



TIPS From T.I.P.

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Consumers Expect Affordable Electric Bills

More than three-fourths of Americans agree that Congress should know how much climate legislation is going to cost consumers if they approve new energy policy.

That was one of several findings according to a national poll commissioned by the Arlington, Virg.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

According to the study, Americans expect that their elected representatives will know-and will tell them-how much their electric bills will increase in addressing concerns about climate change.

“Electric cooperatives are working hard to help Congress develop simple, affordable, flexible and effective climate change legislation,” said Glenn English, CEO, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. “We are seeking a common sense approach to climate change that minimizes costs and ensures that safe and reliable electric power remains affordable for everyone.

“Family budgets are already strained by rising energy costs, and climate change legislation that does not take consumer costs into account will place significant burdens on households from coast to coast,” English said.

Public policy will change to achieve reductions in carbon dioxide emissions-the heart of any climate change policy-from factories, power plants and vehicles are inevitable, English said. “The question isn’t if they will happen, but how.”

In mid-April, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced it was ready to use the federal Clean Air Act to limit emissions of carbon dioxide, along with five other greenhouse gases blamed for contributing to global warming. However, the agency said it hoped Congress would adopt a legislative solution instead.

Congressional climate change proposals remain

vague about how consumers will be affected. The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, a draft measure under consideration by the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee, would employ a market-based system of tradable federal permits, known as emissions allowances, to cut greenhouse gases. This cap-and-trade system would set a specific limit on carbon dioxide emissions from sources like power plants, factories and refineries, and require those sources to account for all emissions with allowances.

The plan does not specify whether these allowances would be distributed for free, as has been done with other environmental laws, or sold at auction to generate a massive amount of federal revenue, as suggested in President Obama’s fiscal 2010 budget.

“Electric co-ops, and Americans in general, are highly skeptical of schemes that will allow speculators to bid up the price of emissions allowances,” English said. “That would put electric bills in the hands of Wall Street.”

The danger of such a system isn’t lost on consumers: 77 percent of those polled were concerned that a cap-and-trade auction would allow financiers and multinational energy companies to control the price consumers pay for electricity. Fifty-eight percent agree that at a time when the U.S. economy is in trouble, climate change legislation must keep electric bills affordable by focusing only on meeting climate change requirements-not generating federal revenue for other purposes.

In early May, electric co-op representatives from 47 states gathered on Capitol Hill to have a role in the debate and discuss consumer concerns face-to-face with members of Congress. **(Continued on page 3)**

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Notice: Your REC office will be closed Friday, July 3rd. Have a safe holiday!



Advance Notice of Member's Meeting

In preparation for the Annual Meeting of the members, August 29, 2009, the following information is provided.

Membership

The Association shall have no capital stock, but membership in the Association shall be evidenced by a certificate of membership. The issuing price of membership in the Association shall be \$5, and no certificate of membership in the Association shall be issued until the issuing price for the membership shall have been paid in full.

Annual Meeting

At the Annual Meeting of the members, directors shall be elected by and from the members to serve for a period of three years or until their successors shall have been elected and qualified. No person shall be eligible to become or remain a board member of the Association who is not a member receiving electric service to his or her principle place of residence from the Association or is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business selling electric energy or supplies to the Association, or a business primarily engaged in selling electrical or plumbing appliances. Upon establishment of the fact that a board member is holding office in violation of any of the foregoing provisions, the board shall remove such board member from office.

A member shall not become or remain eligible for the office of director if such person or his or her spouse has a relative as hereinafter defined working full time for the Cooperative. A relative for this purpose shall be defined as such member's parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, aunts, uncles, great-aunts, great-uncles, or first cousins and in addition any spouse of any of the foregoing persons.

Nominations

The nominees for the position of Director shall be named by a nominating committee, which nominating committee shall consist of two persons from each of three geographical areas. Said committee shall be named by the Board of Directors of the Cooperative. Said committee shall select two nominees from each geographical area and the persons thus selected shall be reported to the Annual Meeting. The names shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Cooperative not less than 10 days prior to the Annual so that printed ballots can be prepared.

