



**Dunn Energy  
Cooperative**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## LATE SUMMER UPDATE



By James Hathaway,  
General Manager

Summer is winding down. As I write this it is late July and so far this summer has been hotter and drier than recent summers. Electric bills tend to get bigger in the summer. The heat means air conditioners run more often. Humidity means dehumidifiers run more often. And a dry summer means

watering the garden and perhaps the lawn. All this leads to more electric use.

Most electric utilities, including Dunn Energy, charge more for electricity in the summer. The reason for this is demand for electricity is higher in the summer. As the heat increases during a typical summer day, so does demand for electricity. As demand goes up, utilities have to start up more and more generating plants. The most efficient and inexpensive plants run most of the time. But when demand goes up, utilities have to start up their less efficient and more expensive plants to meet the added electric demand. So it costs more to generate the needed electricity. And the costs are passed on through higher electric rates. More electric use and higher rates mean higher summer electric bills. The long-range forecast for August is calling for more heat and humidity, so electric bills for August that are due in September are likely going to be higher than average.

### Member Services

Your energy cooperative is a service organization and, as such, our mission is to provide service conveniently, reliably, and at a reasonable rate. This year we have been challenged in the office with the conversion to a new software provider. As I have said before, these days just about everything runs on computers. This has helped us meet the service needs of an ever-growing membership with the same number of office staff as we had 20 years ago. The new software required members paying online to re-register their information. It took a bit for the staff to learn the new software and we appreciate our members' patience as we worked through the process. The new software allows us to process billing information using far less paper, which saves money and is good for the environment. (1644002)

The new software gives members more information about their electric account and electric usage too. If you go on our website at [www.dunnenergy.com](http://www.dunnenergy.com) and click on the SmartHub link, you can log into your account and do a variety of things. You can see your past bills. You can see your electric usage by day or by month. You can compare last month's usage to

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the same month last year. You can also sign up for autopay if you wish. Having your electric bill taken care of automatically is just another way Dunn Energy Cooperative is working to make your life more carefree and enjoyable.

### Operations

Once again, several line reconstruction projects were planned for the year. Every five years or so we have our engineers develop a work plan to determine which power lines need replacing or upgrading. And every year we pick two or three projects to get completed. This year we had two large projects to do in New Haven Township in northwestern Dunn County. Work began in May on about four miles of line going north out of our Connorsville substation. The line will be totally rebuilt with larger wire to handle future load growth. Our second major project was started in August. We are rebuilding the east circuit out of our Connorsville substation. This three-phase line will be upgraded with larger wire too. This line runs through some hilly and wooded rights-of-way. So we will be putting the new line in underground to reduce the likelihood of future outages. Other smaller projects are being performed throughout the cooperative's service territory with the goal to improve power quality and help meet our members' growing demand for electric energy.

It costs us \$70,000 to \$90,000 to build a mile of three-phase line and \$30,000 to \$35,000 to build a mile of single-phase line. We continue to work on maintaining the co-op's equity level at about 50 percent. That means the co-op borrows half the cost of construction projects, with the other half raised through members' rates. Most of the original Dunn Energy electric grid was built in the 1930s and 1940s. Some of the lines are still in service, but much of the original system has been replaced and upgraded. As the electric grid ages, it needs to be replaced. Poles rot, lines break from storm damage, and old line has to be replaced with larger wire to meet growing demand. The co-op borrows a portion of the cost of rebuilding or replacing line to better spread the cost of construction over the life of the facilities.

### Maintenance

Earlier this year almost 4,000 poles were tested as part of our annual testing program. The cooperative has over 20,000 utility poles holding up line in our service territory, and each year we test several thousand poles to make sure they are in safe and serviceable condition. The poles tested this year were in Otter Creek, Colfax, Grant, and Howard Townships in Eastern Dunn County and Western Chippewa County.

