



**Dunn Energy  
Cooperative**

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



# LOOKING BACK ON 2021

By Jesse Singerhouse, General Manager

As 2021 comes to a close, I'd like to recap our year here at the cooperative. Every day the employees and board members of Dunn Energy Cooperative (DEC) have worked hard to have a successful year.

COVID continued to present challenges. As always, our main concern is the health and safety of our employees and our members.

The supply chain issues that affected many businesses nationwide also affected DEC. Meters that we could get within a week are now taking several months to arrive. Some larger transformers and other equipment have 40+ week lead times. Fuel costs and other materials have increased in price. Fortunately, we have been able to manage these supply chain issues and keep our rates steady for our members.

We saw the return of some in-person events in 2021, including our annual meeting, the EV Experience, and the Cooperative Month appreciation breakfast. While they were not our typical, pre-pandemic events, it was good to see our members. We hope 2022 will bring us even closer to being back to normal.

While there have been many challenges in 2021, we have also experienced many successes. It appears that your cooperative will have a strong year financially, due mainly to steady power costs from our power supplier, Dairyland Power, and increased usage by our members during the warm, dry summer. Over \$500,000 in power cost adjustment credits have been returned on your bills in 2021. We also issued close to \$1 million in capital credit dividend checks in October to our membership. Dunn Energy is on pace to end the year in strong financial shape.

Keeping your power reliable is a priority for your cooperative. We completed five major work plan projects on our distribution system this past year. These projects in the Colfax, Downsville, and Rock Falls areas will strengthen the network serving our members, reduce outage time, and improve system efficiency. Our crews and contractor also brushed and cleared many miles of line in the Knapp, Eau

Galle, Downsville, and Tainter areas to help reduce the possibility of outages. Day-to-day, our staff responded to outage calls, installed over a hundred new services, and inspected hundreds of miles of line.

This past year, DEC partnered with Dairyland Power, ZEF Energy, River Country Cooperative, and the CHARGE electric vehicle (EV) network to install a level 3 EV fast charger at the Eau Claire Travel Center at 29 Pines. This charger provides a convenient charging option to EV owners traveling in our service territory along State Highway 29. Since the ribbon cutting in late September,

this charger has been used close to 50 times. Speaking of electric vehicles, DEC also leased a 2021 Chevy Bolt to add an electric vehicle to the fleet. It not only gives us experience driving an EV so we can answer questions for our members, it helps us with our sustainability goals.

The board of directors and management team also spent two days charting the course of the next few years at Dunn Energy during a strategic planning session. Over

the course of the session, we spent time talking about the opportunities that exist for the cooperative and how to successfully meet the challenges of an ever-changing and dynamic energy landscape. Five main themes surfaced including employee development, using data to add value to the service you receive, continuing our culture of safety, maintaining our financial strength, and engaging our members. Currently our staff is working on developing action plans to meet those goals—goals that focus on you, the members of this cooperative. You'll hear more about our plans in the months ahead.

Dunn Energy definitely saw challenges, as well as successes in 2021. We continue to strive to provide you with reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible energy. This past year we focused on those efforts and in 2022 we hope to do even more. On behalf of the employees and the Board of Dunn Energy Cooperative, I sincerely thank you for your business in 2021 and wish you and your family a safe and joyous holiday season.

2021

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# HOME HEATING PRICES EXPECTED TO INCREASE THIS WINTER

According to recent information from the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the cost of heating your home with propane this winter could increase over last winter by up to 54%. They have based this on a colder winter forecast from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

