

# New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives  
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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814-766-3221

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## From the General Manager/CEO



### 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 Rick L. Eichelberger

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?

Gasoline 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.

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 six 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, communication, even transportation.

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.

Early in my career, I had the pleasure of interviewing 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.

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**From the General Manager/CEO**

*(continued from page 14a)*

“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, 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. ☀

**Please make room for roadside crews**

**WHEN THE** power goes out, so do New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative's line crews. Lineworkers are the first to respond after an outage occurs, and they work tirelessly to restore power to the communities we serve.



If you're traveling and see one of our crews on the side of the road, we kindly ask that you move over if possible and give them a little extra space to work. We deeply care about the safety of all, and this extra precaution ensures just that.

If you approach a crew while traveling on a two-lane road, moving over to the next lane might not be an option. In this case, we simply ask that you slow down when approaching roadside crews. If you approach a crew while traveling on a four-lane road, and safety and traffic conditions allow, we ask that you move over into the far lane.

Utility crews aren't the only ones who could use the extra space. Emergency responders, such as police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians, often find themselves responding to emergency situations near busy roadways. We ask that you follow the same procedures mentioned above to help keep these crews safe.

There's plenty of room for all. Let's work together to keep everyone safe on our local roadways. ☀

**Energy Efficiency  
Tip of the Month**



Let the sun work for you! Consider solar lights for outdoor lighting. Solar cells convert sunlight into electricity that can be stored in a battery and tapped at night to make light. Check manufacturers' instructions to make sure your solar lights are situated to receive sufficient sunlight to recharge during the day.

*Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy*

**ATTENTION: Landlords**

When you are renting your properties, don't give the keys to your renter until they have put the electric account into their name. Should the renter not put the account into their name and move in, you, the landlord, are responsible for any unpaid bills the renter may accumulate.

Have your renter call our office a week or so before they are to move in. Once they call, a credit check will be run on all parties living at the location. The credit check determines the amount of security deposit that will be required. The fees are as follows:

- ▶ Excellent credit – no deposit
- ▶ Average credit – \$125 deposit
- ▶ Below-average credit – \$250 deposit
- ▶ No credit history – \$125 deposit

The security deposit will be returned on their billing statement after they have paid 12 consecutive months of payments in full or should they move from our service territory.

In addition to the security deposit, a \$5 membership fee will need to be paid, and membership papers and sales tax exemption certificate completed. All of the paperwork and fees must be taken care of before the account can be placed in the renter's name.

So before giving the keys over, call our office to be sure the account is out of your name.

# High bill concerns

## Why is my bill so high?

High bills are the direct result of high use. Our member services personnel are always happy to assist you with your billing questions, but you may consider gathering the following information prior to calling. It might answer your questions or provide valuable information when you do call.

## Accurate history

- ▶ Review how much power you've used for the last 12 months. We call this the kilowatt-hour (kWh) history.
- ▶ This history is provided for you on every bill and is also available on SmartHub. You can compare your most recent month to that same month one year ago.
- ▶ Weather fluctuations may be a factor in any major differences, but this is a good place to start your search.
- ▶ The kilowatt-hours you use are the main driver of costs on your electric bill.

## True electric bill

- ▶ Check to be sure this is a true high electric bill. Are there other charges beyond electric service? Any additional service fees (i.e., deposits, reconnection/disconnection fees or returned check fees)?
- ▶ Have any past-due amounts from a previous bill been added to the total?

## Compare winter to summer

- ▶ Check the kilowatt-hour total by month. From the history, are the winter months higher, indicating some form of electric heat, higher hot water heater use or space heaters being used in the home?
- ▶ Do the summer months indicate air conditioning? Were tempera-

tures higher or lower than normal during the period?

