

Expect energy costs to rise in '07

The electricity that is sold to Continental Divide Electric and most of New Mexico's other co-ops is expected to cost more in early 2007, and the increase will be felt by consumers across the state.

While the amount of increase won't be known until later this month, CDEC's average residential consumers can expect to pay a few more dollars per month to power their homes. Currently, standard-rate consumers pay 6.5 cents per kilowatt hour.

The increase is coming from Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association, which sells power to CDEC and 11 other New Mexico electric co-ops. The upward trend will affect everyone.

Despite the best efforts of electric co-ops everywhere, electricity costs are rising because energy demand currently exceeds our available supply. At the same time, fuels (coal and natural gas) needed to generate electricity also are becoming more expensive.

It could be several years before Tri-State is able to generate enough wholesale power for all of its members. In the meantime, it will be forced to buy additional power on the open market, which is more expensive and volatile. And Tri-State member co-ops in New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska will face annual rate increases to pay for the construction of new generation and transmission facilities.

It's important to remember during this uphill climb that we – consumers and co-ops – use energy more wisely. We have the power to be energy efficient and conserve electricity whenever possible.

How do I lower my energy costs?

- In July, Continental Divide Electric included a Home Energy Savings Guide with monthly billing statements. Take a few minutes to read it. It contains valuable cost-saving tips.

- In August, CDEC identified consumers with higher-than-average usage and sent letters informing them of the co-op's new time-of-use rate. The rate is designed to encourage consumers to use less energy during peak hours of 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. As a co-op, we are billed for power based on our system's "peak usage." If we lower our demand, everyone benefits.

- Consider putting your water heater, dishwasher, baseboard heaters and other high-energy appliances on timers. There are individual timers and system control panels designed to reduce the amount of time these energy hogs operate.

- Change the lights you use. Initially, you will pay more for energy-saving compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs). But they use a fraction of the wattage, last much longer and give off less heat. A single 14-watt CFL used in place of a 60-watt incandescent would save you about \$35 on your electric bill throughout the life of the CFL bulb.

Rebates adjusted for ETS heaters

First the bad news: Rebates for Steffes electric thermal storage (ETS) heating units were incorrectly reported in last month's *enchantment*.

The good news is that the actual prices after rebate – shown on the right – are better than those first reported.

Initially, we sized ETS units without taking into consideration new winter peak hours that Tri-State will implement next year. What does that mean?

It means the co-op has to make sure it sells you heaters capable of quicker heat recovery, in case our peak-hour schedule of 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. has to change to be aligned with Tri-State's.

For you, the consumer, it means you are getting the most efficient heaters for your buck. And that buck hasn't changed. If you compare this chart with the one previously published, you'll notice that heater prices remain the same. However, BTU output and the amount of space each ETS unit can heat have changed. That's because we've figured in the possibility that CDEC's peak hours might grow. So, we are now marketing ETS units outfitted with the largest heating elements possible. And because these units are even more energy efficient, they are eligible for an even bigger rebate. Still confused? Call me. We'll talk heaters.

– Mac Juarez, CDEC Member Services, (505) 285-6656

ETS Model*	Space it heats ¹	Output	Old Price	New Price ²
2102-1.32kW Room Unit (plug in)	120 sq. ft.	2,764 BTUs	\$838.00	\$801.04
2102-3.6kW Room Unit	328 sq. ft.	7,541 BTUs	\$808.00	\$707.20
2103-5.4kW Room Unit	493 sq. ft.	11,328 BTUs	\$957.00	\$805.80
2104-7.2kW Room Unit	656 sq. ft.	15,081 BTUs	\$1,119	\$917.40
2105-9.0kW Room Unit	820 sq. ft.	18,868 BTUs	\$1,290	\$1,038
3120-14.0kW House System	1,276 sq. ft.	29,345 BTUs	\$2,449	\$2,019
4120-19.2kW House System	1,749 sq. ft.	40,244 BTUs	\$3,001	\$2,467
5120-19.2kW Hydronic System	1,749 sq. ft.	40,244 BTUs	\$3,230	\$2,696

* Larger models and models with more kilowatt input are available for larger heating spaces.

¹ This represents the average amount of space the model can heat. The model will heat more or less space, depending on insulation values, ceiling height and window space. CDEC will perform a heatloss audit to ensure heating equipment is properly sized for room or home. Buyer will be required to sign a waiver, if he or she chooses to buy equipment that is undersized for home.

² Cost does not include tax, shipping or any accessories that may be needed for heating equipment to operate. Rebate will be deducted from total cost at time of purchase.



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