



# POWER-GRAM

November  
2022

Cludcroft  
575-682-2521  
Alto  
575-336-4550  
Carrizozo  
575-648-2352

[www.ocec-inc.com](http://www.ocec-inc.com)

LOBBY HOURS  
8 AM - 4 PM  
Monday - Friday

TO REPORT AN  
OUTAGE, CALL  
1-800-548-4660

FOR BALANCE  
INFORMATION  
OR TO PAY YOUR  
BILL, CALL  
1-844-846-2695



A Monthly Newsletter for Members of

OTERO COUNTY ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE, INC.

Left: Photo by Adam Raulerson

## Components of Your Electric Bill Explained

Otero County Electric Cooperative's (OCEC) utility bills are broken into parts so consumers know exactly what they are buying. Let's look closer at the most misunderstood part: the system charge. Some electric co-ops call it the facilities charge or customer charge. Some consumers erroneously call it a meter charge. Simply stated, the flat-fee system charge you and your fellow cooperative members pay each month helps to defray a portion of the fixed costs of operating the cooperative.

**What Are Fixed Costs?** In business, costs that do not change with an increase or decrease in the number of goods or services sold are called fixed costs. They are the predictable costs that don't typically change throughout the course of a budget cycle. Fixed costs include the cost of regular maintenance of the poles, wires, substations and other co-op equipment that keeps OCEC delivering electricity to your homes and businesses. Salaries, insurance payments, property taxes, loan repayments, interest expenses and depreciation are all fixed costs. And, yes, even the co-op pays utility bills. Also included in the fixed costs are office equipment and supplies, computers, software, meter reading and monthly billing expenses. Maintaining customer records and communications expenses, such as the text and email messaging system, bill inserts, and *enchantment* count as fixed costs, too. Fixed costs are all things the co-op needs to pay for, whether consumers buy zero kilowatt-hours (kWh) a month or a million kWh. They are the people, equipment, supplies and processes in place that allow us to deliver the energy you buy to your door whenever you want it.

**Who Pays for These Fixed Costs?** No matter how much electricity a particular household uses, the cost of delivering power to that house is the same as the neighbors'. As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, it is expected that operational costs should be spread fairly and equitably across all members. The system charge covers

part of the costs that give each household access to the power the co-op delivers. That is why every member pays a flat fee each month to cover basic operational costs, regardless of the amount of electricity they use. All residential members are charged the same amount for the electric system charge since they all benefit from having power delivered. In essence, this gives each co-op member an equal share in OCEC's operation.

**What About Variable Costs?** OCEC members also have a part of their bills called the energy charge. This shows each member the amount of energy in kilowatt-hours they have used and purchased, and how much it costs them in dollars. This is the part of the bill over which consumers have direct control. If a member wants to pay a smaller bill, they decide to use less energy. If a member wants to heat their house to 72 degrees rather than 68 degrees in the winter, they are choosing to pay a larger bill. The energy cost is also variable because the weather is unpredictable. More or less heating and cooling is needed, for example, depending on the weather, which changes from month to month and year to year. The variability of these costs is why the bill is broken into a system charge and an energy charge. If the fixed costs were tied to the variable costs, there may be some months OCEC would not collect enough to pay its bills. In other months, it might collect more than it needs from members. The monthly system charge members pay ensures they have access to safe, reliable and affordable power when they need it. OCEC appreciates and values the monthly investment each member makes in the co-op, and we strive to use that investment wisely for the benefit of all members of our community.

As with anything, there is a whole lot more to the discussion regarding rates and what you pay for your electric, but this should give you a basic understanding of what makes up your total electric bill.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP

Is your home heating system ready for the winter chill? One of the easiest ways to keep your system running efficiently is to regularly replace filters. If your central air system has a furnace filter, it should be replaced about every 90 days.

If your home is heated through warm-air registers, baseboard heaters or radiators, remember to clean regularly to boost efficiency.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

## Winter Season Disconnect Moratorium Notice

Protection from winter shut-off begins November 15, 2022. To avoid potential disconnection of service please contact the Human Services Department at 800-283-4465, or the appropriate tribal or pueblo entity for eligibility information for Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Your service will not be disconnected from November 15, 2022, through March 15, 2023, if you meet the qualifications of LIHEAP and have no past due amounts or you remain current on any settlement or installment agreement for amounts due as of November 15, 2022. Members of New Mexico tribes or pueblos who need help with translation or with other matters may contact the commission's consumer relations division at 888-427-5772, who will contact the appropriate tribal or pueblo official for assistance.

## Apply to be a 2023 Youth Tour Delegate

OCEC is proud to sponsor delegates to attend the 2023 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for high school sophomores, juniors and seniors to visit Washington, D.C. for a week in June 2023.

OCEC began sponsoring students for the first time in 2017, but the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has brought high school students from across the country to our nation's capital since 1950. And, this year, OCEC will sponsor up to four (4) students to go on this unique trip to watch history come alive as they explore museums, memorials and monuments, visit with U.S. Senators and make friendships that will last a lifetime.

Please encourage students you know to apply for this unique opportunity. Applications may be picked up at your local OCEC office, from your school guidance counselor or at [www.ocec-inc.com](http://www.ocec-inc.com).



# ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR

## Vegetation Management Update

Crews working to trim trees and vegetation in rights-of-way are currently in the following areas and are expected to remain there for the next few weeks.

- High Rolls & Hwy. 130
- Glencoe & Hwy. 380

OCEC reminds members that you may see vehicles, ATVs and crew members from Rogers Tree Service cutting trees near existing power lines. Vehicles will be marked with their company name and an OCEC contractor placard.

## November Employment Anniversary

Wes Gaskill—Vegetation Mgmt. Coordinator—18 years  
Kathy Powell—New Construction Rep.—14 years  
Luisa Ruiz—Member Service Representative—6 years  
Mike Winrow—Meter Reader/Collections Supv.—27 years

## Thank You to Our Veterans

President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed that November 11, 1919 was the first commemoration of our nation's soldiers' sacrifices. Since then, November 11 has been known as Veterans Day—an annual opportunity to show our appreciation for the brave people who have served to protect our country, our liberty and our freedom.

For those who have not served in the military, it can be difficult to understand the sacrifices our nation's soldiers have made: the time away from family and friends, the physical tolls of training and battle, and the emotional scars of combat and service itself. Put simply, we owe our veterans a debt that can never be repaid.

The veterans among us are our sons, daughters, parents and spouses. They are our siblings, friends, board members, co-workers, and many of our nation's homeless.

This November 11, remember those who have fallen and express gratitude—both in words and action—to those who are still here with us.