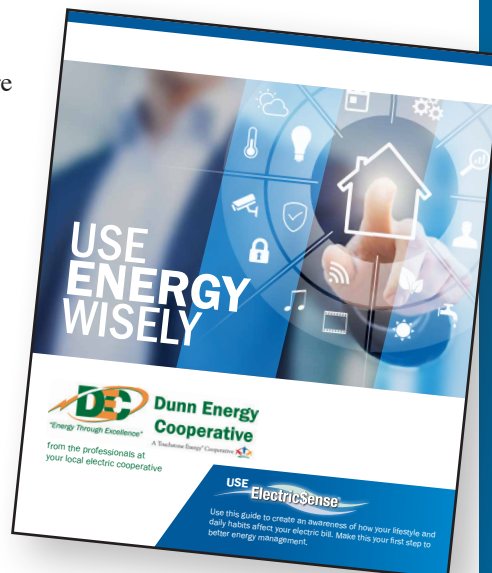
In comparison, electric rates have been stable for the last several years. As a comparison, electric heat at our regular rate is equal to LP at \$2.80 per gallon. If you have hard-wired electric heat on our off-peak rate, it equals LP at \$1.77 per gallon. (6822004)

It may be a little late in the year to switch your home heating source to save money, but there are things you can do to help make your home more efficient. Start by making sure your windows and doors aren't letting all of the heat escape. If possible, pull the trim off around your doors and windows and make sure there is insulation between the door or window jamb and the framing it is connected to. Many times, that gets missed and leaves the area wide open to air infiltration. Also, if your windows aren't locked, you should do that—not only for efficiency purposes, but also for safety.

- You can also seal your windows with temporary plastic over the winter months. This helps immensely with older, single-pane windows.
- If you have a fireplace, make sure the flue is closed tightly when it is not in use.
- Seal around any pipes coming through the walls (i.e., furnace exhaust, water pipes, or any other venting). Air sealing is an inexpensive way to lower energy costs and improve comfort. You can use caulk or spray foam depending on where the opening is located.
- Ensure the weather stripping around doors and windows is tight. Replace door sweeps if necessary.
- Make sure your outside dryer vent door closes when the dryer is not in use. If it does not close, consider replacing it.
- Ensure floor registers are not blocked with rugs, drapes, or furniture.
- Change your furnace filter monthly. And remember, the cheap ones are the best ones if you don't need the HEPA filter for health reasons. The more easily the air moves, the more efficiently your furnace will run. Just make sure you install it correctly—look for the arrow that indicates airflow.

If you're really ambitious, you can add insulation to your attic. Did you know that nearly 90% of homes in the United States are under-insulated, according to the Insulation Institute? An insulation factor of R-49 is recommended for northern climates. Typically, that measures to approximately 16-18 inches of insulation, assuming you get about R-3 per inch. You can find more information regarding insulation at [insulationinstitute.org](http://insulationinstitute.org).

For more energy-saving tips, visit us online at [dunnenergy.com](http://dunnenergy.com) and navigate to the Energy Sense page and click on Use Energy Wisely. If you'd rather have a paper copy of the booklet, just give the office a call. We'd be happy to send you one.



## Reducing Expenses Through Energy Management

When you utilize your cooperative's energy management program, electric resistance heat is competitive with other fuel sources and an affordable way to heat your whole home or areas that are hard to keep warm. Electric heat also provides a clean, safe, and consistent form of heat.

Energy management programs are designed to save you and the cooperative money. There are two ways energy management can make heating your home competitive with other fossil fuels.

- **Dual fuel:** On winter days, due to electric power market conditions, a signal is sent to your heating system to automatically switch to a backup non-electric heat source.
- **Heat storage:** If your electric heating system is able to store heat (e.g., in-floor heat submersed in a bed of sand or an electric heat system that utilizes ETS technology), your system "charges" during off-peak hours when electrical demand is low and then stores the heat energy so it is available when the thermostat calls for heat.

Many people believe heating your home with electricity is expensive. However, when you use the latest technology available in ground or air source heat pumps, and combine that with our energy management program, not only do you get a reduced rate on your electricity, you avoid the volatility of ever-changing fuel prices.

# OUCH!

## That Hurts.

### Troubleshooting a High Electric Bill

**D**o you think your energy bill seems higher than normal? As you may have read on the opposite page, the U.S. Energy Information Administration is expecting higher than normal costs for the heating season due to colder than normal weather predicted by the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration.

