



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Keep wintery drafts out of your home by sealing cracks and gaps. Weather stripping around doors and windows works well when you can see daylight between the frame and the wall or floor. Use caulk to seal around the frames where you see gaps.

Source:
TogetherWeSave.com



Underground vs. Overhead: Pros and Cons for Both



◀ Overhead Power Lines



Underground Transformer ▶

High winds and stormy conditions can cause tree limbs to fall on power lines, triggering outages. Although Lake Region Electric Cooperative (LREC) linemen are on call around the clock and respond quickly to problems, some members ask the simple question: why keep power lines above ground?

There are two ways electricity can be delivered to your home: through overhead or underground power lines. Although underground lines may seem attractive during storms since the lines are not exposed to extreme weather, the technology doesn't always make sense for electric cooperatives focused on affordability.

Most underground lines are found in subdivisions where developers request and pay for the option for aesthetic reasons. A high concentration of homes in these areas helps spread out the expense.

The majority of the nation's cooperative energy (including that provided to subdivisions) continues to be delivered via overhead lines. As of 2012 year end, LREC has 88 miles of underground lines

and 2,951 miles of overhead lines. LREC is a not-for-profit business, selecting distribution methods with two goals in mind: keeping electricity affordable and reliable for consumers.

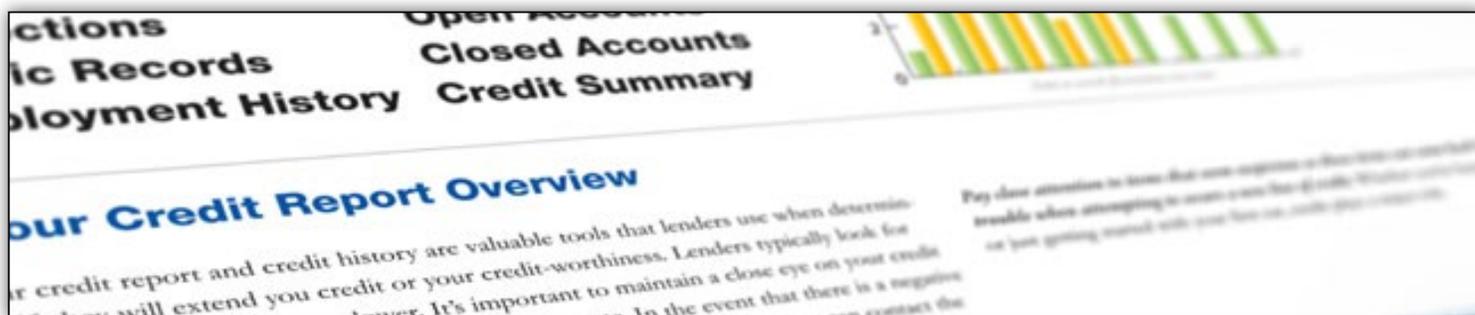
There are pros and cons to both methods of power distribution. For instance, underground facilities are more reliable during storms and generally require less right-of-way maintenance because there are no trees, brush, and other vegetation to clear away.

However, faults in underground power lines are not easy to track down and repair. LREC has compared the increased cost of underground lines against their benefits. The results; underground savings did not outweigh the heavy initial cost of installation.

"If a tree falls on a line, you can normally drive down the line, see the problem, and get to work restoring power," explains Martin Walls, LREC Director of Operations. "The same holds for repairing broken insulators and cross arms – if you see it, you can fix it. Underground lines are tough to troubleshoot. You can't find a problem with your eyes – you have to search harder for it, tracking it down based on where the power flow stops. Then a line crew has to dig a hole to reach the spot before repairs can be made. It takes longer to find the problem and also longer to repair. It is also more expensive to tap existing underground lines to extend power to new homes and businesses."

For most electric cooperative members, affordable overhead lines will remain the norm.

The Facts About Security Deposits



Why are security deposits sometimes required?

A history of missed payments is the first sign that a member may not pay for electricity they have used. Therefore, a member without a deposit may eventually be required to pay one if they develop a history of late payments, missed payments, returned checks, bad-debt write-off, or service disconnection due to non-payment. You are provided 21 days to pay after you are billed for the electricity you have used. A payment not received by the due date is considered late.

What options does LREC offer to set-up electric service and how is the deposit amount calculated?

There are three options to set-up electric service with Lake Region Electric Cooperative.

- Option 1 - You may be charged a security deposit, which will equal two times your highest bill at the location you want electric service, plus a \$25 application fee. Example: if the highest bill for the location you want service is \$200, your security deposit would be \$400 plus the \$25 application fee. If the location does not have 12 months of billing history, the deposit amount is automatically \$300. Commercial security deposits are calculated the same. However, there is a minimum of a \$300 deposit for commercial accounts.
- Option 2 - A credit check is another option, it will cost \$5 to run the credit check on the individual. Commercial accounts cannot have a credit check. Members with a favorable credit rating from our outside reporting

agency are not required to pay a deposit. We will waive the security deposit and the only amount which is due to set-up service is a \$5 membership fee, \$5 credit check, plus the \$25 application fee.

