



Sac Osage Electric Cooperative

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News

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Board of Directors 2022 Budget Keeps Rates Stable

Each new year brings new and recurring challenges to build and maintain a reliable electric system. Poles have to be replaced on an ongoing basis. Outdated equipment and service vehicles must be renewed, retired, or replaced. Communications systems have to be updated. The entire system has to be maintained, so the member on the last mile of line can expect to come home to a comfortable house. The board of directors is entrusted with the responsibility to approve a budget that balances these responsibilities with the rates that members pay.

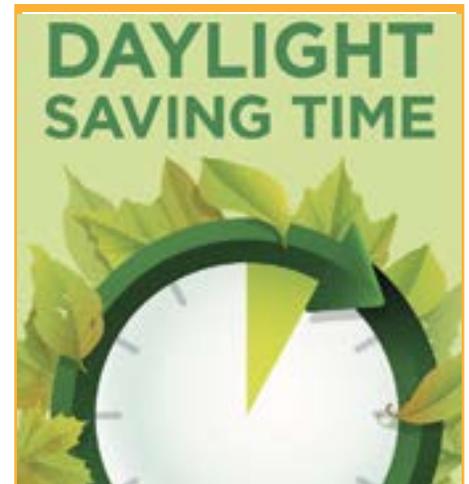
In February of 2021 Sac Osage Electric along with other cooperatives in the state set record demands because of the extreme cold in our area. Thankfully, through the strength of the three-tiered cooperative system, it didn't result in a rate increase to the

members. 2021 inflation rates have impacted members' lives, and the cooperative itself was impacted. The costs of building line and new services have increased and the cooperative has adjusted its building prices to reflect that increase. However, the budget approved by the Board of Directors keeps the electric rates the same with no increase.

In 2021 Sac Osage began work on an aggressive fiber build out. Through a partnership with Conexon Connect this project will mean that every Sac Osage member will have access to high-speed Internet speeds up to 2,000 Mbs. The Cooperative projects that in 2022 this project will have a net positive impact on the budget.

A budget is an estimate of income and expenses for a set period of time. The last few years have proven that

the unprecedented can happen. Circumstances could change and the Cooperative would have to make adjustments. The Board of Directors is very glad to be able to go into the year building a strong reliable electric infrastructure and providing the new opportunities coming with fiber-to-the-home Internet, while keeping electric rates stable.



Daylight saving time is March 13th. Remember to set your clocks forward. And don't forget to adjust any timers you are using to lower your peak demand



Contractors clear line to maintain reliability.



Sac Osage crews upgrading the electric system.



Weather, whether freezing or hot can have a big impact on revenue and expenses.



Fiber huts like this one are a new edition to Sac Osage.

Be Prepared For Spring Storms

Spring can bring quite the array of weather-related dangers to the United States. Various parts of the country are at risk for tornadoes, floods, thunderstorms and lightning, hail, and wildfires during March, April, and May. Help your family stay safe this spring by knowing what types of hazardous weather affects your area, learning key safety steps, and making preparations.

“What you learn now can be a lifesaver later,” says Erin Hollinshead, executive director of the Energy Education Council and its Safe Electricity program. “Preparation is a key step in keeping your family safe when severe weather strikes.”

To help with any emergency, create a family communication plan with an easy-to-access list of emergency contact information, evacuation routes, and with a few safe places to meet in case you get separated.

Put together supplies for an emergency kit. Your emergency preparedness kit should include items such as enough water and food for three days, flashlight, batteries, blankets, and a first aid kit. A full list of suggested items can be found at SafeElectricity.org.

Severe storms can cause extended power outages. Be prepared with food, water, and other essential supplies.



This kit will also be of help if the power goes out. When the power goes out, Safe Electricity suggests you:

- If you have access to SmartHub, see if the Cooperative knows you are out of power; if not, then contact your electric utility immediately to report the outage.
- Use safe alternative food preparations. If using a grill, always do so outside.
- Turn off electrical appliances and unplug major electronics, including computers and televisions. This will help protect your electronics and help the utility by reducing the electric load that must be picked back up when power is first restored. Leave one light on to indicate that power has been restored.



Also, check the forecast and hazardous weather outlook regularly. Watches and warnings are issued by county and reference major cities. A watch indicates there is the possibility of storms in your area. A warning means a storm has been reported or is imminent and you should take cover. If you are called to evacuate your home in the face of severe weather, do so immediately to ensure your safety.

