



Season's Greetings

From the Directors
and Employees of
Shelby Electric Cooperative,
Shelby Energy Company,
PWR-net High Speed Internet,
and Shelby Fiber Broadband

Offices Closed

Your cooperative offices will be closed on December 25 and 26 to celebrate Christmas. Offices will also be closed on January 1, 2024, to celebrate New Year's Day.



For food safety questions, contact the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline.

- Call 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854)
- Visit www.fsis.usda.gov or foodsafety.gov

Turkey cooking questions? Butterball® Turkey Talk-Line™ is there to help!

- Call 1-800-BUTTERBALL (1-800-288-8372)
- Text 844-877-3456
- Live Chat at butterball.com



REMINDER: December 31, 2023 is the application deadline for the 16 Thomas H. Moore IEC Memorial Scholarships. The LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker's Scholarship deadline is April 30, 2024. Visit shelbyelectric.coop and click on the "Community" tab for more information or call us toll-free 1-800-677-2612.



Factors that impact your electric bill

Quite often we get asked what impacts electricity prices, as we see how the daily cost of living has increased across the board.

Just as inflation has impacted everything from the price of gasoline to the price of eggs, costs for the fuels required to produce electricity have also risen.

While there is no short answer, there are a few key elements that impact electricity prices and rates. Some of these factors Shelby Electric Cooperative (SEC) can manage, some of them you can impact, and other factors are beyond our control. So, let's break it down.

There are three primary parts to your monthly electric bill: a service availability charge, an energy charge, and a Power Cost Adjustment (PCA). To understand your total energy costs and what impacts your bill, let's unpack one piece at a time.

The first is a fixed monthly service availability charge, which covers the costs associated with providing electricity to your home. This includes equipment, materials, labor, and operating costs necessary to serve each meter in SEC's service territory, regardless of the amount of energy used. In

order to ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local system, including power lines, substations, and other necessary equipment. Like many other businesses, we have experienced supply chain issues and steep cost increases for some of our basic equipment. For example, the cost for a 15 kVA distribution transformer (which looks like a long metal can at the top of a power pole) went from \$920 in 2021 to \$1,418 this year, and wait times to receive this essential equipment are up to 57 weeks. Because we are a not-for-profit cooperative, some of these expenses must be passed on to our members. Please note that the service availability charge is the same for everyone, and the costs are shared equally across the membership.

Another component of your monthly bill is the energy charge, which covers how much energy you consume. You have likely noticed the amount of energy you use can vary from month to month and is typically impacted by extreme temperatures. When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling and heating equipment run longer, which increases your home

energy use. Regardless, energy consumption is an area that you have some control over, and you can lower your monthly bill by actively reducing energy use. Your thermostat is a great place to start, so be sure to keep it close to 78 degrees during summer months and 68 during winter months.

The last component of your bill is the power cost adjustment (PCA), which is the same amount for all SEC members. The PCA recently increased because of higher fuel prices, which means the power that SEC purchases from our wholesale provider (Prairie Power, Inc.) is more expensive. The PCA covers fuel cost fluctuations without having to continually restructure electricity rates.

Hopefully this information sheds light on some of the factors that impact electricity prices. While we cannot control the weather or the rising costs of fuels, please know that SEC is doing everything possible to keep internal costs down.

We are here to help you, too. Contact us if you have questions about your energy bill or for advice on how to save energy at 217-774-3986.

SHELBY News

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or 1-800-677-2612
Pay-by-Phone:
1-855-385-9981
www.shelbyelectric.coop
twitter.com/YourCoop
facebook.com/YourCoop

Office Hours:
7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

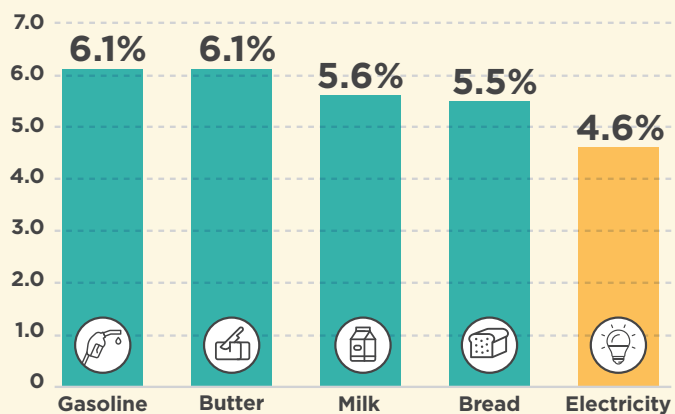


Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

Average Annual Price Increase 2017-2022

Percent



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
 Consumer Price Index



• THE TWELVE DAYS OF • **SAFETY** HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

The holidays are a joyful time to spend with family and friends, but a careless mistake could put a real damper on your festivities. Here are 12 safety tips to keep in mind this holiday season.

