

Otero County Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Power - Gram



For Outages Please Call: 1-800-548-4660

Visit us at www.ocec-inc.com

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF OTERO COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP

July 2009

Cloudcroft, N.M. 575-682-2521

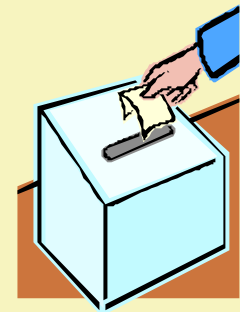
Alto, N.M. 575-336-4550

Carrizozo, N.M. 575-648-2352

A Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative



Annual Meeting of Members



Saturday
August 1, 2009
Cloudcroft High School Gym

Registration
8:30 AM

Business Meeting
10:00 AM

Benefits of Attending Your Annual Meeting

Nominating Committee Report
Old & New Business
Safety Coloring Contest Winner
Win Door Prizes
Enjoy a Good Meal
Get Updated on Coop Issues

Door Prize Give-Away
Election of Three Trustees
Recognition of Scholarship Recipients
Visit With Your Trustees
Visit With Your Neighbors
Have A Great Time

Celebrating 70 Years of Reliable Service to Our Members

Investments in efficiency deliver strong returns

By Megan McKoy

In today's troubled economic climate, people are searching for places to sock away money that offer the promise of a healthy return. While no one can predict when, or if, the stock market will fully recover, crunching a few numbers does show one safe investment alternative: energy efficiency.

Even in good financial times the annual Wall Street return on stocks averages 14 percent, followed by 4.2 percent for 30-year bonds and 3.5 percent for money market accounts. In comparison, incorporating 10 home efficiency measures carries a 16 percent rate of return, according to the U.S. Department of Energy Home Energy Saver program.

Looking at it another way, the energy bill for a typical American home averages \$1,283 per year, while a home that has purchased and installed ENERGY STAR products spends just \$774. That's a savings of more than \$500 annually, a nice profit for smart and efficiency-savvy investors to take to the bank. Even better, you get to keep the money you save on your electricity bill; normal investment incomes are taxed heavily.

The first two energy efficiency areas to invest in those with the highest rates of return are lighting and sealing ducts. Upgrading to compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) and fixtures in a typical home costs about \$200, but with an annual savings of \$80 the initial investment pays for itself in 2.5 years with a 41 percent rate of return. Proper duct sealing, which can cost up to \$250, pays for itself in 2.6 years and matches lighting's high rate of return.

Your next purchase should be an ENERGY STAR front-loading clothes washer. Even though one costs an average of \$194 more than

a non-efficient model, you reap a 37 percent rate of return allowing you to recoup the extra expense in less than three years.

A programmable thermostat provides another boost to your bottom line. With a 30 percent return it pays for itself through energy savings in 3.7 years.

A water heater tank wrap with an R-12 insulation rating should be your next step; the initial cost of \$85 saves you \$23 every year, offering a 28 percent return on your investment. An ENERGY STAR refrigerator, heat pump, and dishwasher follow with rates of return ranging from 18 percent to 27 percent. Finally, adequate air sealing and increasing wall and attic insulation offer between an 8 percent and 9 percent return.

To find out how you can start investing in your home's efficiency, visit Home Energy Saver at www.hes.lbl.gov. You can learn about local promotions for ENERGY STAR appliances and save even more by using the rebate finder at www.energystar.gov.

Meanwhile, Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives offer several efficiency programs at www.touchstoneenergysavers.com, including Touchstone Energy Home (a set of nationally recognized standards for building efficiency), a Home Energy Savings Guide, a Light Bulb Energy Saver calculator showing how much money you can save by using CFLs, and Seal the Deal, a do-it-yourself video showing how to effectively seal your home to lower heating and cooling costs. Source: U.S. Department of Energy Home Energy Saver.

Megan McKoy writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives

Straight Answers on Wind & Solar

For some members, the desire to generate their own energy, and protect the environment can cloud their judgment about good investments. Some Web sites selling residential-sized wind or solar setups will overestimate the energy savings potential and payback period, but www.chooserenewables.com may be different. It has a feature where users enter their zip code for a quick assessment of wind and solar. We found paybacks of 25 years (or more) for locations that we know are poor wind and solar locations. This site may be a useful first step to show members that on-site generation is not a money saving proposition in most locations. Certainly a more detailed assessment of the site (beyond zip code location) should be done, but this may be an easy first step.

OTERO COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

P.O. BOX 227

CLOUDCROFT, NEW MEXICO 88317

- Office hours are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. If service is interrupted, check your fuses and circuit breakers. If all your service is off, check with your neighbors.
- Report promptly if you think the trouble is on Otero County Electric Cooperative, Incorporated lines.
- When problem is on consumers side of the meter, the consumer will be charged for a false call for service.
- Please examine this bill carefully as it will be considered correct if we are not notified within 30 days.
- The statement enclosed does not include payments made after billing date.
- If you desire information on the use of electricity for any job, large or small, do not hesitate to call your Cooperative, come by the office, or write for information at any time.
- FOR EMERGENCIES OR POWER OUTAGES CALL (800) 548-4660.