

CLOSED Circuit


Volume 71, No. 4
April 2011

Official Publication of



CLARKE

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



► **Pay attention to bill due date.**
Your payment must reach our office by 4 p.m. on the *DUE DATE* that is printed on your bill. The due date is always the last business day of the month.

Please help your cooperative keep cost down by paying your bill on time and reducing the number of friendly reminders sent out.

Thank you.

Meeting Our Nation's Energy Challenges

Fossil fuels, the backbone of the nation's energy supply, are one of our biggest challenges. Because Congress did not pass a comprehensive energy bill last year, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began in January to use its authority under the Federal Clean Air Act to regulate greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide (created when fuels such as coal and natural gas are burned).

Practical methods of limiting carbon dioxide emissions do not exist today. Processes are being tested, but they're expensive and have no guarantee of effectiveness. The high cost to comply with the EPA's reinterpretation of the Clean Air Act—plus new requirements in discussion—may cause a shutdown of many of

Electricity makes our homes comfortable day in and day out and helps our businesses run. It is ready at the flip of a switch, but we may be headed for a day when nothing happens when you flip the switch.

the nation's coal-fired power plants. This could bring the available supply of electricity to a point that's significantly lower than your needs.

Planning, building, and launching a baseload power plant is no small feat: six or seven years for coal-fired, three to four years for natural gas, and at least ten years for nuclear.

Continued on page 2

Education, Training, and Information

Co-op Principle in Action

Jason Gibbs gave a safety demonstration to Corydon preschoolers in February, putting into practice one of the seven cooperative principles—education, training, and information. He showed the *Play it Safe* video and brought along a surprise: a special appearance from Louie the Lightning Bug. Jason is available to give safety demonstrations to large or small groups. Contact him at 800-362-2154.



Meeting Our Nation's Energy Challenges *Continued from page 1*

Wind farms and large solar projects take about two years to complete, but they have intermittency issues. Wind generation is available about 40 percent of the time and seldom operates (wind doesn't blow) during periods of peak consumption like hot, humid summer weekday afternoons or frigid winter days. Solar power systems operate only during daylight hours and are affected by cloud cover, rain, and snow. Wind and solar resources must be

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation, the U.S. bulk power grid watchdog, estimates that by 2017 we will need to build almost half again as much new generation as is on the drawing board today.

backed up by facilities such as natural gas power plants that can come online when needed. That adds extra expense.

Electricity must be used immediately or moved to where it can be used the moment it is produced. The U.S. power grid, an intricate network of millions of miles of power lines, has evolved over the last century to do this. (CEC has 1800 miles of lines.) Imagine a major highway at rush hour with all the vehicles going one way, merging to reach their final destinations. Cars exit to cities and countryside. Electricity travels across the state in much the same way, moving from power plants along major transmission arteries until off-ramps distribute it to Clarke Electric and, finally, your home. 33-15-06-00

There is a national push to improve this setup to create a smart grid that allows getting timely information to decision makers (utilities or electricity users). This would mean upgrading the physical network and deployment of digital technologies to allow communication between electric utilities, providers, and consumers. Due to innovations in the digital information and telecommunications network, we need an electric superhighway to support our information superhighway.

The power grid also needs to be expanded. Wind, solar, geothermal, and other forms of renewable energy share a common problem: the areas where the power is generated are not the population centers where the power is consumed. Transmission lines must move the power to where folks live.

To transmit electricity over longer distances, larger facilities will be

needed to achieve capacity. Who will pay for this? We believe that the costs should follow those that benefit, but applying this principle has significant challenges. Presently, the federal government appears to favor spreading the costs out over a large base, which means you and I will likely pay for some of these new large transmission lines.

Capacity is limited on the existing transmission grid. If more wind farms are built, they will need transmission capacity and possibly new transmission to move the output of the wind turbines to markets east of Iowa. What should be built first: the wind farms or the transmission?

