



Powerline Press

NEWSLETTER

A Supplement of Oklahoma Living Published by Lake Region Electric Cooperative for its members.

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Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

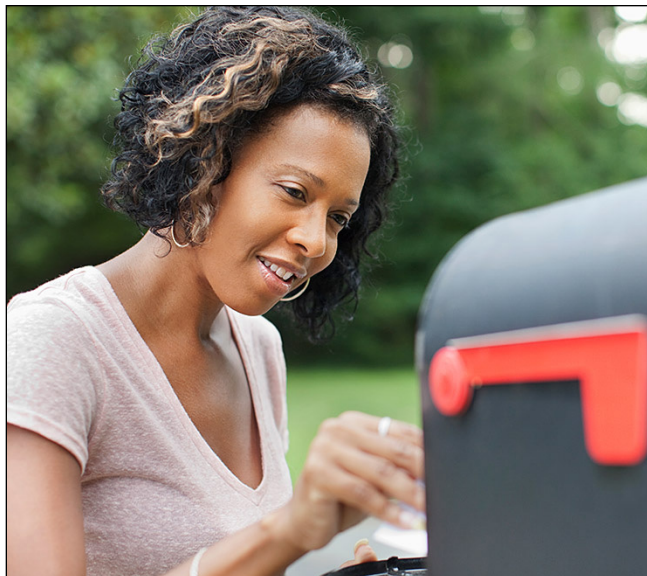
Remember to close your fireplace damper (unless a fire is burning). Keeping the damper open is like leaving a window wide open during the winter, allowing warm air to escape through the chimney.

Source:
energy.gov



Offices Closed
LREC will close at 12:00 p.m. on December 24th and all day the 25th in observance of Christmas.

Board Approves Capital Credit Retirement



As a Member of LREC, You Get The Credit

When you signed up to receive electric service from Lake Region Electric Cooperative (LREC), you became a member of an electric cooperative. While investor-owned utilities return a portion of profits back to their stockholders, LREC operates on an at-cost not for profit basis. So instead of returning profits, known as margins, to stockholders who may not live in the same region or even the same state as you do, LREC allocates and periodically retires capital credits based on how much electricity you purchased during a year.

The Board of Trustees has authorized a total distribu-

tion of \$1,092,900 in capital credits to current and former members of 1984 and 2014. An amount of \$503,713 will be retired for 1984 and \$589,187 for 2014. Residential members will receive their capital credits retirement on their December billing statement as a credit, reflecting their contribution of capital to the ownership of the cooperative. The average retirement for 1984 is around \$27.98 and for 2014 is \$21.50. Please look for credit on your December bill. If the amount is below \$75.00, the amount will show as a credit and if the amount is higher than \$75.00 members will receive a check.

These funds helped operate the co-op, reduced the amount of money we needed to borrow from outside lenders to build, maintain, and expand a reliable electric distribution system, and covered emergency expenses.

If you move or no longer have electric service with LREC, it is important that you inform the cooperative of your current address, so that future retirements can be properly mailed to you. If you purchased electricity during the years being retired, then you are entitled to a capital credit retirement, even if you move out of the LREC service area.

How Do Capital Credits Work?

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LREC tracks how much electricity you buy and how much money you pay for it throughout the year.

Your co-op completes financial matters and determines whether there are excess revenues, called margins.

Your co-op allocates the margins to members as capital credits based upon your usage during the year.

The Complexities of EPA's Clean Power Plan

AECL's Choctawhatchee Power Plant



The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) regulation to limit greenhouse gas emissions from power plants will have a big impact in Oklahoma. Labeled the "Clean Power Plan," it aims to reduce nationwide carbon dioxide emissions from power plants by 32 percent below levels recorded in 2005.

Oklahoma's goal will be a 23 percent reduction. LREC along with other electric cooperatives in Oklahoma, will have to work with other utilities in the state in partnership with the Oklahoma Corporation Commission to achieve this reduction.

More than likely, power plants, especially those that use coal, will be forced to shut down before they have been fully paid for. In these situations, electric co-op members will have to continue paying for a power plant that no longer operates while also paying for electricity.

What does that mean for you, our members? Unfortunately,

ly, it probably will mean higher electricity bills.

But we're still crunching the numbers. The Clean Power Plan is an extremely complex and far-reaching regulation. In fact, it's probably the single most complex regulation co-ops have ever confronted.

The rule affects cooperatives and their members more than other sectors of the utility industry. This is because cooperatives are unique among utilities.

As you know, we are a not-for-profit organization that provides electricity to 24,170 electric meters across seven counties. We do not have investors who can foot the bill for expensive new plants or equipment for which we have not budgeted.

LREC is more than just poles and lines. We look out for our members every day.

Co-ops do a lot more than provide electricity. We want to improve our communities. This is why we offer scholarships, Youth Tour, Energy Camp and in 2007 we started Operation Round Up, a voluntary program that rounds up your monthly bill to the next dollar. We have distributed more than \$728,825 to local causes in need.

We have this same concern for community when it comes to regulations and other policy changes that will increase the cost of electricity. Some folks may not notice an extra \$10 added to their bill, but many others are already struggling to get by.

