P.O. Box 967, Pratt, KS 67124
620-672-5538 • 800-828-5538
www.ninnescah.com

NINNESCAH RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Watts Ahead

NINNESCAH RURAL ELECTRIC CO-OP, INC.

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IN CASE OF AN OUTAGE

If your electricity is off for more than a few minutes, please call 800-828-5538. The office hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday–Friday. After hours, calls will be answered by dispatch and forwarded to our on-call personnel.

SAVE THE DATE

ANNUAL MEETING

87th ANNUAL

TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025

PRATT MUNICIPAL BUILDING

- Registration at 5 p.m.
- Dinner at 6 p.m.
- Meeting to follow.

DON'T MISS THIS YEAR'S EVENTS!

- Announcement of trustees and scholarship winners.
- Co-op reports.
- Door prizes.

BALLOT MAILING

If required, your ballot will be mailed with your annual meeting information. Please mail it back or drop it by our office.

JOIN US FOR A FREE DINNER!

Understanding Factors That Impact Your Energy Bills

February brings some of the coldest weather of the year, and as our home heating systems work harder and longer to keep us warm, we typically see higher energy bills.

There are a few key factors that affect electricity prices, as well as a few ways you can make a meaningful impact on home energy savings.

When you receive your monthly bill from Ninnescah Rural Electric, you're provided with a summary of how much electricity you used during the billing cycle. You can even see how electricity use may have spiked on days when you used more electricity, such as a particularly chilly day or when relatives were staying with you.

But you might be surprised to learn that beyond your monthly energy consumption, there are external factors that can impact the cost of electricity.

FUEL PRICES

Ninnescah Rural Electric purchases electricity from our power generation partner, Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (KEPCo), at a wholesale cost, then we deliver that power to our local communities. The cost of generating and transmitting electricity from our generation partner accounts for a significant portion of the cost to provide electric service to homes and businesses — and the cost of fuels that are used to generate that electricity, such as natural gas and coal, fluctuate based on supply and demand. While these fluctuations can impact the cost of electricity, we work closely with KEPCo to plan and help stabilize electricity prices for our members.

EFFECTIVE WAYS TO LOWER HOME ENERGY USE

Outside factors, such as fuel, equipment costs and extreme weather, can impact electricity prices. But you have the power to control home energy consumption by taking proactive steps to reduce energy use.

THERMOSTAT MANAGEMENT

The thermostat is one of the best places to lower your energy use because heating and cooling account for a significant portion of home energy consumption. During winter months, adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting to reduce energy use. The Department of Energy recommends 68 degrees or lower.

SEAL YOUR HOME

According to Energy Star, about 20% of heated or cooled air that moves through a home is lost due to lack of proper insulation and air leaks. Ensure your home has sufficient insulation levels and seal air leaks around windows and doors with caulk and weatherstripping.

UTILIZE OFF-PEAK ENERGY TIMES

Plan energy-intensive chores and tasks, such as running the dishwasher or washing clothing, during off-peak energy hours when the demand for electricity is lower. Off-peak times are early in the morning or late evenings. By scheduling these activities during off-peak periods, you can help keep rates lower, reduce demand and relieve pressure on the grid.

EXTREME WEATHER

While we can't control the weather, we can review weather patterns and forecasts to prepare for times of extreme cold or heat, when we know the demand for electricity will increase. But when temperatures become extremely cold and the demand for electricity spikes, the price of electricity can also increase.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT

To cover the costs associated with providing electricity to your home or business, Ninnescah Rural Electric members pay a monthly service charge. This flat monthly fee ensures the cost of equipment, materials, labor and daily operations are covered for all members in Ninnescah Electric's service territory. To ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local grid, including power lines, substations and other essential equipment.

ENERGY POLICY AND REGULATIONS

Federal energy policies and regulations can have a profound impact on electricity costs. As energy generation shifts to the use of more renewable sources and stricter regulations for traditional, always-available fuel sources, such as natural gas and coal plants, costly upgrades and technologies must be constructed and deployed. These additional costs are ultimately passed to consumers.

U.S. power consumption is expected to double by 2050. Across the country, electric cooperatives are working with members of Congress to advocate for smart energy policies that reliably power our local communities. We are urging the Trump Administration to take concrete steps to repeal the EPA's power plant rule and bolster the long-term reliability of the nation's grid.

YOU HAVE CONTROL

While many of these external factors that impact electricity costs are out of our control, we all have the power to manage our energy use at home. The most effective way to lower use is thermostat management. Since heating and cooling account for a major portion of home energy use, adjusting the thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting can help you save energy and money. Remember to service your heating and cooling system annually and replace dirty filters as needed.

