




Co-op News from Wyrulec Company

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives 
The power of human connections

July 2009

From your manager

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Miller

Cap and trade

I don't claim to be an expert on federal legislation but I do know that the proposed "cap-and-trade" legislation will have a very profound impact on electricity rates in the coming years if it is passed in its current form.

In fundamental terms, the cap-and-trade bill initiated in the House Energy and Commerce Committee by Henry Waxman (D-CA) and Ed Markey (D-MA) places a cap on the amount of CO₂ emissions emitted by power plants and others. It requires reduction of overall emissions to 17 percent below 2005 levels by the year 2020 and 83 percent by 2050.

The bill would also require manufacturers, power plants, and other operations to obtain allowances for the greenhouse gases they emit.

The government would sell those allowances and, at least initially, **give** a large share of them to various industries to lessen the initial economic impact. Companies would then be able to "trade" those allowances. Each ton of CO₂ emitted will be taxed, probably between \$20 and \$150 per ton. At \$20/ton our power supplier, Tri-State G&T, would need to collect an additional \$230,000,000 to purchase these allowances.

The legislation is proposed for 2012 and therefore your electric rates could conceivably increase by approximately 25 percent at that time and that is at the \$20/ton level. If the amount charged for the allowances is \$150/ton, your electric bills could very well double or even almost triple. Simply put, the "cap-and-trade" bill will force increases to the cost of coal and natural gas power generation to the point where they can't compete with other forms of generation. This will make other generation sources more economically attractive. The price to pay for that action will be very heavy. Is it the right direction to go? Maybe and maybe not.

Wind generation

Recently, I was invited to attend a wind generation meeting at the Prairie Center School, where several people expressed interest in approaching wind developers with a formalized plan. I was very impressed with the group's efforts to go after this with a common goal. *Verna R. Jepson* Grant Stumbaugh made a presentation and backup was provided by Frank Fallon, an attorney in Cheyenne very familiar with this type of landowner group/wind developer interaction.

I felt, from a co-op utility perspective, that this is the way it should be done. As I have stated earlier, with large, wind-farm type generation, Wyrulec would probably not be a big player, if a player at all, in the agreements. We may provide backup power for the site but the power purchase/interconnection/wheeling agreements would be with the Western Area Power Administration or Tri-State Generation and Transmission, due to those entities owning the transmission facilities in the area.

If you are proposing something similar, I would be happy to meet with you and help in any way I can.

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From your manager

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Net metering small generation

Wyrulec has a net-metering tariff in place intended to address the concerns of those interested in having their own generation on site. In addition, there is a state statute addressing net-metering installations up to 25kW. Although these smaller generation sources can be very expensive—and it’s questionable as to whether they will even pay for themselves over the life of the unit—we are experiencing slow but continuous interest. We welcome the opportunity to work with you from the planning through interconnection stages of these installations.

There will be, from Wyrulec, minimal costs, in most cases, to the member to interconnect the system

and the sum will include only those costs that are directly attributed to the individual installations.

One area that concerns me, however, is the issue of liability. *Keith D. Maser* What is considered an acceptable liability risk to the entire membership and the cooperative for these installations?

These generation sources, albeit small, can generate power and push that power onto the distribution system. This presents a safety concern. What liability exposure are members willing to accept with an installation like this? I’d be interested in hearing what you have to say on this issue.

Regarding any issue, feel free to call me in the office or you can reach me almost anytime on my cell at (307) 575-2435.

Common Household Air Leaks

Most air leaks are hidden in your attic and basement and can significantly raise your energy bill. Here’s a list of common hiding places. Seal them with caulk, weatherstripping or other appropriate materials. Thirty percent of your expenses, up to \$1,500, may qualify for an energy efficiency tax credit!

Windows and Doors

Attic Hatch

Wiring Holes

Plumbing Vent

Recessed Lights and Open Soffit
(the box that hides recessed lights)

Furnace Flue or Duct Chaseways
(the hollow box or wall feature that hides ducts)

Basement Rim Joists
(where the foundation meets the wood framing)



Source: Alliance to Save Energy’s Guide to Home Sealing

Don’t let the air out!

