



Electric rate increase ... the five Ws

For months, SIEC has been preparing members for an electric rate increase by discussing details at our last annual meeting in August, and in articles published in our local newspapers, Illinois Country Living Magazine, and on Facebook and our website.

What?

Yes, unfortunately SIEC must implement an average electric rate increase of 9.22 percent for 2012.

When?

The rate increase goes into effect for members' usage this month. The increase will be seen on electric bills due in March. Harold L. Hurst

Why?

There are several reasons for the necessary rate increase such as increased infrastructure maintenance costs, low growth in kilowatt-hour (kWh) sales and increased wholesale power costs from Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC). For a detailed explanation of these factors, please go to www.siec.coop or call SIEC at 1-800-762-1400 for copies of recent rate increase articles.

Who?

This increase affects all of our members. The 9.22 average percent increase is just that....an average. Some members may see more or less.

Where?

The cost of generating power is rising rapidly across our entire nation. Almost everyone is feeling the impact of higher electric bills. Marketers are aware of this so please don't become scammed by companies promising lower electric rates to members who switch their power generators (not distributors). Please ignore these solicitations for two reasons: (1) Solicitations are meant for investor-owned utility customers, not cooperative members. (2) If you notice the fine print on the mailings, some of these companies will not guarantee the savings promised. Ultimately, switching could cost customers much more in the long run.

Help!

What can be done to help ease this impact on your pocket book? One of the best methods to help control monthly electric bills is to be aware of your energy usage every day. Are you using electricity during peak hours? Are you turning off lights when you leave rooms? Are your appliances energy efficient? Have you caulked around your windows? Have you insulated your home properly? Do you change your air filters monthly? To learn more, visit togetherwesave.com.

If you need financial assistance to pay your electric bills, you may be eligible through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) with Shawnee Development Council. Local county outreach offices/numbers are as follows: Alexander 734-0535; Johnson 658-6131; Massac 524-2941; Pope 683-2107; Pulaski 745-6388; and Union 833-7431.