- 1 Never leave a burning candle unattended.** On the first day of safety, we remind you to extinguish any lit candles when you leave the room, your house, or go to bed. According to a National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) study, candles start more than half of all home decoration structure fires, and most of those fires occur in December.
- 2 Turn off tree lights, decorations, and portable space heaters when away or asleep.** Did you know that local fire departments respond to more than 50,000 fires involving heating equipment and more than 700 caused by decorations each year?
- 3 Never throw wrapping paper in the fire.** On the third day of safety, remember to never toss wrapping paper into the fireplace. Doing so could result in a flash fire, because wrapping paper can ignite suddenly and burn intensely.
- 4 Only use outdoor and indoor lights as indicated on their packaging.** On the fourth day of safety, we remind you to only use lights tested for safety by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. Lights for both indoor and outdoor usage must meet different standards that testing laboratories can verify. Before using, be sure to check each set of lights — whether new or old — for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Throw out damaged sets and do not use electric lights on a metallic tree. Check outdoor lights for labels showing the lights have been certified for outdoor use and only plug them into a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI)-protected receptacle or a portable GFCI.
- 5 Do not overload circuits, extension cords, or electrical sockets.** Overloading circuits, extension cords, or electrical sockets could cause a fire. Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord.
- 6 Never leave cooking or baking unattended.** Most people don't realize that cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and that, as reported by the NFPA, unattended cooking equipment is a factor in one-third of reported home cooking fires and half of the associated deaths. Be especially careful when you are using the stove or cooktop and while frying foods. Always stay in the kitchen — even if you are baking or roasting — and set a timer to remind yourself to check on food that is cooking.
- 7 Keep holiday plants away from pets.** On the seventh day of safety, we remind you to keep festive holiday plants, including poinsettias, mistletoe, and holly out of your pets' reach. Ingesting any of these may cause a mild range of symptoms ranging from an upset stomach to low blood pressure.
- 8 Check your smoke alarm battery.** On the eighth day of safety, we remind you that smoke alarms should be tested regularly, and the batteries replaced at least twice a year. Mark your calendar to check your alarm when changing your clock to and from daylight saving time. A working smoke alarm cuts your risk of home fire death in half.
- 9 Celebrate small and don't drink and drive.** If you plan on attending a gathering, remember every year hundreds of people die in drunk driving accidents during the holiday season. If you plan to drink alcohol, make sure you have a designated driver or use a ride share app to get you and your loved ones home safe and sound.
- 10 Choose a fire-resistant artificial tree and be sure to water a natural tree daily.** On average, more than 200 house fires are caused by Christmas trees each year. To prevent this from happening to you, we remind you on the tenth day of safety to exercise caution when placing, decorating, and maintaining your tree. Position your tree at least three feet away from heat sources and remember to keep natural trees watered.
- 11 Maintain woodburning fireplaces and chimneys.** Nothing is cozier than relaxing by the fire, but it is especially important to have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional. Also, keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from the fireplace and maintain a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- 12 Travel safely and don't overshare on social media.** Social media is a great way to share what you and your family are doing for the holidays. However, if you are leaving your home for an extended period, we remind you on the twelfth day of safety not to put your plans or pictures on social media until after you return. You could be unintentionally inviting thieves to break into your house while you're away.

Be aware of scams and frauds

It is the world we live in today — the necessity to pause and consider before we click, answer, or respond to someone seeking information. No industry, person, or business is off limits to scammers, who even try to con their way into the utility industry. The Better Business Scam Tracker reports that victims usually lose an average of \$274 in financial scams and \$500 in utility scams annually.

When it comes to power bills, scammers make threatening phone calls to consumers to demand immediate payment, or else they threaten that your service will be shut off. This deceiving claim is often made during the height of summer or winter when people want to stay comfortable during the extreme heat or cold. Shelby Electric Cooperative always sends the initial disconnection notice in writing.

Utility scams: How they get you

Scammers request that immediate payment be wired, loaded on a reloadable gift card or debit card, or sent using cryptocurrency (a digital money system that does not rely on banks for verification). Only scammers request this type of payment and threaten immediate service disconnection if payment is not made. Do not provide any information (including your account number) or agree to immediate payment; instead, hang up and call your utility. Consumers should trust their gut reaction; if it seems like a fraud, it probably is.

Protect personal info

When supplying your utility (or any business or individual) with sensitive information, such as a social security number, proof of address or death certificate, do not email the information. Additionally, do not give out sensitive information to anyone over the phone. Verify the phone number and call the utility directly to discuss any matter that



would involve providing personal information. In general, some companies have password-protected and secure methods to obtain personal information via an app or online portal. You should always verify this before using.

At your door

The famous song by Paul McCartney, titled “Let ‘Em In,” features the artist’s welcoming plea, “Someone’s knockin’ at the door; Someone’s ringin’ the bell ... Do me a favor; Open the door and let ‘em in,” but that is not always great advice these days.

Door-to-door scams may involve impersonators of utility workers saying the meter is broken or offering to perform other repairs or an energy audit — all at the consumer’s cost. Your utility will contact you in advance, prior to arriving at your home for service or for any other reason. Do not let someone in the house that doesn’t have an appointment scheduled with you.

Scams in general

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) warns that phishing emails and texts attempt to convince individuals to make payments or provide personal information. Fake numbers and links can appear in emails and texts. Thieves use

stolen information to open accounts and pass charges on to their victims.

Caller ID can fib

Over the phone, calls appearing to be local are not always an accurate assessment of who is calling. AARP has a fraud watch network that provides alerts of new frauds. To learn more, do an internet search for the fraud watch network.

Scams are everywhere

Non-utility related scams may include the announcement of an inheritance or a pop-up on your computer screen warning that technical support is needed. There are even puppy purchase cons where cute and often sought-after breeds are offered in all their puppy cuteness, but scammers take your money and run. There are student loan forgiveness scams and one-time password program scams.

Hackers even prey on the many smartphone users who have cracked screens. It is called the “chip in the middle attack,” in which scammers get a hold of a screen replacement and install it on your phone with a spyware chip. Always verify a screen-fix-it phone number or take your phone to a store/servicer you trust. If a search engine cannot verify the company, do not trust it.

No matter the scam, the goal of the scammer is to gather personal information. Stay safe: Do not share Social Security numbers, account details, credit card numbers, bank information, death certificates or birth dates. Thieves can use this information to steal your identity.

During the holiday season, there is an increase in scamming incidents so do not be a statistic and fall for a scam. If you become a victim, report it immediately to the local police and your financial institutions. Blocking unknown callers and keeping software updated is one way consumers can protect themselves on all of their devices.