

Northwestern Electric News

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Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

June 2017

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Prepaid metering puts the power in your hands

Prepaid metering is as simple as it sounds: consumers pay for electricity before it is used, then use the electricity until the credit expires. A terrific analogy for prepaid metering is putting gas in your car.

Say you only have \$30 for the week to pay for gasoline. You drive down to the station, pump in \$30 and drive off. As you drive during the week, what happens? You monitor the gauge and make sure each trip is necessary. If you drive too much, you burn up your \$30 before the week is out. Literally. By checking the gauge throughout the week, you became more prudent with your gas use and made informed decisions on when and how much to use.

Now let's transfer that analogy to your account with Northwestern Electric. With normal metering, you get a bill after you have used the electricity.

Sometimes it comes as a shock. You ask yourself, "How could I possibly have used so much electricity?" Prepaid metering is designed to ease—and hopefully eliminate—that shock. Let's take a look at how it works.

The components of a prepaid metering system aren't too different from regular metering. Two extra pieces are required—a way for Northwestern Electric to tell you how much you have left in your account and a way to switch off the power when all your money is used. Think of this as your "electricity tank gauge." On Northwestern Electric's side, we handle the extra software and processes.

Now let's see it in action. Northwestern Electric sends electricity use notifications through your choice of our smartphone app, email, text message or phone call.

Now you decide how often you want to buy electricity. Monthly? Weekly? Then you budget for a certain amount of power and pay the co-op.

Purchasing power is quick and easy, even on weekends and holidays. You can pay any time by telephone, in person during normal business hours, 24/7 at the kiosk, with our smartphone app or online. Bingo, your electricity tank is full.

During the time period you have paid for (let's say a week for this example), you receive regular feedback on how much you have left in your tank.

As you approach "empty," you add more money to your account and are then set for the next period. If you run out, the power goes off just like your car stops when it runs out of gas.

To complete the analogy, let's look at what you have been doing during the week. You become more aware of how you are using electricity. You turn things off more often. You may change the setting on your thermostat so you don't cool or heat as much. You might cook outside to avoid using the oven or make sure your dishwasher is really full before running it. Industry studies show that consumers who participate in prepaid metering plans use as much as 10 percent less electricity than their counterparts.

Prepaid metering teaches the value of electricity, what uses watts in your home, provides absolute control over how much you pay and helps you reduce your energy use. It is a tremendous way to power your life. Contact us at 580.256.7425 or 800.375.7423 to learn more about prepaid metering.

The power is in your hands with...

Prepaid Metering

By paying for electricity as you go, you can monitor energy use and know when you need to conserve. A few benefits of participating in prepaid metering are:

- Teaches the value of electricity
- Helps consumers understand what uses watts in their home
- Provides absolute control over how much money is spent on electricity
- Helps reduce energy use



NORTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Operating In Beaver, Dewey, Ellis, Harper, Major, Woods and Woodward Counties in Oklahoma

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IN CASE OF TROUBLE CALL:
24 HOUR EMERGENCY
1-877-9NOPOWER (877.966.7693)

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ADDRESS
P.O. BOX 2707
WOODWARD, OK 73802
2925 WILLIAMS AVENUE
WOODWARD, OK 73801

NOTICE

A copy of NWECC Bylaws will be made available for any member upon request.

Web page: www.nwecok.coop
E-mail: nwec@nwecok.coop



“NWECC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”



It's been over four months now since the January ice storm toppled right at 6,000 poles. The storm caused widespread power outages in northwest Oklahoma including a large portion of Northwestern Electric's service territory. Damage assessments were significant enough to qualify for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance. After following FEMA's guidelines and requirements for storm debris removal, we now have the cleanup process underway. Contract crews with JCL Power are scattered across our territory picking up the damaged poles and equipment. The debris removal process is expected to take approximately 6-8 weeks and should be completed by mid-July.

NWEC offers low interest loan funds

In an effort to help the economy of northwest Oklahoma, Northwestern Electric offers low interest revolving loan funds. The low interest funds may be used by qualifying businesses to purchase buildings, equipment, and to provide working capital. (992016001)

For more information about the revolving loan and availability of funds, contact Melissa Washmon at 580.256.7425 or 800.375.7423. You can also view the loan fund guidelines and credit application on our website at www.nwecok.coop. Click on the Economic Development Loan tab under Account Services.

March 2017 Operating Report

	2016	2017
Revenue - Billing	2,337,118	2,454,359
Cost of Power.....	1,442,976	1,484,410
Miles of Lines	4,987	4,999
Members Connected	11,912	11,860
Density per Mile	2.39	2.37
Average Member KWH	2,012	2,056
Average Bill	196	207
KWH Purchased.....	25,990,110	26,965,498
KWH Sold.....	23,970,566	24,385,894
Income per Mile.....	471	493
Expense per Mile	497	527

Smart digging means calling 811 before each job

Homeowners often make risky assumptions about whether or not they should get their utility lines marked, but every digging job requires a call—even small projects like planting trees and shrubs. Underground utilities, such as buried gas, water and electric lines, can be a shovel thrust away from turning any digging project into a disaster.

Play it safe by dialing 811 to find out where utility lines run on your property. Your call will be routed to a local “one call” center. Tell the operator where you're planning to dig and what type of work you will be doing, and affected local utilities will be notified.

In a few days, a locator will arrive to designate the approximate location of any underground lines, pipes and cables. These areas will be marked with flags or paint so you'll know what's below. Then the safe digging can begin.

Even simple tasks like installing a new mailbox post can damage utility lines, which can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm diggers and potentially result in fines and repair costs. According to the Common Ground Alliance (CGA), a federally mandated group of underground utility and damage prevention industry professionals, survey data shows an underground utility line is damaged every six minutes in the U.S. because someone decided to dig without first dialing 811.

