



# PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER

By Jesse Singerhouse, General Manager

For many of you, your relationship with Dunn Energy Cooperative is purely transactional. Meaning, you use power from us for a month, we send you a bill, you pay the bill, and the transaction is complete. But October is Cooperative Month and it's a good time to remind all of our members that we are part of something bigger than a monthly electric bill.

Rural members pooled their resources and got the backing for the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) in 1937 to bring power to their friends and neighbors, to transform rural America, when no one else wanted to serve them. They worked together to find a solution to a challenge and formed a cooperative, which benefits every member-owner to this day. The risk of starting an electric cooperative from scratch was high, but it was a risk worth taking because rural homes, farms, and businesses needed electricity. Electric cooperatives have a long and rich history, and I'm thankful to be part of an organization where members matter.

Because you, the member-owner, matter, we asked for your feedback. Thank you to the over 500 members who took the time to complete our recent member survey. I appreciate the many positive comments we received on a variety of things we do. I also spent time reading the concerns members expressed and those comments are just as important. As we move into our strategic planning

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process, we will build off our strengths and look for opportunities to serve all our members even better. All to continue to be a cooperative that safely delivers to members reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible energy. More information on the survey can be found on the following pages.

Another way the cooperative business model is different is our capital credits program. Nearly \$1 million was returned, via checks or bill credits, to member-owners of Dunn Energy Cooperative this month. This is a true benefit of being a cooperative member. Over time we return profits to the members who purchased the energy. In general about 4% of your capital credits are returned each year. Operating like a cooperative and keeping our cooperative financially healthy is important to the long-term success of your cooperative.

In celebration of being a cooperative, we are hosting our member appreciation event this month as well. Please join us for our Cooperative Month lunch event on Saturday, October 26, from 11 a.m.–1 p.m. here at our office.

Thank you for being a member, and always remember that you are part of something way bigger than the monthly electric bill.



## 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 Jeff & Jodi Schutt and Jeremy Abbott

# YOU ASK. WE ANSWER.

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## HIGH BILL CONCERNS

In August we emailed a member survey out to over 5,400 people and received over 600 comments. We've had some time to comb through the comments and will be answering some of the more common questions and concerns here in the magazine. Let's kick off the series with High Bill Concerns.

**Question:** My bill seems really high. Is there a way for me to troubleshoot my high bill before I call you?

**Answer:** You bet there is! Get your Sherlock hat out. We're about to create a "Choose Your Own Adventure" story.

What you'll need:

1. **Pencil and Paper.**
2. **SmartHub.** We highly suggest logging in to or signing up for your SmartHub account before you begin. This way you can see what your daily usage looks like. You'll need to look at your history to get a good idea of what average is for you. You can also

see when your usage started to climb. (You may want to ask yourself if it coincides with the weather, visitors, or new electrical appliances or anything else with a plug. If so, you probably just figured out the answer to your question.) But sometimes it's a little harder than that. This is where the breaker test comes in.

3. **A partner** to help you. (11421003)
4. Maybe some **walkie talkies** to communicate while you're doing the test. Okay, maybe just your **cell phones** if you aren't within hollering distance of each other.

First, log in to your account and see if you spot any anomalies. This one pictured below is a good example:

Before you start step one of the breaker test, shut off all of your sensitive electronics. Because their usage is so low, it won't matter that they're off for this test.

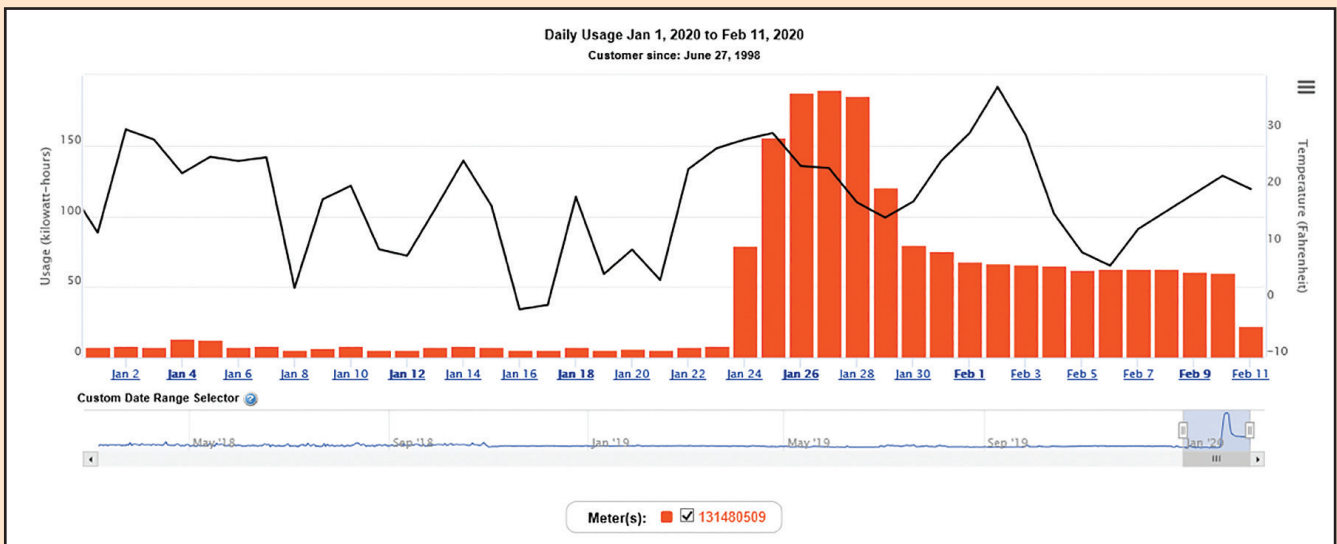
Now, let's get started. One of you will need to station yourself by the breaker box and flip breakers and the other of you will watch your meter and record numbers.

