

EFFECTIVE WAYS To Lower Home Energy Use

Outside factors, such as fuel and equipment costs and extreme weather, can impact electricity prices. But you have the power to control home energy consumption by taking proactive steps to reduce energy use.



Thermostat Management

The thermostat is one of the best places to lower your energy use because heating and cooling account for a significant portion of home energy consumption. During winter months, adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting to reduce energy use. The Dept. of Energy recommends 68 degrees or lower.



Utilize Off-Peak Energy Times

Plan energy-intensive chores and tasks, such as running the dishwasher or washing clothing, during off-peak energy hours, when the demand for electricity is lower. Off-peak times are early in the morning or late evenings. By scheduling these activities during off-peak periods, you can help keep rates lower, reduce demand and relieve pressure on the grid.



Seal Your Home

According to ENERGY STAR®, about 20% of heated or cooled air that moves through a home is lost due to lack of proper insulation and air leaks. Ensure your home has sufficient insulation levels and seal air leaks around windows and doors with caulk and weatherstripping. This is a simple, effective way to lower energy use and improve indoor comfort.

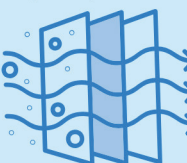


Maintain Equipment

The health of your heating and cooling system is essential for comfort and can greatly impact energy bills. Maintain your system by regularly replacing dirty filters and scheduling annual inspections for maintenance and necessary repairs.

CHUNK THOSE OLD FILTERS! Keep your air fresh and clean with **FilterEasy**

Regularly replacing your air filters is essential for maintaining a healthy and efficient home environment. Clean air filters improve indoor air quality, reduce allergens, and help your HVAC system run more efficiently, saving you money on energy bills. Regardless of the season, it's important to check and replace your air filters regularly.



For added convenience, consider a subscription service like FilterEasy, which delivers new air filters right when you need them. Visit bigcountry.coop/filtereasy-air-filters for more information.

OPERATION ROUND UP

Deadline: February 18, 2025 by 5:30 PM

The Operation Round Up program is supported by BCEC members whose electric bills are "Rounded Up" to the nearest dollar. The "Rounded Up" amounts fund Operation Round Up for distribution to individuals and organizations with demonstrated financial need in the counties we serve.

Every penny stays right here at home!

Operation Round Up welcomes applications from:

Local organizations that provide essential community services, including food banks, shelters, medical assistance, rescue organizations, educational projects, childcare programs, and more.

Families and individuals facing financial hardships due to life-altering circumstances.



Visit bigcountry.coop/Operation-Round-Up or contact Krysha Burlison at kburlison@bigcountry.coop.

A Balancing Act: ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AND DEMAND

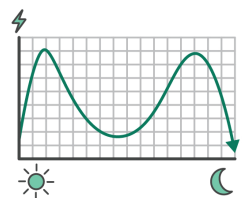
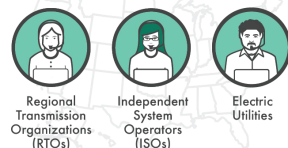
Behind the scenes, a network of people and facilities work together to ensure you have electricity when you flip the switch.



Electricity is generated at a power plant, then sent across the grid to homes, schools and businesses.

The amount of electricity generated and how much is sent to where it's needed are typically coordinated and monitored by regional grid operators that essentially act as energy traffic managers.

Regional Grid Operators



As electricity demand varies throughout the day, grid operators, power plant operators and electric utilities work to forecast, plan and purchase enough electricity for everyone.

Ensuring communities have the exact amount of electricity they need is a challenging task, but behind the scenes, a network of industry experts make it happen every day.



Factors that Impact Electricity Supply and Demand



- Demand Surges
- Extreme Temperatures
- Infrastructure Costs and Availability
- Supply Chain Challenges
- Fuel Costs
- Federal and State Regulations



BIG COUNTRY
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Membergram

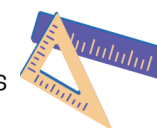
ATTENTION: MOMS, DADS, & GRADS!

Scholarships are available through BCEC and our affiliates. Don't miss out on these opportunities!

BCEC ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP

Deadline: March 1, 2025

Two \$4,000 scholarships for graduating seniors whose parents/guardians are BCEC members.



GSEC DIRECTORS' MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Deadline: March 1, 2025

Several \$2,000 scholarships for graduating seniors whose parents/guardians are BCEC members.



TREWA SCHOLARSHIP

Deadline: March 15, 2025

Twenty \$1,500 scholarships for TREWA members (\$10 annual fee) and their children.



