

We're Different. We're Looking Out for You

Cooperatives are different from other business you deal with. To tell you the truth, I like being different. And the fact that you're reading this article shows you like that difference, too.

We're different because we're *Looking Out for You*. Now, more than ever, that's important because we need to work together to keep your electric bills affordable.

Congress did not pass a comprehensive climate bill last year. In January the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency began regulating greenhouse gasses—an action made possible by a 2007 Supreme Court decision, followed by rulings allowing the EPA to use the Clean Air Act to curb carbon emissions. Policies dealing with coal ash, even more stringent controls on other power plant emissions, and state renewable energy requirements could also lead to higher costs. It's hard to predict the future, but one thing seems certain: government regulations are going to increase the cost of doing business.

New regulations won't be the only culprit. Prices for fuel, materials, and equipment will continue to rise. Although the recent economic slump and correspond-

ing drop in electricity use provided some much-needed breathing room, soon we will need to build new power plants, requiring a significant, long-term investment of time and money.

We're committed to keeping you informed about policy changes that will impact your electric bill through channels like the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News* and our website, www.oakdalerec.com. We're going to do everything we can to keep your electric bills affordable.

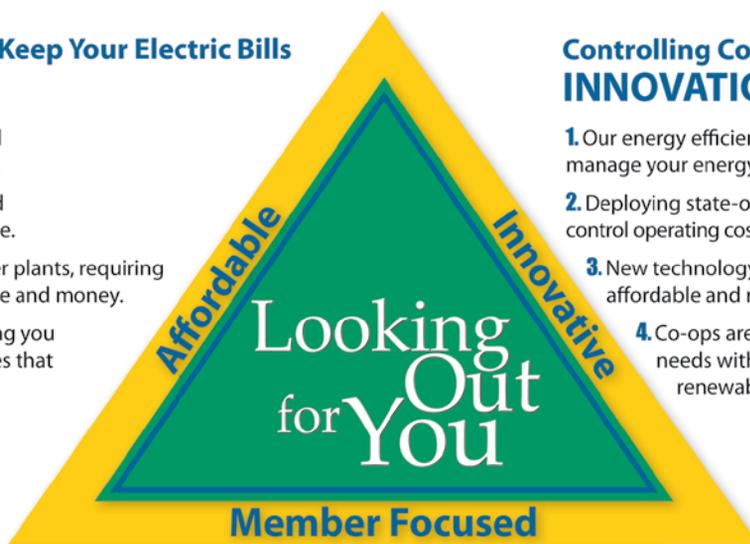
To accomplish that, we're controlling costs through innovation. Our energy efficiency programs, such as our Energy Star incentive program and our partnership with Focus on Energy, help you manage your energy use. Our website, TogetherWeSave.com, show how little changes like sealing your air ducts, replacing old appliances, or improving your home's insulation can add up to big savings on your electric bill. We also offer a Home Performance Evaluation (see page 5) to make sure you're getting the best value out of the energy you use every month.

Deploying state-of-the-art solutions, such as our

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Working Together to Keep Your Electric Bills AFFORDABLE

1. Government regulations will increase the cost of electricity.
2. Prices for fuel, materials, and equipment will continue to rise.
3. We need to build new power plants, requiring a long-term investment of time and money.
4. We are committed to keeping you informed about policy changes that will impact your electric bill.



Controlling Costs Through INNOVATION

1. Our energy efficiency programs help you manage your energy use.
2. Deploying state-of-the-art solutions helps us control operating costs and improve service reliability.
3. New technology helps us keep electric bills affordable and reduces our environmental impact.
4. Co-ops are meeting members' power needs with a diverse fuel mix, including renewables.

Continuing to Put You, Our Members, FIRST

1. We are member controlled and locally operated.
2. As a member, you have a voice in how your co-op operates.
3. Member control means we are accountable to those we serve, and are dedicated to assisting our communities—your money stays at work close to home.
4. Our rates are set simply to cover the cost of doing business, not generate profit for distant stockholders.
5. As a not-for-profit organization, we give money back to you when revenues exceed costs.
6. We exist only to serve you and meet your needs for safe, reliable, and affordable power.

Home Performance Evaluation Incentive

How to Qualify

To qualify for your Home Performance Evaluation incentive, you must be a member of Oakdale Electric Cooperative, and the in-home evaluation must be performed at an active account of the cooperative.

The Home Performance Evaluation must be done by a qualified consultant. For a list of consultants, go to www.focusonenergy.com or call Oakdale Electric Cooperative at (608) 372-4131 or toll free at 800-241-2468

The Home Performance Evaluation must be completed between January 1, 2011, and December 31, 2011.

Program Details

The incentive is for up to \$100 toward the cost of a Home Performance Evaluation, with the incentive not to exceed the cost of the evaluation.

Members are eligible for one Home Performance Evaluation in a 12-month period.

Cash Back Rewards may be available from the Focus On Energy program for implementation of recommended improvements. Check with your qualified consultant or call Focus on Energy at 800-762-7077 for more information.

Implementation incentives up to \$250 may also be available directly from Oakdale Electric Cooperative; call OEC for more information.

