

LIVE WIRE



280 East Wood Road
P.O. Box 129
Rensselaer, IN 47978

PHONE NUMBERS AND HOURS

To contact your REMC

Business telephone: 866-4601

Long distance please use:

1-888-866-REMC (7362)

Emergency phone number: 866-5911

Anytime day or night to report

an outage or emergency.

E-mail address: jasperremc@jasperremc.com

Website: www.jasperremc.com

Office hours:

8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday

WATTS INSIDE

- New rates begin this month
- Bylaw requirements for REMC directors
- Youth program deadlines near

HIDDEN ACCOUNT NUMBER

There is a hidden account number within these four pages of *Live Wire*. Be sure to look them over. Maybe you'll spot **your** account number. If you do, just call our office before the last working day in February to claim the \$25 electric bill credit.

New rate calculator on-line



When you visit www.jasperremc.com you will see new rate calculators for our Residential (Home and Farm) rate, General Service Single-Phase rate and General Service Three-

Phase rate on our home page. You can input your average kilowatt-hour use per month and see how our new rates will affect your bill.

The new rates may encourage energy efficiency in your home. Please refer to the Energy Advisor section of our website under the "Products and Services" tab or call our office to learn more about energy efficiency.

CO-opNews

Information from your electric cooperative

FROM THE CEO/GENERAL MANAGER

Getting the word out on rates

In this month's column, I want to review our new rates. Although there has been a small rate increase, overall, some members may be impacted more than others. This is due partly because we not only adjusted the rates, we overhauled the rate structure. The logic is simple — our costs have increased and we need to adjust to keep up with the demands of our members and our industry.

In preparation for this column, I did some research and collected some data. Material used to build and maintain our infrastructure is one of the biggest investments we make almost every day. Here are some examples of the increases in commonly used construction materials we have experienced over the last few years.

Transformers

Whenever we add a new member, we have to add at least one transformer to our system. The smallest transformer used today is a 15-KVA pole-mounted transformer which would set the bottom threshold of cost for transformers used in most every job we work. In 2006, the price of a 15-KVA transformer was \$546. Today it is \$783. This represents a 44 percent increase in cost of just one item. Larger transformers have a larger price tag and they can cost up to \$12,000 each. These prices even surprised me, so I looked for a few other good examples.

Poles and materials

The most common pole we use is 35 feet long. We probably have in the neighborhood of 12,000 to 15,000 of these poles on our system. In 2006, a 35-foot pole cost \$137.80 and today it costs over \$173 each. Each of our poles typically has at least one pole top insulator and those insulators have risen in price by 65 percent.

As I reviewed the cost of our inventory, I found that some of the materials we use on a daily basis have risen over 100 percent in recent years. None of our standard or specialty materials has gone down in price so it stands to reason that our costs have risen significantly over the last few years.

Equipment

Those of you with construction and agricul-



Bryan Washburn
CEO/General Manager

tural backgrounds would not be surprised that we have seen significant increases in the price of equipment as well. Some of the trucks we use today carry a price tag of over \$200,000 which represents a major use of capital to us. Today, there are only three manufacturers who build most of the trucks we use on the lines which makes it hard to "shop around" for a better price. These trucks are the most efficient way of doing our jobs since the only option is to shut down the power to a large area and climb the poles as we used to do.

I think I've illustrated reasons why our costs have risen significantly over the past few years, but there is another point I want to make. It is imperative to remember that, along with the adjustment to the rates, there was a change to the "structure" of the rates

as well.

We have eliminated the declining block structure which should allow for our members to reap some benefits in the future. Declining blocks use the premise that the more kilowatt-hours you buy the cheaper they become. This is very counter intuitive to the energy efficiency mandates that are now being imposed on utility companies

and our customers.

Increased federal and state regulation has put more pressure on power plants to reduce emissions that impact the environment. Therefore, there is a national movement in our industry to encourage reduction in electric use which will reduce the emissions affecting the environment.

As you can see, if we continued offering declining block rates and then tell you to reduce your use, our message is not consistent with this national movement. Also, if you did decide to curb your use, you would be using less electricity and paying more per kilowatt-hour with the declining block.

Our industry is also telling us that electricity prices will rise dramatically in the future so we should help our members reduce their use now so they can manage their energy costs in the years to come. Declining rate structures are counter intuitive to this effort as well.

