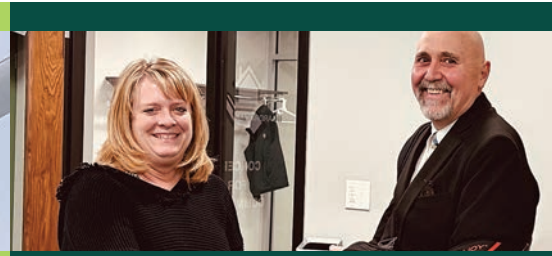
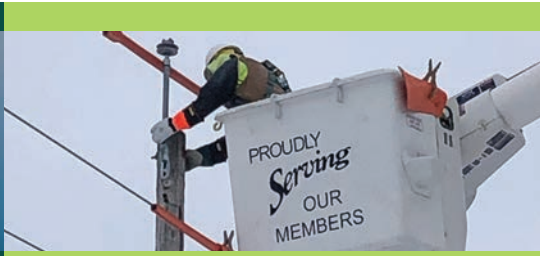




CLARKE
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Safety Driven • Energy Smart • Community Invested

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Volume 83, No. 3 | March 2023

HEADLINES

SAFETY DRIVEN | ENERGY SMART | COMMUNITY INVESTED

Board Approves Service Charge Increase

Financial soundness is important to every business and Clarke Electric is no exception. We recently completed our budget and financial forecasting for 2023 and beyond and found that for us to continue being financially sound, it is essential to increase our monthly service charge.

On Feb. 22, the Board of Directors approved the increase that will affect the price for your electric service beginning in May. For the co-op, it means a budgetary increase of approximately \$515,739 or 3.4%.

We last implemented an increase in 2017 that averaged 3.93%. In the six years since, our operating expenses have increased more than expected. In the

last two years especially, you have probably noticed inflation affecting your wallet when you go to purchase gas, clothing, food or other necessities.

During the pandemic and now as we return our lives back to normal, our vendors continue to play catch up on the supply and demand issues that linger. To help offset the negative impact of this and ensure we have the materials we need to distribute your electricity safely and reliably, we've had to increase our inventory. In a normal year we carry around \$300,000 in inventory but in 2022, we tripled that amount to more than \$900,000 on the books.

continued on pg. 3

COMMUNITY INVESTED



2023 Scholarship Opportunity

High school students should apply by April 1

High school seniors whose parents are members and reside in Clarke Electric Cooperative service territory are eligible to apply for post high school scholarships. The scholarships can be used for college or vocational technical school. Visit www.cecnet.net/scholarships to access and download the application. **The application deadline is April 1.**

The co-op has set aside \$10,000 for scholarships. Applications will be scored by a panel and the size of the award is dependent upon the quality of applications and number of people who apply.

A copy of your transcript and a short essay on why electric cooperatives are important to you must accompany the completed application. See the online application for complete details and more information. 29-14-03-50

Reading pays! We have hidden two of our members' account numbers in this issue. If you find your member location number, call during March to have \$10 deducted from your monthly energy account.

Winter Moratorium Ends

If you are behind on your electric bill, contact Clarke Electric before April 3.

It's that time of year when we emerge from the winter cold and begin to see signs of spring.

For Clarke Electric, it's the time to bring the accounts up to date for our member-consumers who have fallen behind on their electric payments the last few months. Our staff will assist those members who have fallen behind while ensuring all members are treated fairly, paying for the product they consumed.

If your account is past due, and you have not made payment arrangements by April 3, you will be at risk of having your electric service disconnected. *To avoid this, you must pay your electric bill in full by April 3 or request a reasonable payment arrangement for your past due account(s).* On and after April 3, CEC is not required to post a 48-hour disconnection notice on your premises.

Here are some ways we can assist you:

Payment Plans. Member-consumers may be eligible to enter into a reasonable payment agreement with Clarke Electric to pay accumulated debt over time and maintain electric services. If you are past due on your account, contact me or Cori Smith to discuss payment plan terms.

Budget

Billing. For member-consumers with tight budgets, seasonally high electric bills can cause financial difficulties. Clarke Electric's budget billing payment option makes it easier to budget and anticipate. To enroll, contact me or Cori Smith to discuss whether budget billing is right for you.

State of Iowa Resources.

We also encourage anyone who has fallen behind on payment to contact the Iowa Bureau of Energy Assistance at (515) 281-0859 or their local community action agency regarding eligibility for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP is designed to assist low-income families meet the cost of home heating for electric or natural gas service. Applications are accepted at your local community action agency and if eligible may provide a one-time per year payment to assist with heating costs for eligible households.

We are happy to work with you to make sure your account is current to avoid any interruption in service. If your account is past due and you have not made a payment arrangement, please call us before April 3 at (641) 342-2173 or (800) 362-2154.



KIM GRIFFIN
Billing Specialist

THE COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE

Show You Care with RECare

Even though spring is on the way and will bring warmer temperatures, many Clarke Electric Cooperative member-consumers are struggling to catch up on winter heating bills.

As an electric cooperative, Clarke Electric is invested in helping our communities thrive, and that means supporting our low-income member-consumers, too.

RECare is a nationwide program exclusive to rural electric cooperatives that encourages fellow member-consumers to make a one-time or monthly donation that can help alleviate the stress for other member-consumers straining to pay their winter heating bills. Funds may also be used to weatherize the recipient's home to make electricity use more efficient. 05-23-06-00

And don't worry; your donation is directed to a local community action agency for distribution to low-income families in your community.

You can feel good that the dollars you donate are helping your friends and neighbors. It's an easy way to show you care!



Member Authorization Form

Yes, I want to be a part of members helping members through the RECare program.

