

‘Wascally’ Customer Charge



**MESSAGE
FROM
MANAGER
JERRY D.
WILLIAMS**

If you examine your electric bill, you might notice a line that details a “Customer Charge.” This charge, unlike the other portions of your bill, stays the same whether you use zero electricity or hundreds of kilowatt-hours (kWh).

For most accounts this Customer Charge is \$12.50, whereas a large industrial customer with three transformers instead of one, the charge is \$50. Lots of folks have asked me “What is this fee?” This is the fee you pay to have electricity available. Some call it the Service Availability Charge.

In reality, it is just part of our rate and helps generate the revenue we need to operate. If there were no customer charge, we would have to add the same amount to something else on your bill. It helps pay for the basic infrastructure needed to deliver electricity—from the wires that carry power to your house, to the salaries of the employees who make our co-op run. There are also taxes, insurance and other costs to consider.

The Customer Charge is applied equally to everyone who receives electric service because even if you use zero kWh in a month, it still costs the co-op the same amount to maintain lines, read meters, and calculate and mail bills. You may not realize it, but the transformer at your house uses a lot of electricity just sitting there humming, even though your meter never turns.

Take the example of Elmer Fudd. Mr. Fudd has a cabin he uses only when he’s hunting wabbits during the three months of wabbit season. The hunting cabin is on the same distribution line as another member, Bugs Bunny, who is a year-round resident of the area. They each pay the same monthly Customer Service fee, even though Mr. Fudd doesn’t use electricity for nine of those months.

After a storm hits, the distribution line is damaged. Mr. Bunny and Mr. Fudd both need that line to deliver electricity to their doorstep, and both help pay in the form of the Customer Charge fee for its repair.

Mr. Bunny and Mr. Fudd use the line equally, and both pay equally for its upkeep. That way, when either needs electricity, it is there, just waiting for the flip of a switch.

We think applying this charge equally to all members is the fairest way to ensure everyone pays a share for building and main-

taining our electric system—even during the months when no electricity goes thru the meter.

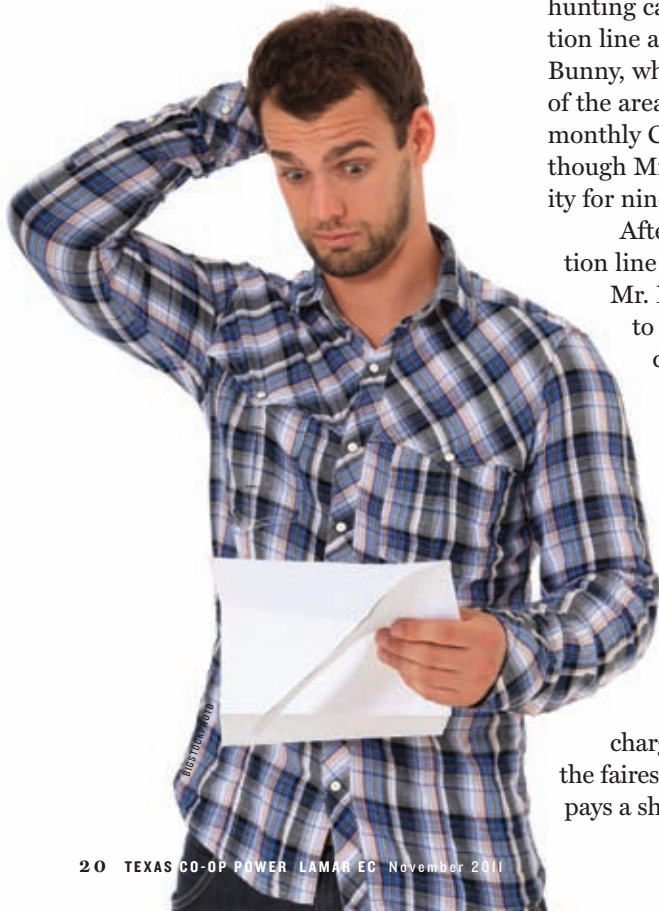
Some have asked me if we could lower the Customer Charge to around \$6. The answer is “we could.” But, in order to get enough money to maintain the electric lines and equipment, we would have to increase the kWh energy charge to make up for the reduction in the Customer Charge.

