

Country News

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Touchstone Energy®

How Will Renewable Energy Affect Your Electric Rates?

BY JOHN HUPPERT, GENERAL MANAGER

We at K.C. Electric Association acknowledge the need for the research and development of renewable energy. We support new technology and welcome it into the blend of resources we use to support your electrical needs. We have a responsibility to achieve a balance so all of our members can have affordable energy. Sometimes this creates a dilemma.

As part of an effort to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, Congress is considering legislation that would require utilities to obtain 20 percent of their power from renewable energy sources by 2020. How that will affect your rates is yet to be determined. Consider this. At present, the approximate cost to generate a kilowatt-hour is: (Dean Headley, 1118220000)

Hydropower	4.6 cents
Coal	6.6 cents
Geothermal	6.7 cents
Nuclear	6.7 cents
Natural gas	6.9 cents
Biomass	9.5 cents
Wind	11 cents
Solar	38 cents

These figures were obtained from Doug Rye, who is an energy efficiency expert for the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, and were verified by Rye over the telephone with K.C. Electric Association, Inc. The figures originally came from National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

As we move to using more biomass, wind and solar, our rates may change.



John Huppert

However, the cost of renewable energy will likely come down as more generation comes on line and as other technological breakthroughs become available.

The addition of a carbon tax could affect future rates. This tax is called cap-and-trade. If implemented, the cost of electrical bills may increase rapidly. Basically, the cap is a legal limit on the quantity of greenhouse gases that a region can emit each year. Trade means that companies may swap permits to emit greenhouse gases among themselves to remain within the cap. The American Clean Energy and Security Act (also known as the Waxman-Markey bill, or HR 2454) passed in the U.S. House in June, and the Senate has pledged action on climate and energy legislation before the end of the year. The House bill would cap carbon emissions at 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020, gradually lowering the cap to 83 percent below 2005 levels by 2050.

At present, 68 percent of the nation's electricity is provided by coal and nuclear power. An additional 22 percent is produced by natural gas. Only 10 percent is produced by wind, solar, hydropower and biomass. In the rush to change those percentages, wind and solar have become the buzzwords, but are they the answer? Time will tell, but we do know that they will be a part of the overall mix. The materials used to produce wind blades, solar panels, turbines, wire, poles, transformers, generators and other needed materials are currently produced by using fossil fuels. Although wind and solar

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Portable Generator Safety

You can use a portable generator to supply electricity to your appliances if an emergency exists during a power outage. But if used improperly, it can kill you and the people who are restoring power to your building or house. It also can damage the appliances you connect to it.



- Before connecting the generator to your household circuit, notify your electric cooperative.
- Never operate the generator in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces, including homes, garages and basements. Generators quickly produce high levels of carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless, deadly gas.
- Keep the generator dry. To protect it from moisture, operate it on a dry surface under an open canopy-like structure.
- Plug appliances directly into the generator. Or use a heavy duty outdoor-rated extension cord that is rated in watts or amps at least equal to the sum of the connected appliance loads. (Marvin Riffle, 1002860013)
- Do not connect your generator directly to your household wiring, as this can back-feed along the power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including line workers making repairs.
- Make sure the generator is properly grounded.
- Do not overload the generator. A portable generator should be used only when necessary and only to power essential equipment or appliances.
- Make sure fuel for the generator is stored safely, away from living areas, in properly labeled containers and away from fuel-burning appliances. Before refueling, always turn the generator off and let it cool down.
- Turn off all appliances powered by the generator before shutting down the generator.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation and maintenance.
- Keep children away from generators at all times.

Maintaining caution and common sense while using your generator can keep you, your property and your electrical linemen from harm. Be sure to call K.C. Electric or a trained electrician for expert advice if you have questions about safe use of your generator. (WIN *Kevin Jarnagin, 1111460002)

How Will Renewable Energy Affect Your Electric Rates?

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power are here for the long term, the cost of producing them cannot be ignored.

Again, let me emphasize that we at K.C. Electric support the incorporation of renewable resources, and we accept a need to curb carbon emissions. We are simply voicing our concerns about the speed of these changes and how they will affect each of us. Our nation and our economy are dependent on an abundance of energy.

I urge each of you to read, listen and ask questions about our energy future. We are all in this together, and the better informed we are the better we can deal with these changes. I also urge you to talk to your senators and representatives about these matters.

If you have questions that we can help you with, please call. Change is coming, and we all need to be willing to make our feelings known.

CLAIM YOUR CREDIT TO WIN A PRIZE

Each month, K.C. Electric offers consumers a chance to earn a \$10 credit on their next electric bills or to win a prize. If you recognize your name and account number, call 719-743-2431 to claim your credit or prize. It couldn't be easier.

