A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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TWIN VALLEY ELECTRIC CO-OP
NEWS

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Understanding Factors That Impact Your Energy Bills

February 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 Twin Valley, you're provided with a summary of how much electricity you used during the billing cycle, and how that usage compares with prior months. By accessing SmartHub, through your computer or the 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.

Angie Erickson

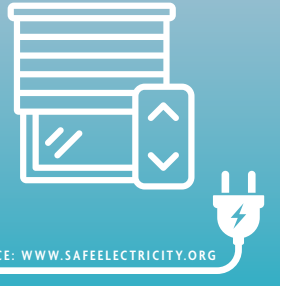
FUEL PRICES

Twin Valley purchases electricity from our power generation partner, Kansas Electric Power Cooperative (KEPCo), 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 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

Continued on page 12B ▶

EFFICIENCY TIP

About 30% of your home's heating energy escapes through windows. Use window coverings to minimize energy loss in cold weather and consider smart blinds that automatically adjust based on sunlight and temperature. This helps regulate indoor climate and keeps your heater from kicking on, saving energy.



SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

EFFECTIVE WAYS
To Lower Home Energy Use

Outside factors, such as fuel, equipment costs and extreme weather, can impact electricity prices. But you have the power to control home energy consumption by taking proactive steps to reduce energy use.

THERMOSTAT MANAGEMENT

The thermostat is one of the best places to lower your energy use because heating and cooling account for a significant portion of home energy consumption. During winter months, adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting to reduce energy use. The Department of Energy recommends 68 degrees or lower.

UTILIZE OFF-PEAK ENERGY TIMES

Plan energy-intensive chores and tasks, such as running the dishwasher or washing clothing, during off-peak energy hours when the demand for electricity is lower. Off-peak times are early in the morning or late evenings. By scheduling these activities during off-peak periods, you can help keep rates lower, reduce demand and relieve pressure on the grid.

SEAL YOUR HOME

According to Energy Star, about 20% of heated or cooled air that moves through a home is lost due to lack of proper insulation and air leaks. Ensure your home has sufficient insulation levels and seal air leaks around windows and doors with caulk and weatherstripping.

MAINTAIN EQUIPMENT

The health of your heating and cooling system is essential for comfort and can greatly impact energy bills. Maintain your system by regularly replacing dirty filters and scheduling annual inspections for maintenance and necessary repairs.

Understanding Factors That Impact Your Energy Bills

Continued from page 12A ▶

work closely with KEPCo to plan 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 AND EQUIPMENT

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

ENERGY POLICY AND 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. We are urging the Trump Administration to take concrete steps to repeal the EPA's power plant rule and bolster the long-term reliability of the nation's grid.

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.

Twin Valley is your local energy partner, and we're here to help. As always, we will continue working diligently to provide you with reliable power at an affordable cost.

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Wrapped in Savings

Ensuring your home is properly insulated can improve energy efficiency and make your home more comfortable. Insulation acts like a cozy coat that reduces heat loss during winter months and a protective layer that reduces heat gain during summer months.

Many older homes have less insulation than newer homes, but even newer homes can benefit from additional insulation. While it's not the least expensive efficiency improvement, adding insulation and air sealing your home can provide the biggest bang for your buck in energy savings and overall comfort.

A properly insulated home can reduce heat loss during the winter and reduce heat gain during the summer.

The most common areas to insulate are attics, ceilings, crawlspaces or unconditioned basements, exterior and interior walls, floors, and ductwork located in unconditioned spaces.

The amount and effectiveness rating of insulation required for each area varies by climate, but many websites like The Department of Energy or Home Depot provide easy-to-follow recommendations. Visit www.energy.gov/insulation to learn about recommended R-values for specific areas of the home based on climate zones.

It's important to understand how insulation effectiveness is measured. Insulation is rated in R-value, which measures the material's resistance to conductive heat flow. The higher the R-value, the greater the insulating effectiveness. The R-value you'll need depends on factors like climate, type of heating and cooling system and which area of the home you plan to insulate.

Insulation is offered in a wide range of materials from bulky fiberglass rolls to cellulose materials made from recycled paper products. If you're considering installing additional insulation, talk to an expert who can offer guidance on the right materials for your budget, climate and comfort needs.

Investing in proper insulation for your home not only enhances comfort but also reduces energy consumption.

Snowmageddon, Snowpocalypse, SnOMG!

Whether it's a big snow storm or an everyday snowfall — there's a risk of death by shoveling. Sudden exertion after being sedentary for several months can put a big strain on the heart. Pushing a heavy snow blower can also cause injury.

Shoveling heavy, wet snow can cause back injuries and heart attacks. So don't push yourself!

- Dress warmly, covering your head, fingers and toes.
- Take it slow and stretch before you begin.
- Stay hydrated and don't shovel after eating or while smoking.
- Shovel only fresh, powdery snow; it's lighter.
- Push small amounts of snow rather than lifting.
- Take frequent breaks and do not work to the point of exhaustion.

Know the signs of a heart attack, including chest discomfort, an uncomfortable feeling of fullness and shortness of breath. Stop immediately and call 911 if you're experiencing symptoms; every minute counts.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

Why is My Power Out?

When power goes out, we are working hard to restore it.

We hate it when the power goes out just as much as you do. When there is an outage, we work hard to resume service as quickly and safely as possible.

Many times, the reasons for outages are beyond our control. Here are the main reasons the power goes out:

STORMS — Conditions brought on by storms such as high winds, ice and lightning can interrupt service. Lightning itself does not impact outages as much as people think, but it can strike trees and cause branches or even whole trees to fall on distribution lines. Lightning can cause a problem if it strikes substation equipment, such as a large transformer. Strong high winds and ice that accumulates on lines can also impact distribution.

TREES AND VEGETATION — Branches, limbs or trunks can fall on lines and vegetation (such as vines) can grow around poles, lines or other equipment. Ice and wind can make matters worse. This is why we continuously work to keep rights of way near power lines and equipment clear.

ANIMALS — It is estimated that 11% of all outages are caused by our furry friend the squirrel. They love to chew on the weatherproof coating around lines. Other critters like turkeys, snakes and seagulls can interfere with service too. We put non-harmful devices on our equipment and lines to make it less comfortable for animals to perch, rest or make a nest. A bird on a wire is harmless and safe as long as it touches the line and nothing else.

ACCIDENTS — Cars, trucks and farm equipment that collide with a utility pole can cause an outage.

PUBLIC DAMAGE — Unsafe digging, equipment or line damage, vandalism or theft can all cause interruptions in the energy chain.

OVERLOAD — This happens where demand spikes, such as when too many air conditioners run on a hot summer day, causing blackouts or brownouts.

EQUIPMENT ISSUES — We maintain and inspect all of our lines and equipment regularly; however, sometimes equipment malfunctions and we address those problems as soon as they happen.

Please contact Twin Valley Electric at 866-784-5500 with questions about outages or to learn more about the steps we take to provide reliable service.