

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.

Payments are calculated based on an average of the last 11 months plus your current month.

Every member is eligible with no participation fees to join.

SIGN UP FOR BUDGET BILLING: 903 455 1715



Using energy more efficiently.



by **MARK STUBBS**
General Manager

You have a couple of televisions, a video game system or two, a microwave oven, an electric range and cooktop, a refrigerator, maybe a freezer, a heat pump and a personal computer. So does your next-door neighbor. So why is your electric bill almost twice as high every month?

Consider this: How well are your walls insulated compared to your neighbor's? How is your attic insulation? Do you take longer, hotter showers? Are you cooking gourmet meals and baking from scratch while your neighbor subsists on quick-heating TV dinners? Does the TV keep you company even when you're not watching it?

No two families live alike. So no two electric bills are the same. Comparing your monthly statement to anyone else's would be like comparing your weekly grocery tabs. Two families of four will never spend exactly the same amount on food because their tastes and habits are different.

Think about the conveniences you might be willing to pay for, even though your neighbor isn't. Are you more comfortable sleeping in an extra-cool house on hot summer nights? Maybe your neighbor's set-back thermostat ekes the temperature up a few degrees at bedtime.

Do members of your family entertain themselves in separate rooms after dinner—watching TV or playing video games—while the folks next door all gather in a family room to play a board game?

Have you switched all of your old style light bulbs for energy efficient LED bulbs? Making the switch to LED light bulbs is one of the simplest ways to keep electric bills affordable. We include these bulbs as part of our energy efficiency rebate program. We will reimburse you up to \$100 for LEDs you buy in 2016. Here's why we offer a rebate on these bulbs: According to Energy.gov, by replacing your home's five most frequently used light bulbs with LED models that have earned the ENERGY STAR rating, you can save \$75 each year.

Another major factor in today's electric bills is vampire energy loss. Virtually anything that's plugged in is drawing some current—even when it's off. Experts estimate that standby energy drain accounts for five to 10 percent of an average home's annual power usage. A plasma TV, for instance, can use \$165 annually for electric power—when it's off. Consider unplugging items when not in use or using a power strip to disconnect several items at once.

There are also "smart" power strips available that automatically cut power to devices in standby mode. The way to lower your electric costs is to use energy more efficiently before the bill comes.

Contact Farmers Electric Cooperative or visit our website at FarmersElectric.coop for tips on how to save money by conserving energy around the house.



FARMERS EC ENERGY TIP

Use advanced power strips to manage energy usage.

When you leave electronics like TVs, computers and game consoles plugged in—even while turned off—they continue to use small amounts of electricity.

Advanced power strips block unused electronics from drawing electricity. These new strips look just like your old ones, but do so much more. In home entertainment centers and home office areas where many consumer electronics typically are plugged into a power strip, work by preventing electronics from drawing power when they're not used.

There are a variety of types of advanced power strips to fit variety of needs. If you often fall asleep when watching TV, an advanced power strip with an activity monitor can turn everything off for you. Or if you are diligent about turning all your electronics off when you aren't using them but are concerned about the lingering power draw, a masterless advanced power strip can make sure everything is completely off.

By replacing your standard power strip with an advanced model, you can save energy and money.

2016 ENERGY EFFICIENCY REBATES

UP TO \$100

MAKE A BULB SWITCH

Change out your interior lights and exterior floodlights with LED bulbs and we'll credit your account up to \$100. You'll be glad you did—LEDs are far more efficient and last much longer than old-fashioned incandescent bulbs.

UP TO \$200

BLOCK THE SUN AND ITS HEAT

Adding solar screens to your windows reflects the sun's heat, keeping your home cooler and your energy costs lower. Plus, we're offering a rebate of \$10 per window and up to \$200 total, so why not?

UP TO \$300

MOVE IN A NEW WATER HEATER

Install a new water heater with an energy factor (EF) of 2.0 or greater and Farmers EC will issue you a rebate of \$300. Older models use more energy to heat water for your home, but new units are up to 20 percent more efficient.

UP TO \$500

INSULATION FROM HIGH ENERGY COSTS

Add attic insulation (minimum R-38 value) and get up to \$500 back, or tune-up your HVAC system for a \$50 rebate. There are many energy- and money-saving rebates available now — see rebate rules below and visit FarmersElectric.coop for more information.