____ Enclosed is a check with a one-time donation.

____ I would like to make a monthly donation of \$____.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Mail to: RECare, c/o Clarke Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box
161, Osceola, Iowa 50213

Looking Out for You: January Outages

Equipment/maintenance: 2

Vandalism: 1

Unknown: 2



Increase...from pg. 1

Our cooperative has three main ways to collect the necessary funds to meet our operational expenses, our financial institution's requirements and remain financially stable: kilowatt-hour (kWh) sales, the demand charge and the monthly service charge.

Our budget and financial forecast review indicated our best method to increase our co-op revenue is through the monthly service charge. That's the fee that is designated to maintaining and upgrading our aging infrastructure - substations, poles, wires, equipment, right of way clearing, pole inspections, mandated regulatory and safety requirements as well as many

other factors.

The effect of this adjustment on your bill will vary depending on the type and amount of electricity you use. See table below for what we expect the average monthly increase per customer will be.

A written explanation of all current schedules is available from our local office and at www.cecnet.net. If you have any questions, please contact us at (800) 362-2154.

As always, Clarke Electric Cooperative works hard to be your trusted energy source. We will continue to make system and service improvements, so you are comfortable and safe in the place that matters most – your home.

Monthly Service Charge Increase Effective May 1

	Current	Increase	New
Single Phase Residential Above 250 kWh	\$32	\$10	\$42
Single Phase Residential Equal/Below 250 kWh	\$42	\$13	\$55
Single Phase Urban Above 250 kWh	\$22.50	\$7	\$29.50
Single Phase Urban Equal/Below 250 kWh	\$29.25	\$9	\$38.25
Commercial 0-75 kVa	\$85	\$25	\$110
Commercial 75-1,000 kVa	\$105	\$33	\$138
Commercial over 1,000 kVa	\$575	\$180	\$755

Materials Costs Prove Challenging

Pad-mount Transformer - Residential
2020: \$1,672
2022: \$2,857 (+ 71%)

Pad-mount Transformer - Commercial
2020: \$11,636
2023: \$27,442 (+ 135%)

35 ft. pole
2020: \$219
2022: \$375 (+ 71%)

10 kVA Pole Transformer
2020: \$755
2022: \$1,422 (+ 88%)

8 ft. Fiberglass Cross Arm
2020: \$123
2023: \$169 (+ 38%)

15 kVA Pole Transformer
2020: \$780
2022: \$1,574 (+ 102%)

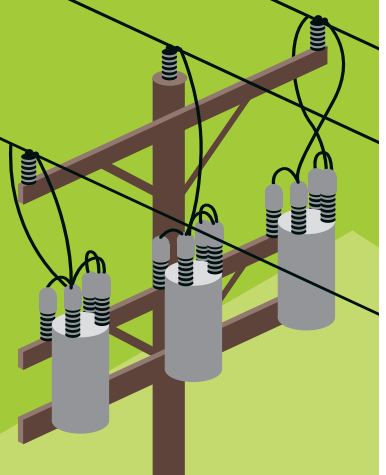
#6 Cooper Ground Wire
2020: \$3.82/lb.
2022: \$6.55/lb. (+ 75%)

Overhead Wire
2020: .18/ft.
2022: .41/ft. (+ 128%)

Underground Primary
2020: \$2.38/ft.
2023: \$4.08/ft. (+ 71%)

Gas Prices
2020: \$2.17
2023: \$3.26 (+ 50%)

Inventory
2021: \$330K
2022: \$900K (+ 173%)



WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU? @ cecnet.net



Statewide outage map



Leased Light Program



SmartHUB



Rebates & Online Forms



Operation Round-UP



Call Before You Dig



Email newsletters



RECare

Board Recognitions



Clarke Electric General Manager Dave Opie, left, presents Board Member Cody Miller with a certificate recognizing his recertification of his Director Gold credential from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. The Director Gold credential recognizes board members who demonstrate their ongoing commitment to advancing their knowledge of electric cooperatives and performing their fiduciary duty to the best of their ability. Thank you, Cody, for your commitment to Clarke Electric!



Dave Opie congratulates Board Member Lydda Youmans for nine years of service to the Clarke Electric Cooperative Board. CEC Board Members serve three-year terms and are elected by, and from, the cooperative membership. Thank you, Lydda, for your commitment to Clarke Electric!

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Washing windows and screens is a great way to practice energy efficiency during spring cleaning. Clean windows and screens make your home brighter by allowing more sunlight in, reducing the need for lamps and fixtures. Clean screens also allow more fresh air in the home when the windows are open to recycle indoor air. Natural light and clean air are energy savers, and they enhance overall health and productivity.



Considering Solar? Call Us First

As solar energy generation increases in popularity, more Clarke Electric member-consumers are considering this option to reduce their carbon footprint. A lower energy bill is also the goal.

We want to make sure you fully understand the true costs, operational reality and potential energy savings that come with a home solar installation. We're here to help. As your trusted energy advisor, Clarke Electric can offer a candid assessment of your specific situation. After all, our "bottom line" is serving you and sharing our experience. We constantly strive to find new ways to help you use energy more efficiently.

We can walk you through considerations to make sure solar is right for you based on your electric use, how to maximize the power you can get from installing solar and potential savings based on our rates.

Before you sign anything, contact our office at (800) 362-2154 or visit www.cecnet.net/residential-solar.



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(641) 342-2173 | (800) 362-2154
cecnet.net

OFFICE HOURS

Mon.-Fri.: 7:30 AM - 4 PM | Outside depository available 24/7

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Ed White
Vice President: Randy Rouse
Secretary: Larry Keller
Treasurer: Lydda Youmans
Asst. Sec./Treasurer: Randy Barnard

Directors
Larry Jackson
Marni Kelso
Cody Miller
Natalie Rydl

GENERAL MANAGER

David Opie

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.