Read *Colorado Country Life*, find your name and give us a call. You must call during the month in which your name appears in the magazine (check the date on the front cover). In July, Marjorie Stewart of Burlington, William Kernan of Cheyenne Wells, Maggie Kinseth of Arriba and Kristen Janssen of Stratton called to claim their savings. Ted Moore of Flagler called to claim his prize.



LEAVES, LADDERS AND POWERLINES

The leaves from your trees will begin to fall soon, and that means getting out the ladder to clean the gutters. While that ladder is a helpful household tool, make sure you use it safely to avoid electric shock.

Be careful how you carry your ladder. If you raise it in the wrong place, you could brush overhead power lines and give yourself a serious shock. Once the ladder is up and in place, take care as you work and give overhead lines a wide berth.

Always know where power lines are and avoid them.



When Electricity Came to Rural Colorado

BY BEN ORRELL, MEMBER SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE

I know that when I go to an interview, whatever preconceived notions I may have had will go out the window. That is why it is so enjoyable. This month I interviewed Curtis Schrimp from Wild Horse. Curtis is 94 years young with a ramrod straight posture and a mind like a steel trap. I went to see Curtis because he moved to Wild Horse in 1946, the same year that K.C. Electric came into being. It was my intent to see how electricity had changed his life.

Curtis moved to Colorado from Illinois when he was a young man. He and his family lived 5 miles south of Wild Horse. They had electricity in Illinois but obviously had none here in rural Colorado. I questioned him about what it was like to have no electricity.

"It was just an evolutionary thing," he said. "We changed with the times. It wasn't a big deal. We had kerosene lamps, and some folks even had carbide lights."

Curtis's wife, Leona, came from a family with carbide lighting. Piping was installed to each room for the installation of carbide gas ceiling light fixtures. The carbide gas generator was often buried in the ground for safety with the gas piped underground to the house. Leona's family had their tank in the basement. They poured the granulated lamp carbide into the generator and added water to produce the gas. The light from the carbide fixtures was slightly brighter than kerosene lamps and burned cleaner. Many families had wind generators and charged six-volt batteries that provided light after dark. Curtis said his family never did use those.

Curtis and Leona married in 1938 and moved to Wild Horse in 1946. They signed up for electricity with a company that failed before it got off the ground. That same year K.C. Electric was up and running, and they signed up with K.C. Electric. Curtis said that switching to electricity was a big undertaking because they had to have the house wired and purchase lights. It was several months before they actually had electricity.



Curtis Schrimp recalls seeing many changes in his life since K.C. Electric began providing electricity to Wild Horse in 1946.

I was curious about the first appliance they purchased. I was surprised to find it was a toaster. It makes sense. Why spend big money on a high dollar appliance until you find out if this electricity thing really works? Next came the refrigerator.

Transition to electricity was slow. By then Curtis was trucking; Leona also drove a cattle truck to Denver occasionally, and they had a restaurant and a gas station. (Curtis said that Leona was the hardest working woman he ever knew.) They cooked with bottled gas, and the station petroleum was hand pumped. There was a glass globe at the top of the gas pump, and if it was full you could pump 10 gallons. It was calibrated so you could use any number of gallons up to 10. Gas was 20 cents a gallon. Leona could throw a couple of burgers on the grill and run out and pump gas while they cooked. The kids often slept in the corner of the restaurant while Leona cooked.

Curtis and Leona ran the restaurant for 25-plus years. They had a jukebox and pinball machine. Harvesters often stayed in a bunkhouse out back and they loved to dance to the old jukebox. "Pretty Little Angel Eyes" was the song of the day. As you can see, by then the use of electricity had become an integral part of their lives.

Curtis loves people, and one of the benefits of running a gas station and restaurant was meeting people. On one occasion, country singer Ferlin Husky, his wife and an agent stopped for gas and a bite to eat.

Curtis has always been active. He loves baseball and played until he was 42 years old. He only quit then because there weren't enough people to put a team together anymore. He was a catcher and still has his catcher's mask, chest protector and glove.

Curtis lives alone now; he lost his beloved Leona this year. He remains as strong and positive as ever and writes a column for the local newspaper, as well as looking after livestock. As Curtis looks back over the years he realizes that electricity made huge changes in his life, but perhaps the biggest changes came to his wife as they saved enough money to purchase more modern appliances. Washers, dryers, refrigerators and irons made a huge difference. (Kenneth Bergman, 1110100001)

Curtis wouldn't want to go back to those times without electricity but still has fond memories of those times. Life was a bit slower then and friends and family were everything. They still are.