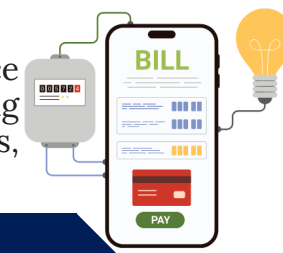
For full details and applications, visit bigcountry.coop/scholarships.

Please contact Krysha Burlison at (325) 776-3803 or kburlison@bigcountry.coop.

Important Billing Update

As you are likely aware, monthly bills reflect members' usage from the previous month. Unfortunately, we had some technical issues with our meters sending in the recorded usage reports from December 30 and 31 during the time January bills were prepared, which means those two days were not reflected in the January bill. Instead, they will be accounted for in this month's (February's) bill.

We apologize for the inconvenience and appreciate your understanding and patience. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.



www.bigcountry.coop

February 2025

OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFETY



We are proud to recognize the dedication of our employees at the cooperative, who have reached an impressive milestone — **7 years without any lost time incidents**. This achievement reflects their ongoing commitment to maintaining a safe and efficient workplace.

At BCEC, the safety of our employees and the public is our top priority. As part of this commitment, we adhere to our Safety Creed: *"No task is so important that it involves violating safety rules; BCEC places safety as our number one priority safeguarding our health, livelihood, reputation, and environment."*

Each year, we conduct eleven employee safety meetings covering essential topics such as pole-top and bucket rescue, hazardous recognition training, safety data sheet training, bloodborne pathogens training, forklift certification, CPR, and first aid. Additionally, we offer safety demonstrations at area schools and community organizations upon request.

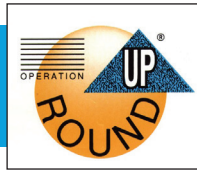
Another way we ensure the safety of our employees and the public is through our Safety Analysis Team (SAT), which plays a key role in our safety efforts. Comprised of a rotating group of nine employees from across all district offices, along with our Safety & Training Manager, Robert Pippin, and Safety & Compliance Specialist, Cody McClintock, who serve as liaisons to the team, the SAT meets monthly to ensure open communication between employees and management. The team provides valuable feedback, raises concerns, and brings forward ideas to continually improve our safety practices and meetings.

We sincerely thank our employees for their vigilance and adherence to safety protocols. Their dedication ensures we can continue providing reliable and efficient service to our valued members.

Let's recognize this significant achievement and remain committed to prioritizing safety in all our operations.

7 YEARS
NO LOST TIME





Committed to Community

For complete information about our Operation Round Up program or to opt out of participation, visit bigcountry.coop/operation-round-up.

Celebrating Thomas Edison: The Father of Modern Electricity

Did you know that Thomas Edison's birthday is this month? It's a perfect opportunity to reflect on his monumental contributions to the world of electricity and how they resonate within our electric cooperative community today.

Thomas Alva Edison, born on February 11, 1847, is often celebrated as one of history's greatest inventors. He held over 1,000 patents, with the incandescent light bulb and the phonograph standing out as some of his most famous innovations. Edison's relentless drive to bring light to the world has a profound connection to the mission of electric cooperatives, like ours, dedicated to providing reliable and affordable electric service to our members.

Much like Edison's approach to problem-solving and innovation, our cooperative thrives on community involvement and collaboration. His belief in making technology accessible to all echoes our commitment to ensuring every member of our community benefits from electricity, a resource many take for granted.

Edison's pioneering work laid the groundwork for the expansive electrical grids we rely on today. His dedication to innovation continues to inspire the advancements in sustainable energy and smart technology that electric cooperatives all over the nation implement.

As we honor Thomas Edison's birthday, we also celebrate the ongoing commitment to innovation that drives our cooperative forward—just as it did for Edison over a century ago. Let's remember how his inventions have illuminated not just our homes but the path forward for technological progress and continue to work together, inspired by Edison's vision, to build a brighter and more sustainable future for our communities.

What Happens to Unclaimed Capital Credits?

At Big Country Electric Cooperative, we believe in rewarding our members for their continued support. As part of our cooperative structure, we distribute capital credits to members based on their usage and the cooperative's financial performance. However, sometimes members move, pass away, or can't be located, and their capital credits go unclaimed.

Keep Your Contact Information Up to Date

To ensure you don't miss out on any capital credits, it's important to keep your contact information—such as your address, phone number, and email—up to date with us, even if you're no longer receiving service from the cooperative. If you've moved or closed your account, make sure we have your current details so we can continue to notify you of any capital credits that may be due to you.

Where Do Unclaimed Capital Credits Go?