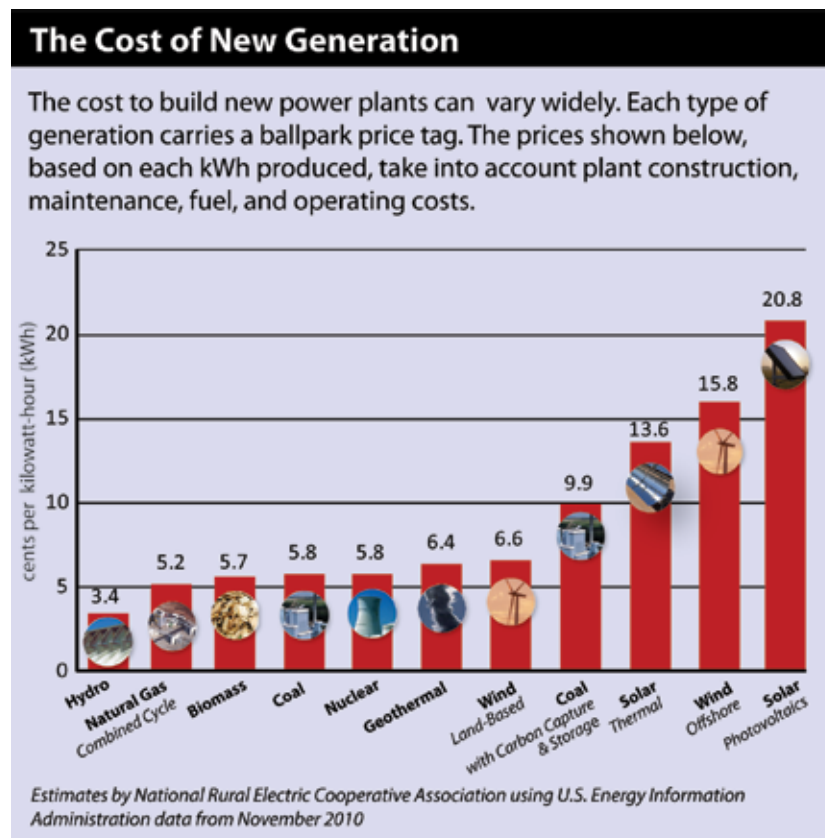
Transmission planners go through lengthy approval processes (hopefully using existing rights-of-way), explain the pros and cons to local residents, and begin the permitting process with federal, state, and local agencies. An outcry of "not in my backyard" can stall the project for years—or even stop it. Even if the permitting process goes well, groups opposed to transmission lines can put procedural roadblocks in place, including legal challenges.

One thing seems certain: our cost of doing business will increase due to federal and state requirements and rising prices for fuel, materials, and equipment. Even though the recent economic slump and corresponding drop in electricity use has provided a little breathing room, needed power plants and power grid upgrades will require a significant and long-term investment of time and money.

We are facing an emerging power crisis. At Clarke Electric, we take our obligation to provide you with safe, affordable, reliable, and

environmentally-responsible power seriously. We believe we can meet our nation's energy challenges with new technologies and a diverse fuel mix that includes clean coal, nuclear power, natural gas, renewable generation, and energy efficiency. The news from Japan will likely put more focus on safety as opposed to clean energy.

Of course, implementing all of these things on a large scale will require leadership from the private sector and government. And it will require your participation: get in touch with our state and federal legislators to ask for energy policies based on realistic, achievable goals and large doses of common sense. We will be calling on you soon to help.



Pull Savings Out of Thin Air!



Reasons to Install Heat Pump



Reduce the cost of heating water up to 62% and save \$320 per year.

Advanced heat pump technology combined with traditional electric elements, the new ENERGY STAR®-qualified GE GeoSpring hybrid electric heat pump water heater has been designed with maximum energy efficiency in mind. **It's the most energy efficient 50-gallon electric water heater you can buy.**

The GeoSpring uses an innovative process that creates the same amount of hot water as a traditional electric water heater, but only costs \$198 per year to operate—showing a dramatic impact on your monthly electric bills! 03-26-01-01

With an easy-to-use control panel, the GeoSpring electric heat pump water heater is the first residential electric water heater with an electronic back-lit LCD display. This panel offers both simplicity and flexibility, giving consumers as much or as little control as they like.

The GeoSpring qualifies for a federal tax credit of \$300 (some restrictions apply) and a \$500 rebate from Clarke Electric Cooperative. **So potentially the GeoSpring water heater could be yours for less than \$600.**

Show you care with RECare!

Clarke Electric extends a helping hand to those who need it—one reason why RECare was established.

RECare is a program through which members help members by providing funds to be distributed by local community action agencies to help pay winter heating bills and to assist in weatherization of homes of low-income members. You may make a one-time donation or a monthly donation.

Customer Authorization Form

Yes, I want to be part of members helping members and contribute to RECare.

Enclosed is a check with a one-time donation.

I would like to make a monthly donation.