Plan ahead so you do not get caught outside in a storm. Lightning can strike up to 10 miles from the area in which it is raining, even if you do not see clouds. If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance.

If you are inside when a storm hits, stay inside. Keep away from windows



and go to the lowest level of your home. If you do get caught outdoors during a storm and are unable to get into a safe building, take shelter in an enclosed vehicle with a hard-top roof—not an open-frame vehicle like a convertible.

If you are outside during a tornado and you cannot find shelter, do not take cover in a vehicle or under a highway overpass. Find a ditch or ravine, lie flat, and clasp your hands behind your head to protect yourself from flying debris.

Just because a severe storm ended, flood receded, or wildfire extinguished does not mean the danger has passed. A variety of hazards can be left behind.

“Never touch downed power lines or objects in contact with those lines. Just because power lines are damaged does not mean that they are dead,” warns Hollinshead.

Touching a downed line or anything it has fallen on, like a fence or a tree limb, could get you injured or even killed. Stay away, and instruct others to do the same. If you come across downed power lines, call 911 to notify emergency personnel and the utility immediately. During flooding, if there is any chance that flood waters could be energized from contact with electrical equipment inside or outside the home, do not enter the area.

For more safety tips, please visit SafeElectricity.org.

Get up to Speed!

Discover the power of fiber internet today.

With fiber internet you'll be able to:

- Stream high-definition media smoothly and quickly
- Download and upload data such as files, photos and videos at super-fast speeds
- Access to the latest technological advancements and applications
- Run multiple devices simultaneously without decreased download and upload speeds

and more!

Check Availability and Learn more at ConexonConnect.com/SacOsage





Know How to Save Money With Electric Water Heaters

What is one of the hardest working, yet hidden, members of your household appliance team? Stoves and refrigerators receive your appreciation many times per day; but when was the last time you thought about the daily dedication of your water heater? The “Rodney Dangerfield” of appliances stands in a corner or is hidden in a closet and just doesn’t get any attention.

Reduce the workload of your water heater and increase your energy efficiency by turning down its thermostat. For each 10°F reduction in water temperature, you can save 3-5% on your energy bill. Your water heater may have been installed and set at 140°F, but most households usually only require them to be set at 120°F. Water above that temperature can result in scalding.



Another benefit of the 120° temperature is a reduction in mineral build up inside the tank and pipes. Corrosion and mineral build up shortens the life of the water heater and reduces tank capacity.

“While your water heater may seem

warm and cozy, both you and it may benefit from an insulating jacket,” adds Molly Hall, EEC Executive Director. “Water heaters will have some insulation between the tank and the cover, but it may be insufficient to keep the water heater operating at peak efficiency. If your water heater is warm to the touch, it would benefit from an insulating blanket. Raising the R-value to R-24 or more, will help it retain heat and save money.”

The R-value is the thermal resistance of the insulating material. If a water heater already has an R-value R-16 or less, most industry professionals recommend an additional R-10 insulation blanket.

Water heaters with insufficient insulation may lose 25% -45% of their standby heat and adding adequate insulation could save 4-9% on your water heating cost. If a family of four spends \$25 per month to heat water, your savings will be realized quickly.

A typical insulating blanket for a water heater may be purchased for \$10-\$20, and may easily pay for itself in a year. Although installation is relatively simple, follow the directions, leave the access panel uncovered, and do not set the thermostat above 130°F if an insulating blanket is being used.

Another addition to reduce the workload on your water heater is a timer, which activates the heating element just before major use periods. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates a 5% to 12% reduction in water heating costs by adding a timer to an electric water heater. Some of the savings will depend on the insulation of the tank and habits of the household regarding consumption of hot water.

With Sac Osage Electric Cooperative’s rate structure, timers can have a quick return on investment. By having the water heater off during the



peak hours of six a.m. to nine a.m. and four p.m. to seven p.m., members can keep the water heating within the lower cost hours. Real world experience has shown members can save around \$12 a month in their on-peak demand with a properly working timer. Timers can also show more benefit to water heaters that have less insulation. Timers are not a good option for gas water heaters, since an additional motor has to be attached to open and close the gas valve, and gas valves are not designed to be frequently open and closed.

Warm up your knowledge about water heater efficiency at www.EfficiencyResource.org