If capital credits remain unclaimed for an extended period, Texas law requires that they be turned over to the state's Unclaimed Property Fund. If you or a family member think you might have unclaimed capital credits, you can easily search for them through the Texas Comptroller's Office.

How to Search for Unclaimed Funds

To check if you or a family member has unclaimed capital credits, visit the Texas Comptroller's Unclaimed Property website at <https://claimit.texas.org>. Simply enter your name or the name of a family member to see if there are any unclaimed funds available.

Don't miss out on what's rightfully yours—take a moment to search today!



Ongoing System Maintenance

As part of our ongoing maintenance program, crews are changing out poles on Wetzel and Garza substations. This phase covers areas southwest of Roby, including FM 419, Claytonville, and towards Rotan, such as the Fisher County Hospital. Additionally, it includes areas around the Garza Substation, extending north and west towards HWY 669 and south towards Fluvanna.

What to Remember:

- You may experience brief outages while crews work on pole replacements and other maintenance.
- Crews will attempt to notify residents directly before any outages.
- Our goal is to minimize disruptions and complete the project as quickly as possible.

We appreciate your understanding as we work to enhance the reliability of our service.

Which Irrigation Rate Option Suits Your Needs?

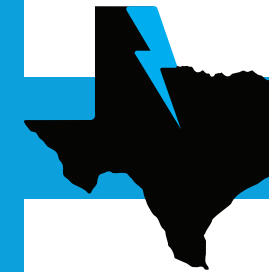
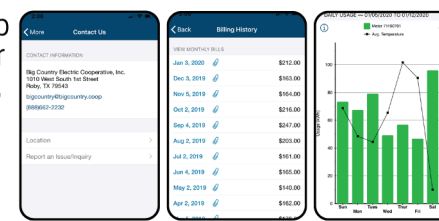
Each year, irrigators are provided with the opportunity to select options that best suit their needs. BCEC offers the following irrigation options:

- A** Flat Rate: Uses one set charge for all kWh used.
- B** Stepped Charge: Involves a stepped charge structure where a portion of the usage incurs higher charges, while the remaining usage is billed at lower rates. This option is more economical for irrigators who water more than 45% each month.
- C** Off-Peak Usage: Allows usage during a set off-peak period during the month. Usage during the on-peak period results in an on-peak demand charge. This option is best for those who can water during the off-peak periods.

It's important to note that irrigation options are selected annually and cannot be changed during the year once the selection has been made. The annual horsepower charge is billed in April. Letters, or emails for those who have opted in, will be sent out to irrigators outlining irrigation options and corresponding rates. Alternatively, you can be proactive and fill out the form online at bigcountry.coop/form/irrigation-rate-options. Please call us if you have any questions.

Are you utilizing SmartHub?

Download SmartHub today to check your usage, pay your bill, report outages, update contact information, and more!



www.bigcountry.coop

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday: 7:30-12:00, 1:00-5:30
Friday: 7:30-11:30

Contact Us

Toll Free: 1-855-940-3872
Roby: (325) 776-2244
Stamford: (325) 773-3684
Snyder: (325) 573-3161

Report Outages

Please **call** your local BCEC office to report power outages.



We're Mobile!



Access your BCEC account anytime with SmartHub! Download the app for your mobile device today by visiting www.bigcountry.coop or searching for SmartHub in the app store.

Ask about our partnerships with:



 **Rural Development Assistance Available Through BCEC**
BCEC is an Equal Opportunity Lender.

Big Country Electric Cooperative, Inc. has a limited amount of funds available for low-interest loans to qualified applicants to stimulate rural development. Applicant does not have to be a member of Big Country Electric Cooperative. Please contact Sarah McLen at smclen@bigcountry.coop for details.



Call 811 at least 2 working days before you dig.
Visit www.texas811.org for more information.

Agricultural Tax Exemptions - In order to claim an exemption from Texas sales and use taxes on electricity and other items used in agricultural and timber operations, you are required to provide us with a registration number on Texas Agriculture Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certification Form 01-924. All water wells should be exempt if used for irrigation or watering livestock. The Texas Comptroller's Office issues the registration number and those wanting to claim the exemption must fill out an application. Registration numbers must be renewed every four years. Applicants can request a paper application to mail in by calling 1-800-252-5555 or download a copy from the comptroller's website, www.getreadytexas.org. The generic exemption certificate, Form 01-339, cannot be used to claim the agricultural exemption. Accounts that do not have the new required form on file will be subject to taxation.
Commercial Tax Exemption Records - A completed and signed exemption form is required for each commercial tax exempt account. Accounts that do not have current exemptions on file will be changed to taxable accounts. Any refunds for taxes must be claimed from the State of Texas. Thank you for your help.