

Current Matters



Nobles Cooperative
Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

September 2019

Vol. 11 Issue 9



Time of use matters

Did you know you can help your electric co-op by simply glancing at the clock? The key is a term used in the energy industry called "time of use."

Electricity follows the basic economic laws of supply and demand—when a lot of people want something, it's expensive; when they don't, it's cheaper. Energy is more expensive during certain times of the day because more people are using it.

Behind that statement, there's a story of a complex industry that's changing as fast as digital technology. The role you play can be as simple as washing and drying your clothes a couple hours later than usual. Why would you want to do that? One reason has to do with the fact that as a co-op member, you and your neighbors own your electric cooperative.

By paying attention to times of energy use, co-op members can feel like they're a part of something. Essentially, (516-37-198) if you're helping your co-op, you're helping your neighbors. Helping with time of use can be more than a feeling. It can translate to real dollars.

People wake up in the morning, they turn on their coffee makers, they take showers, they get ready to go to work, they go to work, then all the comput-

ers and buildings are powering up, and there's this peak demand for electricity that has to be met. The infrastructure has to be there to serve that demand. Then later in the day, people go home, turn on their lights, eventually go to bed, and then they aren't using as much power, but there still needs to be the infrastructure there for the next morning when they get up and start all over.

Your electric co-op pays more for electricity during those (123-31-36) morning and evening energy rush hours in two ways: either by having a power plant there to make sure enough electricity is available, or by actually paying more to purchase electricity from another utility with excess power at the time. Those peaks in energy use get even higher when it's especially hot or cold outside, as air conditioners or heaters use extra power.

So, you can help level out that pattern of energy peaks and valleys by simply adjusting when and how you use electricity.

By shifting the time of day you use energy for common chores, like washing clothes or running the dishwasher, you can help your electric co-op keep energy rates lower, which also helps your fellow co-op members.

Energy saving tip

Cookware Efficiency Tip: Copper-bottomed pans heat faster on the stove. In the oven, ceramic and glass dishes are better than metal. With ceramic and glass dishes, you can turn the oven down about 25 degrees, and your meal will cook just as quickly.

Source: energy.gov

Mark your calendar

Sept. 25 Electric bills due
Oct. 14 Columbus Day

Protecting you against Identity Theft

In order to ensure the privacy and accuracy of member information and to reduce the incidence of identity theft, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) enacted an "Identity Theft Red Flag Rule". This rule requires all businesses that obtain and maintain confidential information to implement an identity theft prevention program. As a member, you may be asked to provide additional information and identification when you make inquiries regarding your service or account. We understand that this can be a bit of an inconvenience, but the rule is in place for your protection. Please understand that these procedures will help protect your identity.

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October survey seeks members' feedback



A word from your General Manager **Adam Tromblay**

Structured to serve our members

Recent news articles have falsely asserted that electric cooperatives are not regulated and question the value of self-governance or why cooperatives are different from other utilities. We want to set the record straight on these points.

We don't take for granted what it means to be different from other electric providers. We appreciate and embrace our differences because it means we can serve you, our member, in a manner that best meets your needs. While there are dozens of positive ways electric cooperatives differ from other utilities, everything we do revolves around our unique business model and our local, not-for-profit structure.

Like all electric cooperatives in the state, Nobles Cooperative Electric (NCE) is owned by our area's neighbors, friends and community members. Because of this member-ownership structure, the directors you elect to govern the cooperative are entrusted to make decisions that are in the best interests of our local communities.

This type of self-governance is successful in many forms – through schools, church, credit unions and



September Auto Pay Winner Merrill Peters

Take a minute to sign up for Auto Pay and you may win a \$25 credit on your electric bill. A winner is chosen each month. Members who are already saving time and money with Auto Pay will be automatically entered in our monthly contest.



Find your location number and win a \$10 credit

If you find your location number (as it appears on your monthly electric bill) in this issue, you will receive a \$10 credit.

various types of cooperatives. While this structure allows for local decision-making, it's imperative to recognize that self-governed organizations – including NCE – must adhere to all local, state and federal laws and regulations. Electric cooperatives are, in fact, significantly regulated.

