South Central Power Co.
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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937-393-3421
1-800-207-0020

BARNESVILLE
37801 Barnesville-Bethesda Rd.
Barnesville, OH 43713
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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

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Co-op adjusts delinquency practices May 1

South Central feels impact of recession's effects

The recession is taking a toll on a number of Ohioans, including South Central Power customers. As more people struggle economically, some customers find that they cannot pay their electric bill in a timely manner.

In 2008, the cooperative wrote off nearly $1.2 million in past-due bills. That record amount represented 3,970 accounts with an average uncollected balance of $295. Many bills had considerably higher balances, though.

South Central Power is aware that delinquencies and write-offs impact all of its consumers. Their cost contributes to rate increases for all consumers.

Former practices. In an effort to reduce write-off losses, the cooperative will revise its delinquent bill practices on May 1, 2009.

Currently, when a bill reaches 30-day past-due status, the delinquency status is reflected on the next month's bill. It prompts the customer to call and make alternative payment arrangements.

If the past-due amount still is not paid at the end of 60 days after the original billing, the next bill indicates the account is subject to disconnection 10 days later if payment arrangements are not made and honored.

By the time disconnection actually occurs, it is possible for an account to be up to 70 days past due.

Revised practices. The revised system reduces the time from delinquency to disconnection. Now, when a bill becomes 30 days past due, the next month's bill shows the account is delinquent and subject to disconnection 16 days later. To avoid disconnection, customers are asked to call South Central Power to make payment arrangements. Payment must be received as agreed.

By shortening the time from delinquency to disconnection by 30 days, South Central Power expects to reduce its delinquencies by one-third.

Ohio law says an electric account becomes delinquent 14 days after billing and may not be disconnected until reasonable notice is given. From mid-November until mid-April, disconnections cannot occur until the account is 30 days past due and reasonable notice is given. South Central Power's revised process falls within those general guidelines.

Need help with your electric bill? Call South Central Power as soon as paying your electric bill becomes difficult. The cooperative regularly assists its customers by making alternative payments arrangements.

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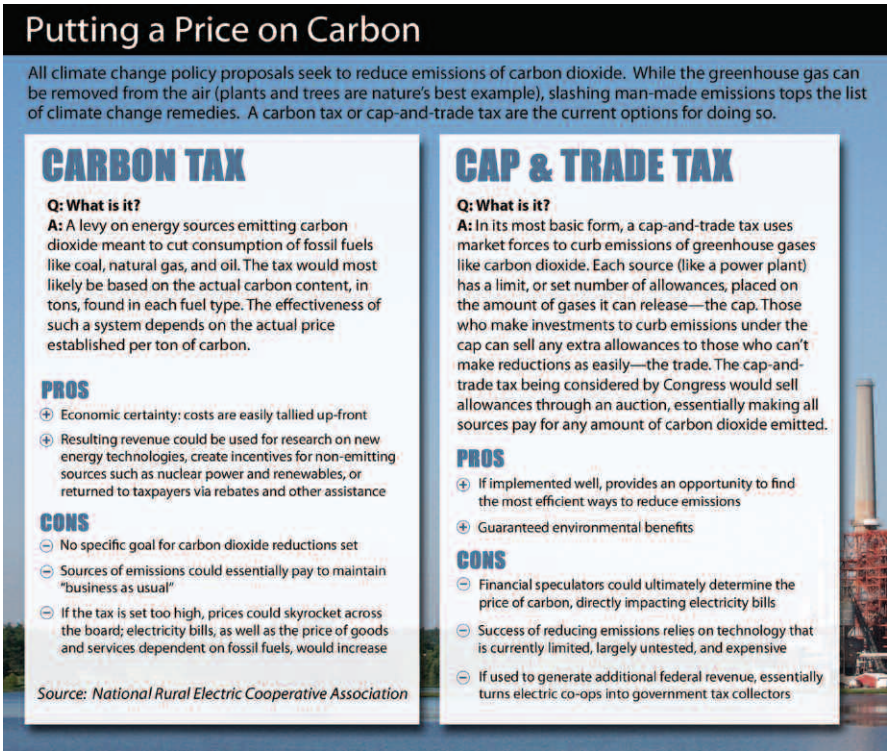
Climate change policy hits your pocketbook

Policy will decide increases in electric bills

Congress and the federal government are focused on prioritizing climate change policy. Given the long list of environmental impacts and expensive solutions, any action taken to address the issue certainly will increase the cost of electricity we use every day.

