South Central Power Co.
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## Offices

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**CANAL WINCHESTER**
10229 Busey Road
Canal Winchester, OH 43110
614-837-4351
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**CIRCLEVILLE**
2100 Chickasaw Drive
Circleville, OH 43113
740-474-6045
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Hillsboro, OH 45133
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1-800-207-0020

**BARNESVILLE**
37801 Barnesville-Bethesda Rd.
Barnesville, OH 43713
740-425-4018
1-800-468-4717

**OFFICE HOURS:**
Monday through Friday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
**www.southcentralpower.com**

## Keep This Number

When reporting an outage, an automated outage reporting system may answer your call. It may ask for your 12-digit account number to help locate the outage site. This number is found on your monthly bill. It's handy to write it down and keep it near the phone.

## Suggestions

Please send your *Country Living* story ideas or comments to the attention of Lisa R. Hooker at South Central's Lancaster office.

# SOUTH CENTRAL POWER COMPANY

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# Rate changes effective January 1

South Central Power's Board of Trustees has approved changes to consumer rates that take effect on Jan. 1, 2009.

**Customer charge.** The customer charge for residential consumers served under Schedule R will increase from $9 per month to $11 per month. The customer charge for commercial consumers served under Schedule GS will increase from $9 per month to $13 per month.

The customer charge is necessary to recover costs associated with having an active service, even if no kilowatt-hours (kWh) are used. These costs include: a transformer, service wire, meter, retrieving the meter reading, processing the meter readings once they are obtained and various other fixed costs.

The customer charge for residential customers was last changed on Jan. 1, 2008. "We had anticipated that the customer charge increase in 2008 would be enough to cover cost increases for two years. However, the price of transformers, service wire and other equipment is increasing much faster than expected. In addition, we've had to replace a great deal of wire and equipment that were damaged or stolen from our substations by vandals," said Vice President of Customer Service Ed Kindler.

**Rider A.** Another cost, the wholesale cost of power, also is increasing much faster than expected.

"In 2008, we also increased the wholesale cost of power embedded in our retail rates from $0.04 per kWh to $0.05 per kWh. This decreased the power cost adjustment portion of Rider A, so the consumer did not see a net change in their rates. Based on projections from our power supplier, Buckeye Power, Inc., we believed wholesale power costs would not go above $0.05 per kWh for 18 months to two years. However, it now appears that wholesale power costs could reach $0.06 per kWh by late 2009 or early 2010," explains Kindler.

To address this, the Board increased the wholesale cost of power contained in the retail rate schedules R, GS and large power (LP) from $0.05 per kWh to $0.065 per kWh. Consumers will see no change, though, because Rider A was changed to reflect the increase in the embedded cost of power.

"The net effect of this change is zero. At this time there is no change in the dollars collected, but, rather, where they are collected from. However, we do expect the wholesale cost of power to increase as more governmentally mandated pollution control equipment is added to the Cardinal generating plant that supplies us with electricity. These increases will be passed on through Rider A," Kindler said.

# The lotus: from East to West

Story & photos by LISA HOOKER

A beautiful flower native to Asia links China and America at Harry and Eileen Nixon's home.

"Ours really is an East-West connection. My wife and I loved lotus flowers before we adopted the girls. Now we treasure them even more because of their cultural significance to our family. It may very well have been destiny that we adopted our girls from China," Harry says.

The Nixons adopted Emily in 2001 and Olivia in 2005. The girls are now seven and three years old, respectively.

"We love the Asian culture," Eileen adds. "We wanted to have children and help someone else, so we turned to adopting the girls from China."

*Clockwise from left: Colorful lotus and water lilies are found throughout Harry and Eileen Nixon's property. They and their daughters Emily (front) and Olivia are shown at the edge of one their nine ponds.*

The Nixons had their water gardens before adopting Emily and Olivia. "I inherited the hobby from my Dad, but expanded it for retirement income and, honestly, the beauty of it," Harry says of the nine ponds with hundreds of blooms on 15 acres in Fairfield County. Nixon grows 15 different lotus varieties. Koi swim leisurely among them.

**Lotus history.** Native to Asia and the Middle East, lotus have been considered sacred for thousands of years. It's cultivated for religious, ornamental and food purposes.

