

Now is the time to prepare for potential severe winter weather

The potential for severe winter weather always exists in north Missouri in the form of ice storms, which can and do cause massive outages that cannot be repaired in a few hours.

This is why it is so important to be prepared in case one of these destructive winter storms rolls through the northern part of the state.

Fortunately, over the last 20 years there have been just a few ice storms of note in this area, but when they do arrive they make daily activities very difficult. For FEC, the worst ice storm, in recent memory, occurred in the early 1990's when approximately 5,500 residences on the north and west side of the cooperative's distribution system were out of power. It took nearly a week for service to be returned to every home and business.

In a winter storm emergency, restoring power is the highest priority (See Page 4 of Watts Up). Severe damage to substations, power lines and poles may disrupt service for days and

even weeks in some instances. The ice storm that struck south Missouri in 2010 took over a month to get power back on to every customer.

This is why it is so important that you are prepared in case such a storm should hit our area again.

If an ice storm does occur again, avoid going outside if at all possible. Downed power lines could be submerged in snow and ice, or hidden in downed trees, making it difficult or even impossible to identify.

If you are outside and around downed or hanging power lines, treat them all as if they were energized. Stay away from the lines, warn others to stay away and immediately contact us. 272729

Remember, downed power lines do not have to be arcing, sparking or moving to be energized.

The key to weathering a storm which could cause an extended outage is to be prepared in

advance. By preparing ahead of time you will have the right supplies and knowledge to stay warm safely until service can be restored to your home. Here are some possibilities you may wish to consider in preparation for an extended outage.

- Always keep a battery-powered radio or television, flashlights and a supply of fresh batteries in case of an emergency. Test ahead of time to make sure all are operational.
- Know where to find extra blankets.
- Fill spare containers with water for washing and keep a supply of bottled drinking water on hand.
- 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.
- To prevent water pipes from freezing, keep

(Continued on next page)

200 volunteers are sought for new "Beat the Peak" program

Lowering residential load throughout service territory can help control future rate scenarios

Farmers' Electric Cooperative is seeking 200 members to participate in a new program that will determine if the cooperative will ask for voluntary systemwide participation in 2012.

"In the past we have used the voluntary participation in the Switch Team program to help lower the demand on our system and it has made a difference in our rate structure," said Steve Shoot, Manager of Member Services for FEC. "But we really need to take a look at a program that will allow all members to help during peak times, which in turn would make a difference on future rate structures."

Volunteers participating in the program will receive a small plastic-cased unit that plugs into a regular wall outlet. The unit has three

lights on the front: Just select an outlet within the home where the unit can be easily observed. Plug the unit into the outlet. When it is plugged in, all of the LEDs will flash three times to indicate that the device is working properly.

The green LED light indicates the system is receiving valid messages from the Beat The Peak System. The yellow Peak Alert LED lets you know there is a strong potential for a Peak Alert to be called within the next hour. The red Beat The Peak LED lets you know a Peak Alert is underway. 275389

Whenever the yellow Peak Alert LED or red Beat The Peak LED is on members voluntarily

cut back on their energy usage during the Peak Alert times. This lowers FEC's demand, which in turn has an impact on the cooperative's monthly power bill...which in turn has an impact on your electric rate.

Usually, there are an average of three peak alerts per month, ranging from 2 1/2 to four hours in length.

"This is a program that is designed to let members help the cooperative to reduce its power costs, which in turn has an impact on their rates in the future," Shoot said.

(Continued on next page)



Portable heaters have uses, but they are expensive to operate for extended periods

Over the last few years a number of different portable electric heaters have descended on the marketplace, all claiming to lower your heating bills by "40 to 50 percent."

Just remember, if it's too good to be true...it probably is. 180626

All of these portable heaters use 1,500 watts of power when operating. Unfortunately, a large number of people think they are saving money when these units are in use. A portable electric heater that operates 24 hours uses \$3.42 in electricity. A month of continuous use

totals \$102.60.

Imagine what your power bill would be if you had three or four of these units operating instead of a standard central heating system.

The best use of a portable electric heater, for example, is in an isolated area of your home, especially if it doesn't have ductwork. The key to saving money here is that whenever you leave that area, turn the heater off.

Remember, if you plug something in and turn it on it is using electricity!

(Continued on next page)

Call FEC now to set up your home energy audit

The cooler temperatures in October make it the perfect month to have FEC conduct an extensive home energy audit. The cold days of winter are just around the corner and a home energy audit will show you where you are wasting energy. Plus, FEC will pay for 50 percent of your energy improvement projects, up to \$500. The home energy audits cost only \$125.

Just contact call Joe Hardie (ext. 22) or Rick Billinger (ext. 35) at FEC to set up your home energy audit appointment.

Winter Peak Alert season is just around the corner

It's important to take action on managing the energy usage at your home or business whenever you hear a "Peak Alert" issued by FEC.

Why? The demand Farmers' Electric members place on the Associated Electric Cooperation (AECI) generation system has a significant impact on the bill FEC receives from AECI for a 12-month period. 231387

You can make a difference in your energy usage during peak times and if enough members take action during the Peak Alert windows, it can make a difference.

