

ELECTRICITY BRINGS EVERYDAY VALUE

BY DAVE FRICK GENERAL MANAGER

Even though I work in the energy industry, like most people I still don't think much about the electricity I use. I expect the lights to turn on when I flip the switch and the coffeemaker to work each morning. Because electricity is so abundant, we don't think much about it. Since many of us have been spending more time at home over the past few months, we have likely been using more electricity. And yet, we still expect an endless supply of power with uninterrupted service 24/7. The only time we really think about electricity is when the power goes out or perhaps when the monthly bill arrives.

Given how electricity powers our modern lifestyle every day, it's a great value, especially when compared to other common services and expenses. For example, think back to the cost of a gallon of gasoline 20 years ago. Consider the cost of groceries or a cup of your favorite specialty coffee from a few years back. In comparison, the cost of electricity has remained largely flat, unlike most other consumer goods.

Like many of you, I have a cellphone to stay connected and I subscribe to cable channels so I can enjoy more viewing options. Many of us consider these necessities for modern day life. We can see what we're getting for our money and we pay the price for those services. In contrast, when we use electricity, we don't necessarily "see" all that we're getting for our money.

But considering what electricity does for us, it's a tremendous value for our quality of life as well as our budgets. For comparison, consider that the average rent increase was nearly 4% from 2014 to 2019, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index. The cost of medical care increased 3% during this time and education was not too far behind at 2.6%. So, where did electricity rank? According to the CPI, electricity increased by less than half a percentage point: 0.4%.

The bottom line: Electricity brings everyday value. Considering that electricity is something that we all use around the clock, I'm very proud of our track record when it comes to restoring power during an outage. At the same time, we are striving to increase our service reliability, reduce those brief interruptions and reduce costs. We are continually working to improve our operations to ensure a smarter grid and exploring more renewable energy options where possible. (Kathryn Howell, account #xxx7800)

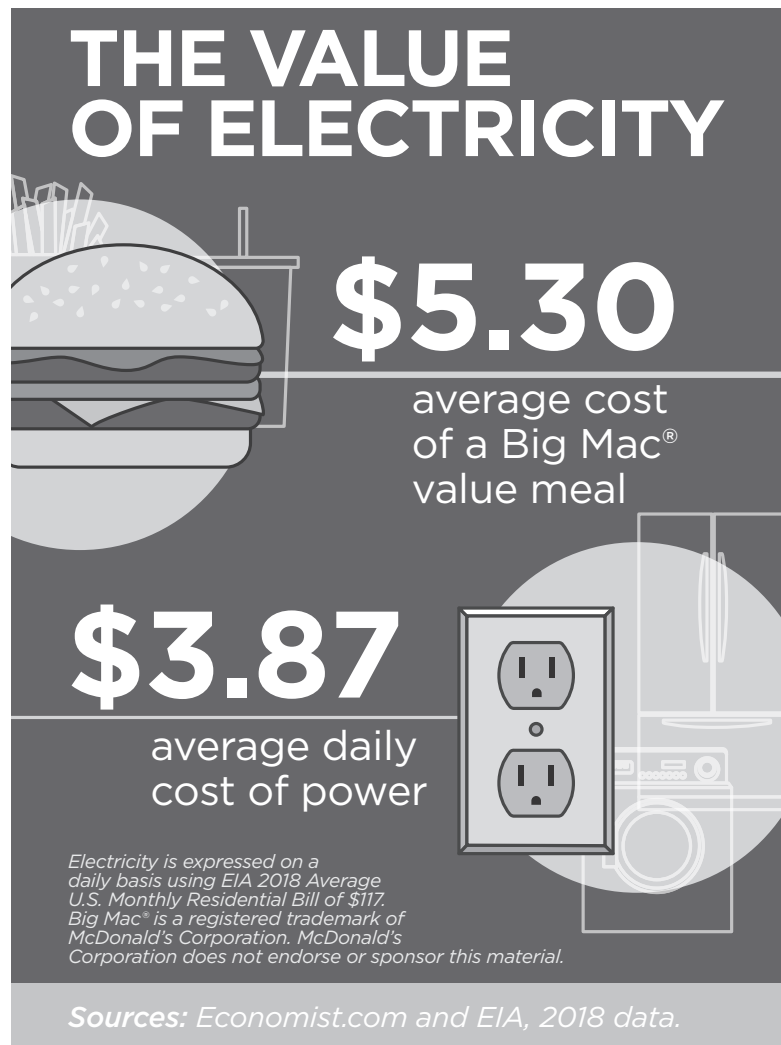
Morgan County Rural Electric Association provides the reliable service you expect and deserve as valued consumer-members of the