Rules:

Only Farmers Electric Cooperative members are eligible for rebates on existing and new homes. The annual rebate cap is \$2000 per membership. Rebates \$100 or less will be credited to your account. Applications must be received within the 2016 calendar year. After all program requirements are met, a rebate will be issued either as a check or as a bill credit to the member's account. Please allow up to 4 weeks after receipt of all documents for the rebate to be processed. Farmers Electric Cooperative reserves the right to verify all projects in order to meet minimum program guidelines. The member may lose the rebate if Farmers EC cannot verify the information provided on the application form. Submission of application does not guarantee a rebate; funding for the program is limited. Once funds budgeted for the rebate program are exhausted, the program ends.



Adding Insulation

Unless your home was designed and constructed with energy efficiency as a goal, your energy bills will likely be reduced by adding more insulation. Older homes have less insulation than homes built today, but even newer homes can benefit from a little extra padding.

You first need to find out how much insulation you already have in your home and where it is. To do this, you can request a home energy audit that includes an insulation check as part of an energy assessment, or you can follow the advice below to do it on your own.

Evaluating Your Insulation

Check the attic, walls, and floors adjacent to any unheated spaces, like garages. Structural elements are usually exposed in these areas, which makes it easy to see and measure the insulation.

Inspect exterior walls through electrical outlets. First, turn off the power to the outlet, then remove the outlet cover and shine a flashlight into the crack around the outlet box. You should be able to see if there is insulation in the wall and possibly how thick it is. Pull out a small chunk to determine the type of insulation, if needed. Check outlets in all areas of your house. Just because you find insulation in one wall doesn't mean it's everywhere.

Inspect and measure the thickness of any insulation in unfinished basement ceilings and walls, or attic crawlspaces. If the crawlspace isn't ventilated, it may have insulation in the perimeter wall. If your house is relatively new, insulation may not be visible. The builder or original homeowner might be able to tell you if exterior insulation was used.

Once you've determined the type of insulation you have in these areas and its thickness, see the U.S. Department of Energy's online insulation fact sheet to determine the R-values.

Deciding How Much Insulation to Add

Once you find out the R-values of your insulation, you can use the Home Energy Saver tool at <http://hes.lbl.gov/consumer/> to determine how much insulation you should add and where for maximum energy efficiency.

Keeping Manufactured Homes Cool



It can be difficult to keep manufactured homes cool in the summer—at least without a high energy bill to show for it. Consider these tips to help keep cool this summer:

Clean or replace your AC unit's filter. Check it once a month during the hot season and clean or replace it whenever it looks dirty.

Clean the condenser's cooling coils. First turn off the unit and its power, then remove debris from the coils and wash gently with soap and water. Allow to dry completely before turning power and unit back on.

Hire a professional. It's a great idea to have a professional technician clean and service your AC unit at the start of summer to make certain its running as optimally and efficiently as possible. Farmers EC even offers rebates for HVAC tune ups.

GOOD TO KNOW



Fans don't cool air in a room, they cool people in a room. A fan's movement of air can make you feel 4 to 6 degrees cooler*, but turn them off when you leave the room to save electricity.



Up to 85% of the electricity that incandescent light bulbs consume is turned into heat. A great reason to switch to LEDs.



A new, energy-efficient refrigerator can save you \$215-\$275** annually on energy costs, but if you move your old one out to the garage, you cancel out most of those savings.



Phone, tablet and computer chargers consume electricity even when they're not charging anything. Unplug them when not in use.

* U.S. Green Building Council <http://greenhomeguide.com/known-how/article/10-ways-to-beat-the-heat>

** Washington Post: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2014/11/26/why-its-not-okay-to-have-a-second-refrigerator/>

JULY DATES

Have a safe
Independence Day.

Farmers EC offices will be closed in observance of the holiday: Monday, July 4

BEAT THE HEAT WITH THESE TIPS

Avoid placing lamps and TVs near your thermostat—it can mistake the heat they give off for heat in the room, causing your unit to run longer and more often.

Set the AC to 78°F instead of 72°F and save up to 18 percent on your bill. Always set your thermostat as high as possible during summer to lower cooling costs.

Consider planting trees to provide shade around your house. You might save \$100 to \$250 on annual cooling costs.

Have your ducts inspected to make sure they're properly sealed and insulated. Households lose an average of 20 percent of their heated and cooled air through ducts to the outside.

Set your water heater to the warm setting (120°F) to save energy. Heating water can account for 14 – 25 percent of energy consumed.

Use your smaller cooking appliances like a microwave, toaster, a counter-top grill or slow-cooker instead of the oven to avoid excess heat and use less energy.

Use a programmable thermostat to automatically turn off your cooling system when you're not home, and turn it on before you get home, while saving you up to \$150 a year on energy costs.

Information provided by:

U.S. Department of Energy: <http://energy.gov/articles/top-11-things-you-didnt-know-about-saving-energy-home-summer-edition>