If your bill seems a little higher than normal, here are some things to consider:

- Do you have a space heater running? Did you know that the average 1,500-watt space heater running only five hours per day costs approximately \$25 to run over the course of a month?
- Do you have heating tape on pipes? (Average cost of \$3.85/month when on 24 hours per day)
- Are you plugging a vehicle in? (2,500-watt heater for a diesel engine at 2.5 hours per use averages \$64/month)
- Do you have a humidifier running?
- Do you have a tank heater for animals?
- Do you have a heat lamp for chickens?

All of these things add up. All of these things are outside of your normal usage. So, if your bill is higher than normal, start with a little home audit to see what you've turned on since the weather got colder.

**Pro tip:** if you're having a hard time remembering what you plugged in, pop on to your SmartHub account. You should be able to see when your usage started to go up. Maybe the date will help you remember what was plugged in at that time.

Then it's time to do some math. (3542001)

#### Here's how you figure out what any electrical appliance costs to run:

1. Find out how many watts per day the item uses (take the wattage listed on the item and multiply it by how many hours a day you have it running)
2. Convert that number to kilowatts (take the number of watts from #1 and divide it by 1,000)
3. Find the monthly usage (take your kilowatts and multiply it by how many days are in the month)
4. Figure out the cost (take your usage from #3 and multiply it by your electric rate)

So that space heater we were talking about would be figured out like this:

$$1,500 \text{ watts} \times 5 \text{ hours per day} = 7,500 \text{ watts}$$

$$7,500 \div 1000 = 7.5 \text{ kilowatts}$$

$$7.5 \text{ kilowatts} \times 31 \text{ days in December} = 232.5 \text{ kilowatt hours}$$

$$232.5 \text{ kWh} \times 10.64 \text{ cents/kWh} = \$24.74$$

You can use that formula for any electrical appliance as long as you know the wattage. For more energy-saving tips, visit us online at [dunnenergy.com](http://dunnenergy.com) and navigate to the Energy Sense page and click on Use Energy Wisely. If you'd rather have a paper copy of the booklet, just give the office a call. We'd be happy to send you one.





The holiday season is the time when we cherish old traditions and enjoy creating new ones. All of us here at Dunn Energy want to wish you a merry and bright holiday season, and we look forward to serving you and our community in 2022!

Jesse Singerhouse  
Mike Andraschko  
Tyrel Blanchfield  
Pete Brantner  
Brian Jiskra  
Josh Millar  
Loren Luzinski  
Pat Rhude  
Chris Marlett

John Hestekin  
Dave Hoffman  
Lee Longmire  
Dan Heit  
Mike Frinack  
Landan Romsos  
Logan Scheel  
David Livingston  
Jordan Hessler

Colin Riley  
Connor Leonard  
Tricia Bauer  
Diane Harschlip  
Heather Boesl  
Becky Weber  
Jolene Fisher  
Becky Gehring  
Laken Fahl  
Dee Fox

*Have a safe and happy holiday season!*

## Hidden Account Numbers

If you find your account number hidden in the pages of this magazine and you call and tell us before the next issue is mailed, we'll put a **\$50 credit** on your electric bill. Happy hunting!

Last month's winners were Tim and Krista Bailey and Valerie Dormanen.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING OUTAGE NOTIFICATIONS

Dunn Energy Cooperative strives to provide reliable service. However, there are times when we need to take outages to repair equipment or install new services. Dunn Energy maintains a list of members requiring electrical power for life-sustaining medical equipment and farm and business-related necessity for planned outage notification purposes. To inform us of your critical need, please contact our office at 715-232-6240. Members who meet these criteria must provide us with current contact information.

Because of a wide variety of circumstances in which power outages occur, Dunn Energy Cooperative cannot guarantee restoration time. If you or your farm or business have critically important equipment that requires electrical power for operations, you should have a back-up power source available to you.

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