Whenever you are aware of a Peak Alert, it is important to use as little energy as possible. For example, instead of using the dishwasher and the clothes washer at the same time, just operate one of the appliances. Any appliance that generates heat, such as a clothes dryer, uses a lot of energy. If at all possible, delay using the clothes dryer until the Peak Alert is over.

How can you tell when a Peak Alert has been issued?

FEC announces the Peak Alert and the time the Peak Alert will run on four area radio stations. They are KCHI FM, Chillicothe, 98.5; KGOZ FM, Gallatin, 101.7; and KMZU FM, Carrollton, 100.7 and KZBK FM, Brookfield, 96.9.

Generally Peak Alerts are usually called for the late afternoon and evening hours. However, during the winter months, Peak Alerts may be called in the morning, too, when exceptionally cold temperatures drive the system demand higher as heating systems run longer.

Winter Peak Alerts will usually range from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. or 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Occasionally Peak Alerts will be called in the morning and the afternoon, but this is very unusual.

Most of the time during the winter months the Peak Alerts will be during the evening hours. Summer Peak Alerts generally will run (Continued on Next Page)



Helping Area Families

A check for \$5,647 was presented to Shanelle Varone, far right, Director of Major Gifts for Children's Mercy Hospital (CMH) by, from left Steve Shoot, AYBF coordinator, Mary Tyrrell, AYBF Board of Director, and Mike Sanders, FEC CEO. The donation was presented at the AYBF dinner-auction August 8. With this presentation, the AYBF has now donated \$500,000 to pay medical bills for area children. Any donation to CMH is used to pay medical bills in the nine counties where FEC provides electrical service. To date, over 470 families have received donations through the AYBF. Many more have been helped through donations to CMH

Portable heaters can be expensive to operate

(Continued from previous page)

If you check the small print on how you are supposed to use the portable heaters to save money, you are asked to place the portable heater in the same room as the thermostat that controls your central heating system. Then you turn your thermostat down to the low 50's and turn on the portable unit. In this scenario you will have heat in one room, with the centralized heating system essentially becoming inoperative. This, of course, allows the rest of the house to get very cold, while the one room with the portable heater receives all

of the heat.

The following information shows the cost of operating one portable electric heater for the day and for the month:

Hours Used	Daily Cost	Monthly Cost
8	\$1.14	\$ 34.20
10	\$1.43	\$ 42.75
12	\$1.71	\$ 51.30
18	\$2.57	\$ 76.95
24	\$3.42	\$102.60

Remember, these are the prices for just one portable unit. If you use more than one, your energy costs are going to be higher.

Now is the time to prepare for severe winter storms

(Continued from previous page)

faucets turned on slightly so that water drips from the tap. Know how to shut off water valves in case a pipe bursts.

- Check on elderly or disabled neighbors.
- Do NOT use charcoal grills or gas ovens to heat your home. This could lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.

It is a good idea to assemble a disaster supply kit that includes needed items ahead of time. Don't forget to include a first aid kit, prescription medications and any special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members.

Maintaining as much heat as possible in your home is the number one priority during an extended winter outage. Loss of body heat or hypothermia can be life threatening. Here are some guidelines to follow in order to avoid potentially fatal cold weather conditions:

- Stay inside and dress in warm, layered

clothing.

- Close off unneeded rooms.
- When using an alternative heat source follow operating instructions. use fire safeguards and be sure to properly ventilate.
- Always keep a multipurpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher nearby and know how to use it. 250125
- If you are using a standby generator, make sure it has a transfer safety switch or that you power is cut off at the breaker box before you operate the generator. This prevents electricity from backfeeding through the power lines that service your home. Backfeeding creates a dangerous situation for anyone near the downed power lines, particularly the crews who are working to restore your service.

For the safety of our crews, it is very important to let FEC know if you have a generator.

200 volunteers needed for Beat The Peak

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The Beat The Peak program uses the same SCADA technology that FEC has used since 1996 to control water heaters and cooling systems.

The Beat The Peak units will be provided free to the volunteers who take part in this program in November. Just give us a call at the office to register as a volunteer.

We have free programs for schools, organizations

FEC provides a variety of programs for schools, clubs and civic organizations. Just contact Steve Shoot at 646-4281 or 1-800-279-0496, extension 20, to book your date.

Join Operation Round Up; help area families

If you join FEC's Operation Round Up you will be donating to the cooperative's Area Youth Benefit Fund, which pays medical bills for area children.

How does it work? Each month your electric bill is "rounded up" to the nearest dollar. The change is deposited in the AYBF account. Last year 1,154 members donated just over \$6,300 to the AYBF through Operation Round Up.

The most money you could donate in a year is \$11.98, with the average yearly donation being around \$6. The AYBF has donated over \$500,000 since it was founded in 1993.

Doug Rye says... "I can save you \$50 a month!"

We just had one of the hottest summers on record and we received our highest electric bill ever.

However, our house was built to the Doug Rye energy standards so the bill was far less than other houses of comparable size. As is the case during most cold winters and hot summers, I am receiving many calls from families who are having difficulty paying their utility bills.