Again this year the cooperative is continuing our right-of-way clearing effort, with contract crews working to clear trees and brush from our rights-of-way. Lines were cleared early this year in Tainter Township. This summer the contract

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# OPERATION ROUND UP STEPS UP

Donation helps girls' STEM camp  
with cost of new equipment



Dunn Energy Cooperative was excited to help the UW-Stout STEPS program purchase new equipment for their campers this year! The STEPS (Science, Technology & Engineering Preview) camp is a five-day summer camp for girls between their 6th and 7th grade year in school. STEPS for Girls aims to build confidence in young women by structuring their participation in STEM-related activities. The hands-on activities and the high-energy environment are designed to inspire both confidence and enthusiasm.

The girls participate in activities focused on production of autonomous, obstacle-avoiding robots. Each camper builds her own robot and takes it home with her. Subcomponents for the robot are fabricated in several of the technical activities and are brought together for final assembly in a simulated manufacturing cell.

Your cooperative adheres to a set of guiding principles. One of those principles is Concern for Community. Through our Operation Round Up program, local, not-for-profit organizations can apply for grants. We believe that children hold our future in their hands, and supporting educational opportunities for students fully falls under our guiding principles. (12115002)



Girls entering seventh grade participate in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) activities at UW-Stout's STEPS program.

# SMARTHUB® TIPS FOR SUMMER

## Get the 411 on Your Electric Usage

Are you taking advantage of the energy management tools available in SmartHub? They are one of the many services Dunn Energy offers to help members conserve energy for lower energy bills.

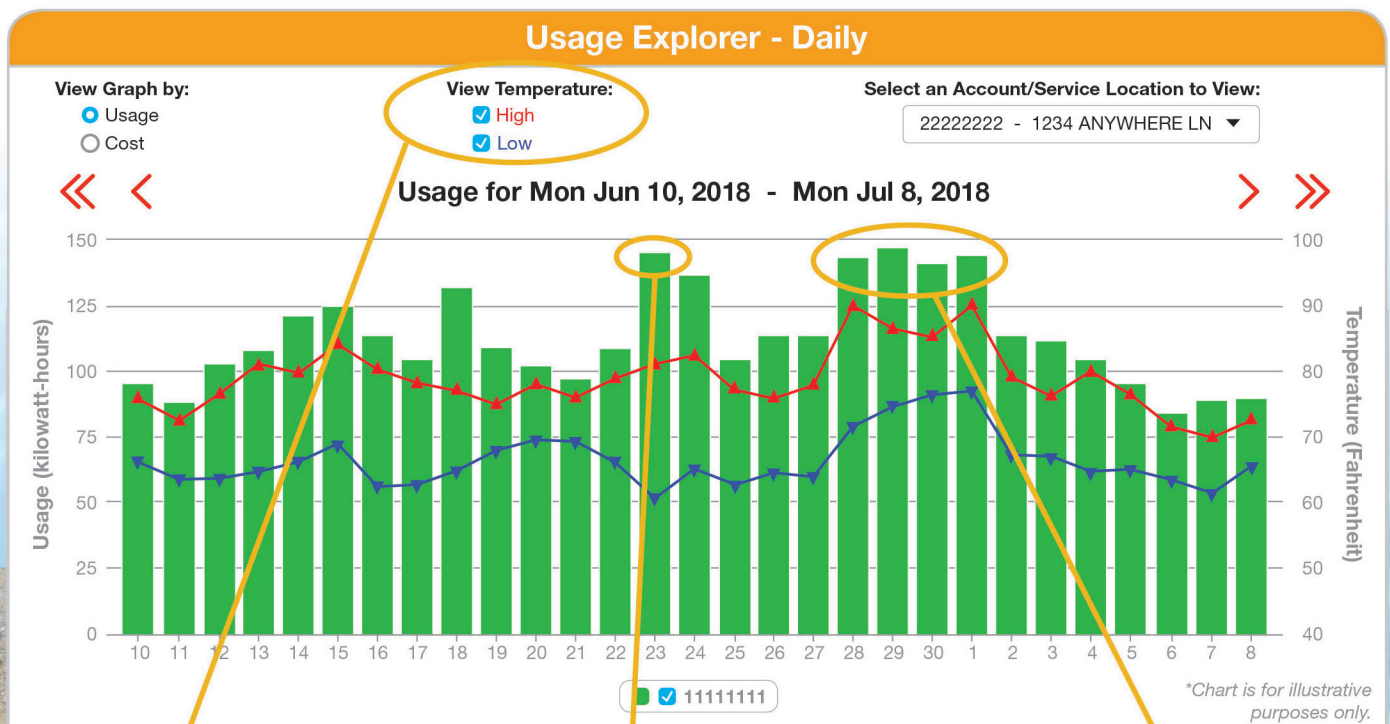
In addition to using SmartHub to pay bills, you can also use it to access Usage Explorer, which allows you to monitor your home's energy usages within two days of using it. This way, you can see how much energy you're

