

# Darke Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

## Fighting for your future

Darke Rural Electric Cooperative, as your provider of safe, affordable and reliable electric service, is fighting to protect our members; fighting to minimize the cost impact of legislation currently being discussed by lawmakers — legislation that otherwise could go wrong for consumers, and go wrong for the country.

Between now and 2030, consumer demand for electricity is expected to increase by 30 percent. To meet that, our nation must add about 264,000 MW in expected

demand. But construction cost increases and the need to develop climate change policy is preventing new coal and nuclear power facilities from coming online. Power suppliers are forced to use fuels such as natural gas, which is subject to wide swings in price, to generate electricity. Coal, a once-inexpensive fuel, recently has shot up in cost as well. The impact of these mounting fuel issues is being compounded across the country as dramatic electric rate hikes are announced, driven by steady cost increases.

These no longer are far-away problems reserved for backroom discussions in Washington, D.C., or state capitals. What has been described as a perfect storm — the clash of growing demand, skyrocketing power plant construction and fuel costs, and climate change policy constraints — has hit home.

To ensure that co-op members' energy needs are met, electric cooperatives across the country are engaged in a grassroots campaign called "Our Energy, Our Future: A Dialogue With America." This campaign seeks to engage policymakers on critical ener-

gy questions, such as how to reconcile growing electricity needs and environmental goals, and how much of all this will increase electric bills. Please visit

[www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop) to get the conversation started.

**Major questions to ask elected officials and candidates for office are:**

- Experts say that our nation's growing electricity needs soon will go well beyond what renewables, conservation and efficiency can provide. What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future?

- Our country faces a crisis as electricity use increases faster than available supply. I believe

that by unleashing American ingenuity we can solve this problem. What are you doing to speed the development of new technology that will allow me to have the electric power I need while meeting national climate policy goals?

- Balancing electricity needs and environmental goals will be difficult. How much is all this going to increase my electric bill and what will you do to make it affordable?

### TRUSTEES

Jack L. Kitchel .....President  
Keith Daugherty ...Vice President  
Judith Fasnacht .....Secy.-Treas.  
Robert Buschur .....Trustee  
Virgil Hale .....Trustee  
Michelle Marker .....Trustee  
Donald Muhlenkamp .....Trustee  
Ted Holsapple .....Gen. Manager

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

Failure to receive your electric bill in no way relieves you, the member, from paying it. If you do not receive your bill, contact us before the due date.



**Our Energy, Our Future**  
A Dialogue With America



## MAKE THE SWITCH TODAY.

“The Switch is On” at your electric cooperative. You can switch your inefficient incandescent light bulbs to new, energy-saving CFLs (compact fluorescent light bulbs), and it’s absolutely FREE. These ENERGY STAR® qualified CFL bulbs use about 75% less energy than standard incandescent bulbs and last up to 10 times longer while still offering the same warm, soft light you’re used to. So make the switch today – for you, your wallet and for the environment. It’s the smart choice.

If you did not receive your free CFLs at the Darke County Fair, stop by the cooperative office and bring three of your incandescent bulbs. You will receive three free compact fluorescent light bulbs!

**Integrity**

**Innovation**

**Accountability**

**Commitment to Community**

# Fine-tune energy use with the right television

by SCOTT GATES

Streamlining your home's energy use can make a big impact on monthly electric bills, especially with rising fuel costs. But the devil is in the details, and everyday energy wasters sometimes are easy to overlook.

One ever-present culprit lurks in your home right now. When combined with DVD players and video game consoles, television use makes up about 10 percent of an average household's annual electricity bill, according to Energy Star, a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy.

Depending on the technology behind the TV you're watching, your monthly related energy costs can vary dramatically. Standard sets use a cathode ray tube, with those smaller than 40 inches drawing roughly 73 watts when on — close to what a 75-watt incandescent lightbulb uses. An average flat-screen LCD television of the same size also requires 70 watts, while a similar flat-screen plasma TV can really suck some power, consuming an average 246 watts when on.