Weatherize

By MEGAN MCKOY

Children running in and out of the house on a hot summer’s day may hear a common warning: “Don’t leave the door open—you’ll let the air out!” But how many adults do the same thing without realizing it?

While you may not leave your front door open, air leaks in the attic and basement let valuable air in—and out!—of your home.

Laura Matney, a Building Performance Institute (BPI)-certified building analyst, advises electric co-op consumers to look into weatherization before investing in other energy efficiency measures. “I certainly encourage the selection of energy-efficient appliances, but they don’t provide the amount of savings that proper sealing of air leaks can. We’re trained to look at the basics of building science—seal, insulate, and then look at the equipment. If a homeowner only has money for one area then nine times out

Don't let the air out!

of 10, I recommend sealing.”

For example, the U.S. Department of Energy’s ENERGY STAR program advises addressing air leaks and ductwork in your home before investing in a new heating and cooling system; sometimes, those are the real sources of problems rather than your equipment.

Most leaks occur in the basement and attic. Starting in your basement, look for gaps and cracks where your cement or block foundation meets the frame of your home. Joists (building supports which are smaller than beams) between the floor and the foundation (called rim or band joists) create cavities that are hard to insulate and may leak. Not all of the gaps are visible, so ENERGY STAR suggests sealing the top and bottom of cavities around rim joists. *Kenneth C. Franks* Use caulk to seal cracks that are 1/4 inch or smaller; spray foam works best to fill gaps from 1/4 inch to about 3 inches.

Seal gaps between the basement ceiling and the floor above, like holes for wiring and water pipes.

In the attic, focus on large spaces. If your home has dropped soffits—part of the ceiling that has been lowered for light-

ing design—be sure they’ve been properly sealed. These design elements, common in bathrooms and kitchens, are often built before your home’s drywall is installed, leaving part of your wall open to air from wall or floor cavities.

Even though there may be insulation covering dropped soffits in your attic, be sure all cavities around the soffits have been properly plugged. To do this, place fiberglass insulation inside plastic garbage bags and stuff it tightly into any cavities.

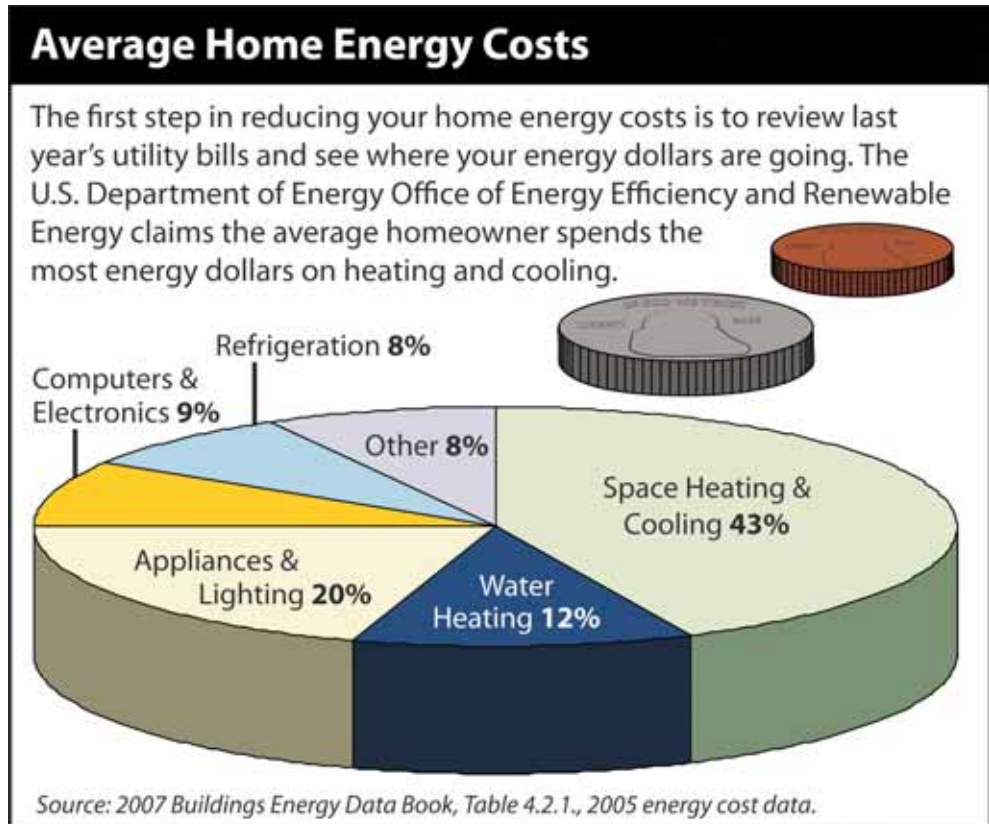
Pay attention to dirty insulation; it’s a big clue that air is moving through the area. *C.E. Onstott* And just like the basement, be sure to seal gaps between the attic ceiling and the