The 811 service is free, prevents the inconvenience of having utilities interrupted and can help you avoid serious injury. For more information, visit www.call811.com.



**ALWAYS
CALL
BEFORE YOU
DIG**

One free, easy call gets your utility lines marked AND helps protect you from injury and expense.

**Safe Digging Is No Accident:
Always Call 811 Before You Dig**

Know what's below. Always call 811 before you dig. Visit call811.com for more information.

811
Know what's below. Call before you dig.

TRAVELERS
Common Ground Alliance

Hidden account number contest

Congratulations to Danny Finley for recognizing his account number in last month's newsletter. The other number belonged to Loren Boise.

For those of you who aren't familiar with the contest, this is how it works. We have hidden two account numbers somewhere in the articles in this newsletter. The numbers will always be enclosed in parentheses and will look similar to this example (XXXXXX).

If you recognize your account number, all you have to do is give us a call on or before the 8th of the current month and we'll give you a credit on your bill for the amount stated.

This month's numbers are worth \$25 each. Happy hunting!

Cooking

Lemon Truffles

- 1 box of lemon cake mix**
- 7 tablespoons melted butter (plus extra to butter hands)**
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice**
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest, optional**
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar, divided (add 1/4 cup to batter, use the remaining sugar for coating the truffles)**

Pour the cake mix into a large bowl and add in the melted butter, lemon juice, lemon zest, and 1/4 cup of sugar. Stir to combine the ingredients.

If the mixture is crumbly, add an extra tablespoon of melted butter a little at a time until the dough holds together.

Pour the sugar into a large bowl or platter. Roll the cookie dough into 2" balls and then roll in the sugar. After the lemon truffles have been rolled in the sugar, place in the refrigerator to set prior to serving.

Serves: 24

Appreciating electricity a penny at a time

Electricity is about the only thing you can buy and still get value for just a penny's worth

By Curtis Condon, editor of Ruralite magazine in Hillsboro, Oregon

I'm old enough to remember when penny candy actually cost a penny. For a nickel, you could buy enough candy to rot your teeth out, as my mother used to say.

But what does a penny buy these days? Not much. The government can't even make a penny for a penny anymore. According to the U.S. Mint, it now costs 1.5 cents to produce one.

About the only thing of value you can still get for a penny is electricity. You might call it "penny electricity."

No, I'm not kidding. Think about it.

To make the math easier, let's say the average rate for a kilowatt-hour of electricity is 10 cents. That is 60 minutes of 1,000 watts of electricity for a dime, so a penny of electricity equates to 100 watts. It's enough to power a 9-watt LED lightbulb—the equivalent of a 60-watt incandescent bulb—for 11 hours, all for only a penny.

Where else can you get that kind of value?

How many eggs will a penny buy? How much milk, bread, coffee, medicine or gasoline?

Gas has come down from its stratospheric levels of several years ago, but there is still no comparison to the value of electricity. For example, if a gallon of gas costs \$2.50 and your car gets 25 miles to the gallon, you can drive 176 yards—about two blocks—on a penny's worth of gas.

I will take 11 hours of lighting for a penny over a two-block drive any day. (6545003)

The value is just as evident when powering things other than lighting. Take, for instance, your smartphone. Using the same 10 cents per kWh price, penny electricity allows you to fully charge your iPhone more than 18 times for a penny. You can charge it once every day of the year for about 20 cents total.

Not impressed? Well, how about these other examples of what you can do with just a penny's worth of electricity: power a 1,000-watt microwave on high for 6 minutes; run a 200-watt desktop computer for 30 minutes; watch 2.5 hours of your favorite shows on a 40-watt, 32-inch, LED television or 1.3 hours on a 75-watt, 75-inch mega TV.

The examples are endless.

We are fortunate electricity is such an excellent value because we have a huge appetite for it. We tend to forget that.

Electricity is not expensive. It's that we use it for so many different things: lighting, heating, cooking, cooling, refrigeration, cleaning, washing, pumping, entertainment, communications—even transportation these days.

Few corners of our lives are left untouched by electricity.

Unfortunately, we don't always appreciate it. When our monthly electric bill comes, we open it and may complain about the cost. It's a knee-jerk reaction ingrained in us as consumers. We don't stop to think about the value we received for the money.

What can you get for a penny?

1¢ of electricity gets you:

- ▶ **11 hours of light from a 9-watt LED lightbulb**
- ▶ **18 full charges on your iPhone**
- ▶ **6 minutes of microwaving with a 1,000-watt microwave on high**
- ▶ **30 minutes on your 200-watt desktop computer**
- ▶ **2.5 hours of your favorite shows on a 40-watt, 32-inch, LED television**

Early in my career, I had the pleasure to interview an elderly woman who vividly remembered the day electricity came to her farm. Her name escapes me, but I do remember she proudly showed me the worn, dog-eared membership certificate the co-op issued to her husband.

"You young people will never know what it was like to have electricity for the very first time," she said. "It was glorious. Nowadays, you take it for granted."

Her farm was energized in 1940. She said the price of electricity at the time was slightly less than a penny a kilowatt-hour—true penny electricity.

A lot has changed since then. Wages and the cost of living today are a far cry from 1940, when the average annual wage was less than \$150 a month and the average cost of a house was \$3,920.

But one thing that hasn't changed is the value of electricity. In 77 years, its price has risen much slower than the rate of inflation.

A penny in 1940 had as much buying power as 17 cents today, which means the residential price of electricity—which now averages 12 cents a kWh nationally and less than 10 cents in the Pacific Northwest—is actually a better deal today than it was in 1940.

So to my way of thinking, the value of electricity is like the bygone days of penny candy, and it's OK to indulge yourself a little. But, unlike penny candy, penny electricity won't rot your teeth out.