

Keep your bill consistent when the weather isn't.

Budget Billing from Farmers Electric Cooperative means you'll know what to expect, so you can plan ahead.



No one likes surprises – especially when it affects your household budget. That's why Farmers EC offers Budget Billing as a payment option to our members. It's a way to plan ahead for the months with greater usage and average those costs throughout the year. It'd be nice if we could do that with the weather, too.

Average is calculated using the last 12-month account history.

Every member is eligible with no participation fees to join.

SIGN UP FOR BUDGET BILLING: 800 541 2662



Let's maximize your comfort and save.

Decrease high winter bills before they begin.



by **MARK STUBBS**
General Manager

Last winter brought unpleasant weather extremes to Texas. Some parts of the state saw temperatures drop to more than 20 degrees below normal, and many others experienced storms that tested the endurance of co-op staff and members alike. Nearly every home in our cooperative was forced to run its heating system longer and harder than usual—and nearly everyone saw unwelcome higher bills as a result.

At Farmers Electric Cooperative, we recognize that high bills cause worries. Every one of us at your co-op pays a utility bill too, so we personally understand your need to keep the household budget balanced while keeping your family warm.

We are committed to helping you find reasonable solutions for your power dilemmas, too. The co-op offers several programs to help members manage their bills and accounts. There's almost always more than one remedy for a situation, and we can help you weigh all the available options.

The most important way to prevent a higher-than-expected energy bill is to look for ways to decrease the amount of energy used. So be prepared, and manage your energy use. Seal any gaps that create drafts in your home, and augment your insulation if needed. Keep an eye on the thermostat to conserve energy, and set it as low as comfortably possible. Always turn off lights you don't need, and avoid using expensive electric space heaters if possible. They often use more energy than you might expect.

We'll work with you every way we can to help manage higher winter bills. We can review your account to make sure the bill is correct and accurate. If you have a concern about your meter, we can test it to see whether it's working properly. We also can set up an audit to identify your home's biggest energy users and sources of inefficiency. If needed and if you meet eligibility requirements, we can arrange a payment plan that will fit your budget.

TAKE CONTROL & SAVE

Our 3-Point Plan helps make the most of your power.



Budget Billing Plan

Average out your monthly bills so you can budget more easily and avoid surprises. We'll help you choose an option that suits you.



FREE energy audit

Our auditor will come to your home free of charge and assess how you're using energy—then show you the best ways to improve efficiency and save!



We're looking out for you

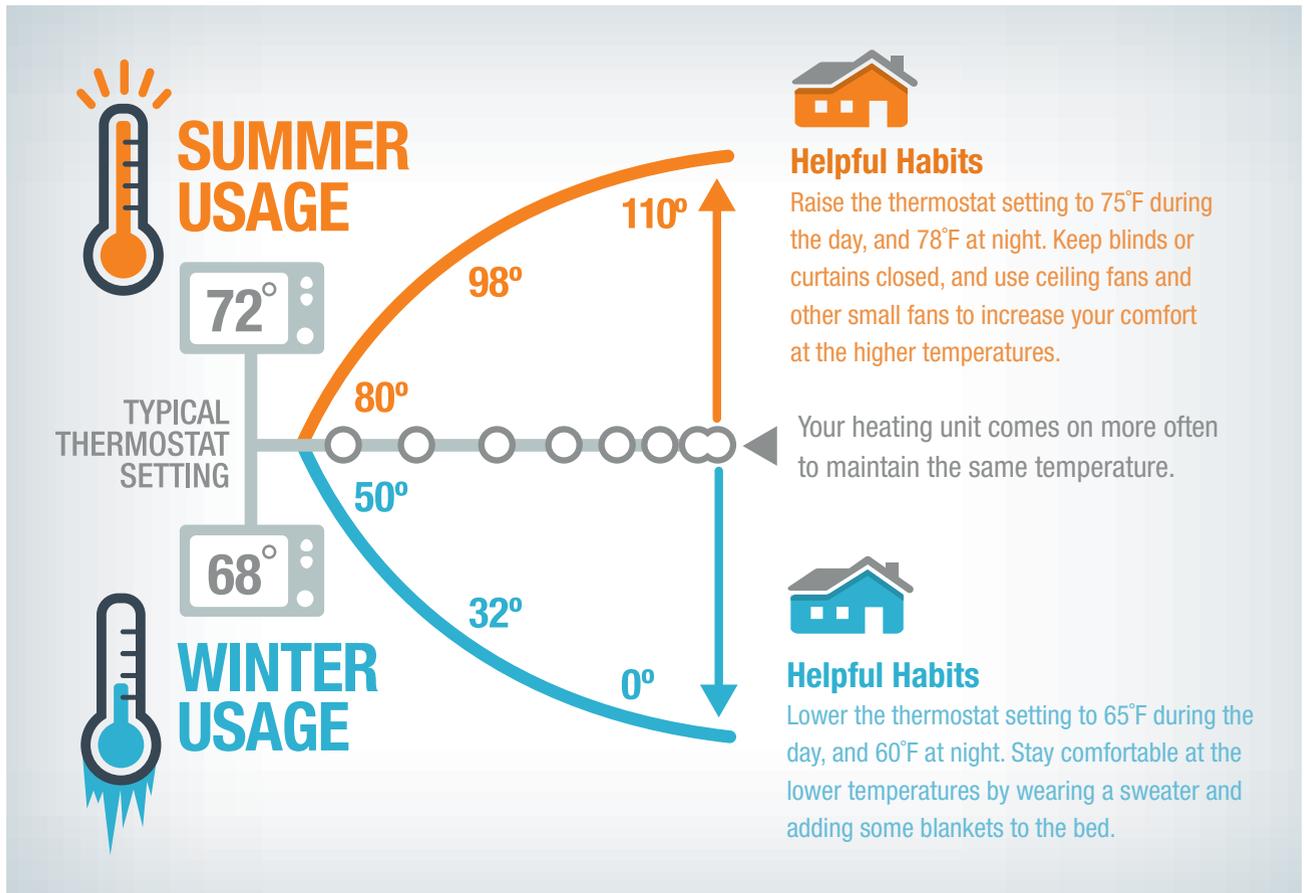
We're working to make your co-op experience better every day. That includes helping you manage your electric bill by offering energy-saving ideas, providing flexible billing options, and even working with local assistance organizations if you're experiencing financial hardships.



