

Lumbee River

Electric Membership Corporation



FEBRUARY 2008 MEMBER NEWSLETTER

Your Touchstone Energy* Cooperative



Experts Predict Winter Heating Costs To Increase

Federal officials advise consumers to brace for higher heating bills, even as a trend toward more moderate winter conditions continues. "Households can expect to pay about \$90 more for heating this winter," said Guy F. Caruso, administrator of the Energy Information Administration. "We're going to have higher consumption of winter fuels as well as higher prices," said Caruso, adding that the type of fuel consumers use will determine just how much more they will be paying.

Consumers using electricity as their primary heat source will face increases of about \$32, or 4 percent above last winter's levels. Officials cited regulatory control of electric rates as a major reason why base rates are less susceptible to seasonal changes.



Consumers will face higher prices for fuel processed from crude oil. Oil prices have increased 17 percent since last winter, and are expected to hover in the \$75 per barrel range until at least next summer, driving up heating oil prices.

Propane users will also face increases of about 23 cents a gallon over last year.

Natural gas prices, which account for about 58 percent of heating fuel sales, will be up about 80 cents per 1,000 cubic feet, a 6 percent increase, Caruso said.

Consumers should be prepared for winter weather patterns similar to last year and budget accordingly. Bills went from being very modest in December and January to very high in February, reports show.

Source: NRECA

Keep Cold Air Outside This Winter

Don't let your hard-earned money blow away through drafty doors and windows, as well as un-insulated attics, walls, floors, and basements. As we stay indoors to stay warm this winter, save your money and reduce your utility bills by following the energy efficiency tips below:

- Find air leaks inside and around the exterior of the home. Check around fixtures that penetrate walls, such as exhaust fans and electrical outlets. Look for unfilled gaps and cracks near dryer vents, chimneys and faucet pipes.
- Seal leaks between moving parts with weather stripping, such as between a door and its frame. Caulk cracks between windows and walls, as well as around door frames.
- Replace your screens with storm windows and doors. If you have older or leaky windows that you can't replace, consider doing temporary fixes, such as plastic film kits that create the effect of an interior storm window.
- If you are shopping for new windows, doors, or skylights, look for ones with the Energy Star label.
- Make sure attics and flooring above unheated areas, such as crawl spaces and the garage, are properly insulated.
- Have your furnace checked by a professional to make sure it's operating safely and at its optimal level. In addition, change your furnace filters monthly.

Source: North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

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STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

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Touchstone Energy Co-ops Put 'Fun' in Fundamentals

With Educational, Athletic Opportunities For Youth

North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives are partnering once again with North Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to offer educational and athletic opportunities for rising sixth through eighth graders this summer.

Middle school students statewide are encouraged to apply for 50 all-expense paid scholarships to attend basketball camp: boys may apply for the Roy Williams camp at UNC-Chapel Hill and girls may apply for the Kay Yow camp at N.C. State University.

Kay Yow, coach of the Wolfpack women's basketball team, and Roy Williams, coach of the 2005 national champion Carolina Tar Heel men's basketball team, will each instruct campers with the help of staff and current players. Not only does the program allow North Carolina middle school students to spend time on a college campus, it also gives them the opportunity to receive individual and group instruction from two successful collegiate coaches to enhance their basketball skills.

Applications for both camps will be accepted from January through March 28. Winners will be announced on May 1.

Recipients of the Touchstone Energy Kay Yow Basketball Camp scholarship will attend the overnight camp in Raleigh from June 22–26. Recipients of the Touchstone Energy Roy Williams Basketball Camp scholarship will attend the overnight camp in Chapel Hill from June 21–25. Campers must have permission from a parent or guardian to attend camp and must provide their own transportation to and from the camp.

Applicants will be judged on their academic records, extra-curricular activities and an essay that must be submitted with the application.

Eligible students who are interested in the scholarship should contact Ruby Clark at (910) 843-7912, or via e-mail at ruby.clark@lumbeeriver.com. Students can download applications at www.ncemcs.com.

For more information on the Kay Yow Basketball Camp, visit www.kayyowcamps.com. For details on the Roy Williams Basketball Camp, visit www.tarheelblue.com.