rooms below, including holes for wiring, lighting, and the attic door.

Weatherizing your home will save you money down the road—an average of \$358 each year according to the U.S. Department of Energy Weatherization Assistance Program—but some people may not be able to pay for improvements. As a result of the federal stimulus package, families with household incomes below 200 percent of the national poverty level are eligible for up to \$6,500 in energy efficiency improvements. For a family of four, that’s an income limit of \$44,100.

For co-op consumers not eligible for the program, the stimu-

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Don't let the air out!

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 lus bill provides a homeowner efficiency tax credit of up to \$1,500, or 30 percent of the cost for upgrades, including insulation, that meets the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code.

There are many more ways to protect your home, including weather stripping doors and windows and sealing ducts. For step-by-step instructions on how to weatherize your home and start saving energy dollars today, download *Sealing Air Leaks and*

Adding Attic Insulation, a do-it-yourself guide to weatherization from ENERGY STAR. *Clifford G. Sharp* The guide is available at www.energy star.gov.

Sources: ENERGY STAR, Building Performance Institute

Employee Spotlight ❖❖❖ Brandon Wheeler

- Q: How long have you lived in Wyoming?
- A: Nine years, six at Wyrulec.
- Q: What did you do before you came to work for Wyrulec?
- A: I worked for the City of Torrington in their electric department.
- Q: What is your job title at Wyrulec?
- A: Journeyman lineman.
- Q: What brought you to Wyrulec?
- A: The employees, the history of the company and the

respect with which it's regarded, and, of course, a job opening.

- Q: Describe your family.
- A: I'm going to be married in July.
- Q: Do you have any hobbies?
- A: I enjoy golfing, fishing, biking, working around the house and garage. I spend time gardening and



dump a lot of money into my Chevelle.

- Q: Words of advice you would share?
- A: You can judge a man by the number of empty buckets he owns.
- Q: Why do you enjoy working for Wyrulec?
- A: I love the outdoors, helping people in the community, and working with guys you call friends.

❖ No need to stand around in the dark ❖
 We have CFLs in stock that are 100-watt replacements. They will fit into any light fixture rated over 23 watts (anywhere a 60- to 100-watt incandescent bulb is now). They operate at 23 watts but provide light equal to a 100-watt incandescent. They are \$1.60 each. We have plenty.

Let us profile your business

Wyrulec Company supports local companies. If you've been in retail business two years or more, and you wouldn't be opposed to a little publicity, we'd like to know. We're interested in running a short get-to-know-you article about area businesses in each issue of *Co-op News*. This newsletter goes to members of Wyrulec Company, your local electric co-op. Contact Wyrulec Company and expect a follow-up phone call from *Co-op News* editor Kris Wendtland.

Don't miss a word

Each month, we will be hiding the names of five members, one from each district, in this newsletter. If you see your name this month, please call and we'll give you a \$25 bill credit.

Play it safe. Don't watch lightning from under a tree.