"Once we had the girls, I began researching and realized how significant (lotuses) are, especially in China, so we made it our feature flower here," Harry says.

The lotus represents prosperity in Chinese culture. It also can represent creativity, power and purity amid adverse surroundings.

**Lotus water gardens.** Lotus often are initially planted in large tubs before being tranplanted into a pond. When first planted, the tuber is immersed in at least six inches of water.

"Put a stone or mud on top of it to hold it in place, but leave the growing tip exposed. That's where the leaves grow from," Harry says. The tuber stores and provides nutrition for the roots to get started.

Nixon's ponds vary in depth. "Lotus grow in water from six inches to eight feet deep. They need full sun and generally grow facing the east," he says. "They'll find a good spot. They'll even move across the pond and travel to find the best place."

Tropical lotus bloom year-round in hot climates. Hardy lotus are perennials. To make it through the winter, lotus need to be planted in the ground under the water deep enough that they don't freeze.

Once the flower buds, the buds turn to blooms.

"They bloom for several days and sometimes change color. They can go from white to pink to yellow to lavender," Harry says.

In Ohio, lotus bloom in the heat of July and August. The flower opens and closes daily. Blooms can be miniatures or grow to more than a foot across with single or double flowers. The plant grows eight to 10 feet tall with a leaf spread of up to three feet. The fragrance is soft.

Nixon also has water lilies. "The difference between lotus and water lilies is that lotus extend their leaves out of the water, while the leaves of water lilies lie on the water," he says.

*Learn more at www.nixonfishfarm.com.*

# Cooperative Owners for Political Action

A new president. A new Congress. Big issues surrounding energy and the economy that could impact electric cooperatives in big ways.

The consumer-owners of South Central Power are among the 40 million Americans who can claim ownership in a not-for-profit, consumer-controlled utility that provides electricity at cost.

As an owner, you have the privilege of participating in the political affairs of your cooperative. That includes your unique right to make financial contributions to the campaigns of candidates who support electric cooperatives and issues that are important to them through ACRE Cooperative Owners for Political Action.

It's how your voice as an electric co-op member-owner is heard on Capitol Hill and at the Ohio Statehouse.

**What is ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action?** The law allows individuals with common interests to pool their resources using political action committees (PACs.)

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association established its Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) in 1966. ACRE supports candidates for state and federal office — those in office now and those running for office — who will speak up and protect the interests of electric cooperatives and their member-owners.

ACRE has expanded its efforts beyond co-op directors and employees to include the country's electric cooperative member-owners with its Co-op Owners for Political Action program.

NRECA CEO Glenn English sees it as a new opportunity for member-owners to be more involved in the political process and supportive of their electric cooperative.

English points out that member-owner participation in ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action is the next logical step in ensuring the voice of rural electrification remains loud and clear in shaping the issues that affect the industry.

Along with a strong grassroots network, ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action is another tool to show legislators that member-owners are engaged in issues, legislation and regulation that, if enacted, could impact electric cooperatives.

**Where does my contribution go?** With the exception of a federal tax payment of less than one percent, all contributions to ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action go directly to the campaigns of candidates for political office.

Additionally, about half of your contribution goes to the state electric co-op PAC. The Ohio Electric Cooperatives Political Action Committee supports candidates for state office who are supportive of Ohio's electric cooperatives and their causes.

Today, more than 34,000 like-minded electric co-op member-owners across the United States are increasing the effectiveness of their personal donations by contributing through ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action.

With an average contribution of $44, ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action truly is a grassroots PAC.

**Who determines how these contributions are made?** ACRE follows established procedures. Factors that determine financial support include the candidate's position on issues critical to electric co-ops, as well as their votes and public statements on these issues. The candidate's committee assignments and leadership positions are considered, as are a candidate's financial need and the strength of his or her opponent.

The candidate's political affiliation is never taken into account. Both Republicans and Democrats receive contributions based on the above criteria.

**Do I really make a difference?** Your participation in the nationwide ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program ensures the political voice of electric cooperatives remains strong.

In these unpredictable times, maintaining a strong grassroots presence in the political process is instrumental to the long-term success of electric cooperatives and the communities they serve. The personal dedication of consumer-owners to stand together is the backbone of this powerful grassroots network.

