

Holmes-Wayne

Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



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Smart solution needed

The dust has settled from the fall election, and this month we turn our eyes to Washington, D.C. The economic crisis will remain a major focus for elected officials through the coming years, and the new Administration also promises an increased focus on energy policy, with a major emphasis on global climate change and the impact on affordable electricity. As all of us paying electric bills every month can attest to, the two go hand-in-hand. It is crucial that any energy policy discussed in Washington comes with a price tag that won't leave consumers in the dark.

Through the nationwide grassroots awareness campaign called Our Energy, Our Future™, co-op consumers have contacted their elected officials with three critical energy policy questions focused on capacity, technology and affordability. With a new president and a new Congress taking office, electric cooperatives will need to continue pressing for answers. These answers won't be clear-cut.

Although electricity use across the United States is steadily climbing, relatively high costs for construction materials and uncertainty about climate change goals, which could place strict limits on carbon dioxide emitted by power plants, have stalled development of new base load generation — the large, efficient stations that provide dependable and affordable electric power year-round.

So here's the important question: how can we keep power flowing and electric bills affordable? There's simply no single answer, and electric co-ops know from experience that it will take a variety of new generation resources and technologies to ensure reliable and affordable electricity in the coming years. We must continue to research into renewable energy, and invest in clean coal technology, nuclear power, an updated transmission grid and improvements in energy efficiency across the board.

Of course, implementing all of this on a large scale will require a massive investment of government resources and leadership. As consumer advocates and industry leaders, electric co-ops can provide lawmakers with expertise on what programs are affordable, sustainable and technologically feasible. All of this must be grounded in goals and public policy that puts consumers first.

You can help in this effort and make a real impact by telling members of Congress your story — why affordable electricity is important to you and your family. Tens of thousands of electric co-op members have done so already, and as a result we've sent more than 1.5 million messages to Congress, calling attention to our nation's impending electricity crisis.

Please visit www.ourenergy.coop today. Make your voice heard and help guide policymakers toward a smart, affordable energy future.

President's Report

By
Glenn Miller



New look and new way to manage your bill

In our constant effort to provide quality customer service, you will notice your HWEC bill will have a new look in 2009. The breakdown of your bill in further detail will help members calculate and manage their electric use.

"As members continue to reduce their consumption through energy-efficient practices, this new bill will be a great tool," said Lisa Baker, billing supervisor. "The bill breakdown will show both the consumer charge and kilowatt consumption charge as well as continue to show any programs they voluntarily participate, in such as EnviroWatts and Operation Round Up."

The last several years, HWEC has been increasing services that assist you the member/owner in managing your electric bill. Baker also stresses, "Our Web site is a huge asset that members can utilize. Through our online payment option, not only can you pay your bill electronically every month but you also can review your consumption history. You also can go to our energy advice section and there are unlimited tips and advice on how to make your home or business more energy efficient. The cooperative's focus on services such as these are great examples of our commitment to providing the information for members to manage their bill."



Greener in Ohio

We're all concerned about the environment. Air, water, land and forests are precious resources requiring our care to ensure continued quality and sustainability for the next generation.

Caring for the environment means doing things like recycling and using energy efficiently — from installing compact fluorescent light bulbs which require about one third of the energy of an incandescent bulb, to turning off lights and appliances when not in use.

Another way we care for the environment is through the EnviroWatts® program. This renewable energy initiative, first developed in 2006, now has evolved into an even smarter way for Ohio electric cooperative members to show their support for renewable energy. It's part of our Greener in Ohio effort.

We want to express our appreciation to the members who are participating in the EnviroWatts program. Your participation has made a difference!

When EnviroWatts began, it was based on renewable energy certificates (RECs) from electricity produced from methane gas at a landfill in Kentucky. A portion of the money from EnviroWatts purchases paid for these RECs and for research and development of renewable energy sources in Ohio — projects such as a small wind turbine at Indian Lake High School

in Logan County near Bellefontaine and, in southwestern Ohio, a 230-square-foot solar panel array built in partnership with Miami University.

These R&D projects have been learning experiences for the cooperatives and education institutions. Our participation allowed EnviroWatts to move to the next level.

Now, the EnviroWatts program will be based upon electricity purchased from Ohio cooperative members who are producing power from renewable energy sources. That's electricity produced by Ohio cooperative members, for Ohio cooperative members. These sources include solar panels and biodigesters on Ohio farms. We anticipate adding additional new sources as the program grows.

EnviroWatts is offered in "blocks." Each block represents 100 kilowatt-hours of electricity produced from renewable energy sources and costs \$2 per block per month. One hundred percent of your contribution for EnviroWatts goes toward purchasing renewable energy for this program.