Name _____

Address _____

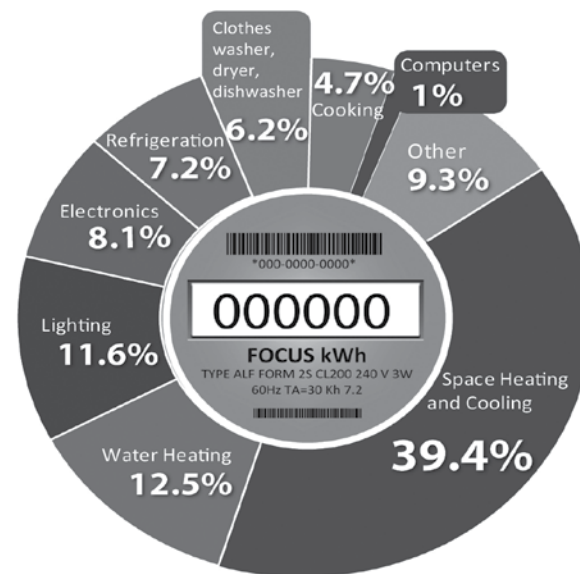
City, State, Zip _____

Please mail to: RECare, Clarke Electric Cooperative, Inc.,
P.O. Box 161, Osceola, Iowa 50213

Reading Pays! Look for your hidden account number in this issue and call during April to have \$10 deducted from your monthly energy account.

1. Heat pumps pull heat from the air or earth to warm your home, reducing costs up to 60%.
2. No gas, flames, or fumes. Safe, clean electricity powers a heat pump—the clean alternative for year-round comfort.
3. A heat pump is so efficient it can use excess heat from its heating and cooling operation to heat water for household use. Depending on the season, a heat pump can provide your home with hot water at no or low cost.
4. You will receive \$3 to \$5 worth of heating and cooling for every \$1 spent on electricity (depending on type of heat pump installed). Savings continue, often allowing installation cost recovery in three to five years.
5. With a flick of a switch, a heat pump becomes an air conditioner that will pull heat from your home, transferring it to the earth or air, reducing costs up to 25%.

How Your Home Uses Electricity



Source:
2009 Buildings
Energy Data Book,
U.S. Department
of Energy, Table
21.5. Represents an
all-electric home.

71 years of answering the call

March Outages

Construction (3)	Maintenance (1)	Overhanging trees (1)
Equipment failure (4)	Motor vehicle (2)	
Lightning (2)	Public cut trees (1)	

Powered
by **CEC**



The Cooperative completed the scheduled upgrade for the Medora substation. Newer transformers improve system reliability, reduce line loss, and allow for interconnection with two different transmission lines.

CEC Payment Options For details on these options, call 800-362-2154 or check out www.cecnet.net

Auto Pay

Automatic payments are deducted monthly from your bank account or credit card.

Budget Billing

Pay the same amount each month for the entire year.

Credit & Debit Cards, E-checks

Both major credit cards, debit cards, and e-checks are accepted. This can be set up as a recurring monthly charge or designated on a month-to-month basis.

Drop Box

May be paid directly during business hours or placed in the 24-hour drop box after hours.

E-Billing

24/7 access to your account information. View, print, or pay your bill online at www.cecnet.net.

CEC provides these options for your convenience.



Live Independently *with a safety net*

Clarke Electric Cooperative offers a Life Safety phone system that offers 24-hour emergency assistance by simply pushing a button.

When the alert key is pressed, the Life System phone automatically dials a preprogrammed help number at the monitoring center. The speaker phone allows for two way hands free communication. If the person does not answer, the call center contacts pre-determined family members, a neighbor or 911 to let them know that help is needed. Call center personnel stay on the line with the person until help arrives.

Get the Life Safety system for a low monthly cost: call 800-362-2154.



Clarke Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Clarke Electric Cooperative, Inc., exists to professionally serve our members' changing needs, enhancing quality of life through leadership in community development and providing service excellence for our members' energy requirements.

P.O. Box 161, Osceola IA 50213 • 641-342-2173 • 1-800-362-2154

Our Web Site: www.cecnet.net

Board of Directors: Tom Carson, Osceola; Ralph Evans, Decatur; Randy Gaumer, Murray; Larry Jackson, Clio; Paul Keller, New Virginia; Kyle Kelso, Weldon; Marilyn Marsh, Lucas; Frank Riley, Osceola; Bill Willis, New Virginia.

Bill Freeman, Manager

Don Lange, Manager of Operations and Engineering

Dave Opie, Manager of Finance

Jodee Eckels, Editor

Office Hours:

7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday - Friday

Outside Depository Available 24 Hours

Closed Circuit is owned, controlled, and directed by Clarke Electric Cooperative, Inc., in Osceola, Iowa. It is printed monthly to help its members achieve maximum benefits from the conservative use of electrical energy, to inform them of the business of the cooperative, and for the general welfare and safety of rural residents in its service area of south central Iowa. Editing and layout by The Write Place.