Climate change proposals seek to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide in particular. In the United States, power plants that burn fossil fuels produce about 2.4 billion tons of carbon dioxide every year. That works out to about 39 percent of the nation's man-made output of the gas — the largest single source.

Electric cooperatives are involved in cutting-edge work to develop new technologies to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants, but those options aren't yet ready for prime time. They're limited, largely untested and expensive. Yet potential legislation would rely on them to make significant carbon dioxide cuts nationwide.



A key committee in the U.S. House of Representatives has released a 648-page draft of a climate change bill, one that imposes a cap-and-trade tax to limit carbon emissions. Cap-and-trade systems work by setting a specific limit on airborne pollutants from sources like power plants, factories and refineries, and require those sources to account for all emissions with issued allowances.

Cap-and-trade has worked well during the last 15 years to reduce emissions of acid rain-causing sulfur dioxide nationwide and over the last decade to curb smog-creating nitrogen oxides in the eastern half of the country. However, some cap-and-trade tax proposals for carbon dioxide contain a new twist: pricey allowances.

Allowances would be auctioned off at undetermined prices, leading to huge cost burdens for any source of carbon dioxide emissions. In the case of power plants, those costs would ultimately be passed on to consumers using the power, in some cases adding $50 or more to electric bills each month. In late February, the Obama administration pointed to such a system as a new, substantial source of revenue for the federal government—effectively muddying the initial environmental argument for regulating carbon dioxide.

Such a backdoor tax increase would force electric cooperatives to essentially become tax collectors for the federal government, and would allow Wall Street investors to set allowance prices and determine how much you pay for electricity.

We need to help Congress draft an energy solution that accomplishes environmental goals while taking affordability into account. But time may be tight. If Congress fails to act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency stands ready to step in, leaving decisions that affect consumers' pocketbooks up to unelected bureaucrats.

Electric cooperatives want to work with Congress to address climate change in an affordable and environmentally responsible fashion. We're ready to provide insight into how various policy proposals will impact consumers, and urge lawmakers to reach informed solutions.

National energy and climate change policy must focus on reducing emissions, not on "revenue enhancement" for the federal government. Money generated, through a cap-and-trade tax or otherwise, must be used wisely: devoted to developing related technology or returned to those who foot the bill. And Congress should take the lead on climate change, not regulators or Wall Street speculators.

In unity with 42 million other electric co-op consumers around the country, urge your U.S. representative and senators to work with electric cooperatives to keep electric bills affordable. Get involved in this effort by participating in the Our Energy, Our Future™ grassroots campaign at www.ourenergy.coop.

Consumers to see new line on electric monthly bill

South Central Power changes electric rate structure to reflect wholesale cost of power

South Central Power is adding a line to its monthly electric bill to directly reflect the wholesale cost of power.

The change is intended to make the monthly electric bills easier for consumers to understand.

Current calculation. The customer charge for residential (Schedule R) and general service (Schedule GS) electric customers increased this year and was reflected on bills beginning on Jan. 1, 2009.

Because of rising wholesale power and transmission costs, the cooperative also increased the embedded cost of power in the base rate energy charges from $.05 per kilowatt hour (kWh) to $.065 per kWh.

That change had no effect on consumers' bills, because it lowered the power cost adder that is passed through in Rider A by the same amount as the increase.

However, many members were confused by that change.

Consumers also were confused that wholesale power costs were included in the base rate energy charge.

South Central Power began handling wholesale power cost changes this way in the early 1980s. The process worked well at the time, because the wholesale cost of power was considerably more stable during the '80s and into the early '90s.