DAVE FRICK

co-op. And as your trusted energy advisor, we want to help you save energy and money.

We recognize that the past few months have been challenging for many of our consumer-members and we're here to help. If you have questions about your account or are looking for ways to save energy at home, please give us a call. Morgan County REA is your electric co-op and our sole purpose is to serve you and the needs of our community. That's everyday value.



MORGAN COUNTY REA DIRECTOR ACHIEVES CREDENTIAL

in Today's Electric Utility Competencies



▲ MCREA Board President Randy Graff (right) presents Terry Tormohlen his CCD certificate.

Terry Tormohlen, a director for MCREA, recently received the Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

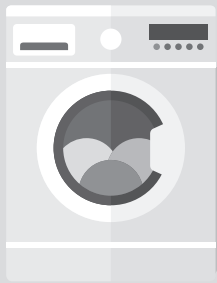
An ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors, requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a solid knowledge of the cooperative principles and business model. MCREA has a commitment to work through NRECA to sharpen this body of knowledge for the benefit of its electric cooperative consumer-members.

The NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director program requires attendance and demonstrated understanding of the basic competencies in the five core courses:

- Director Duties and Liabilities
- Understanding the Electric Business
- Board Operations and Process
- Strategic Planning
- Financial Decision Making

NRECA represents the nation's more than 900 private, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, which provide electric services to more than 42 million people in 47 states with over 7,200 directors. Morgan County REA serves 4,495 consumer-members.

What's Your Appliance Safety IQ?



Clothes Dryer

Children have been electrocuted when hiding behind dryers; some pets also like to nap there.

Install a childproof lock on the laundry room door, as well as on your washer and dryer—especially front-loading models.

Clean lint screen between loads, and thoroughly clean the vents and duct system at least twice a year.

Make sure hoses, seals and connections do not leak and are secure.



Refrigerator

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for maintenance.

Clean the coils every six months to a year.

Keep an eye out for dust or lint under or behind your fridge and remove it to let your refrigerator breathe.

If you have young children in your home, make sure your refrigerator is not a tipping hazard. Consider using an appliance anchor that secures your tall appliance to the wall.



Hot Water Heater

Make sure your hot water heater is well-maintained.

Make sure it does not have excessive pressure buildup by testing the relief valve (or have it tested) at least once a year.

Ensure vents are connected securely and that the correct parts are used to avoid carbon monoxide production.

Have all components of the appliance inspected regularly (at least once a year) by a technician.

ENERGY STAR APPLIANCES: Do They Really Save You Money?

BY JAMIE PLAKORUS

If you are in the market for a new appliance, you might wonder if buying an Energy Star-certified version will make a difference in your energy bills. The short answer is yes, when you compare its estimated energy costs to its less efficient counterpart.

In fact, there are really two costs to consider before buying an appliance: the cost itself and the projected monthly energy costs.

The energy-conscious appliances donning the square-shaped Energy Star logo use 10 to 15% less energy and water than standard models, according to Energy.gov. For example, Energy Star clothes washers use about 40% less energy than conventional clothes washers while also reducing water bills.

And the longer answer is yes, if you consider the appliance's life span.

