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THINKING AHEAD TOWARD FALL: **Electric heat rate and energy costs**

It's never too early to plan ahead for winter.

When it comes to wintertime energy costs, McLean Electric Cooperative (MEC) member-owners participating in the co-op's residential electric heat rate program know they can save money.

Basin Electric Power Cooperative (BEPC), the multi-state regional generation and transmission cooperative providing electricity to electric cooperatives in North Dakota and parts of eight other states, offers an optional discounted residential electric heat rate to its member cooperatives purchasing electricity directly from BEPC.

MEC participates in the program, passing a discounted rate onto its member-owners using residential electric heat who opt to install a separate meter (a sub-meter) for their electric heat kilowatt-hour (kWh) usage.

The discount is currently 5.54 cents per kWh, compared to 11.24 cents per kWh residential electric charge, described McLean Electric General Manager/CEO Mark Doyle.

The heat rate is effective from Oct. 1 through April 30 each winter.

MEC is given the opportunity to pass along the

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discount because its electric power and transmission provider, Central Power Electric Cooperative, receives the electricity it sells to its six North Dakota electric cooperative members from BEPC, Doyle continued. MEC then passes the savings on when Central Power provides the opportunity.

“We offer it, because we’re offered it,” Doyle explained.

While it’s not a guarantee the opportunity will always be available for cooperatives to offer its member-owners, the heat rate discount has been in place for decades.

“Whereas other heating sources tend to be volatile (in pricing),” Doyle added.

An approximate calculation would be equivalent to roughly \$1.33 per gallon of propane at the current heat rate, added MEC Engineering Manager Lucas Schaaf.

Given ongoing inflationary trends, though, Doyle said BEPC members, including MEC, anticipate a possible adjustment to the current discounted heat rate.

As inflation continues pinching consumer pocketbooks and ongoing supply chain issues create concerns for virtually all sectors of the American economy, in North Dakota the cost of electricity still remains well below the national average, however.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) provides an array of data regarding energy, costs and more. Only Utah’s average price of residential electricity (cooperatives, municipalities and investor-owned utilities combined) of 11.07 cents per kWh was lower than what the average Peace Garden State resident paid in April at 11.33 cents per kWh.

MEC’s residential rate is 11.24 cents per kWh.

That contrasts sharply with neighboring Minnesota, where consumers pay an average of 15.06 cents per kWh, the highest in the EIA’s region of Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Californians paid the highest average cost of residential electricity per kWh at 34.26 cents per kWh in the lower 48 states in April. Only residents of Hawaii paid more for their residential electricity, averaging 45.19 cents per kWh.

A sampling of what residents in other states paid in April shows Connecticut residents shelling out 29.58 cents per kWh, second only to California among the lower 48 states. New York state residents paid an average of 22.97 cents; Arizona, 15.24 cents; Massachusetts, 29.5 cents, Alaska, 24.89 cents; and Wyoming, 12.2 cents per kWh.

Costs have risen from the overall 2022 national average, when Utah and Nebraska residents paid an average of 10.8 cents per kWh for residential electricity – the lowest in 2022. By April, North Dakotans experienced a residential rate increase from its 2022 average of 10.9 cents per kWh, while Californians paid an overall 2022 average rate of 25.8 cents per kWh – nearly 8.5 cents per kWh is less than what they’re paying in April. ■

Heat rate program details

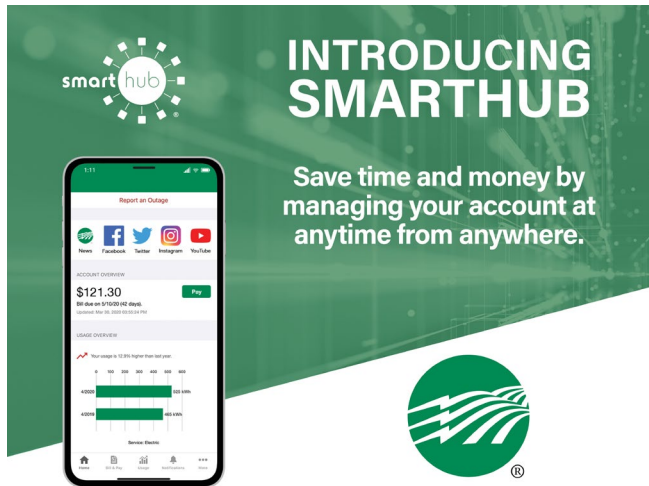
How to participate in McLean Electric Cooperative’s (MEC) heat rate program:

- 240-volt electrical heating circuit systems on a sub-meter (separate meter to measure electric heat usage) qualify, such as baseboard and cove heat, wall units, boilers, electric furnaces and unit heaters.
- Member-owners must purchase the meter socket, picking it up at MEC’s Garrison office with either the member-owner or electrician doing the installation. It will be billed separately from their monthly statement.
- Meter sockets must be installed outside, so the meter can be accessible by MEC line crews, if needed, for servicing.

