

enchantment

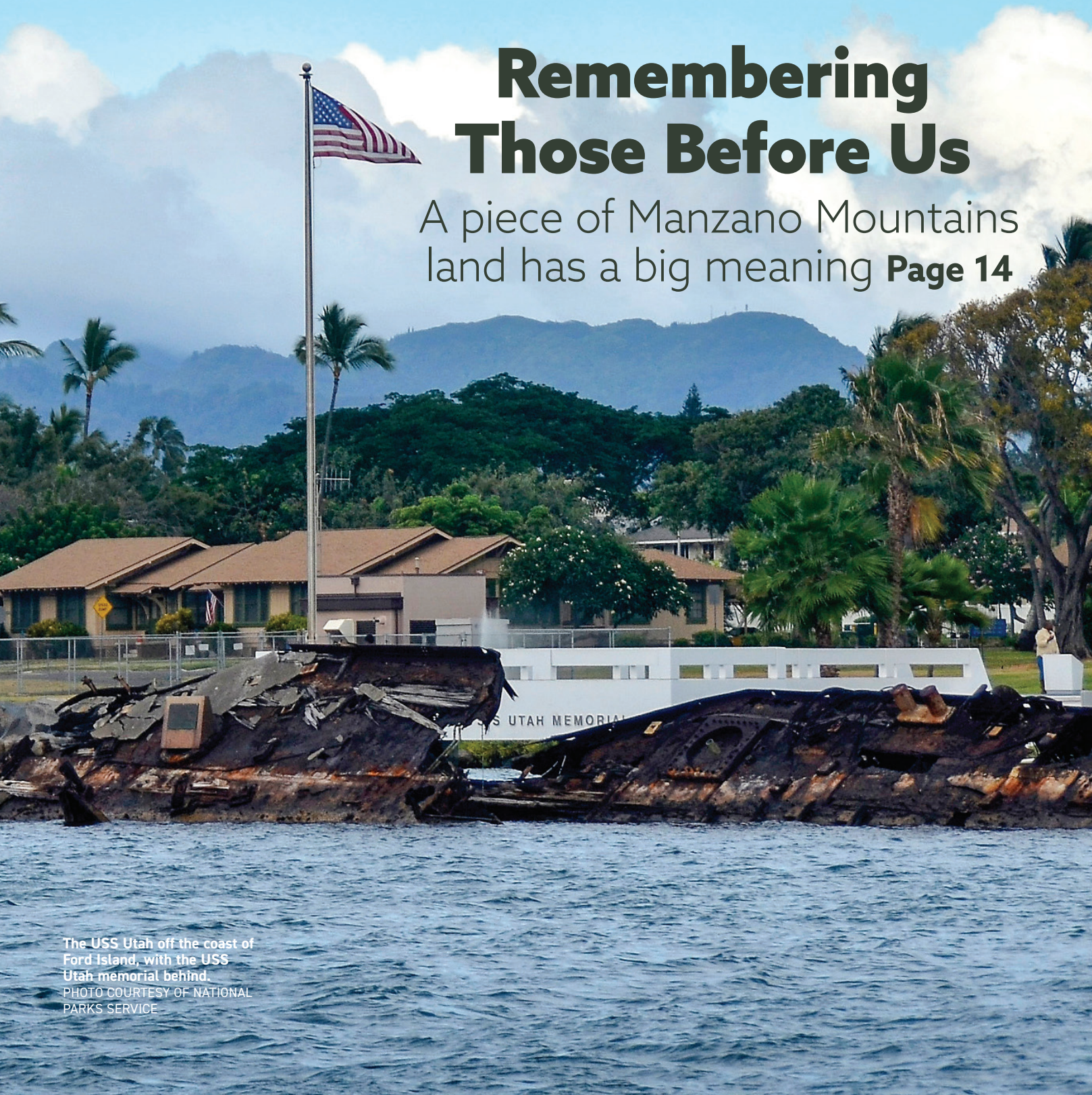
The Voice of New Mexico's
Rural Electric Cooperatives

OTERO COUNTY
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

DECEMBER 2022

Remembering Those Before Us

A piece of Manzano Mountains
land has a big meaning **Page 14**



The USS Utah off the coast of
Ford Island, with the USS
Utah memorial behind.
PHOTO COURTESY OF NATIONAL
PARKS SERVICE



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Office Hours
8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (M-F)

Board of Trustees

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Board Meeting

The board of trustees meets the third Friday of the month at 9 a.m. at the cooperative.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

3 Components of Your Electric Bill Explained

Otero County Electric Cooperative's utility bills are broken into parts so consumers know 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 cooperative members pay each month helps 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 expenses that don't typically change throughout the course of a budget cycle.

Fixed costs include the price of regular maintenance of the poles, wires, substations and other co-op equipment that allows OCEC to deliver electricity to 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 magazines count as fixed costs, too.

Fixed costs are all things the co-op needs to pay for, whether consumers buy zero kilowatt-hours a month or a million kWh. They are the people, equipment, supplies and processes in place that allow OCEC to deliver the energy consumers buy to their doors whenever wanted.

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 nonprofit electric cooperative, it is expected 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 pay an energy charge. This reflects the amount of energy in kWh that each member has used and purchased, and how much it cost them.

Consumers have direct control over this part of the bill. 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 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 strives to use that investment wisely for the benefit of all members of the community.

As with anything, there is a lot more to the discussion regarding rates and what you pay for your electricity. The answers above should give members a basic understanding of what makes up their electric bill.

Apply to be a 2023 Youth Tour Delegate

Otero County Electric Cooperative 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 the nation's capital since 1950.

This year, OCEC will



sponsor up to four 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.

Applications can be picked up at your local OCEC office, from your school guidance counselor or found at www.ocec-inc.com.

Winter Disconnect Moratorium Protects Residents From Utility Shutoffs

Protection from winter utility shutoff began 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.

Your service will not be disconnected 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 which will contact the appropriate tribal or pueblo official for assistance.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Blocked air vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and increase pressure in your ductwork, which can cause cracks and leaks to form.

Ensure all air vents are unobstructed from furniture, drapes or other items to ensure sufficient circulation throughout your home. If necessary, purchase a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect airflow from underneath furniture.

Source: energy.gov



Otero County Electric Cooperative wishes members a merry Christmas and a happy new year!

***OCEC offices are closed
Friday, December 23, Monday, December 26,
and Monday, January 2.***



ADOBE STOCK PHOTO BY LAURITTA