Members of the Cooperative shall be reminded of their opportunity to suggest persons to the Board for said nominating committee in the newsletter of the Cooperative in May prior to the Annual Meeting. In the July newsletter

members shall be reminded of their opportunity to suggest nominees to said nominating committee as candidates for the position of director. No nominations shall be received from the floor at the time of the Annual Meeting.

Tips For Staying Safe During An Electric Outage

As Iowans know well from historic weather experienced in 2008, the spring and summer storm season brings the potential for electric outages, as wind, rain and lightning can bring down trees and power lines.

According to the National Weather Service, in 2008, there were 105 tornadoes in Iowa including the deadly EF5 tornado that struck Parkersburg and other areas in northeast Iowa.

T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative offers the following tips for staying safe when the power goes out:

- If you see a downed line, assume it is an electric line which is energized and don't touch it. Touching an energized power line can be fatal. Call your cooperative to report the downed line.
- If you lose power to your home during a storm, check your fuses or circuit breakers first to confirm that the outage is not due to your home's electrical system, then call your cooperative.
- Never assume someone else has reported a power outage. If you lose power during a storm call your cooperative. Your information helps the co-op pinpoint the source of an outage and speeds the restoration process.
- Use caution when stepping outside of your home during a power outage; a downed power line may be just outside your door or may be hidden by brush or debris. Use extra caution picking up metal debris, such as awnings or metal roofing, which may be in contact with a hidden downed power line.
- Never use a grill, space heater or portable generator intended for outside use inside your home. Similarly, never attempt to heat your home with a gas range. Any natural gas-or propane-fueled appliances can emit deadly carbon monoxide.
- Keep fresh batteries in flashlights and lanterns for use during emergencies and have extra batteries on hand.
- Use caution and common sense in the placement of candles and oil lamps for light. Never keep candles burning when you go to bed. Keep them away from drapes and other flammable materials.

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“Consumers across the country have spoken, and it is clear that electric cooperatives just can’t sit this one out,” English said. “As champions for members’ best interests, electric co-ops are dedicated to getting the message through to Congress: any regulations on carbon dioxide emissions must come through simple, affordable and flexible legislation that can be sustained over the decades needed to make a difference.”

Make Sure Your Home Is Ready To Beat The Heat

Energy use and costs typically rise as the mercury rises. T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative suggests energy- and money-saving measures so you and your home can better weather the summer heat and humidity.

A substantial portion of total residential energy costs is spent cooling homes. Reduce energy costs and ready the air conditioner with a cleaning and tune-up. Clean or change filters monthly during the cooling season. An efficiently running cooling system will save dollars. If you’re purchasing a new unit, check the efficiency rating, or SEER. The higher the SEER number the more efficient the air conditioner. For greater operating efficiency, install the unit in a shady area, and keep it free of plant overgrowth and debris.

Most of summer heat buildup in homes comes through windows. Simply closing curtains, blinds and shades can reduce this heat gain by up to 40 percent, and save big dollars in cooling costs. Installing awnings or shutters over windows exposed to direct sunlight can reduce indoor heat gain by up to 70 percent. Outdoor landscaping that includes shade trees and insulating foundation plants can also reduce energy costs.

Ventilate the attic and check insulation. Adequately sized vents and/or an attic fan can help keep hot air from building up. If your attic has less than 6 to 8 inches of insulation, consider adding more. Proper attic insulation can save up to 30 percent on your cooling bill. Be sure the insulation doesn’t block vents or cover exhaust fans.

Another inexpensive way to keep cool and reduce air conditioning costs is to use ceiling and oscillating fans to create a “wind chill” effect. The moving air makes the temperature feel cooler, and allows a higher air conditioner thermostat setting while maintaining cooling comfort. For each 1 degree increase in the thermostat setting, cooling costs can be trimmed by about 3 percent.