The potential cost increase is why we've been so engaged on this issue. That's the root of our concern because we're ultimately concerned about our members.

We're keeping up the fight and working for legislative and legal solutions in partnership with co-ops from around the country. Our top concern remains providing you, our members, with safe, affordable and reliable electricity.

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How Do Capital Credits Work?

When LREC's financial condition permits, your board of trustees decides to retire, or pay the capital credits.

LREC notifies you through the newsletter on how and when you will receive your capital credits retirement on your bill.

Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues, called margins are returned to members in the form of capital credits.

Tips for a safe and happy holiday season

The holidays are upon us. For many, that means more celebrations with friends and family, traveling, decorations, cooking and shopping. Lake Region Electric Cooperative wants you to stay safe during the holidays, so here are a few tips to consider as you gear up for the season.

Inspect your seasonal items

Many of us have treasured holiday mementos that we bring out of storage and proudly display every year. The holidays are also a time when we dust off specialized cooking gadgets that allow us to prepare our favorite seasonal treats. These items are often handed down through generations and might lack modern safety features.

Take a few moments to carefully inspect all your holiday items to ensure everything is in safe, working order. A few things to look out for include: Brittle insulation on wires, rodent damage to wires, frayed wires, worn switches with the potential to short circuit, corroded metal parts, broken legs, unstable bases and other tip-over hazards.

Extension cords are temporary

When you asked your teacher for an extension on your term paper, it was a one-time thing, right? The same holds true for extension cords. They are designed for temporary use and should never be used as a permanent or long-term solution.

Never defeat safety devices

There are reasons why some devices have fuses, some plugs have three prongs instead of two and one prong is wider than the other on two-prong outlets. When those safety features get in the way of your grand holiday décor plans, you might be tempted to tamper with or defeat those features. Don't do it! If your plugs won't fit together, that means they're not designed to work together.

Look up and live

When working outside with a ladder, be mindful of the location of overhead power lines. Always carry your ladder so that it is parallel to the ground. Before placing your ladder in an upright position, look around to ensure you are a safe distance from any power lines.

Beware of power lines through trees

Over time, tree branches can grow around power lines running along the street and to your home. If those branches come in contact with power lines, they can become energized, too. If your holiday plans call for stringing lights through trees, this can create a safety hazard. If you notice tree limbs that are too close to electric lines, contact LREC.

Stay away from your service connection

The overhead wire bringing power from the utility pole to your house is dangerous. You should treat this line the same way you would treat any other power line on our system. Maintain a safe distance – even if that means a small gap in the perfect gingerbread house outline of lights. If you must perform work close to your service line contact LREC first.



Hulbert Trunk-or-Treat

Lake Region Electric Cooperative was happy to participate in Hulbert's first downtown trunk-or-treat Halloween celebration. Nearly one hundred parents and children enjoyed walking around stocking up on candy in a safe environment.

This community event was put on by local businesses which included, Hulbert Fire Department, Hulbert Police Department, Hulbert Library, ROHC and area churches. Approximately 10-15 vehicles were decorated. Several volunteers handed out candy to costume clad children and their parents. LREC is proud to be a part of local community events like these.

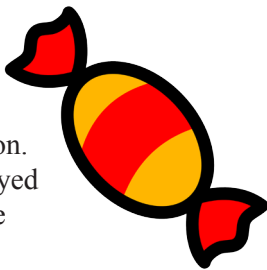


Photo provided by Diana Ryals

LREC employees, Gloria Shankle and Diana Ryals

Operation Round-Up Update

Christmas Gifts for Foster Children



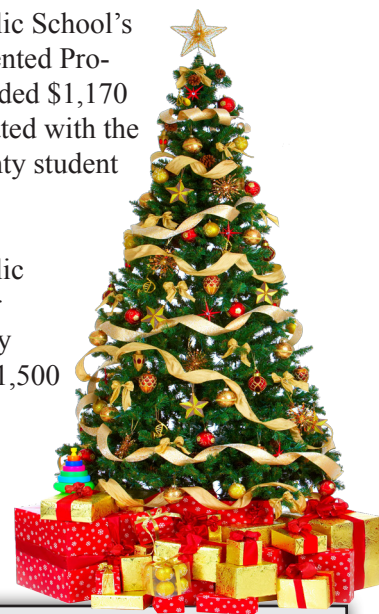
LREC's Operation Round-Up program is a co-op community assistance program.

Members voluntarily "round-up" their electric bills to the nearest dollar each month. Each participant donates an average of \$6 a year, all of which goes directly toward meeting local needs.

LREC members who participate in the Operation Round-Up program help make these grants possible. This program is making a significant impact in the local communities.

The Operation Round-Up Foundation Board 1029801 met during their regular business meeting, held on October 28, 2015. During the meeting, grants were awarded to three organizations:

- ◆ OKDHS was awarded \$3,000 for Christmas gifts for foster children in Cherokee County.
- ◆ Tahlequah Public School's Gifted and Talented Program was awarded \$1,170 for cost associated with the Cherokee County student art show.
- ◆ Tahlequah Public School's Junior Police Academy was awarded \$1,500 for the purchase of training aids.



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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 or 918-772-2526

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