

Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Northwestern REC

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From the President & CEO



Affordable electricity powers quality of life

By Bill Buchanan, *President & CEO*

MOST OF us use electricity, either directly or indirectly, at almost all times. Because electricity is so abundant and available with the simple flip of a switch, it's easy to take it for granted.

According to the Energy Information Agency (EIA), the typical U.S. household now uses more air conditioning, appliances and consumer electronics than ever before. The average home also contains 10 or more internet-connected devices. Considering everything that is powered by electricity, it's no wonder we occasionally might wince at our monthly bill. But keep in mind, it's no longer just the "light bill."

Electricity powers quality of life

Electricity powers our quality of life. From the infrastructure of your home (appliances, water heater, and HVAC system) to charging your smartphones, computers, TV, and Wi-Fi router, your energy bill covers so much more than lighting.


Today, there is more demand for electricity than ever before. At home, in schools and businesses, and in commercial sectors such as transportation, the need for electricity is increasing.

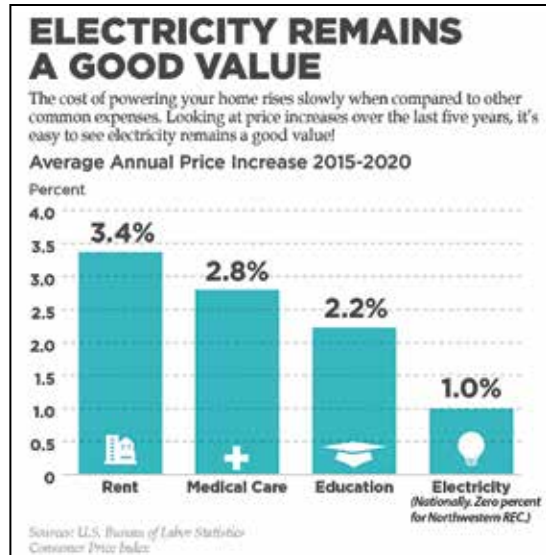
Typically, when demand goes up, so does the price, as is the case with most goods or services, like cable or even your favorite specialty coffee. However, that's not true with

electricity. Let's look at how the value of electricity compares to other common expenses.

Over the last five years, the cost of rent increased 3.4%, medical care increased 2.8% and education increased 2.2%. But nationally, the cost of electricity only increased 1%. At Northwestern REC there have been ZERO rate increases for the last 10 years. Considering all the ways we depend on electricity, it still remains a great value.

So the next time you're enjoying your favorite podcast, TV series, or movie, consider the value of electricity and how it enhances your quality of life.

We care about you, the members we serve, and understand that electricity is more than a commodity — it's a necessity. That's why Northwestern REC will continue working hard to power your life, reliably and affordably. 



August events ready to raise funds for Member-to-Member, Inc.

DEPENDING on where you live, you may be familiar with Erie Gives or Crawford Gives, two fundraising events for local non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations coordinated by the Erie Community Foundation and the Crawford Heritage Community Foundation, respectively. Hundreds of local non-profits will benefit from these two events, including Northwestern's own Member-to-Member, Inc. (M2M).

The M2M program was created in the 1980s by Northwestern REC as a special fund that helps struggling co-op members keep their electric bill paid. It also has been used to help other members

pay for items such as unexpected medical electronic expenses. These special circumstances are determined at the board level. Funds for M2M are raised by co-op employees, directors, and members, as well as through special events like the annual M2M Golf Outing.

If you feel so inclined to donate to the M2M program via either or both events, all gifts received will have additional prorated amounts combined with the donation to make the impact of the donation even larger.

One hundred percent of these donations go to the members and are tax deductible. M2M is a hand up, not a handout. ☀



Erie Gives 2021

Day and Time: Visit eriegives.org. The online event takes place on Tuesday, Aug. 10. You have 12 hours to make your donation between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. EST.

Gift Amount: The minimum gift is \$25. There is no limit to the amount of money you may give. There is no limit to the number of organizations you can donate to in a transaction.

Only Visa, MasterCard and Discover will be accepted. The credit card processor charges a nominal fee per transaction. The Erie Community Foundation does not receive any fees.

Crawford Gives 2021

Day and Time: Visit crawfordgives.org. Online gifts can be made between 12:01 a.m. Monday, Aug. 30, and 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2021.

Gift Amount: To make a gift with your credit card, simply visit crawfordgives.org and select the organizations you wish to support. Set a gift amount for each organization. Enter your credit card information and submit your donation.



Assistance Programs Available to Northwestern REC Members

Emergency Rental Assistance Program

*For those who rent and are on unemployment.

*Money can be used for rent and utilities.

Apply online at www.dhs.pa.gov.

Administered locally by:

Center for Family Services, 814-337-8450

Erie County Care Management, 814-923-5512

Mercer, Venango and Warren Counties, use COMPASS to apply.

