

FEC POWER

Source

Vol. 19 No. 01

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Prepare For Higher Utility Bills

With winter in full-force and our area experiencing frigid temperatures that are well below normal, be prepared for higher utility bills. So far this January, single digit lows with only teens for highs have been commonplace. Anytime temperatures regularly stay this low, the amount of fuel used for heating, whether that be natural gas, propane, or electricity will spike bringing higher monthly bills.

While some additional energy expenditures can't be avoided, there are plenty of simple projects you can undertake to prepare your home for cold weather. Remember: The sooner you start, the sooner you'll start to see savings on your monthly energy bill.



- 1. Seal the leaks.** Closed doors and windows can still allow cold air to enter the home. Prepare your home for cold weather by applying weather stripping and/or caulk around leaky doors or windows. Locking your windows will ensure a tight fit (and prevent burglars from gaining entry). You can also place special window insulation film on windows.
- 2. Insulate the attic.** Having adequate insulation in your attic is one of the most important things you can do to prepare your home for the cold weather. Inspect your attic; if you find the insulation is level with or below the ceiling joists, you need to add more.
- 3. Take care of your furnace.** Have your furnace inspected once a year by a licensed professional. Also make sure to change your furnace filters once a month to keep your furnace running efficiently.
- 4. Give vents room to breathe.** Push aside any furniture that may be obstructing heating vents. This will allow your furnace to heat your home more efficiently.
- 5. Let the sun help.** Keep shades and curtains open during the day – particularly on the south side of the home – so sunlight can provide additional heat. Lower shades once the sun sets.
- 6. Embrace lower temperatures.** For each degree you lower your thermostat, you reduce your energy bill by two percent. So put on a sweater and start saving some real money.
- 7. Embrace lower temperatures (part 2).** Lower the temperature on your water heater to 120 F and you'll save 7 to 11 percent on your energy bill. Some water heaters can't go this low, so it's a good idea to consult your owner's manual before changing the temperature.

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Manager's Message...

Challenges Brought By The Lesser Prairie Chicken



Lance Adkins, GM

As we enter the New Year, we continue to gain understanding about the challenges Farmers' Electric now faces with the listing of the Lesser Prairie Chicken (LPC) as a threatened species. Readers may recall from past articles that the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) endorsed a specific conservation plan, often referred to as the Five-State Plan, to provide a framework for protecting the LPC within the bird's historic range. Each of the five states covered by the historic range of the LPC participated in the development of the conservation plan through the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) and is responsible for oversight of

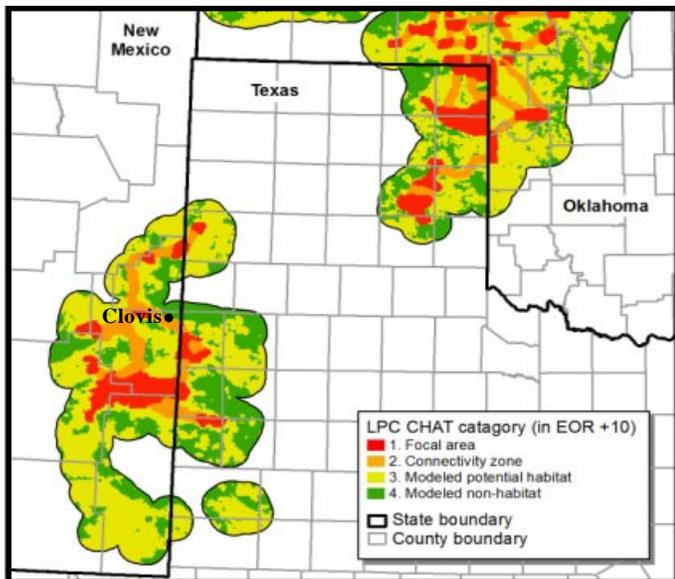
conservation activities in their home state. In New Mexico that task falls to the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF).

Farmers' Electric joined with other utilities and businesses in support of the Five-State Plan because of specific provisions in the Plan that would allow the Cooperative to continue to serve the membership.

One key provision, referred to as the Section 4(d) Special Rule, provides for continued operation and maintenance of existing infrastructure without being subjected to potential litigation for disturbing the LPC. In addition, further infrastructure development would be possible, though we understood that development within the LPC range would likely be very expensive.