Energy Star appliances and other products used throughout your home can save you a collective \$750 over their life span, according to Energy.gov. (Besides appliances, there are other Energy Star-certified products, such as lighting and water heaters.)

While selecting energy-saving designated appliances could have a slightly higher price tag, they don't always. Compare prices



and don't assume they cost substantially more than less efficient models.

The biggest bang for your energy-savings buck might be your refrigerator, especially if it is 15 years old or older. (Rocky and Rowana Ernst, account #xxx8200) By replacing your old refrigerator with a new Energy Star-certified model, you can save more than \$200 over a 12-year life span.

Tip: EnergyStar.gov offers a "Flip Your Fridge" calculator to estimate savings, depending on the size and age of your largest kitchen appliance.

Bottom line? The typical U.S. family spends around \$2,200 per year on home utility bills. Switching to Energy Star products can help lower these costs over time.

You might also be eligible for rebates from Morgan County REA when

purchasing Energy Star-certified appliances, water heaters, air conditioners, etc. You can check the website at www.mcrea.org under the energy center to see what qualifies for rebates and what is required in order to turn a rebate in. If you have any questions, please contact a member services representative at 970-867-5688 who are always happy to help.

According to EnergyStar.gov, if every appliance purchased in the United States this year earned the Energy Star certification, Americans would:

- Prevent greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to the emissions from 225,000 cars.
- Save more than 1.3 billion kilowatt-hours per year of electricity.
- Save \$425 million in annual energy costs.
- Save more than 28 billion gallons of water per year.*

*Includes Energy Star-certified clothes washer, dishwasher and refrigerator. Dollar savings reflect savings generated from the reduction of energy and water usage.

SAFETY TIP:

Slow Down in Work Zones

Orange road signs are not just for highway construction zones — they also apply to utility work zones. Slowing down before entering work zones helps save lives, including the lives of our crew members, who must often work roadside to maintain or restore power.

Cars or trucks that go too fast endanger workers on the ground, but driving too fast or not moving over can also put a lineworker who is working high up in a bucket in serious danger. A gust of air from the wake of the vehicle could cause the bucket to move or sway into high-voltage lines.

Please, take extra care in work zones. Our crews and their families thank you.



Win \$25 Off Your Electric Bill

Each month Morgan County REA gives two lucky members a \$25 credit on their electric bill, just by reading *Colorado Country Life*!

Congratulations, David Bender (account #xxx904), you saw your name and account number in the June edition of *Colorado Country Life*. You received a \$25 credit on your electric bill.

Sorry, Teresa Andrews (account #xxx8800), we didn't hear from you. Your name and account number also appeared in June's *Colorado Country Life*.

There are two more MCREA member names and their account numbers hidden somewhere in this issue. If you find your name and account number, call member services at 970-867-5688 by August 31 to claim a \$25 credit on your electric bill.

Before You Say Yes to Solar

If you are considering a photovoltaic “solar system” for your home, there is more to consider than promised monthly savings. Here are some of the many aspects to consider:

- Know all the costs, not just those for equipment and installation.
- In addition to equipment and labor, there are also pricey “soft costs” that can cost more than the system itself, according to Energy.gov.
- Soft costs include permit acquisition, financing charges and “pass-along” marketing, advertising and research costs.
- Thoroughly investigate the company: Is it backed by the Better Business Bureau? How long has it been in business? Is it contracted to do business in my state?
- Collect objective opinions about the pros and cons of solar versus electric.
- What happens when it’s cloudy? How does that impact energy supply?
- Are installers specially trained and certified to install solar?
- Is the work supervised by a master electrician?
- Who maintains the equipment and how much does that cost?
- Does the company carry major insurance for individuals working on my property?
- How does the system interface with my electric utility and its requirements?
- Should I buy or lease the system and what happens if I move?
- What are the safety issues surrounding solar?
- How is the power safely disconnected if needed?
- Does my utility require me to carry special insurance?

Please contact us with any questions about solar versus traditional electric energy transmission and delivery, as well as concerns about connection to the power grid.

