



# POWER

## Source

August 2018 Vol. 22 No. 8



## Tracking Your Electrical Usage

**H**ow much do you know about electricity and the factors that influence the amount of power you use?

If you are like most people, you probably don't give it a lot of thought – at least not until your bill arrives.

Tracking down household electrical usage is a little like detective work. Start by making a list of the household appliances you commonly use and their typical operating costs.

Read your meter each day at the same time for three to five days to see how many kilowatt-hours (kWh) you use per day. A kWh is equal to the amount of electricity a 100-Watt light bulb needs to operate continuously for 10 hours.

Make a note of daily household activities – things like whether people were home, and the number of showers taken and loads of laundry or dishes done.

Actual usage will vary depending on family size and

- Five-weekend months
- Longer billing periods
- Defective house wiring
- Bill estimations



### Appliances

- Installation of new appliances
- Exposure of water heater pipes to cold air
- Overheating/cooling the house
- Leaking hot water faucets
- Poor maintenance and/or defective appliances

### Changes in Living Conditions

- Family size and average age (new baby)
- Visitors
- Holiday activities
- Sickness
- Repairs or renovations
- Vacations
- Spring cleaning

### New Home

- Larger or smaller than your former home
- Colder or windier location



habits, as well as the time of year. In this region, most residential accounts use more electricity when it is colder.

Here are some of the factors that may be responsible for variations in your electric bill:

### Conditions Affecting Usage

- Seasons of the year
- Light and weather

See TRACKING on PAGE 4

*Manager's Message...***Lance Adkins, GM**

record does not reflect the efforts, perhaps several years of work, leading up to the date FEC was founded.

FEC secured financial commitments from the fledgling Rural Electrification Administration (REA), created in 1935. With an initial loan of \$100,000 and total loan commitment of \$3.5 million, at an interest rate of 2.88 percent; it was time to build line. Funds from REA were set up in a special construction account established with the Clovis National Bank. Minutes from those early Board meetings reflect Mr. Kimbrough was very busy, working with engineer, Carl C. Cox, on line design and routing, meeting with prospective members and working to secure a wholesale power supply source.

*The electric iron was a real blessing*

Service Company (SPS). SPS would continue to serve as FEC's wholesale supplier through 2010, at which time SPS determined to ramp down their wholesale business. FEC is currently in a wholesale supply transition period whereby SPS resources decline and supply from Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC) are increasing.

In addition, Board minutes from June reflect authorization from REA for FEC to use some of the loan proceeds to relend to members for the purpose of having their homes and farms wired, to purchase appliances, and install indoor plumbing. Loans were made available to finance 80 percent of the cost at 6 percent interest. Over the years I have spoken

## A Bit More History

Last month I provided readers with the first installment of historical information on the origins of Farmers' Electric Cooperative (FEC). In that first organizational meeting, held December 20, 1937 at the Curry County Court House, one hundred fifteen memberships were collected and members elected seven Directors (Trustees). Reconvening in the afternoon, Directors selected officers, interviewed and hired a Project Superintendent, Mr. Oliver Kimbrough, and authorized establishing office space and the hiring of a bookkeeper. Of course, the official re-

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June 1938, meeting minutes reflect Board Officers were authorized to enter into a wholesale power supply contract with the Texas-New Mexico Power Company, an entity that would eventually become part of Southwestern Public

*Family time around the radio*

**Board of Trustees:**  
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**Ernest Riley**  
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**General Manager:**  
**Lance R. Adkins**

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### To Report An Outage

We are on-call 24 hours each day, 365 days each year, to serve **your** electric power needs.

**Clovis**  
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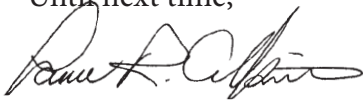
**HISTORY from PAGE 2**


with a number of folks who, as youngsters, recall the day the lights came on for the first time at their home. Popular appliances were refrigerators, washing machines, electric irons, and radios.

On June 14, a “Special Meeting” of the Board was called for the express purpose of considering bids by contractors for the first 100 miles of line, identified by REA as the A-Segment. Minutes reflect that as the meeting convened there were four bids. One additional bid arrived by courier at 3:30, but was not opened due to the bid arriving after the deadline in the original specifications. Bids were tabulated and the construction contract was awarded to the Reinhart & Donovan Company of Oklahoma City, in the amount of \$62,136.38, roughly \$621 per mile. In those early days, copper was the conductor of choice, today, we estimate the cost of single-phase line construction at \$30,000 per mile, using aluminum conductor to save cost and weight.