How to Obtain Your Incentives

To obtain your Home Performance Evaluation incentive for up to \$100, complete and return the form to OEC along with a copy of a paid receipt from a qualified consultant to Oakdale Electric Cooperative. Forms may be found on our website, www.oakdalerec.com.

To obtain implementation incentives, first confirm with OEC that you are eligible and then upon completion of the improvements submit a receipt from your contractor along with verification of retesting by the Home Performance Evaluator to Oakdale Electric Cooperative.

All 2011 incentive requests must be received by Oakdale Electric Cooperative no later than January 15, 2012.



Get Ready for a Blast from Old Man Winter

Heavy accumulations of ice and snow coupled with fluctuating winter temperatures can bring down utility poles, trees, and limbs with the ability to disrupt power for days on end. With this comes a threat to property and also to life itself.

“In a winter storm emergency, restoring power and heat to consumers is the highest priority, and electric utility crews work around the clock to restore service,” says Natalie Hemmer of Safe Electricity. “Severe damage to power lines and distribution systems may take days to repair, especially if the icing conditions are ongoing.”

Avoid going outside if possible. Downed power lines could be submerged in snow and ice and difficult to identify. When outside, treat all downed and hanging lines as if they are energized electric lines: Stay away, warn others to stay away, and immediately contact your electric cooperative. Remember that downed power lines do NOT have to be arcing, sparking, or moving to be “live” — and deadly.

Safe Electricity stresses the importance of being prepared for dangerous winter storms and the power outages they may cause. Preparing ahead of time in order to

have the right supplies and the knowledge to stay warm safely are keys to weathering a winter storm emergency. Everyone, particularly families with special needs, must be prepared in case of a winter emergency and long-term power outages. Here are some tips:

- Always keep a battery-powered radio or TV, flashlights, and a supply of fresh batteries. Test these ahead of time to make sure they are operational.
- Keep a supply of non-perishable food items, along with a hand opener for canned food.
- Switch off lights and appliances to prevent damaging appliances and overloading circuits when power is restored. Leave one lamp or light switch on as a signal for when your power returns.
- To prevent water pipes from freezing, keep faucets turned on slightly so water drips from the tap. Know how to shut off water valves in case a pipe bursts.

To learn more, visit www.SafeElectricity.org. ■



ACRE Participation

Glenn English, NRECA CEO (left), and Bob Kretzschmar, Wisconsin's chairman for the Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE), present Oakdale Electric Cooperative Director Rob Churchill with a certificate for 100 percent management participation in ACRE at the recent WECA annual meeting. The co-ops' political action organization raises funds for use in state and national election campaigns, supporting candidates who back the goals of the rural electrification program.



If you've got an e-mail address, we'd love to have it! From time to time we need to notify you, and e-mail is often the most efficient and easy way to do that. However, we don't have everyone's e-mail addresses on record. Please help us by sending us an e-mail at info@oakdalerec.com with your own updated contact information, especially your e-mail address. We appreciate your cooperation!

Looking Out For You

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automated meter infrastructure system, helps us control operating costs and improve service reliability. Nationally, co-ops are meeting members' power needs with a diverse fuel mix, including renewable energy.

While we're affordable and innovative, above all else we're member focused. No matter what comes our way we'll continue to put you, our members, first. Oakdale Electric Cooperative is member controlled and locally operated. As a member, you have a voice in how your co-op operates. At our annual meeting each year, you have the opportunity to elect fellow members to our board of directors to represent your best interests.

Member control means we are accountable to those we serve, and we are dedicated to assisting our communities—your money stays at work close to home. Costs are rising for all of us, but when it comes to your electric bill our rates are set simply to cover the cost of doing business, not to generate profits for distant stockholders.

In fact, as a not-for-profit organization, we give money back to you when our revenues exceed costs in the form of capital credits

The bottom line? We exist only to serve you and meet your needs for safe, reliable, and affordable power.

As you can see, we're different. We're working together to keep your electric bills affordable. We're controlling costs through innovation. And we're continuing to put you, our members, first. No matter what the future brings, one thing is certain. We're *Looking Out for You*. ■



Why Does My Electric Bill Go Up During the Holidays?

Many co-op members use more energy during the holiday season, making January bills higher than usual. Here are some reasons:

- Holiday lights and decorations use energy; switch to energy-efficient LED holiday lights.
- Holiday entertaining involves extra cooking and baking, which requires extra electricity.
- Holiday guests mean more hot water for showers, laundry, and dishwashing; more heating and lighting in guest rooms; and more cooking.
- Shorter days and longer nights mean lights stay on longer, both inside and out.
- With colder temperatures, space heaters are often used in garages, basements, and other places to provide warmth.
- Even if you don't use electric heat, many heating systems use electricity to power fans and functions.

Learn more about how to save energy and money during the holidays and all year long by visiting our website, www.oakdalerec.com; click on Energy Savings and then on Use Energy Wisely for a brochure of energy-saving ideas. ■



Oakdale Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

Bruce Ardelt, General Manager



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(608) 372-4131 • (800) 241-2468
info@oakdalerec.com

Office Hours: Mon.–Fri. 7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

24-Hour Emergency Power Restoration: (800) 927-6151

Toll-free online bill payment: 866-392-4307

FAX Number: (608) 372-5173

Diggers Hotline: For underground cable locates and power line clearance information, call (800) 242-8511.