With more families opting for flat screen TVs these days, the choice between LCD and plasma really can make an impact, to almost startling levels on a national scale.

Currently, there are more than 275 million TVs in use across the country, with the average household tuning in 4.7 hours a day. It takes more than 50 billion kWh a year to keep those sets on, according to EPA, meaning it costs Americans \$5.2 billion to watch all of that TV.

Of the total electricity generated in a single year, a full 1.2 percent goes toward keeping televisions

glowing. And if current buying trends continue, that number could climb to nearly 2 percent in a few years, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council, a New York City-based environmental advocacy group.

The good news is that energy-efficient TVs — LCD, plasma and otherwise — are becoming available. This November, blue Energy Star labels will appear on all TVs that use less energy when turned on. Current Energy Star TV labels indicate only how efficient a set is when switched off, in standby mode.

"Energy Star's new specifications for televisions are turning the channel on energy-guzzling sets, making them go the way of rabbit-ears and black-and-white broadcasts," quips EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson.

Energy Star estimates that if all of the TVs sold in the United States meet the new requirements, energy savings could grow to \$1 billion a year. Related greenhouse gas emissions, meanwhile, would be reduced by the equivalent of taking about 1 million cars off the road.

If you're not in the market for a new TV, you still can cut back on the electricity your old set uses by adjusting the picture settings. The brighter the screen, the more energy it needs. Also, the small stream of electricity a TV draws while in standby mode can be eliminated by unplugging it, or by plugging it into a power strip that can be switched off.

*Sources: U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Energy Information Administration, Natural Resources Defense Council, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association*



**Darke Rural Electric  
new office hours.**

**7:30-4:30**

**Monday-Friday**

# Do you have a standby generator? Thinking of installing one? You must notify Darke Rural Electric.

Storm-related outages have many of you thinking it is a good idea to purchase a standby electric generator, in the event of an extended outage. We understand a member's need to keep electric power going to their homes, farms or businesses, and would like to remind you to use extreme caution when installing and using a standby generator. If used incorrectly, a standby generator can cause serious harm or even death. Below are some important things you should know about generators:

- Generators can produce power to a home's 120/240 volt service. However, if a generator is not properly installed, the **"backfeed"** will result in an output of 7,200 volts on the distribution line (much higher than what it should carry). **This could seriously injure or kill a lineman working on the system trying to restore power, even if they are miles away from where the generator is installed.**
- Generators need to be isolated from the electric power lines. This means you should connect appliances or other devices directly to the generator with the appropriate sized cords. You also must install an appropriate double-throw switch on your generator to separate your service from the co-op's system. This switch will isolate your generator from the cooperative's power supply lines whenever it is generating current. This will prevent electricity from backfeeding current onto our lines and endangering the lives of our personnel.
- Remember to determine the wattage output you need before buying a generator. Manufacturers rate the strength of a generator in terms of wattage. The generator's wattage output should at least meet or exceed the total rated watts of the appliances you will operate in the case of an outage.
- Know your generator! Read installation instructions, safety and maintenance information, and most importantly follow all manufacturer's recommendations!
- When you need to use your generator during a power outage, turn off the main power switch or breaker in your home.
- Never overload the generator. It should be used only when necessary, and only to power essential equipment. Overloading will cause wear and tear on the generator and could present fire and safety hazards.
- Be careful when fueling your generator! Never try to refuel the generator while it is operating.
- If installed inside, make sure there is proper ventilation and air cooling to prevent overheating and the accumulation of toxic exhaust fumes.

**For your sake as well as the line crews, we want to maintain a safe environment when it comes to standby generators. If you currently have a standby generator, please help us update our records by completing the information below:**

**Complete and return to:**  
Darke Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
P.O. Box 278  
Greenville, OH 45331

**Yes, I have a standby generator at my service location.**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Service address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Size of generator:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do you have a double-throw switch?**  **yes**  **no**