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Cold snap triggers spike in local energy use

The unusually cold start to 2018 has resulted in higher than normal energy use by members of Meade County Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation (Meade County RECC) and other utilities across the region.

Meade County RECC is encouraging members to be aware of their energy use and take steps to help manage electric bills, which are also expected to be higher than usual as a result of increased usage.

Please visit our website at www.mcrecc.com for Smart Savings rebates and incentives.

Weather, especially cold weather, affects residential energy bills more than any other factor. Heating claims about a 42 percent share of overall energy use in U.S. homes.

Put simply, the temperature difference between the inside of your home and the air temperature outside is greater during the winter than in the summer.

The greater the temperature difference, the harder your heating system has to work to maintain a comfortable indoor temperature.

For example, if you want your house to be 70 degrees inside and it's 20 degrees outside, your HVAC system has to make up 50 degrees difference in temperature. Even on a 100-degree summer day, the HVAC system only has to make up about 30 degrees difference versus that 50-degree variance in winter.

Electric cooperatives across Kentucky are reporting double-digit increases in energy use compared to this same period one year ago, which also experienced colder than normal temperatures.

"Meade County RECC is to be commended for its pro-active actions to help members deal with the cold and a spike in energy use," said Chris Perry, president and CEO of the Kentucky Association of Electric Cooperatives. "Co-ops are committed to improving the quality of life in Kentucky. At this time of year, it means both helping members stay warm and helping them manage their energy use."

8 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Winter is a tough time on our wallets with higher heating bills, especially after the long cold snap we experienced in early January. Here are some ways to cut back on energy usage:

1. Find and seal all air leaks. Check for cracks near doors and windows, gaps around pipes and chimneys, and any unfinished areas. Plug leaks with weather-stripping, caulk, or expandable foam.
2. Set your thermostat to 68 degrees, or install a programmable thermostat.
3. Close blinds and curtains at night; if sunny, open them during the day.
4. Cover drafty windows yourself with easy, effective, and inexpensive shrink-to-fit plastic.
5. Turn off lights when not in use. Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.
6. Lower your water heater temperature to 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
7. Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.
8. Keep your garage door closed for a warmer garage in winter, and cooler garage in summer.

To find more ways to save, go to www.TogetherWeSave.com. Call (YOUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE) if you have questions.