## Your electric meter doesn't go on vacation

- ▶ If you leave your home for an extended period of time for business or vacation, any appliance you leave plugged in or connected will continue to use electricity even while you are gone, especially your hot water heater, freezer, refrigerator, HVAC system, landscape irrigation, well pump, etc.
- ▶ Most of us note that the TV and lights were not on, but we forget about these other items.

## Lifestyle

- ▶ No two households use energy the same way, so comparing your energy bill to your neighbor's is like comparing apples to oranges. It is best to compare your current use to your past use.
- ▶ Determine if the size of your household has increased or if someone stayed at home more.
- ▶ Have you added a new swimming pool or hot tub in your backyard?
- ▶ Have you had "guests" stay for an extended period?
- ▶ Do you have hobbies that include the use of power tools, ovens and other high electrical resistance tools or appliances?

## Lighting, refrigeration, cooking and appliances

- ▶ Lighting, refrigeration, cooking and appliances account for 56 percent of the total energy use in the normal household. The location of refrigerators and freezers is very important.
- ▶ Never place a refrigerator or freezer in direct sunlight or in unconditioned spaces such as a breezeway, garage or outbuilding. The refrigerator or freezer will have to work harder to overcome excessive heat during warmer months.
- ▶ Make sure your refrigerators and freezers have adequate ventilation.

## Equipment maintenance

- ▶ If an appliance is more than 15 years old, the efficiency of that appliance may be decreasing significantly and requiring more energy to do its job.
- ▶ It is important to clean or replace the condenser, coils or filters on some appliances regularly. You may need to replace the appliance itself. Many times, old electrical wiring will have loose connections resulting in increased electrical use and potential safety hazards.

## Seasons

- ▶ The additional heating or cooling load will cause an increase in electric use. Heating and cooling your home averages around 44 percent of your total energy use. Using space heaters, fireplaces, livestock heaters or vehicle block heaters in the winter can dramatically increase your energy consumption. Running a dehumidifier or watering lawns, gardens and animals in the summer months will increase your energy use.

## Weather

- ▶ Lightning can sometimes damage your well pump, sump pump or appliances, increasing the running of these devices. If underground wiring insulation is damaged, an increase in electrical use may occur when the ground is saturated with moisture.

## Construction or remodeling activities

- ▶ Has there been any underground excavation recently? If you have underground wiring, the electrical wires may have been nicked, resulting in an electric fault. Many times, these faults are high resistant and won't trip your breaker. When this type of fault occurs, the electricity flows directly into the ground, thus increasing your electrical use. ⚡

## Member satisfaction survey

We want to know how we are doing. What can we do better to serve you? Please complete the following survey and return it to our office: 3596 Brumbaugh Road, P.O. Box 75, New Enterprise, PA 16664-0075 by Aug. 15, 2017. Thank you in advance for your help.

1. How satisfied are you with the electric service you receive from New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative (REC)? Please rate 1 – 10. One being POOR and 10 being EXCELLENT \_\_\_\_\_ Comments \_\_\_\_\_
2. When you have an outage, do you feel your power is restored quickly? Yes No
3. If you needed New Enterprise REC to come to your property to do work, do you feel it was done in a timely manner? Yes No If no, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The phone system is easy or difficult to get through? If difficult, what did you find difficult? Easy Difficult If difficult, why? \_\_\_\_\_
5. If you had to leave a message, was it returned within a reasonable time period? Yes No
6. Have you attended any of our co-op's annual meetings? Yes No
7. What do you like about the annual meeting? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What would you change about the annual meeting? \_\_\_\_\_
9. If you have had to call our office to report an outage, how was your experience? Please rate 1 – 10. One being POOR and 10 being EXCELLENT \_\_\_\_\_ Comments \_\_\_\_\_
10. Are payment options convenient, adequate and meet your needs? Yes No If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Do you have internet access? Yes No
12. How long have you been a member of New Enterprise REC? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Do you read *Penn Lines*? Yes No What could we do to make *Penn Lines* better? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Do you know who your director is? Yes No

Any additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Thank you!*