- Contact MEC when socket installation is complete, so proper installation can be verified and the meter installed by MEC meter technicians.
- Sub-metered heat usage qualifies for the discounted heat rate, although there is a \$3 monthly sub-meter base charge.
- Because the discount applies from Oct. 1 through April 30, other heat usage during the year is billed the standard residential kWh rate.

Contact MEC for more information or questions at 701-463-6700 or 800-263-4922 or visit www.mcleanelectric.com. ■

A metering update



SMART MANAGEMENT. SMART LIFE. SMARTHUB.

It's been almost two years in the making, but McLean Electric Cooperative (MEC) and its meter technicians anticipate completing a meter upgrade project in 2025 – if all goes well, materials are available and ongoing national supply chain issues ease.

Cooperation from MEC's member-owners has been greatly appreciated, MEC General Manager/CEO Mark Doyle offered, noting member-owners will benefit in several ways.

"It's for their benefit. The member-owner is taking better control of their usage," he said.

The new system provides more detail, which can help member-owners better manage usage to help control energy costs, Doyle added.

The old system provided a 24-hour "life," Doyle described, while the new meters track more data, giving member-owners improved profiles of energy consumption.

However, it's more than number-crunching and data. The additional information helps MEC track its load demand more accurately.

"It will help us manage our distribution system more efficiently," Doyle continued.

That's important, because all electrical cooperatives have to provide annual load demand forecasts to their electric provider, which is Central Power Electric Cooperative for MEC.

Central Power, in turn, provides data from the six

North Dakota cooperatives it serves to Basin Electric Power Cooperative, the region's main electric generation and transmission cooperative, so it can meet its members' electric needs.

It's all designed to ensure cooperatives have electricity when member-owners need and want it.

The new meters also touch close to home during outages, providing additional capabilities to help pinpoint problem areas and source when the lights go out.

"The metering system gives us a very clear picture of what is going on in our system," Doyle added.

Data from the new metering system is currently available to both Garrison and Turtle Lake line crews on tablets in their trucks.

All of MEC's main meters have been upgraded, described Doyle, with only some heat rate sub-meters left to install.

MEC member-owners can view data from the new meters by signing up for SmartHub.

"Please contact our office," Doyle suggested, whether it's via the website at www.mcleanelectric.com or telephone at 701-463-6700 or 800-263-4922.

SmartHub does more than help member-owners track their electric usage. It's a way to communicate with MEC, view and pay electric bills, set up recurring payments and receive notifications, such as if there is a planned outage or to stay informed during outages. ■

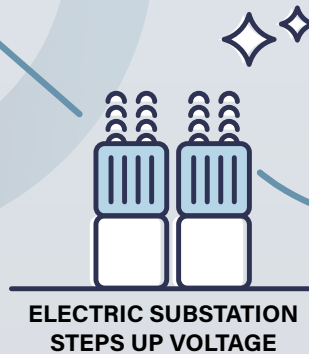
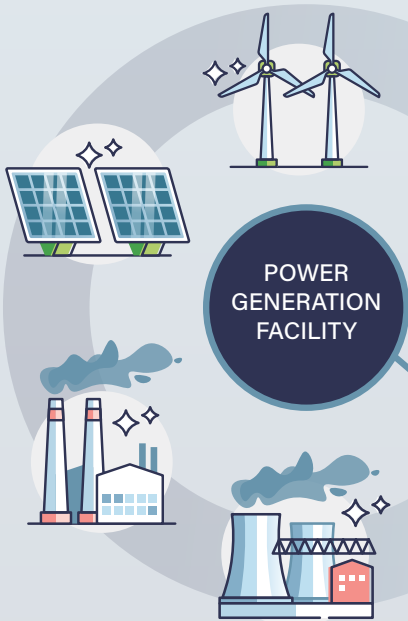


SMART MANAGEMENT. SMART LIFE. SMARTHUB.

How the Grid Works

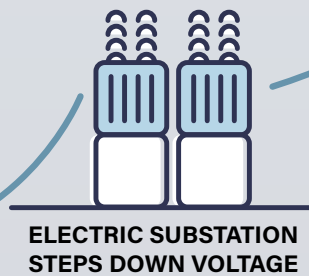
POWER GENERATION

Electricity is generated at power generation facilities, like a coal plant or solar installation, and distributed to a wide group of users. These plants often use a diverse mix of traditional and renewable fuel sources, including coal, oil, natural gas, nuclear, hydro, wind, solar and biomass. Baseload generation resources, such as coal, nuclear and natural gas, can operate 24/7 and be dispatched as needed to meet demand, regardless of factors like weather.



