



NorVal News

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2022 Scholarships

NorVal Electric offers a variety of scholarship opportunities for member dependents including the NorVal Electric Scholarship, the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association Memorial Scholarship, the Basin Electric \$1,000 Scholarship and the NorVal Electric Work Force Development Scholarship. The deadline for all of these is February 1, 2023. More information and the scholarship applications can be found on our website at www.norval.coop or you may call the office at (406) 228-9351 with any questions.

Five Ways to Fight Winter Chill and Save Energy

We all have our favorite season. Some people love crisp, cool weather and bundling up under a favorite blanket, while others prefer the warm temperatures summer brings and all the fun outdoor activities that go with it.

But there's one thing we can all agree on: high winter bills are never fun. NorVal Electric is here to help you find ways to manage your home energy use and keep winter bills in check.

Here are five tips to help increase your home's energy efficiency this winter:

1. Mind the thermostat

This is one of the easiest ways to manage your home energy use. We recommend setting your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower) when you're home. When you're sleeping or away for an extended period of time, try setting it between 58 and 62 degrees; there's no need to heat your home when you're away or sleeping and less active.

2. Button up your home

The Department of Energy estimates that air leaks account for 24% to 40% of the energy used for heating and cooling a home. Caulking and weather stripping around windows and doors is another simple, cost-effective way to increase comfort and save energy. If you can feel drafts while standing near a window or door, it likely needs to be sealed.

3. Use window coverage

Open blinds, drapes or other window coverings during the day to allow natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep the cold, drafty air out. If you feel cold air around windows, consider hanging curtains or drapes in a thicker material; heavier window coverings can make a significant difference in blocking cold outdoor air.


4. Consider your approach to appliance use

When combined, appliances and electronics account for a significant chunk of our home energy use, so assess how efficiently you're using them. For example, if you're running the dishwasher or clothes washer, only wash full loads. Look for electronic devices that consume energy even when they're not in use, like phone chargers or game consoles. Every little bit helps, so unplug them to save energy.

5. Think outside the box

If you're still feeling chilly at home, think of other ways to warm up--beyond dialing up the thermostat. Add layers of clothing, wear thick socks and bundle up under blankets. You can even add layers to your home! If you have hard-surface flooring, consider purchasing an area rug to block cold air that leaks in through the floor.

If you're taking steps to save energy but continue to see major increases in your bills, give us a call at 406-228-9351. NorVal's energy experts can help identify areas and other factors impacting your home energy use and recommend next steps for savings.

Winter months often bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. By being proactive about saving energy, you can increase the comfort of your home and reduce monthly bills. Visit our website at norval.coop for additional energy-saving tips. 



Manager's Update

By Craig Herbert, General Manager

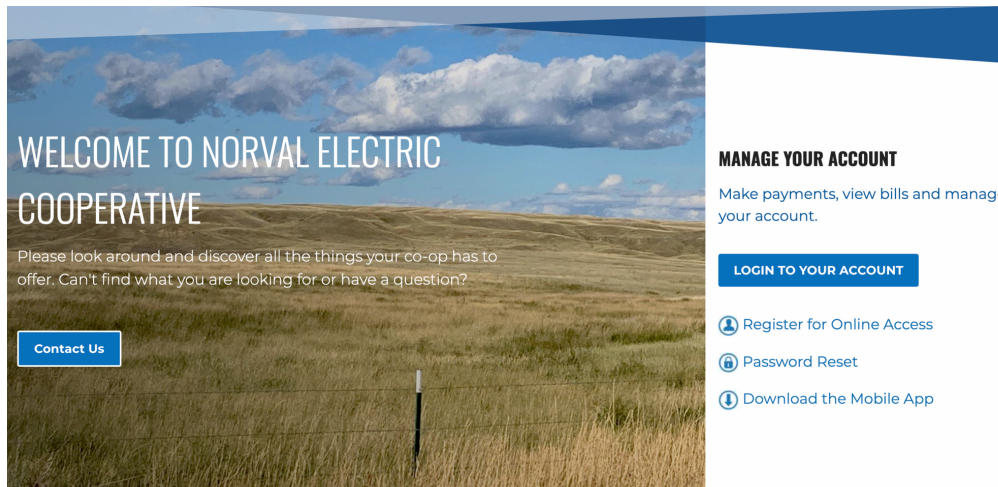
As we approach the end of 2022, I would like to note that our annual meeting was one for the record books. We had great attendance by our members and we received a lot of positive feedback regarding the food and the meeting overall. It is always encouraging to meet with our members and discuss both the challenges and opportunities that our Cooperative faces each day.

One of the topics that was discussed at our annual meeting was Demand, also referred to as capacity. The reason the demand costs are rising is due to the increasing number of baseload generation stations that are being closed. While energy supplies decrease and demand increases, there are unfortunately no solutions to appease each end of the spectrum. Solar and Wind are rising in popularity, but they cannot provide the power needed to maintain our baseline load. Storage batteries have made some advances, but they are far from becoming a viable backup source. Additionally, while the prices of lithium batteries were coming down for a while, they are now climbing rapidly. A large majority of the lithium needed to build rechargeable batteries comes from China and with tensions mounting between China and Russia, we are not expecting much change on the horizon.

If you are interested in seeing your demand for the month, login to your account on our website or through the Smart Hub app to see the details. Contact our office staff if you need help accessing this valuable tool.

Additionally, one of our members asked about electric vehicles. While NorVal has been discussing this topic for quite some time, we will continue to sell the power needed, but we have no plans to own any charging stations. The maintenance on those units, as well as the state and federal tax liability, is not an expense we want to incur. Should charging stations be added to our service territory at the request of a residential or commercial member, the construction costs, along with any of the monthly consumption costs, would be billed to the entity that chooses to install them.

Lastly, I hope that everyone has a wonderful holiday season and a prosperous New Year.



Nick's Notes

By Nick Dulaney, Line Superintendent

2022 was a busy year, but as winter weather arrives, the time has come to put away the trencher. Our crews will be upgrading meters in the Lustre, Volt and Wolf Point areas in the coming months. As 2022 comes to a close, we will be concentrating on our year end tasks – closing work orders, physical inventory, mapping updates and updating our continuing property records so that we can begin planning our 2023 workload. Our crews also use these winter months to catch up on right of way clearing. With the leaves off the trees, our clean-up process is much easier after cutting and chipping. If you are aware of any trees in your area that might need trimming, or that could cause problems around our power lines, please call our office so we can address the issue in the field.



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.

Make sure 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 air flow from underneath furniture.

Source: [energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov)

