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US electricity prices are going up. What can consumers do? **PAGE 2**

■ Many Ways to Pay

Members have options when it comes to bill payments. **PAGE 3**

■ Sweet Potato Pie

A gourmet twist on an old-fashioned holiday favorite. **PAGE 4**



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PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Pay online at www.ecoec.com using SmartHub, or download the app.
- Pay by phone using VISA, Mastercard or Discover at **866-999-4584**. Available 24 hours a day. Convenience fee associated with payments.
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- Pay via automatic draft of your checking or savings account. Sign up online or download the ebill form for easy automatic payments at www.ecoec.com.

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Increase Minimal to Member Rates

In 2005, the cost of a loaf of bread was about \$1.43, and a dozen eggs were \$.98. Gasoline was about \$3.03/gallon.

Over the past ten years, these items and most everything else have increased in cost. But your electricity rate hasn't increased – it has remained the same.

"We are trying our best to have both rates and fees that more closely represent the cost of providing service."

TIM SMITH, GENERAL MANAGER

For East Central Electric Cooperative, the cost of doing business has increased as the price of needed equipment and supplies have gone up. Just as you have been affected by rising prices, so has your electric co-op.

"Due to the increase in the cost of doing business, and our

commitment to being in sound shape financially, the board of trustees feels it's necessary to generate more revenue through an increase in certain charges and rates, explains Tim Smith, East Central Electric general manager.

"The trustees are strongly committed to the cooperative providing reliable electric service at the lowest possible cost. Because of that commitment, they recently completed an analysis of rates prepared by an independent consulting firm, C.H. Guernsey & Co."

"After they had reviewed the report, the board decided that in order to maintain the co-op's financial integrity and meet the requirements of our lenders, a slight increase is necessary," he adds.

"Our members will see an overall increase of 2.9 percent," he says. "There will also be some changes to our miscellaneous fees. Our new fees will be more

representative of the costs the co-op incurs for these services."

"Some of the more common fees are disconnect fees, after-hours re-connects, late payment penalties, and returned check charges. These fees are all voluntary and are charged only when our members choose these services," he says. "We are trying our best to have both rates and fees that more closely represent the cost of providing service."

"East Central is fortunate in that we have a board that is so committed to maintaining a high level of efficiency and service while keeping rates as low as possible," says Smith. "This is not an easy decision for the trustees. They are consumers also, and they understand how an increase like this can affect a household budget. That is one of the reasons they are choosing to keep the increase minimal so that East Central will continue to be one of the most affordable electricity providers in the state."

operation roundup **update**

Operation Roundup funds support local charitable organizations, civic groups, youth programs, community services, and needy families and individuals. For more information on this voluntary bill roundup program, please visit www.ecoec.com.

Figures to date:

Applications reviewed.....	661
Applications granted.....	472
Applications denied.....	177
Applications tabled.....	12
Scholarships awarded.....	\$128,000
Total Disbursements.....	\$1,234,160.54
Average member contribution.....	44¢