We know now that FEC would be challenged in an unexpected way in just a few short years, as construction materials became difficult to obtain at the onset of WWII. Copper and aluminum were not available, lines were built using steel conductor, and poles were installed “green” without any preservative. I recall in my early days at FEC replacing the last of the steel conductor with aluminum and a number of the untreated poles.

Until next time,





**K**eep your energy in. Cracks, holes, and shoddy weather stripping on your windows could be letting the money you spend on energy to slip right out the window (or the door). Make sure windows and doors are sealed and that no air is leaking out. You can test for leakage using this simple method: hold an incense stick up to each seal on a windy day; if the smoke moves any direction but straight up, you may have a leak. Use weather stripping or clear silicone caulk to tighten the seal.

## Summer Sizzler!

**Charbroil Patio Bistro  
Electric Infrared Grill**

**Save \$50!**

**\$169**

**\*While supplies last**



**NOTICE:** You may have recently received a notice by mail from a company, doing business as **Green Med-al Energy**, promising energy efficiency improvements for “No Cost” or “Discounted Cost.” This company is “NOT” affiliated in “ANY WAY” with Farmers’ Electric Cooperative. However, we, (FEC), do offer energy efficient rebates to our members. Please call our office for more details: (800) 445-8541.

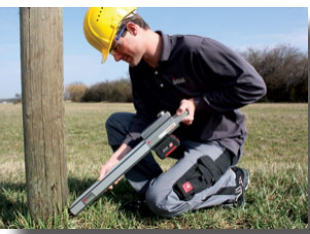
### Pole Inspectors in Area

**C**ontinuing through the end of September and into October, weather permitting, GLS, Ground Line Services out of San Antonio, Texas, will be testing poles for Farmers’ Electric Cooperative (FEC) out of the Weber City Substation. These areas would include, House, Jordan, McAlister, and north of Taiban.

Pole testing is a yearly maintenance program that FEC performs, however, every pole is not tested each year, rather, FEC strives to test each on a ten-year rotation.

This type of maintenance program helps to ensure that FEC can continue to supply the very safest, reliable electricity to our members.

All FEC contractors should be marked as such, “FEC Contractor” on their vehicle. If you have any questions about pole testing or the pole testers, please feel free to contact the office at (800) 445-8541 and ask for Member Services.





**TRACKING** *from* PAGE 1

- Larger water heater and/or heating equipment
- Fewer draperies
- More appliances
- Less efficient equipment

Since major appliances like your furnace, air conditioner, water heater, refrigerator and freezer make up nearly three-quarters of most residential usage, keeping them in good working order will help save you money on your electric bill.

These are just a few of the many variables that may cause variations in your electric bill. When a member calls about a bill concern, these are typically things that our customer service representatives will consider as they ask about your normal pattern of usage. Who knows, maybe there's something on this list that you hadn't thought about? Also, we would encourage you to call us not only when you think your bill may be higher than usual, but also when it seems unusually low. It could be that your bill was estimated low one month for one reason or another. Unfortunately, that would have to be made up the following month making that bill much higher. If we can avoid these situations, it would be a benefit to us both.

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## Give Your Breaker Box a Workout

**D**o you exercise your breakers? Unless your electricity suddenly shouts off, it's likely you rarely give a second thought to the health of the breaker box where your home's electrical breakers "live." But to keep it in good shape, you should open it periodically for a tune up.

Breakers should be "exercised" or switched on and off, about once a year to make sure they have not gotten stuck and to keep them in good working order.

First, turn off the freezer, refrigerator, and air conditioner, as their motors can become damaged if running during the exercise period. Then, flip each breaker off and on three times.

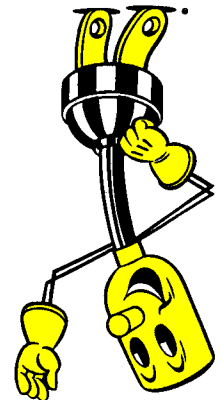
If you have ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) installed in your breaker box, you should open the box up for testing more frequently – about once a month. GFCIs are designed to break a faulty circuit and protect you from shock, but they can do so only if operating properly. Because a GFCI does not have an alert if it has become defective, it's important to test yours regularly.

To test a GFCI circuit breaker, push the "test" button. The breaker handle should go to the middle or off position. This means it's working properly. To reset it, move the breaker handle to the off position and then immediately to the on position. If the test failed, call a licensed electrician to have the GFCI circuit breaker replaced.




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**"Owned By Those We Serve"**



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