

Like you, CEMC pays higher energy bills this winter

Last December, our customer contact center staff fielded 1,349 bill inquiries. Approximately 25 percent of them focused primarily on the Tennessee Valley Authority fuel cost adjustment (FCA).

When one considers the fact that Cumberland EMC serves 89,000 members, 1,349 doesn't seem unreasonable. What makes that number stand out is how it compares with the same month a year earlier, when there were "only" 125 inquiries. The difference is 1,000 percent.

Employees with all electric distributors are painfully aware of the rising costs associated with this winter's billing. Increased metered energy use is not only registered at members' residences and businesses, but at CEMC substations (delivery points) as well. When these delivery point meters are read and calculated by TVA, CEMC is sent a monthly power statement for use in our five county area. Our December bill was the highest in CEMC history. Some of the reasons follow:

Cold weather

The 2008-2009 winter season is running 1 percent colder than normal from Oct. 1 through Jan. 25 and is 14 percent colder compared to the previous year during the same period.

TVA's fuel cost adjustment

Although the FCA has been around for more than two years, there is still a great deal of confusion about it.

The FCA is a mechanism TVA uses to help recover largely uncontrollable fuel (excluding automobile fuel) and purchased power costs. A variety of factors

affect these costs, including weather and global supply and demand issues. The FCA is subject to change four times per year — in January, April, July and October. Last October, the FCA skyrocketed, increasing by 17 percent. At the same time, TVA imposed a 3-percent increase in its base energy rate. But in January, the FCA came down by 6 percent because of a reduction in the cost of purchased power and natural gas. The FCA is designed to fluctuate, and it is performing just as it was originally intended.

On our Web site (www.cemc.org) is a link to

frequently asked questions and answers that explain the FCA in greater detail than we have room for here. Please check it out if you are still uncertain about the FCA.

The price of electricity is rising across America. In Tennessee, a kilowatt-hour of electricity costs an average 10.13 cents. The New England states average 18.75 cents; gas-rich Texas averages 13.44 cents; and sunny Florida averages 12.09 cents. The national average is 11.86 cents, and that includes the astounding price paid by Hawaii residents — 35.74 cents per kwh.

CEMC is committed to holding rates as low as possible while still providing you with reliable electric service. Approximately 81 cents of every dollar we receive goes to TVA to pay for power. To maintain the infrastructure and operating costs of a system as large as ours with the remaining 19 cents is a remarkable accomplishment, and I believe is an indication of an efficient operation.



Jim Coode
General Manager
Cumberland Electric
Membership
Corporation

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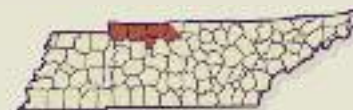
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Mission Statement

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation is committed to providing dependable, affordable electric service through the expertise and dedication of competent leadership and a well-trained and responsive workforce.



Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation

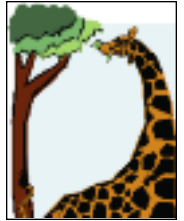
Serving Cheatham, Montgomery, Robertson, Stewart and Sumner counties.



Right-of-way maintenance keeps lights on

The creature displayed on this page is a jaraffe, which, thanks to a saw on the end of a retractable boom, is able to “bite off” tall tree branches that could disrupt your electric service.

The true value of the jaraffe’s work is apparent on days like Jan. 27, when trees throughout the Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation service area were coated with a layer of ice.



The weight from the ice causes limbs hanging over electric lines to snap off, oftentimes bringing the lines down with the limbs. Then it’s “lights out” for everyone served by those lines.

With spring arriving this month, it is a good time to remind homeowners to look to the future when considering planting new trees. Be sure to keep in mind how tall your tiny saplings will eventually be, and plant them far enough away from overhead power lines that they will not interfere with the lines as they mature.

CEMC recommends the following planting guidelines for new trees:

Small trees should not be planted within 20 feet of overhead power lines. Medium-size trees should observe a 40-foot buffer, and large species trees should be planted at least 50 feet away from the lines. Please contact CEMC (800-987-2362) if you have questions about potential tree-power line conflicts. Also, please contact Tennessee One Call (800-351-1111) before you dig!

Each CEMC business office has copies of the “Planting the Right Tree in the Right Place” brochure containing lots of good information for planting trees. Feel free to pick one up.

The reliability of the electric system is of utmost importance. Please do your part to help keep everyone’s lights on by planting your trees the proper distance from power lines.



Ice, ice baby!



Steve Fielder, working foreman, works to clear ice-laden branches jeopardizing power lines along River Road in Dover on the morning a winter storm disrupted electrical service to hundreds of Stewart County residents.

Two words can send shivers down the spine of just about any electric utility worker: *ice storm*. With the memory of the 1994 storm that left thousands of homes in the cold darkness for up to two weeks still fresh in their minds, the threat of a repeat major winter weather event is something no one wants to go through again.

So, when weather forecasters predicted an ice storm for Middle and West Tennessee in late January, workers at Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation prepared for the worst.

Power lines began giving way to falling tree limbs in the early morning hours of Jan. 27. Across the CEMC system, an estimated 15,000 members lost power, with a very small percentage of them out for up to 48 hours. Hardest hit were CEMC's Clarksville and Dover districts at the western end of the system. At the height of the storm, power was out to an estimated 6,700 homes and businesses in the Clarksville district and 3,000 in the Dover district.

"A majority of these outages were the result of tree limbs icing up and falling into the lines," says Randy Holt, CEMC operations manager.

