Make a weekly habit of scrubbing or emptying planters, birdbaths, vases, flowerpot saucers and any other outdoor items that collect water, which is required for mosquito eggs to hatch.

Appreciate Fireworks' Beauty and Risk

Just as electricity must be treated and handled with respect, it's important to approach fireworks with care. It can be easy to focus on their dazzling displays at the expense of remembering that fireworks present significant risks.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in 2016, at least four people died, and 11,100 were injured badly enough to require medical treatment after fireworks-related incidents. And on a typical Fourth of July, fireworks cause 40 percent of all reported fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Consider avoiding consumer fireworks and instead enjoy a spectacular public display con-



ducted by professionals. We want your Independence Day celebrations to be fun, memorable and safe.

If fireworks are legal in your area and you choose to use them, please be mindful of the following tips for safe handling:

- ▶ Never use fireworks while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- ▶ Never allow young children to handle fireworks.
- ▶ Older children should use fireworks only under close adult supervision.
- ▶ Anyone using fireworks or standing nearby should wear protective eyewear.
- ▶ Never light fireworks indoors.
- ▶ Only use fireworks away from people, homes and flammable materials, and only light one at a time, maintaining a safe distance after lighting.
- ▶ Never ignite devices in a container.
- ▶ Do not try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks.
- ▶ Soak unused fireworks in water before discarding.
- ▶ Keep a bucket of water nearby to fully extinguish fireworks that don't go off or in case of fire.

Taylor Electric Cooperative wishes you a summer filled with fun and the makings of many happy memories. Wherever this season's adventures take you, keep these practices in mind to stay safe.

Safety on the Farm

FARMING IS AMONG THE MOST DANGEROUS occupations for several reasons, including potential encounters with electrical hazards. Before taking to the fields, Taylor Electric Cooperative urges farmworkers to be aware of overhead power lines and to keep equipment far away from them.

Share this information with your families and workers to keep them safe from electrical accidents.

Start each morning by planning your day's work. Know what jobs will happen near power lines and have a plan to keep assigned workers safe.

Keep yourself and equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines in all directions at all times. Use a spotter when moving tall equipment and loads.

Always lower equipment extensions, portable augers and elevators to their lowest possible level, under 14 feet, before moving or transporting them. Wind, uneven ground, and other conditions can cause you to lose control of equipment and make contact with power lines.



Be aware of increased height on larger modern tractors with higher antennas.

Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path. If power lines near your property height have sagged over time, call Taylor EC to repair them.

Don't use metal poles when breaking up bridged grain inside and around bins.

Be careful not to raise any equipment, such as ladders or poles, into power lines. Remember, nonmetallic materials, such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay, will conduct electricity, depending

on dampness and dust and dirt contamination.

Use qualified electricians for work on farm electrical systems.

If you are on equipment that contacts a power line, do not exit the equipment. If you step off the equipment, you could receive a potentially fatal shock. Wait until cooperative workers have de-energized the line and confirmed it is safe for you to exit the vehicle. If the vehicle is on fire and you must exit, jump clear of the vehicle with both feet together. Hop as far from the vehicle as you can with your feet together to prevent current flow through your body, which could be deadly.

Help Kids Be Smart Energy Users

“DID YOU TURN OFF THE LIGHTS IN YOUR ROOM?” “WE’RE NOT paying to cool the whole neighborhood!” With school out for the summer, parents will be uttering these phrases to their children countless times each day. Despite best efforts, it can be tough to help kids understand the importance of saving energy—and to put that knowledge into action.

Few people have more experience talking about energy efficiency than the member services team at Taylor Electric Cooperative. So we asked them how they persuade the toughest audience they face every day: their kids. Here are a few of their tips.

Deputize an “Energy Enforcer”

Assign children to investigate wasteful energy practices. Each week, give the appointed child a badge and empower him or her to seek out energy waste and hold the offending parties—including adults—accountable. Consider offering your little energy deputies a bounty for finding leaks, drafts and wasteful energy practices around the house. Their progress can be tracked with stickers on a calendar, and

when the kids reach their goal, they can be rewarded.

Gentle Reminders

Colorful stickers or sticky notes on light switches help kids remember to turn off the lights when they leave a room. Sticky notes don't just apply to light switches. Place notes labeled “Turn Me Off” and “Unplug Me” near game consoles, TVs and other electronics as a visual reminder.

Pay the Piper

For older children, perhaps a financial plan will work best. Consider “fining” them for each light left on in their rooms. Demonstrating the tangible cost of inefficient electricity use might be the way to get the lesson to stick. Show them the electric bill to help them understand why it's important to use energy wisely. No matter what the approach, talking to kids about energy use is sure to pay dividends. They might not always follow through, but they'll be learning lessons about the value of energy and the importance of conservation that can last a lifetime.