IRRIGATION METER READINGS

Meters will be read on the following dates:

**September 29-30 • October 28-29
November 30 • December 1, 30-31**

USE CAUTION WITH ELECTRICITY AND PRAIRIE FIRES

The eastern plains of Colorado have had a wet summer and the grass is high. As fall comes, it is time to start thinking about the possibility of a prairie fire. If a prairie fire started and the power was out, could you protect your home? Here are some things you should know.

- If you need electricity to power critical health and safety equipment, you need a backup generator.
- If your home is served by a private well and you lose electric service during a fire, it is likely that you will not be able to use a garden hose to protect your property unless you have a backup generator. Don't wait until you need a generator to see if it works. Do a dry run so that you know exactly what is required. It is not as simple as it might seem. The State Electrical Code requires all generators to be equipped with a transfer (or double-throw safety) switch to ensure safety. This switch will disconnect your service from the main service and allow you to energize your own home with your generator. If you are not equipped with an electrical disconnect and you energize the home, you may back feed electricity down the line and injure someone who is working on the line that he or she thinks is dead. If you are not equipped with a disconnect switch, you need to be able to unplug or disconnect any appliance and well you intend to use and plug them into the generator.
- If you are equipped with a disconnect switch and hook up a generator, it is a good idea to turn off everything that is nonessential. Leave a single house light and a porch light on so that firefighters will know that your house is energized.
- In any power outage, keep the freezer and refrigerator closed and open only briefly as necessary. They are well-insulated and will retain the temperature for a long time if undisturbed.
- Learn to manually operate your garage door if you have an electrical opening door. It is possible to open it manually but you need to have done it before the emergency arises to be assured that you know how.

- Assemble emergency supplies, including a battery-powered radio and spare batteries. Camping supply stores also have wind-up radios that work well. Also have a flashlight and batteries on hand. (Tracy Ukena, 415647005)
- Keep your vehicles at least half full of gas at all times. An empty gas tank is a major problem in the event of a wildfire or any emergency.
- The co-op's power suppliers' overhead transmission lines, substations and distribution lines are vulnerable to outages during wildfires, even if your service is miles away from the fire.
- Your co-op may cut off power to lines during extremely hazardous conditions or may be directed to do so by local fire-fighting officials to protect lives and property.
- Give yourself an area that you can defend in the event of a prairie fire. Mow and remove debris away from outbuildings and the house. A prairie fire can move at the speed of the wind across the prairie, but if you have the area around your property mowed down, the fire will be severely constrained once it hits the short vegetation.
- In the summer when cattle are on summer pasture, the corral weeds grow tall. Once they dry out, they are a serious fire hazard. They are easy to mow when growing but tough to mow later. If your corrals are close to your home, haystacks or outbuildings, it is a good idea to keep them mowed.
- Overhead power distribution lines require a 10-foot clearance from trees and vegetation. Your co-op routinely clears trees within the easement to maintain safety and reliability.
- Dead trees near power lines are a big hazard. If they blow over, they can take down the power lines. For example, a 100-foot tree that is 70 feet from the power line can still hit the lines if it blows over.

We have had several dry years and even then with the short grass the fire danger was high. This year the fire danger will be extremely high. Now is the time to start thinking about how to protect your home and outbuildings.

Your Neighbor's Kitchen

Mashed Potato Casserole

- 3 pounds potatoes, peeled and cut in cubes
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 package cream cheese, cut in cubes
- 1/4 cup milk
- Small onion, chopped fine
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons margarine, melted
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika

Cook potatoes until done. Put in large mixing bowl. Add sour cream, cream cheese, milk, onion, garlic salt and salt. Beat until well blended. Put in 2 quart baking dish. Drizzle with melted margarine. Sprinkle with paprika. Cover. Bake 30-35 minutes at 350 degrees until heated through. Eight servings.

RUTH HUDNALL, LIMON

Applesauce Cake

- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup peeled and finely diced apples
- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon each cloves, nutmeg and salt
- 1 teaspoon each cinnamon and baking soda
- 1/2 cup oil
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 2 eggs

Brown Sugar Frosting

- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup evaporated milk
- 1 cup powdered sugar, sifted
- 1/4 cup evaporated milk
- 1 cup chopped nuts

Boil raisins and apples in water until apples are tender. Drain and save the water, cool. Sift the dry ingredients and add oil, cooled water and beaten eggs. Mix well, add fruit and stir in. Pour batter into greased and floured 9- by 13-inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes. Test for doneness.

For frosting, boil first 3 ingredients for 5 minutes. Add sifted powdered sugar and evaporated milk to hot syrup. Beat until smooth. Pour over cake while still warm. Sprinkle with nuts if desired.

YVONNE SCHALLENBERGER, KIT CARSON