Fortunately, CEMC crews were able to make all the repairs themselves, without having to call on neighboring utilities for help. As soon as full service was restored to CEMC members, an eight-man crew was sent to assist neighboring Gibson EMC, which was hit far worse than Cumberland.

Holt is quick to praise those who worked to restore service as quickly as they did.

"From top to bottom, Cumberland Electric performed as our mission statement says, with 'a well trained and responsive workforce,'" Holt says. "They exhibited persistence, dedication and perseverance in the true cooperative spirit, and if I were to grade our employees' performance, I would give them an 'A.'"



The ins and outs of CFLs

By Scott Gates, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

When Thomas Edison sparked light from a bit of carbonized sewing thread in 1879, could he have imagined that 130 years later the same basic technology would still be keeping the world out of the dark?

By any measure, Edison's incandescent lightbulbs have had a good run. But as of 2012, this time-tested technology will be phased out in the United States in favor of a more efficient generation of lightbulbs.

As a result, store shelves increasingly will be lined with more energy-efficient alternatives, the bulk of which will be compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs). You have undoubtedly seen these corkscrew-shaped bulbs by now and may have even outfitted your home with them. But what makes them so much more efficient?

CFLs are made of two components: a gas-filled tube — the “swirly” part — and an electronic ballast — the plastic base. Light is produced when mercury molecules, contained in argon or neon gas in the bulb, are excited by an electric current. These molecules then react with a phosphor coating on the inside of the tube, which creates light. With a white coating, you get white light, with a red coating, red light, etc.

Incandescent bulbs, on the other hand, produce light by running a current through a tightly coiled metal filament, typically tungsten. Atoms in the filament produce light when heated to around 4,000 degrees Fahrenheit. As a result, about 90 percent of the power consumed by a typical incandescent lightbulb is

emitted as heat, as anyone who has changed a hot bulb knows well. CFLs, in comparison, produce 75 percent less heat.

Benefits of CFLs go beyond cooler bulbs. A 75-watt incandescent lightbulb will burn out after about 40 days of continuous use whereas a CFL can keep going for a full year; CFLs require one-third less energy than incandescent bulbs, saving roughly \$30 in energy costs over the bulb's lifetime, according to Energy Star.

As CFL technology advances, new bulb and light quality options will expand its use to a wider range of applications. Installation guidelines should be followed to ensure CFLs perform correctly.

For example, not all CFLs perform well on dimmable switches and three-way fixtures, so be sure to check the packaging to see if the bulb's ballast design matches your needs. You'll also get more value if you leave CFLs on for 15 minutes or longer; switching them on and off can shorten their lifespan.

Exterior lighting offers a great place to use CFLs, but people who live in colder climates should look for specially designed cold-weather versions — standard CFLs may not work well below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

To learn about the latest ways you can use CFLs to make your home more energy-efficient, visit Energy Star at www.energystar.gov.

Sources: Energy Star, General Electric Company, U.S. Department of Energy



The ENERGY STAR CHOOSE A LIGHT GUIDE

Match Your Mood

Get ideas, sign up, compare, choose, share

Choose a Light

Every time you are using an ENERGY STAR qualified product you are saving energy, money, and greenhouse gas emissions.

ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency helping us all save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices.

To have the best experience possible, keep the following tips in mind:

Use ENERGY STAR qualified bulbs in places where you will have the lights on for at least 15 minutes at a time. Frequently turning a CFL on and off will shorten the bulb's lifetime.

LEARN MORE AT WWW.ENERGYSTAR.GOV

The Choose a Light Guide at www.energystar.gov helps consumers find the best energy-efficient lightbulbs for their home, taking a variety of factors into consideration.

Graphic courtesy of the Energy Star program, a partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy.



Member Appreciation Days returning at CEMC

One of the newest and most popular traditions at Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation is happening again in 2009.

Member Appreciation Days provide an opportunity for CEMC managers, employees and directors to enjoy a relaxing time with the members of the cooperative over lunch at each of our seven district business offices.



CEMC Director Tommy Whittaker, second from right, visits with member Larry Crocker during last year's Member Appreciation Day event in Portland.

"I would like to encourage everyone to join us when we come to the office near them," says Barbara Harper, member services manager. "We always look forward to spending quality time with our members, and the picnic atmosphere of Member Appreciation Days is perfect for that."

Besides a free lunch of hot dogs, chips, cookies and soft drinks, members can register for a Mecos deluxe electric cart grill that will be given away in a drawing at each location.

The schedule for this year's Member Appreciation Days is:

- Tuesday, April 21 - Springfield
- Wednesday, April 22 - Ashland City
- Thursday, April 23 - Clarksville
- Tuesday, April 28 - Portland
- Wednesday, April 29 - White House
- Thursday, April 30 - Gallatin
- Friday, May 1 - Dover.

Activities will get under way each day beginning at 10 a.m. and end at 1 p.m. when the drawing for each day's grill giveaway will be held. You do not have to be present to win, but you must be present to register for the prize.

CEMC safety training includes CPR certification for benefit of members as well as employees



Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation employees are trained to render aid to each other as well as to members and visitors doing business with the cooperative.

CPR, or cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, is one of the mandatory training classes that all employees are required to attend.

"You never know when you might have to put this training to use, so we try to always be prepared," says Chip Miller, safety coordinator.

David South, apprentice lineman trainee in Ashland City, practices chest compressions on a training dummy. Looking on are, from right, instructor Jimmy Luffman, Bo Cook, apprentice lineman trainee in Springfield, and Brian Shupe, second period apprentice lineman in the Dover District.