However, the cost of generating and transmitting electricity has been increasing rapidly in more recent years.

Additionally, the wholesale increases are projected to continue over the next eight to 10 years.

Reflecting the change on consumer electric bills. Because of the ongoing estimated wholesale power cost increases and the confusion that the embedded calculation caused customers, South Central Power's Board of Trustees chose to make the cost of generation and transmission of power a separate item on consumers' bills.

Beginning with the bills processed on and after June 1, all costs currently embedded in the base rate energy charges will be broken out and shown as "Generation & Transmission Charge" on all electric bills sent to residential, general service and large power consumers.

The rate structure change does not change the amount of the bill. It simply breaks out the wholesale cost as a separate charge.

For example, using the wholesale cost of power from February 2009 (the latest data available when this article was written) the bill for a residential consumer using 1,000 kWh of electricity looked like this:

Customer Charge	$11.00
Energy Charge @ $.0908	$90.80
Rider A Adjustments	($ 9.57)
Total	$92.23

Using the same wholesale power cost data and the rate structure change, the residential customer's bill will look like this starting June 1:

Customer Charge	$11.00
Energy Charge @ $.0219	$21.90
Generation & Transmission Charge @ $.054675	$54.68
Rider A Adjustments	$ 4.65
Total	$92.23

This rate structure change better demonstrates to South Central Power customers the various components that make up their monthly electric bill.

Please call your local South Central Power office with any questions you may have.

South Central Power will be closed Monday, May 25, in observance of Memorial Day.

News Currents

Orange barrel season

Spring means road construction season is here.

Drive safely in work zones to protect yourself and work crews. Be patient, too.

Double your following distance so you have time to react to warnings or hazards.

When traffic must merge into one lane, move into the correct lane well in advance.

Pay attention to moving construction equipment and be prepared to stop.

When temporary median crossovers are in place, watch for uneven roadways.

Report inadequate or missing signage to the appropriate highway department.

Use mulch effectively

Remember when no one mulched their flower beds?

Through the years, though, homeowners have become enamored with mulch. It's useful and attractive.

Primarily used around trees and in garden beds, it suppresses weed growth and conserves moisture.

Mulch also helps maintain a steady soil temperature. This is useful in the summer when temperatures climb and plants benefit from cooler soil temperature.

Mulch applied too early in the spring delays soil warming, and thus the emergence of perennials. Many garden experts recommend waiting until the soil has warmed, usually in late May or early June, before laying mulch.

CALL OUPS, then dig

Thinking about those spring projects which require digging in your yard? Don't reach for your shovel just yet.

State law requires that the Ohio Utilities Protection Service (OUPS) be notified at least 48 hours in advance of digging, excluding weekends and holidays.

OUPS contacts the utilities in your area, so any underground utility, wires, cables or pipelines can be located and properly marked.

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Call OUPS at least two business days before you dig.

1-800-362-2764

Take steps now to beat the summer heat

An air conditioner will cool your home better and use less electricity if the home is well insulated, well shaded and dry.

Solar energy transmitted through the roof and ceiling is one of the primary causes of summer overheating.

If the attic has less than six inches of insulation, consider having another six to 10 inches installed. In addition, seal any air leaks in the attic before insulating.

Sunshine pouring through windows, particularly on the south side of the home, also contributes to overheating.

Awnings and solar screens provide excellent shade because they stop solar heat before it enters the home. Interior window treatments aren't quite as effective, since they dissipate some of the heat into the home. However, opaque roller shades and reflective Venetian blinds can reflect up to half the sun's heat back through the window.

Dampness around the home's foundation reduces summer comfort and increases air conditioning costs.

Air conditioning is a very expensive way to dry out a damp home. Instead, use plastic sheeting as a ground moisture barrier on the floor of your crawl space. Install gutters and downspouts where needed. Consider a sump pump if the home has an extremely wet basement or crawl space.

Cut shrubs and plants away from the foundation to encourage air circulation, as well.