We have considerable oversight through hundreds of Minnesota statutes and by the Minnesota Public Utilities (22-59-67) Commission (PUC). We follow Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations, National Electrical Safety Code® standards and Environmental Protection Agency regulations, to name a few. Where PUC regulation primarily differs for electric cooperatives versus utilities is in rate regulation. The PUC plays a regulatory role for investor-owned utilities (IOUs) in the rate-making process to provide checks and balances between shareholders and ratepayers. Without this oversight, it could be in the IOU's interest to charge as high of rates as possible to return profits to their shareholders.

Because the board members, who are setting rates for NCE, are also members

and users of co-op-generated electricity, there is no benefit in charging any more than necessary for power. NCE undertakes extensive cost-of-service studies to ensure rates are appropriate and adequate to solely cover the costs of providing service.

To govern effectively, NCE's directors bring a diverse and well-rounded background to the boardroom. Our directors have financial skills, industry knowledge, an understanding of regulatory and legislative policymaking, and an aptitude for determining the ongoing and future strategic direction of the cooperative.

Since 1936, the cooperative business model and core principles have been guiding us as we make long-term decisions to ensure reliable, safe and affordable energy for our members. We're proud of our track record of powering homes, businesses, schools, hospitals and other essential services in our communities. If you have questions about our policies or our cooperative structure, please don't hesitate to contact us.

HARVEST SAFETY TIPS FOR FARMWORKERS

- **Maintain a 10-foot clearance** around all utility equipment in all directions.
- **Use a spotter and deployed flags** to maintain safe distances from power lines and other equipment when  doing field work.
- **If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, contact us immediately** by phone and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab, without touching it at the same time, and hop away to safety.
- **Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle.** Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipe and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.

Source: Safe Electricity



AMERICA'S ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVES

ONLINE SURVEY

NCE wants to know what you think! If you receive an email to participate in the survey, we hope you'll click yes. Your opinions are important!



October survey seeks members' feedback

Your opinion matters to us! At NCE, you are more than a customer, you are a member and owner of our cooperative. That's why we are asking you to take part in an important survey measuring member satisfaction. The results will be used to adjust, plan and deliver service to better meet your needs and expectations. The survey is brief and should only take five minutes to complete. At NCE, (516-38-217) we are dedicated to providing you with quality service and we rely on your responses and feedback to succeed. All survey information will remain confidential.

Country Cupboard

Fried Green Tomatoes

4 large, firm tomatoes
1 1/2 c. yellow cornmeal
1 1/2 c. buttermilk

Salt and pepper
1 T. paprika
Crisco shortening

Slice tomatoes 1/4 to 1/2 inch thick. Pour buttermilk into a dish for dipping. Mix cornmeal, salt, pepper and paprika in a separate dish. Add shortening to large frying pan (should fill about 1/4 inch deep). Heat over medium high. Dip each slice into the buttermilk and dredge in cornmeal. Fry until brown on both sides.

Mild Tomato Salsa

36 medium tomatoes, peeled and quartered
4 medium green peppers, chopped
3 large onions, chopped
2 (12 oz.) cans tomato paste
1 3/4 c. white vinegar
1/2 c. sugar
1 medium, sweet red pepper, chopped

1 celery rib, chopped
15 garlic cloves, minced
4-5 jalapeno peppers, seeded & chopped
1/4 c. canning salt
1/4 to 1/2 tsp. hot pepper sauce

In a large stockpot, cook tomatoes, uncovered, over medium heat 20 minutes. Drain, reserving liquid. Return tomatoes to pot. Stir in green peppers, onions, tomato paste, vinegar, sugar, red pepper, celery, garlic, jalapenos, canning salt, hot pepper sauce and reserved tomato liquid. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer uncovered for 1 hour, stirring frequently. Ladle hot mixture into 10 hot 1-pint jars, leaving 1/2" headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace, if necessary, by adding hot mixture. Wipe rims. Center lids on jars; screw on bands until fingertip tight. Place jars into canner with simmering water. Bring to a boil; process for 20 minutes. Remove jars and cool. Yield: 10 pints.

Send your favorite **casserole** recipe to Nobles Cooperative Electric, ATTN: Tracey, P.O. Box 788, Worthington, MN 56187-0788. Entries must include your name, address, telephone number and NCE location number. All (10-14-54) entries must be received by September 25. The winning recipe will be featured in the next edition of *Current Matters* and the winner will receive a \$10 credit on their electric bill.



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Electrical inspectors

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Nobles County
Scott Preuss - 507-430-3652

General Manager

Adam Tromblay

Board of Directors

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Next Board Meeting

October 22, 2019

This cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

