



Warren RECC

A Touchstone Energy®
Cooperative 

MARCH 2018

Colder Temperatures in Our Region Increase Electric Usage and Bills

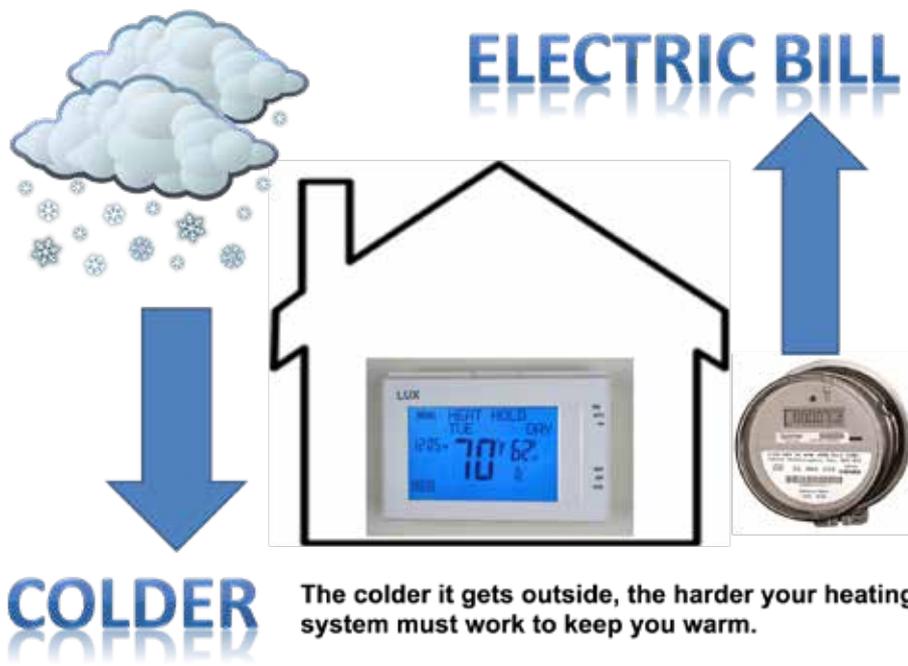
As I write this article at the end of January 2018, we are having the coldest winter since the infamous Winter Vortex of 2014. Chances are, when you look at your electric bills for this past October, November, December and January, you'll see higher amounts than you remember paying last year. And your memory is correct! When Old Man Winter rises up

and plunges temperatures well below freezing, it can cause sticker shock when you receive your electric bill.

Assuming you use electricity for your primary heat source, there is a simple explanation. The colder the outside temperature, the harder your heating system has to work to maintain the temperature within your house. Your heating system requires

electricity to run, so it's understandable that when it is running longer, it's consuming more electricity. The more electricity your heating system consumes, the more energy you are purchasing from your electric cooperative and the higher your electric bill.

At Warren RECC, we understand this can be difficult on our members, and that's why we try to find as many ways as possible to help with energy efficiency. From simple tips such as sealing air leaks and lowering your thermostat to budget billing to rebates for installing more efficient technology, Warren RECC strives to be your partner in combating the effects of Old Man Winter on your pocketbook. For more information on any of the initiatives mentioned here, check out our website at wrecc.com.



The colder it gets outside, the harder your heating system must work to keep you warm.

W. Scott Ramsey
CEO



The Math Behind it All

Though we can do several things to control our energy costs, the one variable we cannot control is the weather. At Warren RECC, we take our weather seriously. As I mentioned earlier, as the temperature outside becomes colder than the thermostat setting inside your home, the more energy you will use. If it is 30 degrees outside and your thermostat is set at 70 degrees that is a 40-degree difference that your heating system has to make up. In 2018, we had many days below 30 degrees, and our heating systems have been working overtime.

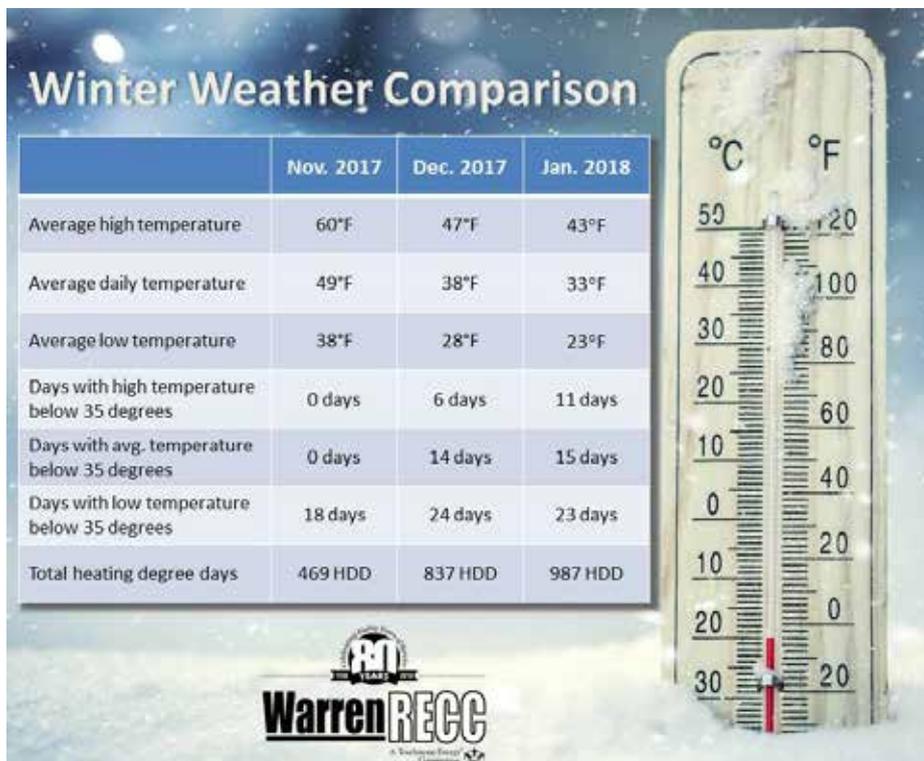
The Winter Weather Comparison, below, gives you some important information about the winter so far. As you can see, in January, the average high temperature was only 43 degrees. That means if you had your thermostat set on 70, your system was making up a 27-degree difference. And that's the high temperature. If you look at the average daily temperature, it is even lower and the gap even larger. Another measure you will see on this chart