Over the past few months we have had several requests for new service within the LPC range area; one request would require a couple miles of new three-phase line. Most of the new line would be located in an existing "impact buffer", an area that already contains some development such as an existing road or railroad. Our understanding was that we could further develop within these existing impact buffers without additional delays and cost. Unfortunately, the USFWS has determined that further development in these areas will require a "survey" to determine if the LPC is living in the area or as close as 1.25 miles from the proposed line route. As an alternative the new lines could be buried underground. We estimate the cost of new three-phase overhead line at roughly \$42k per mile and three-phase underground at \$211k per mile, over five-times the cost of overhead. Another request for service would require setting poles inside the village of Melrose is also prohibited due to the proximity of potential LPC habitat to the village. Other communities affected include Grady,

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POWER SOURCE

is published monthly by Farmers' Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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WINTER CHILL from PAGE 1

8. Invest in a programmable thermostat. Programmable thermostats let you preset the temperatures you want your home at during certain days and times. Most models are manual, but new smart home technology lets you control your home from your smartphone. You can lower your home's temperature while you're at work and even program the thermostat to raise the temperature before you return home. Just remember your pets before you lower the temperature too far.

9. Watch your water usage. A hot shower feels great after braving icy winds. But showers typically account for up to two-thirds of your water heating costs. By cutting your shower time in half, you can reduce your water heating costs by 33 percent.

10. Don't forget your fireplace. When it's in use, your fireplace is a source of heat. When it's not, the chimney is a tunnel for cold air. Closing the damper whenever your fireplace is not in use will prevent cold air from entering your home and warm air from exiting.

PRAIRIE CHICKEN from PAGE 2

Broadview, San Jon and areas around Clovis.

I did mention that one option is for surveying the route to see if LPC is living in the area. While this seems simple enough and is not particularly difficult, the challenge is that the survey must be conducted at a specific time of year. Surveys must be conducted between April 1st and 30th, beginning no earlier than one-half hour before and conclude no later than 2 hours after local sunrise. Wind speed and temperature are recorded at the beginning and end of each survey. Surveys will not be valid if the wind speed continuously exceeds 12mph or if rain or snow is falling. If a project misses the survey "window" the lines must be buried.

For the past several months we and others have been working with WAFWA to draft exemptions that would allow us to extend new service within existing impact buffers, including area communities. While WAFWA and NMDGF understand and support this change, the USFWS has been reluctant to endorse and implement the change. Stay tuned; we'll work to keep folks updated on further development.

Until Next Month, 

Attention

Protection from winter shut-off begins November 15, 2014. To avoid potential disconnection of services please contact the Human Services Department for eligibility information for the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) at 800-283-4465. Your service will not be disconnected from November 15, 2014, through March 15, 2015, if you qualify for LIHEAP and have no past due amount or are making the agreed upon payments.

Atención

La protección del interruptor de invierno empieza el 15 de noviembre de 2014. Para evitar desconexión potencial de servicios contacta por favor al Humano Atiende al Departamento para la información de elegibilidad para los Ingresos Bajos que Calientan Programa de Ayuda de Energía (LIHEAP) en 800-283-4465. Su servicio no será desconectado del 15 de noviembre de 2014, por el 15 de marzo de 2015, si califica para LIHEAP y tiene no cantidad debida pasada ni hace el aceptó pagos.

NAECA Announces New Efficiency Standards For Water Heaters Manufactured Starting in 2015

GAS	Up to 55 Gallon Capacity				Greater than 55 Gallon Capacity		
	Tankless	30	40	50	60	65	75
Rated Storage Vol. (Gallons)							
Current Standard	.62	.61	.59	.58	.56	.55	.53
2015 Standard	.82	.63	.62	.60	.75	.75	.74

ELECTRIC	20-55 Gallon Capacity				Greater than 55 Gallon Capacity		
	20	30	40	50	65	80	120
Rated Storage Vol. (Gallons)							
Current Standard	.94	.93	.92	.90	.88	.86	.81
2015 Standard	.95	.95	.95	.95	1.98	1.97	1.92

Standards apply to U.S. only.

In order to effectively reduce home appliance energy use, conserve more natural resources, and generate significant energy cost savings for homeowners, National Appliance Energy Conservation Act (NAECA) periodically requires higher energy efficiencies—as measured by Energy Factor or EF ratings—on almost all residential gas, electric, oil and tankless gas water heaters.

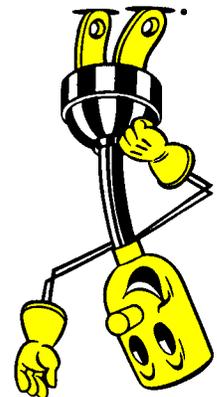
These higher energy efficiencies are based on the Energy Factor, or EF, of the unit, which indicates overall water heating efficiency by measuring how much of the energy delivered to the water heater from your power source is actually used to heat your water. The

higher the EF, the more efficiently the water heater converts your power into hot water while reducing losses—and the more money you save on overall energy costs.

When FEC looks at the dollars spent by residential consumers for energy consumption, in a pie-chart format, we find that nearly two-thirds of the chart is composed of space conditioning and water heating. Replacing an old water heater with new, higher EF model and an old heater/air conditioner with a more energy efficient unit(s) can save a considerable amount on your monthly energy bills.

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