It may seem odd that your cooperative is working to help you lower your use since that

As I reviewed the cost of our inventory, I found that some of the materials we use on a daily basis have risen over 100 percent in recent years.

please turn to the next page

New rates start this month

Before Feb. 15

Farm & Home (R-1)

Facility Charge: \$15/month

Energy Charges:

First 400 kWh: \$0.105/kWh

Next 400 kWh: \$0.073/kWh

Excess kWh: \$0.055/kWh

Energy Tracker:

\$0.021725/kWh

Farm and home example: 1,000 kWh/month with energy tracker and taxes

\$127.26

General Service (C-1)

Facility Charges:

Single-phase: \$20/month

Three-phase: \$45/month

Excess kVa minimum: \$1.10/kVa

Energy Charges:

First 1,000 kWh: \$0.09500/kWh

Next 2,000 kWh: \$0.07500/kWh

Excess kWh: \$0.05250/kWh

Energy Tracker:

\$0.021725/kWh

Large Power Service (LP-1)

Facility Charge: \$50/month

Excess kVa minimum: \$1.10/kVa

Demand Charge: \$6/kW

Energy Charges:

First 150 kWh/kW: \$0.05500/kWh

Next 150 kWh/kW: \$0.05000/kWh

Excess kWh: \$0.04500/kWh

Energy Tracker:

\$0.021725/kWh

Large power rate change begins with Feb. 23 kWh use.

*Energy tracker subject to change on all rates.

Starting Feb. 15

Farm & Home (R-1)

Facility Charge: \$25/month

Energy Charges:

All kWh: \$0.095/kWh

Energy Tracker:

\$0.00*/kWh

General Service (C-1)

Facility Charges:

Single-phase: \$30/month

Three-phase: \$60/month

Excess kVa minimum: \$1.10/kVa

Energy Charges:

All kWh: \$0.09050/kWh

Energy Tracker:

\$0.00*/kWh

Large Power Service (LP-1)

Facility Charge: \$100/month

Excess kVa minimum: \$1.10/kVa

Demand Charge: \$7.80/kW

Energy Charges:

All kWh/kw: \$0.06600/kWh

Energy Tracker:

\$0.00*/kWh

FROM THE CEO

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means we would be lowering our revenue as well. We have emphasized for over 70 years that profit does not drive your cooperative. The most important goal for your cooperative is to serve the membership by providing affordable electricity and improve your quality of life.

We did not want to adjust the rates, but it was necessary to be able to do what it takes to achieve that primary goal. If you want help with becoming more efficient with your energy dollars, feel free to contact our energy advisors for free tips and counsel. Until next time, remember that we at Jasper County REMC are here to keep the lights on for you.

Changes to billing form

We have redesigned our bills to offer you more information about your account. Starting with the February mailing, you will see a chart of your last 13 months of kilowatt-hour use printed on the form. This information provides you with another tool to help you keep track of your billing history and budget for future bills. We look forward to providing you additional tools you can use to manage your energy use and your budget.

Bylaw requirements for REMC director positions

Jasper County REMC is governed by a nine-member board of directors elected by and from the membership. If you're interested in becoming a director, then you'll want to continue reading.

The following is taken from Article 3, Section 4, of Jasper County REMC's bylaws and deals with director nominations.

"It shall be the duty of the board of directors to appoint, not less than thirty (30) days nor more than one hundred twenty (120) days before the date of a meeting of the members at which directors are to be elected, the committee on nominations consisting of not less than three (3) nor more than eleven (11) members with at least one (1) member from each of the (3) districts from which a director shall be elected at the next meeting of the members. With the exception of a retiring director, no officer or member of the board of directors shall be appointed a member of such committee.

"The president of the board of directors and the general manager shall provide the committee on nominations with procedural instructions and any other information that the committee requires for its duties. The committee on nominations shall contact the members whose names are to be placed in nomination and obtain their consent for such action. The

committee on nominations shall nominate at least two (2) qualified members for each directorate position pending election at the next annual meeting of the members. The committee shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative at least twenty (20) days before the meeting, a list of nominations for the directorate positions. Any thirty (30) or more members may make other nominations in writing over their signature not less than thirty (30) days prior to the annual meeting and the secretary shall post the same at the place where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted. The secretary shall mail to each member at least ten (10) days before the meeting a statement of the number of directors to be elected, the nominees designated by the committee on nominations and separately the nominations made by petition, if any. The members may, at any meeting at which a director or directors shall be removed, as provided in these bylaws, elect a successor or successors thereto without compliance with the foregoing provisions with respect to nominations.

"Notwithstanding anything contained in this section, failure to comply with any of the provisions of this section shall not affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any election of directors."

The details of paying on-line

There are two primary differences between paying your REMC bill on-line through our website and paying on-line through your bank.

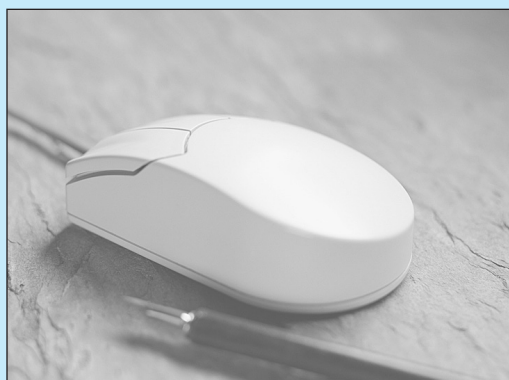
1. When you pay on-line at www.jasperremc.com your payment is immediate. Your payment registers on our account database immediately after you hit the submit button.

