



Riverland Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



**Jerry Sorenson,
General Manager**

AFFORDABLE ELECTRICITY POWERS QUALITY OF LIFE

Most of us use electricity, either directly or indirectly, at almost all times. Because electricity is so abundant and available with the simple flip of a switch, it's easy to take it for granted.

According to the Energy Information Agency (EIA), the typical U.S. household now uses more air conditioning, appliances, and consumer electronics than ever before. The average home also contains 10 or more internet-connected devices. Considering everything that is powered by electricity, it's no wonder we occasionally might wince at our monthly bill. But keep in mind, it's no longer just the "light bill."

Electricity powers quality of life

Electricity powers our quality of life. From the infrastructure of your home (appliances, water heater, and HVAC system) to charging your smartphones, computers, TV and Wi-Fi router, your energy bill covers so much more than lighting.

Today, there is more demand for electricity than ever before. At home, in schools and businesses, and in commercial sectors such as transportation, the need for electricity is increasing.

Typically when demand goes up, so too does the price, as is the case with most goods or services, like cable or even your favorite specialty coffee. However, that's not true with electricity. Let's take a look at how the value of electricity compares to other common expenses.

Over the last five years, the cost of rent increased 3.4%, medical care increased 2.8%, and education increased 2.2%. But the cost of electricity only increased 1%. Considering

all the ways we depend on electricity, it still remains a great value.

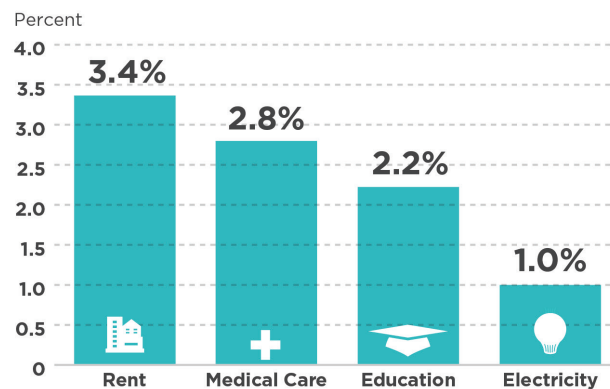
So, the next time you're enjoying your favorite podcast, TV series, or movie, consider the value of electricity and how it enhances your quality of life.

We care about you, the members we serve, and understand that electricity is more than a commodity—it's a necessity. That's why Riverland Energy will continue working hard to power your life, reliably and affordably.

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2015-2020



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

MY CO-OP

RIVERLAND ENERGY SUPPORTS YOUTH SOCCER PROGRAM

Riverland Energy recently donated \$500 to the Arcadia United Soccer Club. The money helps cover costs of uniforms, equipment, and other club expenses. Riverland Energy donations are derived from the Federated Youth Foundation, an administrative trust overseeing unclaimed capital credits of former members.





Enter our photo contest for a chance to win a \$25 electric bill credit

Each month, Riverland Energy will hold a photo contest through its Facebook page for a chance to win an electric bill credit. Each month, the co-op will post a theme for the contest, and members can submit their photos and vote by clicking on the link to the contest page. The member whose photo has the most votes will win a \$25 electric bill credit! Each member who submits a photo will be put into a drawing at the end of the contest for a chance to win a \$250 electric bill credit.

The photo with the most votes each month will appear in the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News* magazine. To submit a photo or vote, visit our Facebook page and click on the link to direct you to the contest page.

Rules/Criteria:

- You must own rights to the photo.
- Photos can be taken outside of the date range, but must be submitted by the deadline given for that month.
- Only one photo per member will be accepted.
- By submitting your photo, you are granting Riverland Energy permission to use your photo in our publications.

The contest will run each month through July 2022.



Spare change for community needs.

COMMUNITY CARES GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE AUGUST 20

Riverland Energy is accepting applications for a grant through its Community Cares Program. To be eligible, groups must be non-profit organizations and service communities within the REC service territory. Disaster relief for individuals may be eligible.

Funds are not given to political or religious groups, fraternal or labor organizations, fund-raising dinners or raffles, advertising, and for on-going operational expenses.

The deadline to apply for funds is August 20. Applications can be obtained online at riverlandenergy.com.



UNDERSTANDING POWER SURGES AND BLINKS

Photo courtesy of Pat Gaines

By Abby Berry

Have you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you've likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power surge or blink. While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

What's a power surge?

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances of a power waveform that can damage, degrade, or destroy electronic equipment within your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage; however, power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts—this can be extremely damaging to your electronic equipment.

Surges can be caused by internal sources, like HVAC systems with variable frequency drives, or external sources, like lightning and damage to power lines and transformers. Riverland Energy encourages all members to install surge protective devices (such as surge protector power strips) to safeguard your sensitive electronics. If you're experiencing frequent surges in your home or business and you believe the cause is internal, contact a qualified electrician to inspect your electrical system.

What's a power blink?

Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they're typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a variety of instances,

like squirrels, birds, or other small animals contacting an energized power line; tree branches touching a power line; or lightning and other similar events. In fact, when it comes to power disruptions caused by critters, squirrels reign supreme. In 2019 alone, squirrels were responsible for more than 1,200 outages.



Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breakers are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are actually good because

that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

Regardless of the cause, Riverland Energy crews will be on their way to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs after a power outage. And you can help too! Any time you experience repeated disruptions to your electric service, please let us know by calling 800-411-9115 or through SmartHub.

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. Electric cooperatives serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56% of the nation's landscape.



CREDIT CARD COMPLIANCE

Riverland Energy representatives are unable to take your payment over the phone

Due to security breaches, credit card companies are requiring tighter security to protect personal information. The Payment Card Industry (PCI) has implemented requirements for credit card payments that have impacted the way Riverland Energy accepts credit card payments.

Due to these requirements from credit card companies, Riverland Energy representatives are not able to verbally accept credit card payments by phone. Credit card payments can still be made over the phone, but instead of talking to a Riverland member service representative, you must utilize our Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system that is PCI compliant at this time by calling **1-888-220-8233**. Our after-hours and overflow answering service, Cooperative Response Center, can also take the payment over the phone. If you call the office wanting to make credit card payment, you can expect to be transferred to CRC.

When calling **1-888-220-8233** to make a credit card payment, you will be able to choose prompts to check your account status, make a payment, update your phone number, or update your stored payment information. For first-time users, select option #3 to create a PIN to keep your payment method stored.

We understand this is a change in how we have normally operated, and it may cause an inconvenience for some of our members. However, it is a change that is required to remain in compliance with PCI regulations and avoid very costly penalties and fines.

Members may continue to pay by credit card online through SmartHub.


Riverland Energy personnel are still only a phone call away to answer your questions and concerns, including questions on your electric utility bill.

Thank you for your understanding!



Members earn rebates with energy efficiency upgrades


Riverland Energy members are eligible to receive rebates for energy efficiency upgrades in their homes or businesses. Common upgrades include replacing incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs and purchasing Energy Star qualified appliances. For a guide to our residential rebate program and a complete listing of rebates available on Energy Star qualified appliances, visit our website at riverlandenergy.com.



RIVERLAND Energy Cooperative
A Touchstone Energy® Company

HAVE YOU FOLLOWED US YET?

Riverland Energy has expanded to multiple new social media platforms, including Instagram and Twitter!




Jerry Sorenson, General Manager

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Beth Alesch, Editor



Riverland Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

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Office Hours

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Holmen: 7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

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