You can sign up by contacting us by phone or visit our Web site to learn more. Help us care for the environment — one EnviroWatts block at a time. Your support helps us all be Greener in Ohio.

Power outage planning

There are many causes of power outages — wind, ice and snow, transmission lines, lightning, construction damage to underground lines, traffic accidents affecting power poles, equipment failure and more. With the dramatic weather we face in Ohio, are you prepared for a power outage? Please take advantage of our new "Electric Outage Planning" program located on our Web site www.hwecoop.com. This section is packed full of valuable information on tips to prepare for an outage, the steps that are taken by Holmes-Wayne Electric to restore your power and answers to frequently asked questions.

Some customers prepare for the possibility of power outages by buying an electric generator as a standby system to keep lights and appliances running until service is restored. Follow these guidelines to make sure that your generator is working safely:

- Follow all safety instructions provided by the manufacturer.
- The law requires that customers with a permanently installed or portable generator do not connect it to another power source, such as Holmes-Wayne Electric Cooperative's power lines. If you own and operate a generator, you are responsible for making sure that electricity from your unit cannot "backfeed," or flow into Holmes-Wayne power lines. For safety's sake, be sure to use your generator correctly. If you do not, you risk damaging your property and endangering your life and the lives of Holmes-Wayne's line workers who may be working on power lines some distance from your home.
- Have a licensed electrician install stationary or standby emergency generators. Call an electrician to repair a generator; never attempt to repair it yourself.
- NEVER operate the generator in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces, including homes, garages and basements. Generators very quickly produce high levels of carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless, deadly gas. Operate your generator outside. Never operate it inside a building or garage.
- Keep the generator dry. To protect it from moisture, operate on a dry surface under an open canopy-like structure. Also, remember to "exercise" your generator weekly so it will be ready to go when you need it.
- Do not overload the generator. Your generator should be 20 percent larger than the total electric load you plan to connect and power up. Plug appliances directly into the generator, or use a heavy-duty outdoor-rated extension cord that is rated in watts or amps at least equal to the sum of the connected loads.
- Never replenish fuel in a generator while it is running. Make sure fuel for your generator is stored safely, away from living areas, in properly labeled containers and away from fuel-burning appliances. And before refueling, always turn the generator off and let it cool down.
- Never connect generators to your utility service through receptacles, outlets, breakers, fuses or meter boxes. Connecting a generator directly to your household wiring can be very hazardous since this can back feed along the power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including line workers making repairs. It is an absolute necessity that your generator, if it is connected to your home's wiring through the circuit breaker or fuse box, be connected with a "double-throw" transfer switch. This is not just a good idea or suggestion — IT IS THE LAW.
- Make sure your generator is properly grounded.
- Turn off all appliances powered by your generator before shutting it down.
- Plug appliances directly into an emergency or portable generator. This is the safest way to use a generator. We don't recommend connection of a generator directly to a breaker panel, fuse box or meter box.
- Obey all local, state and national electrical and fire codes.
- Store gasoline in approved fuel containers and out of children's reach.
- Keep children away from generators.
- Have a fully charged, properly rated fire extinguisher (i.e., rated for electrical and gas fires) ready at all times.
- If an electric generator system is improperly installed or operated, it can be deadly. People die needlessly every year in accidents that involve electric generators.

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Are your parents members of an electric cooperative?

You could win a college, vocational or technical school scholarship of

\$2,625*

Contact your electric cooperative for details on how you can enter

***First place for each division, boys' and girls'**

Second place:\$1,835

Third place:\$1,575

Fourth place:\$1,470

Fifth place:\$1,365

Sixth place:\$1,260



Touchstone Energy®

The power of human connections

Here are the rules for the Ohio Rural Electric Cooperatives, Inc. scholarship competition:

1. Applicants must be a son, daughter or legal ward of an Ohio rural electric distribution cooperative member living on the lines and receiving service at the time of the statewide competition.
2. All applications must be submitted (typed) on forms obtainable on request from your participating local electric cooperative office or at buckeyepower.com.
3. All applications must be submitted to the office of that cooperative by the deadline date of Feb. 13.
4. Applicants must have all basic credits for college or proper** vocational or technical school entrance. They must have a current career average of "B+" (3.5 on a 4-point scale) or better and must be accepted, then enrolled (when they receive the award) in the accredited college or proper** vocational or technical school of their choice.
5. Any applicant who has received a full-tuition scholarship to the school of his/her choice is not eligible for a scholarship from OREC.
6. All scholarships must be accepted in the first academic year after proof of enrollment is received by OREC.
7. Each electric cooperative is eligible to nominate two candidates (one in each division) to participate in the statewide competition.

For information, contact:

Your local high school guidance office or Holmes-Wayne Electric Cooperative at 866-674-1055 or www.hwcoop.com