2. When you pay on-line through your bank, your payment could take up to five or even seven days to get to the REMC because of the bank's processing system. This means you may incur late penalties or fees because we didn't get your payment on time. If you choose to pay on-line through the bank, please pay your bill five to seven days in advance to make sure late fees are not charged to your REMC account. Hidden account 28252-001

When you set up your account to pay through our website, the information you input

has to match the information in our REMC account database: name, address, phone, etc. Please call us if you need assistance setting up your account.

Paying on-line at www.jasperremc.com is easy and immediate.



Energy Assistance Program ends March 15

Participants in the Energy Assistance Program (EAP) are reminded the moratorium on disconnection for nonpayment ends Tuesday, March 15.

Accounts assisted by EAP must be

brought up to date before then or they will be disconnected on Wednesday, March 16. If you have questions about your account, please call our office as soon as possible.

Operation Round Up trustees are appointed

Operation Round Up trustees are appointed by the Jasper County REMC board of directors to serve three-year terms. Each REMC district is represented by three trustees who review grant applications on a quarterly basis and issue funds appropriately to individuals, educators, and organizations that impact our communities. The 2011 trustees are:

District 1

Cheryl Hillan, Rensselaer
John Potter, Rensselaer
Marty Park, Rensselaer

District 2

Charlie Parrish, Rensselaer
Loretta Allseit, Medaryville
Cynthia Ziese, Rensselaer

District 3

Jeri Myers, Rensselaer
Deborah Scholz, Wheatfield
Crystal VanNieulande, Wheatfield

A dedication to safety

Jasper County REMC is committing to a huge presence this year to educating our communities about electrical safety.

Two years ago, we took our hot line safety demo to local schools and 4-H clubs. We arranged for a friend to speak to area high schools about his experience as a lineman who was electrocuted and lived to tell the tale. Emergency responders from seven counties were invited to see our full-size hot line demo at our headquarters. We also had the pleasure of meeting a progressive home school organization and its students who enjoyed our presentation. And lastly, we presented to our toughest crowd, the HeadStart groups in the area because it's never too early to learn about electrical safety.

If our presentations save one person in the near or distant future we will have done a good job for the communities we serve.

Please take time to mention our offer to present a safety demonstration to your adult or children's group. With a few tweaks to our format, the scouts have used our presentation to earn their electricity and engineering patches. Our presentation would be a great asset to your Rotary, Chamber of Commerce or required OSHA safety program.

Electrical safety presentation options available to groups and organizations include:

- PowerPoint classroom presentations for grades K-12.
- Table-top hot line demonstration.
- Full-size semi trailer hot line demonstration.
- Pre-K "Trees & Kites" presentation.
- Safety activity books.
- Safety with an engineering message for scouts.
- Safety with an energy conservation message.
- Safety with a renewable energy message.
- DVD on driving safety for teenage drivers

We look forward to any invitation we can get to keep you, your family and your friends safe around electricity.

REMC member benefits

Besides low cost, reliable, electric service you can enjoy these benefits:

REMC/Wabash Valley Power Association Programs Refrigerator/Freezer Recycling Program

- ◆ \$35 reward.
- ◆ Call 877-395-5535 for pick up date and time.

Washing Machine Rebate

- ◆ \$50 bill credit.
- ◆ Must have electric water heater.
- ◆ Washer must be Energy Star® qualified.

WVPA Residential Heat Pump Rebates

- ◆ ASHP \$125/ton up to 10 tons.
- ◆ Geothermal \$150/ton up to 10 tons.
- ◆ For replacement of electric heat.
- ◆ Call us for the detailed requirements to qualify for this program **BEFORE** ordering your unit.

REMC Programs

Air-Source Heat Pump Rebate

- ◆ Install an air source heat pump and get a \$200 bill credit from the REMC. Credits are not given for replacement heat pump units.
- ◆ Call us for contractor list and fuel cost comparisons.

Geothermal Rebate

- ◆ Install a new geothermal heating and cooling system and get a \$500 cash rebate from the REMC. Rebates are not given for replacement geothermal units.
- ◆ Call us for contractor list and fuel cost comparisons.

Operation Round Up

- ◆ Thank you to our members who let us “round up” their bills to help the community.
- ◆ Round Up funds are **not granted to pay utility bills.**
- ◆ **Grant periods are March, June, September, and December.**

Free Energy Audit

- ◆ Call us to set up a free energy evaluation of your home.
- ◆ It's never too late, or too early, to have us perform an energy audit. Call us before you build, add on, or remodel.