Follow these operating tips for greater energy efficiency and reduction in air conditioning costs:

1. Install a timer or programmable thermostat to raise

and lower the temperature automatically. Leave it on a higher temperature while you’re away, and set it to cool the house half an hour before you return home.

2. Turn off unnecessary lights and television sets you’re not watching. Don’t leave computers on when not in use.
3. Make sure heat-producing appliances like televisions and lamps are away from the thermostat. They will raise the temperature at the thermostat and cause the air conditioner to run when its not needed.
4. Plan to do hot work-washing and drying clothes, cooking and baking-during cooler morning and evening hours.
5. Keep your kitchen cooler by cooking in a microwave oven, or grill outdoors.

“Increased summer electric demand not only can place strain on budgets, it can place a serious strain on your home’s electrical system—a dangerous shock and fire hazard,” cautions Molly Hall, Safe Electricity Executive Director. “Flickering or dimming lights, television and computer monitors, or frequent circuit breaker trips, are signs of an overloaded electrical system or faulty wiring that should be checked immediately by a professional.”

Homeowners can take simple electrical safety measures that can prevent overloaded outlets and serious damage and injury, according to Hall.

“Avoid using extension cords on a long-term basis, and don’t use multiple plugs in outlets,” she advises. “Check plugs and electric cords for fraying or cracks, and never run cords across high-traffic areas, behind curtains or baseboards, or underneath rugs or furniture.”

Your Cooperative and the Safe Electricity program offer information year round to help consumers use electric energy efficiently and safely. For more information and tips to help cut costs and improve home safety, visit the Web sites www.tiprec.com, and www.SafeElectricity.org. Safe Electricity is an electrical safety public awareness program created and supported by a coalition of several dozen organizations, including electric utilities and cooperatives, educators and other entities committed to promoting electrical safety.

What To Do If You Don’t Received A Bill

Occasionally, members report that they do not receive their electric bill or they have mislaid it. If this happens to you, contact our office and request a duplicate bill. Failure to receive a bill does not relieve one of the responsibility of paying on time.

Want to Pay Your Bill by Check, Debit or Credit Card? Log on to tiprec.com and Click on Rapid Pay or Call 866-271-5568.

**T.I.P. RURAL ELECTRIC CO-OP
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Everyone And Everything Around You Is Your Teacher.

Plan To Attend Your Annual Meeting On August 29, 2009

It is not every company that invites its customers to an annual meeting to elect the board of directors. But your electric cooperative does just that.

When you signed up as a consumer of the electric cooperative, you automatically became a member and a part-owner of that utility.

Cooperatives use a business model that is different from other companies. They do not sell stock on Wall Street, so there are no out-of-town investors. Control of a cooperative utility is local.

Each consumer of a cooperative is an equal partner in that utility. You may run for a seat on the board of directors and vote for the candidates who do run-and know that every candidate is also a consumer of the co-op.

So it is important to attend your cooperative's annual meeting. It is a place where you can meet the staff who run the cooperative and get to know the consumer/directors who advise the staff and decide on important policy matters.

It is also where you can vote for the board of directors and learn what kinds of business issues your cooperative is dealing with.

Membership in a cooperative comes with these privileges. It also comes with the responsibility to keep on top of cooperative matters and cast your vote for the directors you think will do the best job.

Watts Smart Tips Available to Members

Recently, your Cooperative added a new feature to our web site. It's called "Watts Smart" and it's available online. Just go to www.tiprec.com and click on the "Newsletters" tab at the left and it will take you to another page and you need to click on the "Watts Smart" box at the bottom of that page. This will open up safety, energy saving and energy efficiency articles and more for you to read. Take advantage of these tips today!



How Energy Star Is Helping!

In 2008, Americans-with the help of **ENERGY STAR**-saved **\$19 billion** on their energy bills and avoided greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to **29 million cars**.