Bridge Builders Community Foundation

*For NREC members who qualify in Venango Co.

*Administered by the United Way of Venango Co.

Apply by calling 814-676-6545

Member-to-Member, Inc.

*For all members with a referral from NREC.

*Administered by several local agencies, visit M2Mfund.org

Contact Northwestern REC at 800-352-0014



pa211nw.org

*Powerful search engine for all available help in your area.

Visit pa211nw.org, call or text 2-1-1

M2M

Member-to-Member, Inc.

800/352-0014  

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The 18th Annual M2M Golf Outing will be held on June 15, 2022.

Understanding power surges and blinks

PHOTO CREDIT: PAT GAINES



Surges can be caused by internal sources, like HVAC systems with variable frequency drives, or external sources, like lightning and damage to power lines and transformers.

Northwestern REC encourages all members to install surge protective devices (such as surge protector power strips) to safeguard your

HAVE YOU ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you've likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power surge or blink. While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

What's a power surge?


Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances of a power waveform that can damage, degrade, or destroy electronic equipment within your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage; however, power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts — this can be extremely damaging to your electronic equipment.

sensitive electronics. If you're experiencing frequent surges in your home or business and you believe the cause is internal, contact a qualified electrician to inspect your electrical system.

What's a power blink?

Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they're typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a variety of instances, like squirrels, birds, or other small animals contacting an energized power line; tree branches touching a power line; or lightning and other similar events. In fact, when it comes to power disruptions caused by critters, squirrels reign supreme. In 2019 alone, squirrels were responsible for more than 1,200 outages.

Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breakers are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are actually good, because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

Regardless of the cause, Northwestern REC crews will be on their way to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs after a power outage. And you can help, too! Anytime you experience repeated disruptions to your electric service, please let us know by calling 800-352-0014, option 1, or visiting NorthwesternREC.com. 

Penalties to resume September 1

TO HELP our members during the COVID-19 pandemic, Northwestern REC temporarily suspended service disconnections and any penalties due to nonpayment in March 2020. This is one of many steps that Northwestern REC took to reduce stress on our members and provide local families and businesses with certainty during an uncertain time.

We recognize the significant economic fallout from COVID-19 on local families and businesses. The economic health of Northwestern REC is directly tied to the wellbeing of our local community. Not-for-profit electric co-ops like Northwestern REC have no shareholders and routinely return excess revenues to their members. Because of this structure and the desire to keep energy costs as low as possible, some co-ops have more limited reserve margins to sustain high rates of nonpayment.