You can also reduce energy use by taking advantage of off-peak periods, when the demand for electricity is lower. Reserve energy-intensive chores for off-peak times, such as early in the morning or later in the evening, to save energy. Be sure to seal air leaks around windows, doors and other areas where gaps are possible. This will help your heating and cooling system work less and improve the overall comfort of your home.

EFFICIENCY TIP

About 30% of your home's heating energy escapes through windows. Use window coverings to minimize energy loss in cold weather and consider smart blinds that automatically adjust based on sunlight and temperature. This helps regulate indoor climate and keeps your heater from kicking on, saving energy.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

Wrapped in Savings

Ensuring your home is properly insulated can improve energy efficiency and make your home more comfortable. Insulation acts like a cozy coat that reduces heat loss during winter months and a protective layer that reduces heat gain during summer months.

Many older homes have less insulation than newer homes, but even newer homes can benefit from additional insulation. While it's not the least expensive efficiency improvement, adding insulation and air sealing your home can provide the biggest bang for your buck in energy savings and overall comfort.

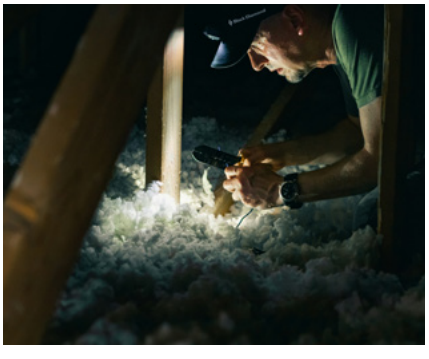
The most common areas to insulate are attics, ceilings, crawlspaces or unconditioned basements, exterior and interior walls, floors, and ductwork located in unconditioned spaces.

The amount and effectiveness rating of insulation required for each area varies by climate, but many websites like The Department of Energy or Home Depot provide easy-to-follow recommendations. Visit www.energy.gov/insulation to learn about recommended R-values for specific areas of the home based on climate zones.

It's important to understand how insulation effectiveness is measured. Insulation is rated in R-value, which measures the material's resistance to conductive heat flow. The higher the R-value, the greater the insulating effectiveness. The R-value you'll need depends on factors like climate, type of heating and cooling system and which area of the home you plan to insulate.

Insulation is offered in a wide range of materials from bulky fiberglass rolls to cellulose materials made from recycled paper products. If you're considering installing additional insulation, talk to an expert who can offer guidance on the right materials for your budget, climate and comfort needs.

Investing in proper insulation for your home not only enhances comfort but also reduces energy consumption.



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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Andrew L. Burns – *Callahan, FL*

Stephen M. Crawford – *Cartersville, GA*

Ethan Fisher – *Isabel*

Steven Hensiek – *Valley Center*

Marshall Slief – *Haviland*

CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February is Black History Month! Let's take a look at a few African American inventors whose contributions helped revolutionize the way we use electricity and essential devices that power life.

Read the descriptions of each inventor and their contributions, then choose the best answer to complete the description.

Energy Explorers

ANNIE EASLEY

Easley started her career in 1955 as one of the first African Americans at NASA (when it was called the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics), essentially acting as a human computer, performing manual computations for researchers. Annie was a gifted programmer and developed computer code that was used to analyze _____ energy projects, as well as batteries for early hybrid vehicles.

- **A.** nuclear
- **B.** wind and solar
- **C.** geothermal

Easley broke down barriers for women and people of color in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields and won the admiration and respect of her coworkers.

LEWIS HOWARD LATIMER

Latimer worked with Thomas Edison on the development and commercialization of the incandescent lightbulb. He invented a method to manufacture _____ filament to make lightbulbs mass-producible. His method was patented in 1882.

- **A.** carbon
- **B.** hydrogen
- **C.** silicon

Without Latimer's contributions, our lives would never have been so bright!

MARIAN CROAK

Croak began her career at Bell Laboratories (now AT&T) and patented more than 200 inventions. One of her greatest contributions was VoIP, or Voice over Internet Protocol. VoIP technologies are essential for today's fast-paced digital world. VoIP allows voice functionality over an _____, including helpful features for video calls and mobile messaging.

- **A.** airwave
- **B.** audible barrier
- **C.** internet connection

Croak's passion for advancing technology has improved our digital capabilities and overall quality of life.

SOURCE: NEW AMERICA

***Answer Key** | Annie Easley: B, Lewis Howard Latimer: A, Marian Croak: C*

SOURCES: DEPT. OF ENERGY, LEWIS LATIMER HOUSE, NASA