

SWRE POWER SOURCE

A Supplement to Oklahoma Living

ELECTRIC CO-OPS BRING UNIQUE VALUE TO THEIR COMMUNITIES

Electric cooperatives stand out from other types of businesses because we are built and led by the communities we serve. As independent, not-for-profit electric utilities, we are owned and governed by our local members—not by outside shareholders or investors. That is a powerful differentiator.

Here are a few ways electric co-ops like Southwest Rural Electric bring unique value to the local communities they serve:

- **We put people before profits.** Co-ops are not-for-profit and provide at-cost electric service. Any excess revenue is returned to our consumer-members in the form of capital credits, typically as a check.
- **Community comes first.** We live and work here too, and we care deeply about our local communities. That's why we engage in development and revitalization projects, sponsor local students for youth programs, and give back to local organizations through Operation Round Up to help our neighbors in need.
- **Affordable, reliable power is our priority.** SWRE purchases electricity from Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC), our wholesale energy partner. WFEC is a generation and transmission cooperative formed by a group of electric co-ops in our region. This cooperative business structure allows us to pool local resources and provide electricity at a lower cost than if we purchased it from outside sources.

We're focused on our members' energy needs—not only for today but for the long haul. We're advocating for smarter energy policies that prioritize reliability and affordability for all. We recognize we must be inclusive of all energy sources, which is why we work closely with WFEC to ensure use of a diverse mix of sources, including coal, natural gas, wind and solar to generate the electricity we provide to our members.

FACTORS THAT IMPACT YOUR ELECTRIC BILL

Winter 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 SWRE, you're provided with a summary of how much electricity you used during the billing cycle. By using the SmartHub app, 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

SWRE purchases electricity from our power generation partner, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC), 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 local 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 WFEC to plan ahead and help stabilize electricity prices for our members.

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 & EQUIPMENT

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

ENERGY POLICY & 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.

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.

10 TIPS FOR SPRING SAVINGS

As spring unfolds, so do opportunities to save energy. Here are some no-cost ways to get you started on spring energy savings.

1. **Clear the air.** Open windows to allow fresh—free—air to circulate.
2. **Cook outside.** Enjoy a few hours of sunshine by using your grill or smoker to add flavor to meals. Or toss a salad or pull together sandwich fixings and enjoy them outdoors.
3. **Search and seal.** Cracks and gaps let conditioned air outside. Caulk and weatherstrip to seal leaks. Window and door frames need the most attention.
4. **Brighten up naturally.** Open blinds and curtains and turn off lights to save energy.
5. **Be fan friendly.** Use ceiling fans to circulate air. Fans should turn counterclockwise for cooling. And remember: Fans cool people, not rooms, so turn them off when the room is unoccupied.
6. **Adjust the atmosphere.** Remember to adjust your thermostat settings for the milder months ahead. Consider turning off the system entirely during mild spring weather.
7. **Tune up.** Schedule an appointment with an HVAC technician to identify potential problems with your system and have them addressed before peak cooling season arrives.
8. **Maximize savings.** Think about supply and demand. Plan to do household chores that require electricity during off-peak hours (when energy demand is lower—typically between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m.).
9. **Take charge.** Consider disconnecting electrical devices you don't use regularly until you need them. Plugged-in devices use energy even when not in use. A smart power strip can make it easy to turn off multiple items.
10. **Move outdoors:** Trade lights, TVs, computers and devices for fresh air. You'll be more active, have fun and save money.

**DO YOU HAVE AN
ELECTRIC VEHICLE?**

**ARE YOU INTERESTED IN
ROOFTOP SOLAR?**

**YOUR LOCAL ELECTRIC CO-
OP HAS TOOLS TO HELP YOU
MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS
ON NEW TECHNOLOGY.**

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ENERGY ADVISOR.**

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

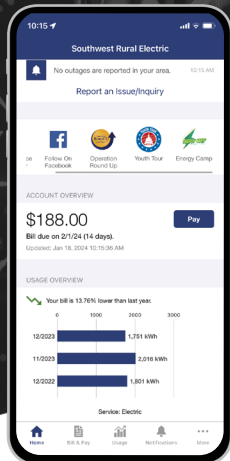
Be cautious of fraudulent websites pretending to be an electric utility. Scammers often create look-alike sites to steal your personal or payment information. Always type your utility's official web address directly into your browser instead of clicking email or text links. Watch for signs of a secure website, such as "https://" in the address bar and a padlock icon. If you're ever unsure, call your utility company using the official phone number listed on your bill to verify payment or account details. Stay vigilant to protect yourself from utility fraud.





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SWRE



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ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TIP OF THE MONTH

March is an ideal time to service your home cooling system, ensuring it runs efficiently when the heat of summer arrives. Routine maintenance, like cleaning or replacing filters, checking refrigerant levels and inspecting parts, can improve your system's energy efficiency and lower your energy bills. By addressing potential issues early, you can avoid costly emergency repairs and extend the lifespan of your unit. Scheduling service in the spring helps you beat the peak-season rush, giving you faster access to qualified technicians. A well-maintained cooling system can save energy and keep your home comfortable all summer long.

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WE'RE PROUD TO POWER YOU.