REMC Payment Options

- ◆ On-line payment through www.jasperremc.com.
- ◆ Drive-up window and lobby open from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays.
- ◆ Night deposit box open 24 hours, 7 days a week.
- ◆ Drop off to DeMotte State Bank and branches. No late or partial payments accepted at DSB.
- ◆ Credit or debit card accepted.
- ◆ Credit card auto draft available.
- ◆ Invisible Check drafted from your checking or savings account.
- ◆ Budget billing that starts in July after 12 months of electric use.

Long-distance Phone Service As Low As 4.9¢! —

Available to members and nonmembers.

- ◆ Call toll free 866-241-0392 to sign up.

FREE Water Heater Program

- ◆ Free 40- or 50-gallon electric water heater. Discount price on 80-gallon heaters.
- ◆ Free maintenance on member's electric water heater during business hours.
- ◆ Up to \$50 rebate for electrical materials to convert from gas heater to electric.

Dusk-to-Dawn Pole Lights

- ◆ A dusk-to-dawn pole light can be installed, serviced, and maintained by the REMC.
- ◆ Ask us about the monthly cost of a dusk-to-dawn light.

Critical Account Recognition

- ◆ REMC members who depend on electricity for mandatory medical equipment can be placed on our critical account list with a doctor's request.

Presentations—Available to members and nonmembers.

- ◆ Call us to present our safety or energy efficiency demonstration at your next meeting.

Youth program deadlines near

The application process is now underway for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, Touchstone Energy® Camp, and Nesius Memorial Scholarships. All applications can be downloaded at www.jasperremc.com under the “Education” tab.

Electric Cooperative Youth Tour

This June, students can have the experience of joining nearly 1,500 students from other states to learn more about our nation's history and electric cooperatives through the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. Jasper County REMC, along with Indiana Statewide Association of RECs, Inc., continues to sponsor this traditional, all-expense paid trip for area youth. To enhance the students' learning experience, sites will be visited such as the Gettysburg National Park, Arlington National Cemetery, the national museums, and other general sightseeing excursions. The only criteria is the students' parents or legal guardians are Jasper County REMC members and the students must have satisfactorily completed their junior year of high school, with intentions to return for their senior year. The trip will take place June 9-16. **Deadline to turn in applications to REMC for the Youth Tour is Feb. 11.**

Touchstone Energy Camp

Touchstone Energy Camp will be held June 8-11 at YMCA Camp Tecumeseh, located in Brookston. The camp is designed to educate boys and girls about cooperatives, electrification and electric safety. Camp accommodations, chaperones, food, and expenses will be provided by Jasper County REMC. The student's parents or guardians must be Jasper County REMC members and the child must be between sixth and seventh grade this summer. **Deadline to sign up for this educational and fun experience is Feb. 11.**

Nesius Memorial Scholarships

The Nesius Memorial Scholarship is an opportunity for area high school seniors graduating in 2011. One \$500 academic scholarship will be awarded to a successful candidate from KVHS, RCHS and one from all other high schools in Jasper County REMC's service territory. Candidates must be a son, daughter or legal ward of a Jasper County REMC member. **Deadline to return applications for the Nesius Memorial Scholarship is April 9.**

For more information about these student programs, please contact Jasper County REMC during office hours.

Permanent and portable generator safety

Many rely on backup electric generators for emergency power when the electricity goes out. If you are considering purchasing a backup generator, take proper safety steps before operating it in your home or business. Improper installation or use could be dangerous to you and your family, friends, neighbors and electric utility crews trying to restore service.

Properly connecting the generator into the system is critical for safe and effective use. A licensed professional should install a permanent, standby electric generator.

Before you operate any standby or backup generator, make sure it has a transfer safety switch or that your power is cut off at the break box to prevent backfeed. Backfeed creates danger for anyone near lines, particularly line crews working to restore power.

Some homeowners choose smaller, portable generators to power essential electrical equipment during outages.

For safe operation of portable generators:

- Read and follow all operating instructions.
- Make sure the generator is properly grounded.
- Never plug a portable electric generator into a wall outlet or connect directly to a home's wiring. This can energize utility power lines and injure others.
- Don't overload the generator with more appliances than the generator is rated to handle.
- Use shop-type electrical cords designed for heavier outdoor use to connect appliances.
- Many generators are equipped with twist-lock connects to reduce accidental disconnections due to vibrations.
- Always keep the generator outside in a dry, protected area, away from windows or air intakes where deadly exhaust fumes can enter living spaces.
- Turn off the generator and allow it to cool before refueling.
- Before shutting down a generator, turn off and unplug all appliances and equipment being powered by the generator.

Whole house generator information needed!

Please call our office if your home has a permanent “whole house” natural gas or propane generator. We'd like to add that information to your account for the safety of our linemen.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