*For information on how to participate in ACRE Cooperative Owners for Political Action, contact Director of Communications and Government Relations Lisa Hooker at 1-800-282-5964 ext. 6104.*

## Winter pet care

Our furry friends need extra care and attention during winter, so pet owners should use a little common sense during this coldest time of the year.

When the temperatures dip, don't keep your pets out for very long. They can suffer frostbite and hypothermia just like humans.

Outdoor dogs, and even cats, need adequate shelter. A warm dry house with a flap lined with straw is ideal. Cloths and rags can get wet and freeze. Make sure the house faces away from prevailing winds. If your garage is large enough, set your pet up in there for the coldest of days and nights.

Plenty of fresh water is a must. Keep water bowls free of ice and snow.

Extra food is needed, too. Your pet needs more calories to produce body heat and have a healthy warm fur coat.

Honk the horn or bang on the hood before starting your car. Outdoor cats often crawl near the engine for warmth and shelter.

Watch for puddles of antifreeze. It tastes good to pets, but is deadly.

Wipe your pet's paws regularly. Rock salt is abrasive to an animal's paws and burns its mouth when they lick their paws.

## Help your co-op thwart copper thieves

Copper theft remains in the headlines, and it's impacting your electric cooperative.

South Central Power asks its consumers, especially those living nearby to cooperative facilities, to keep a watchful eye for any suspicious activity.

For your safety, do not approach anyone. Call law enforcement and South Central Power if something seems amiss at an office, substation or along an electric line.

Some thieves have been so brazen as to remove electric wire from the cooperative's electric poles when the lines are energized.

In addition to the obvious safety hazards for the thieves and co-op employees who unknowingly walk into unsafe situations, the material replacement costs are significant. Ongoing copper thefts and associated vandalism does impact customers' bills, because the increased costs impact the co-op's finances. As a not-for-profit entity, South Central Power passes the increased costs through to consumers.

These incidents continue to occur, despite South Central Power's security enhancements. Several security measures, including surveillance cameras, have been installed at a number of locations.

***The cooperative reports all damage and thefts to the appropriate law enforcement agency. When and if the perpetrators are found, South Central Power will prosecute to the full extent of the law.***

Thank you to the consumers who have contacted us in the past about suspicious activity.

## Set the thermostat at 68 degrees and save

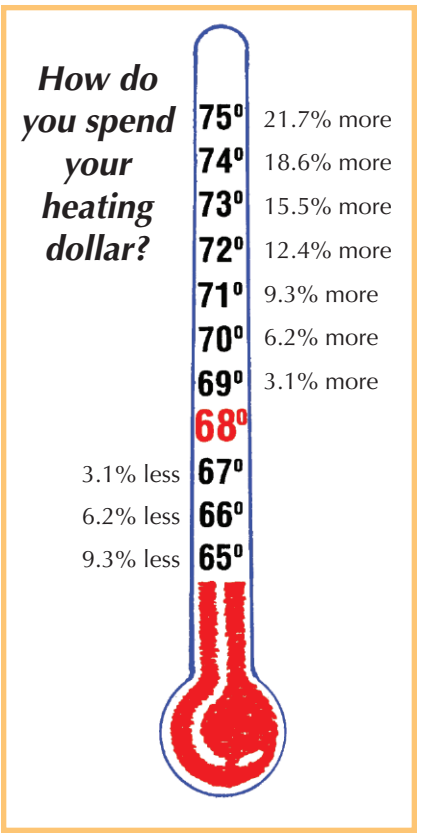
In these times when budgets are tight, paying attention to your thermostat setting can pay off.

Simply setting your thermostat at 68 degrees or lower can save a considerable sum.

For **each** degree the thermostat is set above 68 degrees, the rule of thumb is that heating costs increase by three percent higher.

For example, at 72 degrees, heating costs are 12 percent higher than a 68 degree setting.

By the same token, turning the thermostat down to 67 degrees from 68 degrees can reduce heating costs by about about three percent.

Heating costs in a home where the thermostat is set at 65 degrees will be nine percent less than if it's set at 68 degrees.

The best news? The savings apply no matter what type of heating source the home has.