using and find ways to use less. You can also get an idea of how much your next bill will be.

After logging into your account, you'll find the Usage Explorer under the My Usage tab. If you turn on the View Temperature option, you'll see what the weather was like, by your zip code, for any billing period. It's one of the best ways to see the effect the summer weather has on your electric usage. This is especially helpful considering

nearly 50% of the typical home's energy bill is due to heating and cooling costs.

It's easy to sign up for SmartHub. Just go to [www.dunnenergy.com](http://www.dunnenergy.com) and click on the link. All you need is your electric account number, your last name, zip code, and an email address. Or, you can download the DEC version of the SmartHub app to your smartphone or tablet from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store.



Tip: Analyze your usage by selecting the View Temperature feature. It shows the daily highs (red) and lows (blue) along with your daily energy usage. This allows you to see the correlation between high temps and higher usage.

It's only natural for usage to go up when it's really hot outside. The greater the difference between the outside temperature and your thermostat setting, the longer and harder your AC system will work to make up the difference—and the more it will cost. For example, when it's 102 degrees outside and your thermostat is set to 78 degrees, that's a 24 degree difference. If you lower the setting to 72 degrees, the difference is increased by another 6 degrees.

Tip: For every degree you raise your thermostat in the summer or lower it in the winter, you can save about 4 to 6 percent on your cooling and heating costs.

The number of hours that temperatures are high outside, and the number of consecutive days they stay high, affect energy consumption—it will take your AC longer to cool down your home after baking in the sun all day. When evenings remain warm, it takes even longer. Plus, your family may be using more electricity as they spend more time inside watching TV and playing video games...and maybe cranking down the AC.



2017-18

Together we can make a difference for the next generation, like Kinsey here. We started our Energy Sense rebate and incentive program 10 years ago to empower our members to make common sense choices about energy.

One of those common sense choices is Energy Star rated appliances. When you replace an older appliance, long-term savings with Energy Star is the way to go! And you'll get a \$25 rebate to boot.

Visit our website at [www.dunnenergy.com](http://www.dunnenergy.com) or call us at 715-232-6240 to learn more about our rebates and incentives.



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crews have been working in New Haven and Sheridan Township and they will be working their way east from there. Our efforts at clearing rights-of-way are ongoing and never-ending because trees do not stop growing.

The herbicides we apply to cleared rights-of-way hold down, but do not completely eliminate, re-growth. Also, trees on the edges of rights-of-way tend to grow out into cleared rights-of-way as they seek the sunlight they need to grow. This means that the current cycle of tree clearing involves more side-trimming or cutting of upper branches, rather than cutting down entire trees. Done properly, side trimming can encourage tree growth away from utility lines rather than into lines. An effective tree-clearing program will reduce tree-related outages and blinking lights.

For over 80 years Dunn Energy has been providing electric power to rural Dunn County and portions of the surrounding counties. I am pleased to report that the cooperative is financially healthy. Electric rates have gone up less than 4 percent over the past six years. Equity remains healthy at almost 50 percent. Outage hours are down and service reliability is up. All of this means your cooperative is healthy and keeping your needs at the top of our list of priorities.

## \$\$ FOR HIDDEN ACCOUNT NUMBERS

If your account number is one of the two hidden account numbers in this issue, it will mean \$10 credit on your account if you call the office before the end of the month. Two customer account numbers have been randomly selected and are hidden in the Dunn Energy Cooperative section of this *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News*. Last month's winners were Huntsinger Farms and Nancy Hoover.

### James Hathaway, Manager

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### Jolene Neisius, Editor



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