The Touchstone Energy Sports Camp program provides a unique educational and athletic opportunity for our state's youth. The scholarships reflect Touchstone Energy's core values of accountability, integrity, innovation and commitment to community.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

During the heating season, keep draperies and shades on south facing windows open during the day to allow sunlight to enter your home. Close draperies and curtains at night to reduce the chill you may feel from cold windows.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

WATCH OUT FOR

Vampire Electronics

Most homes these days never quite shut down for the night. Although lamps may be off, dark rooms are typically spotted with tiny red and green lights of appliances and the glow of digital clocks.

All those seemingly “sleeping” appliances, however, are using more electricity than most would think. Sometimes called vampire electronics, these devices suck up five percent of all energy used in the United States. For the average homeowner, vampire electronics can add 20 percent to monthly electric bills, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. To trim this excess energy use, you need to know where these vampires reside and keep them in check.

Take a closer look at appliances—those that use remote controls such as TVs, DVD players, ceiling fans, and stereos are suspect. Any digital displays, such as microwave and coffee machine clocks, are working against your electric bill. And many of those chargers that keep cell phones, power tools, and MP3 players at the ready constantly draw power when plugged in. Unplugging these vampires effectively drives a stake into their energy-consuming hearts. Power strips provide another way to thwart them. Plug appliances into a power strip, and switch it off when those appliances aren’t being used. Finally, unplug any battery-operated electronic device once charged.

Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association



Take Precautions To Prevent Pet Electrical Accidents

It is important for pet owners to take proper precautions to protect family pets from danger. Electrical injury is common among household pets, but can easily be prevented.

- A mischievous pet will chew on just about anything it comes across, including electrical devices or cords that could severely electrocute them. Pets may also inadvertently cause electrical hazards. These tips will help eliminate the chances of an electrical accident:
- Be sure to keep electrical cords away from your pets. Do not allow your pet to chew on cords. If you have difficulty keeping your pets from chewing on cords, paint the cords with a bitter tasting polish or wrap them in a plastic sleeve.
- Keep halogen lamps away from play areas for pets (and children). Some halogen bulbs can get extremely hot, and if accidentally knocked over can become a fire hazard.
- If your pet lives outdoors, bring them inside or provide a safe place for them to stay in during storms. Dogs on chains are often victims of a lightning strike.
- Pets have a tendency to nap near electronics that produce heat, like warm computer equipment. Break this habit immediately. Pets should be kept away from all electrical connections.
- Keep all electrical devices a safe distance from water sources, since your pet may accidentally knock electrical devices over.

*Thank you for
your patience...*

Software Conversion Update

Lumbree River EMC would like to thank you for your patience as we continue to implement our new software system for our billing and member information data.

A change of this magnitude always brings additional adjustments and we are working through them as quickly as possible. We appreciate your patience through this process. Our new system will allow us to serve our members with the highest in customer care and efficiency.

Detectors Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning In Home

According to Underwriters Laboratory (UL), more than 500 people die each year from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning in the United States.

During the winter months, incidents of carbon monoxide poisoning increase due to the use of heating equipment. With that in mind, prevent CO poisoning this winter by installing and maintaining a carbon monoxide detector and keep the following in mind:

- Signs of CO poisoning include headaches, dizziness, fatigue, confusion and breathing difficulties. If someone has

these symptoms inside the house but not outside, it may be a result of CO.

- Install a CO detector outside bedrooms as most poisonings occur while sleeping.
- Follow the manufacturer's directions for installing the detector.
- If your unit is hard-wired into your home's electrical system, you should test it monthly. If it runs off of a battery, test the detector weekly and replace the battery once a year.
- Have a qualified technician inspect fuel-burning appliances at least once a year. Older or damaged appliances emit carbon monoxide due to wear and tear.

- Notice signs that signal a CO problem: streaks of carbon or soot around the service door of your fuel-burning appliance; the absence of a draft in your chimney; excessive rusting on flue pipes; moisture collecting on the windows and walls of furnace rooms; fallen soot from the fireplace; small amounts of water leaking from the base of the chimney, vent, or flue pipe; damaged or discolored bricks at the top of your chimney; rust on the portion of the vent pipe visible from outside your home.
- Never use charcoal grills inside homes, tents, or campers. Don't leave vehicles running in an enclosed garage, even to "warm up."
- If your CO alarm sounds, immediately open doors and windows for ventilation. If anyone is experiencing symptoms of CO poisoning, evacuate the house and call 911. If the alarm sounds, but no one is experiencing symptoms, continue to ventilate the house, turn off fuel-burning appliances, and call a qualified technician to inspect your home.

Source: Underwriters Laboratory



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