HUNTER WILSON/DAILY NEWS

is "heating degree days", or HDD. HDD is the number of degrees that a day's average is below 65 degrees or the temperature below which buildings need to be heated. The colder the

weather, the more heating degree days there will be. That's a number you do not want to be high because in general, energy bills increase pretty close to the same percentage that degree days increase. Looking at this chart, you can see some definite growth in HDD from December to January. When you look year over year, the monthly HDDs for the very warm January 2017 were 640 and the HDDs for the much colder January 2018 were approximately 987. That's a 54 percent increase, helping to better explain why some heating bills were at least 50 percent higher than last January.



TVA's Emergency Load Curtailment Program

Another effect of the extreme cold temperatures we've experienced this year is the strain that the increased energy usage puts on the entire system. TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority) supplies the power

Warren RECC distributes to its members. At times, extreme temperatures like the ones we've experienced this winter can lead to increased usage throughout the Tennessee Valley and cause strain on their generation and transmission lines.

For times like these, TVA has developed a set of rules they follow when their lines are nearly fully loaded. These rules are called the Emergency Load Curtailment Program or ELCP. This energy reduction process is normal and is performed by utilities throughout the country to ensure electricity is always readily available to meet demand. Most years there is no need to issue such alerts as the electric demand and weather cooperate. However, situations such as the Winter Vortex of 2014, where electric demands reached historical records throughout the eastern U.S., make such alerts necessary.

As previously discussed, this year has been exceptionally cold, and TVA has unfortunately been in a position to issue such alerts. To give you an idea of the size of the demand in the Tennessee Valley region this year, on January 17, TVA delivered an all-time record of 706,000,000 kilowatt hours. That's enough energy to power Las Vegas for over 88 days!

When TVA does determine the need to issue an alert, they undertake several well defined steps. The first step is to request the local power companies reduce their usage. That's right—Warren RECC was

turning off lights and extra heaters and reducing thermostats even before we entered Step 2, where we ask Warren RECC members to **VOLUNTARILY** reduce electric usage.

The third step in TVA's process is to ask industries who have previously volunteered to do so to activate what we call "load controls" at their facilities. Load controls can include steps such as shift reductions or reduced office hours, and companies who volunteer to participate receive a small incentive from TVA. During

those rare times where such load reductions must occur, this option helps stabilize the grid. Steps 4 and beyond begin to get very serious should they ever be needed. Electric services at low priority would be cut off first, working to a point where the electrical system becomes stable again. I do not see us ever getting to steps 4 and higher unless we were in a war, large natural disaster or other highly impactful event in our history.

Why does TVA want to reduce usage at such a cold time? The

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RELIABILITY WHEN IT COUNTS!

TVA

18-1002-0118

number one reason is to ensure the electric grid does not reach overload and then fail during such critical weather periods. National grid outages in history have shown it can take days to get an electric grid back to normal; we can't risk doing that especially during extreme weather. Since TVA is Warren RECC's regulator, we must follow the regulator and comply with those energy reduction alerts.

While this winter has certainly been

a challenging one for everyone from our regulator down to our member thermostats, one thing is for sure—Warren RECC is poised and ready to serve our membership regardless of what the weather may throw at us. If you have any questions regarding your bill or ways to improve your energy efficiency, please feel free to reach out to us by phone or on our website at wrecc.com. Our dedicated staff is looking forward to helping you make the best decisions for your energy needs.



How To Contact us for Service

Emergency or power failure-24 hours

1-888-604-4321

(Warren County - 270-843-9710)

Electric Services

7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday

Barren County 270-286-8062
Butler County 270-526-3384
Northern Edmonson 270-286-8007
Southern Edmonson 270-286-8062
Grayson County 270-259-3161
Logan County 1-800-844-1664
Ohio County 1-800-844-1707
Simpson County 270-586-3443
Warren County 270-842-6541

Water Services

Grayson County Water District
270-259-2917

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www.wrecc.com

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