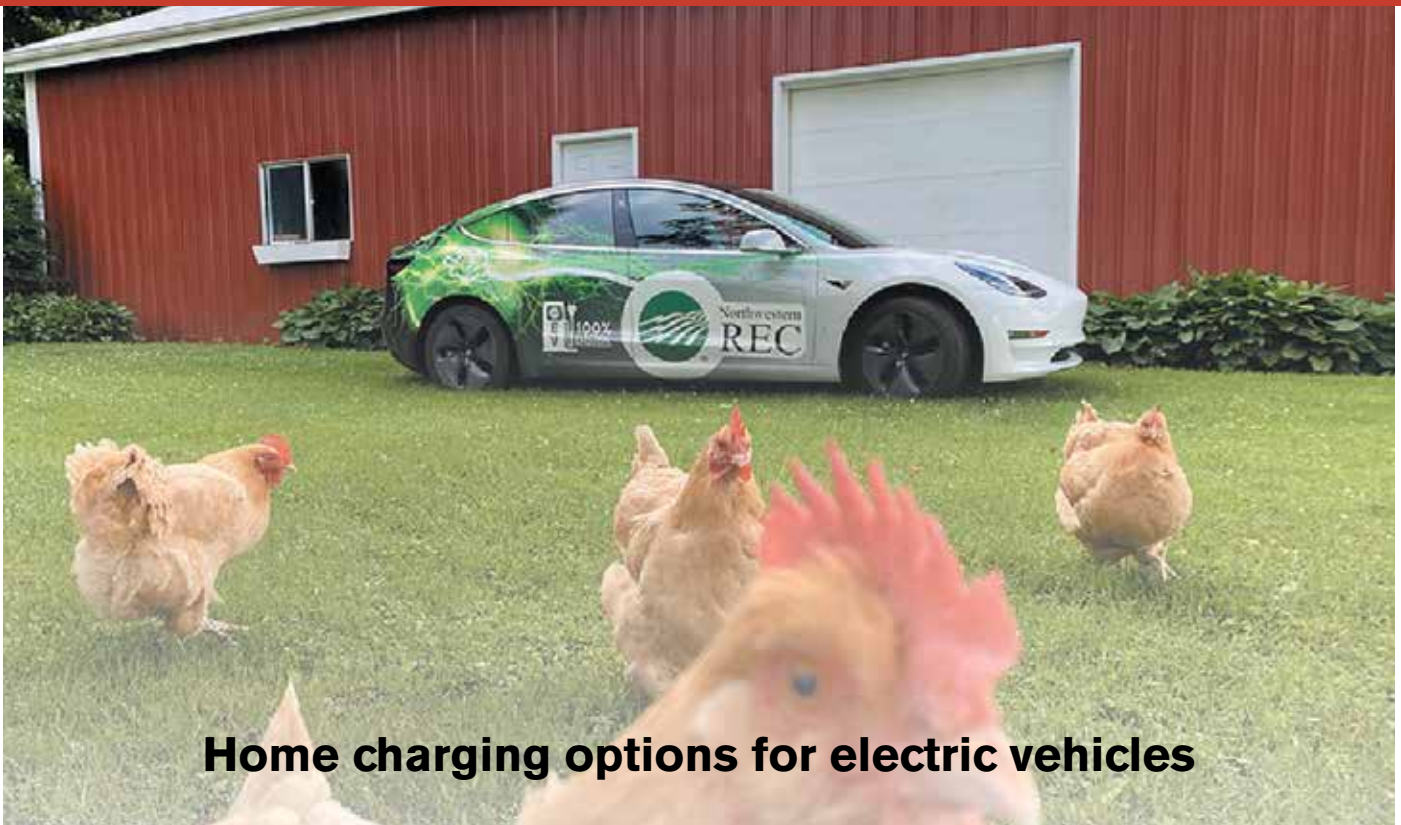
Nationally, the pandemic is pro-

jected to cost electric cooperatives \$10 billion through 2022, according to new research by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

As our community recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, starting on Sept. 1, 2021, Northwestern REC will resume adding penalties to accounts with a past-due balance. Disconnections for nonpayment resumed in April 2021, at the end of the winter moratorium.

The last thing the co-op ever wants to do is disconnect anyone's electric service. The COVID-19 pandemic was unprecedented. We know our members may be facing financial challenges, and we understand you may have trouble paying your electric bill during this critical time. If you missed payments and have a past-due balance, we can help.

Please contact our Member Services Department at 800-352-0014 for help. Our hours are 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.



Home charging options for electric vehicles

ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) owners have multiple options for charging their vehicle at home. There are three common EV charging levels: Level One, Level Two and DC Fast Charge.

Level One Charging

Level One (as happening behind the scene in the photo above) is the most basic charging level. If you choose this option, your EV will typically include an adapter that plugs into a typical 120-volt outlet. This is the easiest and cheapest solution, but it will take much longer to charge your EV.

Level Two Charging

Level Two is about three to five times faster than Level One, but this level of charging often requires separate purchases and installation. The EV is plugged into a 240-volt outlet, which is used for larger appliances, like a clothes dryer. Most homes do not include a 240-volt outlet in garages, so the outlet must be installed by a licensed professional. You typically see Level Two charging stations at shopping malls, office buildings and multi-family community spaces. There is a Level Two charging station available to the public located in the front parking lot of Northwestern REC.

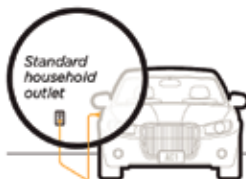
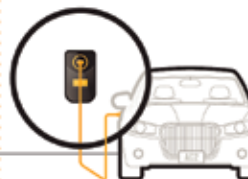

DC Fast Charge

DC Fast Charge stations are typically seen near high-traffic public areas, like gas stations, rather than in homes. This is

the fastest charging level, with the ability to charge an EV at 80% in under 30 minutes. As EVs continue to become more popular, you can expect to see more DC Fast Charge stations throughout Pennsylvania.

If you're charging an EV at home, please contact Northwestern REC at 800-352-0014. EV charging creates additional energy demand. The time of day you charge your EV can have an impact on the grid and your monthly energy costs. By letting us know about your EV charging levels, we can help ensure your home is prepared for the additional energy consumption, and you can take advantage of the co-op's current EV rebates found online at NorthwesternREC.com. ☀️

Electric Vehicle Charging Levels

AC Level One	AC Level Two	DC Fast Charge
		
VOLTAGE: 120V 1-Phase AC	VOLTAGE: 208V or 240V 1-Phase AC	VOLTAGE: 208V or 480V 3-Phase AC
AMPS: 12-16 Amps	AMPS: 12-80 Amps (typ. 32 Amps)	AMPS: <100 Amps
CHARGING LOADS: 1.4 to 1.9 kW	CHARGING LOADS: 2.5 to 19.2 kW (typ. 6.6kW)	CHARGING LOADS: 50-350 kW
VEHICLE CHARGE TIME: 3-5 Miles per Hour	VEHICLE CHARGE TIME: 10-20 Miles per Hour <small>20+ for some EV models</small>	VEHICLE CHARGE TIME: 60-80 Miles in 20 Minutes
Sources: Advanced Energy and EPA		