Reducing the Customer Charge from \$12.50 to \$6 for about 10,000 accounts would reduce revenue by \$780,000 per year. The offset would be to increase kWh energy by about 6/10 of a cent for these same people. Sure, Elmer and Bugs would both have a \$6 Customer Charge every month; but, Bugs Bunny would pay around \$12 more per month for electrical energy when he uses his air conditioner, and \$15 more when the wabbit hole gets dwafty in the winter and his electric heat kicks in. Elmer Fudd may be happy, but not so much for Bugs. Even with a \$6 customer charge the TOTAL amount of Bugs Bunny’s electric bill will now be around \$5.50 to \$8.50 more each month during several months of the year, and that can add up to a lot of carrots. Road Runner, who uses a lot of electricity, would discover he is now paying a lot more and would be forced to cut back on his Ajax purchases.

As it is, all the hunting camps, weekend homes, summer cottages, guest houses, spare wabbit holes, barns, well pumps, boat docks, etc., will pay their fair share of maintaining the electrical system, even during months of little or no kWh usage on their meter.

I hope this has shed some light on this portion of your bill and explains why we apply the charge evenly to everyone.

As always, you can call Lamar Electric Cooperative at (903) 784-4303 to receive further explanation or you can email me at jerry@lamarelectric.coop.



Light Up Holiday Savings with LEDs

Decorating with lights this holiday season? Consider light-emitting diodes (LEDs). They cost a bit more initially but last twice as long as traditional lights, and you'll recoup the difference in three to four years.

EFFICIENT. A string of colored LED Christmas lights will use about 15 cents worth of electricity in the entire 30-day Christmas season. Traditional lights use about \$1.50 per string. Using 10 strings, that's a savings of \$13.50 for the holiday season.

DURABLE. LEDs last about 4,000 hours. They're also made of plastic and less likely to break.

Members can purchase two strings of 70-LED indoor/outdoor colored Christmas lights at our office for \$6 each as long as supplies last.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Give Thanks for Rural Electric Pioneers

They did their work nearly 80 years ago, and most of them have passed away by now. But the legacy of the men and women who petitioned, paid for and built Lamar Electric Cooperative, which serves your neighborhood, lives on every time you turn on the lights, watch TV or charge your cellphone.

This holiday season, give thanks for the pioneers who helped bring electricity to the rural communities and farms that the big electricity companies refused to serve. Perhaps your grandparents or your neighbors' relatives were involved in collecting membership fees or signatures. Maybe you've heard their stories.

Thanksgiving is an appropriate time to recall their sacrifices, their pre-electricity lifestyle and their foresight, which laid the foundation for the at-your-fingertips electric, phone and Internet service that you enjoy today.

When you take your turkey out of your electric oven this season, or when you switch on your electric furnace or heat pump for the first time this fall, remember those who lived without the convenience of electricity—and that they wanted it so badly they literally took matters into their own hands.



'In every thing give thanks.'

—1 Thess. 5:18

Lamar Electric Cooperative wishes you and yours a richly blessed Thanksgiving holiday.

Our offices will be closed Thursday and Friday, November 24 and 25, in observance of the holiday.

Be an Energy Owl, Not a Turkey, This Thanksgiving

You can almost smell it, can't you? A golden brown, perfectly roasted turkey with stuffing. Mashed potatoes with gravy. Zesty cranberry sauce and green bean casserole. Pumpkin pie. Pecan pie. Cherry pie.

It's almost Thanksgiving, and that can mean a big jump in your electric usage. It can mean dishwasher load after dishwasher load of plates and an oven that's constantly on. It could mean your refrigerator door is often open as family members search for hidden goodies. More people in the house means your water heater may struggle to keep up with all the showers and laundry.

Yep, Turkey Day not only can be a strain on your beltline, it can be a strain on your electric bill. This holiday season, opt for these tips when you're cooking up your feast—you'll enjoy both a meal and a little energy savings.

Oven Tips

- Turkey is traditionally roasted for hours. Because it's a long, slow cook, there's no need to preheat your oven, even when the recipe suggests it. This also holds true for a holiday ham. In fact, unless you're baking breads or pastries, you may not need to preheat the oven at all.

- Don't open the oven door to peek inside. Instead, use the oven light and check the cooking status through the oven window. Opening the oven door lowers the temperature by as much as 25 degrees, increasing cooking time.

- As long as your oven is on, cook several items at the same time. Just make sure you leave enough room between items for heat to circulate evenly.

- In an electric oven, you can turn the heat off several minutes before your food is fully cooked, as long as

the door remains closed.

- If you use glass or ceramic pans, you can turn your oven temperature down by 25 degrees.

- If your oven has a self-cleaning feature, consider using it immediately after baking your meal to take advantage of the residual heat.



THINKSTOCK

size of a traditional range—is the ideal choice.