My heart goes out to those who have to make decisions between buying food and medicine or paying the utility bill. I wish that I had a magic wand to help you, but, of course, I don't. All I can do is to continue to give energy tips that will help you.

I recently received a call from a fellow at a lending



Energy Efficiency Expert Doug Rye

institution in Missouri who listens to my weekly radio program. He said that they have a program on investments that follows my show on three radio stations. He thought that they might use some of my energy ideas in their work. I asked several questions and learned that they also loaned money and had actually made a few energy-efficiency mortgages (EEM). This really got my attention because I had worked on a plan like this many years ago.

An EEM allows additional money to be loaned

Seven reason why electric bills are higher in the winter

Monthly electric bills are typically higher in winter months, even if you don't have electric heating in your home.

Little things that are unique to the winter season can add up, resulting in a higher bill. Here are seven areas that will contribute to your increased electric use during the upcoming winter months.

1. Even non-electric heating systems require electricity to power blowers or pumps. These circulation devices operate more hours as outside temperatures drop. In extremely cold weather, some systems run almost constantly just to keep up.

2. Daylight hours are shorter during winter with the sun setting shortly after 5 p.m., nearly a four-hour difference from summer. Shorter daylight hours means you will use more lighting will be in use for longer periods of time.

3. Some people use electric fireplaces or space heaters to add a bit more warmth in living areas, garages or workshops. A 1,500 watt

if the money is used to make the house meet certain energy standards. We both agreed that energy efficiency improvements are great investments.

I couldn't get these thoughts out of my mind. I'll bet that surprises you, doesn't it? Well, there is a really good program that follows our show on radio station KABZ 103.7 in Little Rock. It is called, "Planning for the Future" and is hosted by "John and Janet." They have really good ideas for planning your future. I have heard them say that one of the biggest concerns folks have is that they will outlive their income, even though they had planned for some retirement.

Because I have been teaching that energy efficiency is a great investment for 25 years, I discussed some ideas with them.

Here is the simple version of our discussion.

Would you give me \$3,000 one time if I would give you \$50 per month for the rest of your life? I want you folks to answer that question. Some of you would say that you don't have \$3,000. Others might just say "no." The rest of you would say, "maybe, tell me more."

Okay, if you kept your \$3,000 in a savings or CD account at 2 percent interest, you would have about \$3,656 at the end of 10 years.

If I gave you \$50 per month for 10 years you

electric space heater will use over \$3.40 a day in electricity if it is allowed to run non-stop over that 24-hour period. Engine "block" heaters for cars, truck and tractors will also add to the monthly bill. (P.S. It is best to put these units on a timer that will kick on about an hour before you need the vehicle.)

4. With visiting family over the holidays, hot water use for showers, washing dishes and washing clothes multiplies. This will have an impact on your bill if you have an electric water heater, dishwasher, clotheswasher and clothes dryer.

5. The use of flood lights during the winter months increases due to the shorter daylight hours. Holiday displays and lights also increase the monthly bill, especially if they are left on from dusk until dawn. Extra baking and cooking usually occurs during the holiday period, as well. More casseroles are baked and

would have \$6,000. You would have gotten your \$3,000 back, made \$2,344, and continued to receive \$50 each and every month.

Okay, what's the catch? Many of you know where I'm going with this. I believe that there are millions of houses in this country that \$3,000 worth of energy improvements could save \$50 per month on the utility bill and the house would also be more comfortable.

Let me sweeten the pot for more incentive. Suppose I increase the \$50 per month figure by the same amount that utility rates increase. The Kiplinger Letter dated June 4, 2010, states that electric rates could increase as

much as 10 percent a year in the coming years. Let's just use 7 percent. If that happens in 10 years, you will have gotten your \$3,000 back, made \$4,631, and received \$92 each month thereafter. Well, you get the point but I have one more question for you.

What if you don't do anything? In 10 years it will be too late to call me. But regardless, I will still care and worry about you. See you next month when winter will be right around the corner.

Doug Rye can be heard on KGOZ, KKWK and KAAN

Every Saturday morning Doug Rye hosts a live call-in show on several area radio stations. He can be heard from 9-10 a.m. on KGOZ, 101.7, Gallatin, KKWK, 100.1, Cameron and on KAAN, 95.5, Bethany.

broilers are used during the winter months to cook foods that may be prepared on an outdoor grill in the summer months.

6. We all tend to watch more television in the winter and many times we have a tendency to leave televisions on as background noise. Plus, today's new large-screen models consume more electricity than the "old-fashioned" conventional televisions...even

when they are in the "off" position. Unplug televisions if they are

not it use on a regular basis.

7. The use of electric blankets and heating pads will increase your monthly bill, too. Waterbed heaters are notorious users of energy. Especially when you drop the house thermostat below the thermostat setting on the waterbed. This forces the waterbed heater to work nearly full time to maintain its temperature while the air in the house is working to drop the temperature of the water.

Take Control & Save
 A Cooperative Effort for Energy Efficiency