The new meters flash through a series of four screens with different information. The one you'll want to focus on is IKW. It will tell you the Instant Kilowatts you are using.

Flip off all of the high-use breakers:

- Hard-wired electric heat (i.e. baseboards, Steffes storage units, electric boilers, etc.)
- Central air conditioning
- Electric water heater
- Well pump and septic pump

With those shut off, you should have your baseload. For the average home on our lines, that's going to be approximately 1,000 kilowatts. Homes are like fingerprints though. Yours may be higher or lower than this. Also keep in mind, this number does not include your



You can tell that something obvious happened on January 24 for this member. Did someone spend some time at the cabin without telling them? Did a pipe burst? Has their well pump spring a leak? We don't know, but this was the first step in the investigation.



shop, garage, shed, extra living quarters, greenhouse, or the camper plugged in out back. This is strictly an average home. If it is WAY over this number, you probably have something plugged in that you've forgotten about. This is your first adventure. You'll have to do some investigating from here on out to find it.

Is there heating tape still plugged in and on pipes? A humidifier or dehumidifier running somewhere? Heat tape for eaves and gutters still on? A tractor plugged in out in the barn? Stock tank heaters on? A heat lamp for the chickens on? A space heater in someone's bedroom on? These are all things that we've found over the years

that can have a significant impact on someone's electric bill.

If you think your number looks relatively average for you, based on your SmartHub history, you can now start turning breakers back on. Record what is being turned back on and the IKW as it increases with each breaker.

Now, it's time to wait. Has each item that you've turned back on run its regular cycle and shut back off? If not, you've narrowed down your culprit. Is the well pump still running? Has the heat or AC cycled off? (9277014)

If they have, it's time for our next adventure. Look at the numbers you've written down and see if they're drawing

what they're supposed to draw. You may have to do a little Googling to find that out. The average usage for some items can be found in the Use Energy Wisely booklet on our website. You can find it by clicking on the Energy Incentives tab at dunnenergy.com

Figuring out a high bill isn't always easy, but it's oh-so-satisfying when your amateur sleuthing pays off. If you've done everything you can think of and can't come up with an answer, give us a call. We're here to help. Obviously, we won't know what's in your house that needs to be turned off, but we sure can help you by telling you about the most common culprits of a truly high bill.

## DUNN ENERGY EARNS 2024 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AWARD

We are honored to announce that Dunn Energy Cooperative has earned a 2024 Customer Satisfaction Award from the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) for Co-op Energy Utilities! This award is available for qualifying Touchstone Energy® member cooperatives and recognizes that Dunn Energy Cooperative has received an ACSI score within the top 25 percentile of scores when compared to cooperatives publicly measured in the ACSI Annual Energy Utility Study for 2024.

Members were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with us, how well we lived up to their expectations, and how well we measured up to their ideal co-op experience. While these were not the only questions in the survey, we included these specifically because they are the core components of the proprietary ACSI methodology.

Dunn Energy's ACSI score of 84 substantially outperforms the industry average score earned by publicly measured utilities reported in the 2024 ACSI Energy Utility Study. This Award is a testament to our ongoing efforts to provide the best possible member experience.

The 2024 Customer Satisfaction Award affirms that Dunn Energy's hard work has been noticed by its members. We are grateful for our members and will continue to strive for excellence through constant dedication to improvement.

*Thank you!*

We'd like to take a minute to thank our members who took the time to complete the survey. Although we earned an impressive score, we know there's more work to do. We're going to take some space in our pages, right here in the magazine, to answer questions and concerns that were voiced in the survey comments.

The first topic we'll tackle is high bills. See page 17 for our first, You Ask, We Answer column. If, throughout this series, you think of questions you'd like addressed feel free to send a quick email with your question to [info@dunnenergy.com](mailto:info@dunnenergy.com) or call the office.





October is Cooperative Month!

**CO-OPS  
BUILD  
ECONOMIC  
POWER**





DUNN COUNTY  
*Cooperative*  
**COOKOUT**



Lunch includes: **HOT DOGS, BEANS, CHIPS, DEEP FRIED CHEESE CURDS, COOKIES, AND BEVERAGES**

**Saturday, October 26, 2024**  
**11 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

**Dunn Energy Cooperative**  
N5725 600th Street, Menomonie

-  Cooperative Displays
-  Raffle Prize Drawing
-  Kids Trick-or-Treating
-  Come in Costume!

Please consider supporting Stepping Stones of Dunn County Food Pantry with a non-perishable food donation

Together, we **CAN** make a difference!



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