- Electric skillets can do everything a skillet on the stove can do, plus they can double as serving dishes.

- Be adventurous: Many Texans live where the climate is mild enough to cook outdoors. Roast your turkey outside on the charcoal grill. If you haven't tried a deep-fried turkey yet, you're in for a treat. Just make sure you mind your county's burn ban status.

Refrigerator Tips

- Most refrigerators and freezers get a real workout at Thanksgiving. If you've already invested in Energy Star-rated versions, good for you, but they still remain one of the largest energy consumers in your house.

- Keep the doors closed as much as possible. However, leaving the door open as long as you need is better than opening and closing it several times in a row.

- It's easy to keep your fridge and freezer full at Thanksgiving. It's also more

energy efficient. The mass amount of cold items inside will help your fridge recover each time the door is opened and shut. However, don't cram it so full that the cold air can't circulate.

Dishwasher Tips

- One simple and fun way to save energy at holiday time is to gather everyone in the kitchen and wash and dry dishes by hand. Don't keep the hot water flowing at a steady stream: You'll waste more energy than you'll save.

- Always opt for a full load of dishes. If you must rinse your dishes before loading them in the washer, use cold water so your water heater doesn't have to work as hard. And don't forget to use the energy-saving cycle.

Stovetop Tips

- When cooking on top of your range, match the size of the pan to the burner. More heat will get to the pan, and less will be lost to surrounding air. A 6-inch pan on an 8-inch burner will waste more than 40 percent of the energy!

- Clean burners and reflectors provide better heating while saving energy.

Other Ways To Cook

- Fast and efficient microwaves use less energy than ovens, plus they don't heat up your kitchen.

- Slow cookers are perfect for busy families and can cook up a whole meal for about 17 cents worth of electricity.

- If you're baking or broiling small items, a toaster oven—a fraction of the

COUNTRY CORNER EVENTS

November 4

CASA For Kids Annual Fundraiser, Casa Blanca—6 p.m. at Love Civic Center in Paris. Tickets \$10 per person. For reservations, call CASA at (903) 737-4346.

November 12

Chisum Trails Cowboy Church Chuck Wagon Cook-Off—For information, call Carolyn at (903) 739-0560.

November 18

Bike Night on the Plaza—6 p.m. around the Plaza in downtown Paris. For information, call Jeff Miller at (903) 737-4801.

November 19

24th Annual Tinsel & Tidings—9 a.m.-4 p.m.,

Love Civic Center in Paris. Hosted by YWCA of Paris & Lamar County.

All-Star Variety Show presented by American Legion Post 199, For God & Country—1 p.m., North Lamar High School. For information and tickets, call Al at (903) 782-9238. This benefits underprivileged children and the community's disabled and handicapped.

November 24-25

Lamar Electric Cooperative will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday.

November 26

Third Annual Christmas Tree Lighting—6 p.m., north parking lot of the Lamar County Courthouse in Paris.

If you have any events that you would like listed for Delta, Lamar or Red River counties, please contact Marci Thompson. Information must be submitted two months in advance for the magazine. E-mail marci@lamarelectric.coop or call (903) 783-4911.



LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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For general information and outages after hours, call **(903) 784-4303** local or **1-800-782-9010** toll-free

Operating in Lamar, Red River, Delta and Fannin counties

Find us on the web at www.lamarelectric.coop

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YOUR "LOCAL PAGES"

This section of Texas Co-op Power is produced by LEC each month to provide you with information about current events, safety, special programs and other activities of the cooperative. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the local office.

MEMBER BENEFITS:

- Level billing
- Automated meter reading
- Free bank draft service
- E-Bill
- Visa and MasterCard accepted

ATTENTION, STUDENTS!

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

CO-OP TEENS POWER TEXAS

One 30-second TV ad can win you \$1500!



STUDENTS, GRADES 6-12: Make your own TV ad for your co-op and post it on YouTube. You could win a cash prize!

TEACHERS: You could win \$1000 for your school by sponsoring the grand prizewinner.

For full details, go to TexasCoopPower.com



Carter BloodCare

Blood Drive

Give the Gift of Life

Given by: Carter BloodCare
Hosted by: Lamar Electric Co-op (in our parking lot)
Date: Thursday, November 17
Time: Noon to 4 p.m.

Donors earn points for free gifts or gift cards, and each donor will receive a free box of Diogen LED Christmas lights from Lamar Electric. Make sure you eat a good breakfast that morning. Cookies and juice will be provided following donation.

If you have any questions or want to schedule your appointment for that day, you can contact Marci Thompson at (903) 783-4911.