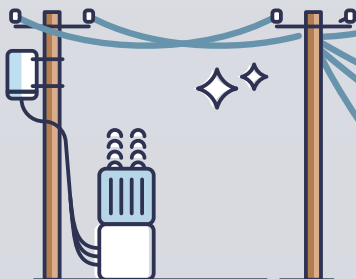
TRANSMISSION AND SUBSTATION

Electric power from generating plants is carried via high-voltage transmission lines to substations.



DISTRIBUTION

After an electric substation steps down the voltage, distribution lines safely deliver power to cooperative member-owners, which include large industrial users, businesses, farms and homes.



**INDUSTRIAL
CONSUMER**



**DOMESTIC
CONSUMER**



**COMMERCIAL
CONSUMER**



Smart home tips for saving energy

Interested in automating your home, but wondering where to start? Smart products can be remotely managed from your phone, even when you're out of the house. Products can be programmed to perform actions automatically based on your schedule, send alerts about performance issues before they become a big issue, and even adjust energy usage based on occupancy detection.

SMART THERMOSTATS

Heating and cooling consume more energy than any other appliance in the home, making smart thermostats the best candidate to help save energy within the household.

These devices offer the ability to monitor and adjust your home's temperature, even when you are away. More importantly, they can be used to automatically turn down your heating and cooling when it's not needed.

Saving energy and staying comfortable are easy with smart thermostats. The advanced technology can automatically create personalized schedules for your home based on temperature adjustments

you've made. System alerts and service reminders will let you know if filters or batteries need to be changed, making it easier than ever to manage your HVAC system.

SMART LIGHTING

LEDs are the obvious choice for energy-efficient home lighting, but smart LED bulbs come with even more benefits. You can control the color and brightness of smart bulbs through apps, smart speakers and even smart in-wall light switches. No more losing sleep over lights left on while you're away.

Not only do ENERGY STAR-certified smart light fixtures and light bulbs use 90% less energy than traditional incandescent light bulbs, they also help you when you forget to turn out the lights.

SMART APPLIANCES

Appliances are getting smarter, too. ENERGY STAR-certified appliances with connected functionality use less energy and offer new functions that can enable convenience and even more savings. ■

ALWAYS ASSUME ALL DOWNED LINES ARE **LIVE**

Downed power lines can be **deadly**. Always assume a downed power line is **live** and avoid approaching them or anything near them.

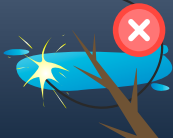
Use Precaution



Downed power lines can energize the ground up to **35 feet** away. Even more in wet conditions.



If you see a downed power line, **call 911**.



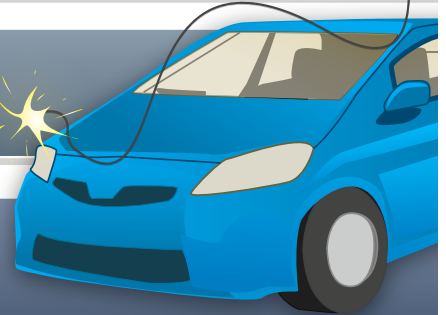
Never drive over downed power lines or anything in contact with them.



Never try to move a downed power line.

If a vehicle contacts a **power line** or **utility pole**...

STAY AWAY AND CALL 911



Consider **all lines** to be live and dangerous.



Stay in place or inside your vehicle unless you see **fire** or **smoke**.



Warn others to stay at least **35 feet** away.



Tell others not to approach vehicle, downed lines, or anything that may be in contact with downed lines.



Call **911**.

In the Event of Fire or Smoke

Do not touch the ground and vehicle at the **same time**.



Jump from the vehicle with your **feet together**.



Shuffle away, avoid lifting your feet.



www.facebook.com/ESFI.org

www.twitter.com/ESFI.org

www.youtube.com/ESFI.org

Aiming at electrical equipment is never in season!

As autumn approaches, along with various North Dakota hunting seasons, please remember that electrical insulators, conductors and electrical equipment are NOT on the hunting season list.

McLean Electric Cooperative encourages hunters to be aware of electrical equipment while enjoying the great outdoors this season. Be aware of what's behind that big buck, or it might cost big bucks. Repairs can be costly and damages cause outages to our members. As a nonprofit cooperative, owned by the members, we all share in this expense.