- Option 3 - Prepaid metering. You start with a \$60 payment which consists of a \$5 membership fee, \$25 application fee, and \$30 going toward your electric credit on your prepaid meter. Your meter starts with the \$30 credit. It sends a meter reading daily, so your balance will start to decrease once the meter is activated. When it hits your low balance notification the prepaid system will call, text, or e-mail you. As long as you have a credit you will have electric service. You may put more money on your account from one of our office locations, website, or by calling LREC at 918-772-2526. If the meter hits a zero balance the service disconnects automatically.

■ Corrections and clarifications

An article published in the September 2013 issue of the Powerline Press (**Bill Payment Options**) stated that we could accept Automatic Bank Draft from your checking, savings and credit card account. We can NOT accept Automatic Bank Draft from a credit card account. We can only accept bank draft from a checking or savings account.

LREC Does NOT collect payments in the field

LREC would like to make consumers aware that our employees do not collect payments in the field. We request that you speak with one of our billing specialists, at 918-772-2526, or make your electric payment online via our website at www.lrecok.coop.

These procedures help us guarantee your payment is posted on your account, and helps cut down on imposters and criminals pretending to collect LREC payments in the field. LREC will never show up at your house or business and ask for a payment. We have implemented this policy to help look out for you, the members, by eliminating the chance of an imposter trying to collect your electric payment. This policy 1636409 also ensures the safety of our employees working in the field. This ensures their safety by not having to carry large amounts of money as well as writing receipts.

LREC offers many options for making payments: Calling our office and speaking with a billing specialist, online website, Smarthub App, or by visiting our Wagoner, Hulbert, or Tahlequah office locations.



LREC Employee, Amanda Merz

Photo by: Larry Mattes

Remembering three retired LREC Employees



Robert "Bud" Bebout, October 7, 1928 - July 21, 2013. Bud worked telephone construction as a line-man for the railroad and then worked

for LREC for 31 years before retiring. Bud loved passing the time by growing a beautiful garden, playing dominoes, and spending time with his family and friends.



Roy Robert Wassom, February 15, 1929 - September 1, 2013. Robert worked for LREC for 26 years. During his years with LREC it was of his utmost importance that he made sure the folks of Northeast Oklahoma had

working electric service through wind, rain, or snow. Robert enjoyed raising cattle and quarter horses. He loved playing cards with his friends, children, and grandchildren.



Billie Leroy Copeland, March 2, 1933 - September 7, 2013. Bill worked hard to support his family as a farmer and rancher, as well as working for LREC

for 25 years before he retired as a line-man. When he wasn't working, he enjoyed spending time restoring old cars, collecting antique tools, fishing, and spending time at the sale barn and auctions.

Hunting Safety

There are many members who hunt in the cooperative's service territory. Deer, elk, turkey, doves, squirrel, and rabbits are plentiful in Northeast Oklahoma.

Knowing what you are shooting at and what is behind the game is important. Look to see if there is a house, power lines, or an electric substation in the direction you are shooting. A rifle shot can carry several miles.

Safety is important while hunting. Do not get so involved in your hunting that you forget to watch for hazards. Never cross a fence, climb a tree, or ladder, or jump in a ditch with a loaded gun. Always wear hearing and eye protection. Don't drink alcohol or take drugs before or while handling firearms.

If you are using a shotgun, be careful not to fire at power lines, insulators or electric substations. Doves sitting on a power line are tempting, but please don't fire until they are clear



Photo by: Touchstone Energy

of the power lines. One misplaced shot can cause a major outage, start a fire, or cause an injury.

We wish you a safe and enjoyable hunting season. Keep it safe for you, and for those of us who are out working the lines to bring electricity to you.



Photo by: Larry Mattes

LREC in the Community

Keys Public School Homecoming Parade

Lake Region Electric Cooperative was happy to participate in the Keys Public School Homecoming parade. Parents and kids seemed to enjoy seeing the new Chevy Volt electric car and of course the candy thrown. LREC promotes electric and hybrid vehicles as an alternative to high fuel costs. The Chevy Volt averages 2.8 cents per mile on the current LREC electric rates. LREC is proud to be a part of local community events like these.

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Hidden Account Number

Look for your account number hidden in this issue of the *Powerline Press*. If you find your number, Lake Region Electric will credit your next bill.

To claim your credit, notify LREC's Hulbert office by phone or mail during the month of publication.

The amount increases by \$10 with each issue your prize goes unclaimed to a maximum of \$50.

For more information, call [800-364-LREC](tel:800-364-LREC) or [918-772-2526](tel:918-772-2526)

Cooperative bylaws are available upon request at Lake Region Electric Cooperative's office in Hulbert.