TEXT ALERTS:
Text FEC to 85700

Winter makes homes work harder.

Long, cold nights mean more lights and heating use.



The more the outside temperature drops or rises, the harder your heating and cooling unit has to work to keep your home comfortable inside—even more so in the winter. The illustration shows the differences in how hard your home has to work to maintain your indoor temperature habits.

Seasonal Usage

You keep your home thermostat on the same temperature as you always do. Do things the same way each month. You don't think you are really using that much more energy each month, but you probably are during the winter. In colder months, you are changing the air temperature inside the house more than even summer months. When we

get prolonged cold weeks, the exterior temperatures during peak heating may still be 20 degrees different from an indoor setting of 68-70 degrees – which is similar with summer differences. However in winter, sunset begins to widen the gap your thermostat is trying to overcome. That is different from summer when sunset begins to narrow the gap.

Another factor is that shorter daylight hours mean we use indoor lighting 29% more in winter versus summer.* You might even leave exterior lights on during the day so you don't come home to a dark home after work.

But Texas has mild winters

We all remember those great 70 degree

days we get in December, January, and February. They sometimes last from a couple of days to a week. But when the colder air returns, so does the work of your heating unit.

* Daylight hours winter solstice: 10

Daylight hours summer solstice: 14.5

WINTER REMINDER

Your home uses more electricity during the winter for lighting and heating. A FREE energy audit from Farmers EC can help you find ways to make your home more energy-efficient, especially during these extreme seasons. This is when adjusting your home habits can also help you save.

10 ways to drop those high winter bills.

If your bank account is still feeling the bite of last winter's electric bills, now is the time to take steps that can make a difference this winter. Here are 10 ways you can conserve energy and gain some control over winter electric bills.

- 1. Tune up your furnace.** Call a professional HVAC technician to inspect and repair your system and change its filters.
- 2. Add insulation.** Especially if your home is older, the attic insulation might have fallen out of place and even diminished over the years.
- 3. Seal gaps and cracks.** Use caulk or weatherstripping to close up holes around doors, windows, outlets, and trim where heated air can escape.
- 4. Open the drapes.** In the daytime, the sun's rays will help heat your home for free, then cover windows once the sun goes down.
- 5. Wrap up in layers.** It costs a lot less to put on a sweater or wrap a blanket around you than it does to move the thermostat up even a couple of degrees.
- 6. Humidify.** A humidifier will add moisture to the air, which makes it feel warmer and helps retain heat.
- 7. Unblock heating vents.** Move furniture and other items away from vents so they can do a good job of evenly distributing warm air throughout the house.
- 8. Turn on ceiling fans.** Flip the switch to make blades spin clockwise so they push heated air—which naturally rises—back down into the room.
- 9. Turn off exhaust fans.** The longer an exhaust fan runs, the more heated air it sends outdoors.
- 10. Lower the temperature at bedtime.** You could save up to 10 percent on your heating bill if you let your house cool off a bit for eight hours.

TAKE CHARGE & SAVE

As your electric cooperative, our mission is to bring reliable electricity to our members & community. Farmers EC is committed to providing ways to keep your electric bill affordable. Let us help you keep your electric bill consistent, even when the weather isn't.

Rebates

We offer many rebates to help members create a more energy-efficient home. These range from smaller items like light bulbs, to large scale changes of solar panels and A/C tune-ups. Call or go online to research the rebates and savings we provide to help you.

Helpful Home Heating Hints

Install a Programmable Thermostat

Make sure temperatures in the home match the schedules of inhabitants. Turning back your thermostat for eight hours a day can save as much as 10 percent a year on your heating bill.

Perform an Air Leak Test

Leaks in windows and doors are big culprits in a chilly household. Perform this test on a windy day if possible:

First, close all windows and doors.

Second, light an incense stick or a match and pass it by windows and doors. If the smoke is sucked out or blown into the room, you have found an air leak. Seal any leaks you find with caulk or weatherstripping.