This doesn't include the inconvenience and hazards to members down the line who require power for medical equipment or other needs, while a lineworker does some hunting of his own, looking at spans of line trying to locate the problem.

Hunters and other gun owners should not shoot near or toward power lines, power poles and substations. A stray

bullet can cause damage to equipment, could be deadly to the shooter and potentially interrupt electric service to large areas.

Sometimes the damage isn't noticed for several weeks or months, and is only discovered when an unexplained outage occurs.

Landowners are also encouraged to take note of those who are hunting on their property, and remind them to be aware of power lines.

We recognize the majority of hunters practice safe hunting and understand the potential risks when discharging a firearm. We encourage experienced hunters who are familiar with the area to identify the locations of utility properties and equipment to young or new hunters in their group and remind them to avoid shooting toward these facilities. Enjoy the great outdoors. Just be sure to hunt only what's in season. ■



HUNTING SAFETY TIPS:

- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Familiarize yourself with the location of power lines and equipment on land where you shoot.
- Damage to the conductor can happen, possibly dropping a phase on the ground. If it's dry and the electricity goes to ground, there is the possibility of electrocution and fire.
- Be especially careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.
- Do not use power line wood poles or towers to support equipment used in your shooting activity.
- Take notice of warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment on the poles can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them, causing shock or electrocution.
- Do not shoot at, or near, birds perching on utility lines. That goes for any type of firearm, including pistols, rifles or shotguns.
- Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Anything attached to a pole besides utility equipment can pose an obstruction – and a serious hazard – to electric cooperative employees as they perform utility operations.



McLean County community calendar: Events and activities to see and do

McLean County area food pantry September distribution dates, times and locations:

- **Community Cupboard of Underwood food distribution:** 4-6 p.m. Sept. 5 and 10 a.m.-noon Sept. 21, 208 Lincoln Ave. Like us on Facebook (Community Cupboard of Underwood), for distribution dates, thrift store and other information.
- **Community Food Pantry serving Ryder, Makoti, Roseglen, Plaza, White Shield, Parshall and those in need:** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Sept. 28, 181 Ellsworth St., Makoti.
- **Community Thrift Store serving Ryder, Makoti, Roseglen, Plaza, White Shield, Parshall and the region:** 3-6 p.m. Tuesday, 4-7 p.m. Thursday and 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, except holidays, 181 Ellsworth, Makoti.
- **Free Community Clothing Share & Exchange Store:** Noon-6 p.m. every Thursday, 221 Main St., Turtle Lake.
- **Garrison Area Resource Center & Food Pantry:** Noon-2 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. Sept. 26, Garrison.
- **McLean Family Resource Center:** McLean County residents can contact the center, 701-462-8643, for an appointment to pick up baskets along with more information or assistance through the center, 205 Seventh St., Washburn.
- **McLean Family Resource Center Clothing Outlet:** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and 10 a.m.-1 p.m. first Saturday of every month, 205 Seventh St., Washburn.
- **Our Savior Lord's Food Pantry:** Noon-3 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. Sept. 16, City Hall, 215 Main St., Max.
- **The Lord's Pantry:** 2-4 p.m. Sept. 12, 10 a.m.-noon Sept. 28, Trinity Lutheran Church, 515 Kundert St., Turtle Lake.

- **Wilton Food Pantry, Wilton:** "Mini" distributions every Friday, 11:30 a.m. until gone. Full food distribution, 4-6 p.m. Sept. 19, Senior Citizens Center, 42 Dakota Ave., Wilton.

Area food pantries often experience high needs for the following items: baked beans, pork and beans, canned fruit, tuna, chicken, vegetables, cereal, oatmeal, granola and breakfast bars, juice, macaroni and cheese, hamburger and tuna helper, pancake mix, syrup, pasta, spaghetti, Alfredo and pasta sauce, peanut butter, jelly, rice side dishes, soups, chili, and household items, such as body wash and soap, dish soap, laundry detergent, shampoo and conditioner, toilet paper, toothpaste and toothbrushes. Contact local food pantries for drop-off locations, information or a list of additional needs in your community.

September events:

- **Sept. 2:** McLean Electric Cooperative closed in observance of Labor Day.
- **Sept. 28:** Celebrate National Public Lands Day, Audubon National Wildlife Refuge's Fall Festival, headquarters a mile east of Lake Audubon along the south shore.
- **Sept. 30:** Operation Round Up grant application deadline. Visit McLean Electric Cooperative's website, www.mcleanelectric.com, for details.

Nonprofit organizations and communities throughout McLean County can contact Patricia Stockdill at stockdill.patricia@gmail.com or 701-337-5462 to submit community events. ■

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