

# CLIMATE CHANGE

## Must Be Fair, Affordable, and Achievable



Tim Stewart  
CEO / General Manager

Climate change and climate change legislation are certainly hot topics lately, as well they should be. Since early this year, Congress has considered a cap-and-trade system to address climate change concerns. This system focuses on reducing carbon dioxide emissions from power plants, vehicles, and factories — essentially impacting all sectors of the economy. In last month's edition of the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News*, I noted no less than five articles devoted to discussing carbon reduction and its implications. Simply stated, as Congress considers legislation to limit carbon dioxide emissions, associated costs will impact everyone. Consumers paying electric bills, and every company making products with electricity generated from fossil fuels, will pay more. The costs will be passed on to the end consumer. The key question is... how much more? Already, some members are having trouble paying their electric bills and coping with rising mortgages, the cost of health care, and the loss of jobs in the economy. In addition, energy costs are already increasing. The transition to a reduced carbon economy will add to these increases.

The energy policy decisions made in the coming weeks will directly impact all of our electric bills, electric cooperative members and otherwise. We know rates will go up as a result of any action Congress takes. Nation-

wide, more than 50 percent of the electric utilities are coal fired. That percentage is higher for the Midwestern states like Wisconsin. In fact, the generation mix of our power supplier, Dairyland Power Cooperative, is more than 90 percent coal. That's why electric cooperatives nationwide feel it's important for Congress to keep three things in mind regarding climate change:

### Fairness

Climate change legislation needs to recognize regional differences in how electricity is produced. Some states have more low-carbon resources available than others. We should not be penalized based upon available resources and where we live. We're all in this boat together — one part of the country should not benefit at another's expense.

### Affordable

Any climate change plan must keep electric bills affordable for all Americans. We need a guarantee from Congress that electricity prices won't rise beyond the reach of the average American household.

### Achievable

Climate change policy must be realistic and in sync with technology to ensure long-term success.

I urge you to visit the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's web site, [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop), to learn more about this important issue. Your future energy costs depend on it. ■

Cooperatively yours,

**Tim Stewart**  
CEO/General Manager



**Our Energy, Our Future**  
A Dialogue With America  
[www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop)

# Resource Information

## Energy Assistance

October starts the winter heating season. It's important for you to make every attempt to keep current on your electric bill. We understand that things do happen that put financial burdens on people. Certain government organizations can offer heating assistance or direct you to a group that can help.

Emergency energy assistance is sometimes available in addition to energy assistance because some winters are worse than others, and emergencies in certain regions may require additional funds in meeting needs beyond the levels established under the program authorization.

During the past years, funds have provided heating assistance to offset extreme cold as well as price spikes in heating oil, propane, and natural gas. Funds have also

covered the additional cooling costs in the Midwest during a prolonged summer heat wave. To find out if emergency energy assistance is available, contact your county social services department.

The Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) administers the federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Public Benefits Energy Assistance Program. LIHEAP and its related services help more than 100,000 Wisconsin households annually. ■

**Clark County** **715-743-5233**  
*Department of Social Services*

**Chippewa County** **715-726-7862**  
*Department of Human Services/  
Economic Support*

**Marathon County** **715-842-3111**  
*Energy Services, Inc.*

**Taylor County** **715-748-6123**  
*Human Services Department*

**Wood County**  
*Department of Social Services*  
**Wisconsin Rapids Office** **715-421-8600**  
**Marshfield Office** **715-387-6374**

**Jackson County** **715-284-4301**  
*Department of Health & Human Services*

### Estimated Guidelines 2009 – 2010

Persons in Family	Monthly Income	Annual Income
1	\$1,953	\$23,435
2	\$2,554	\$30,646
3	\$3,155	\$37,856
4	\$3,756	\$45,067
5	\$4,356	\$52,278
6	\$4,957	\$59,488
7	\$5,070	\$60,840
8	\$5,183	\$62,192

## Moving House

Crews were busy one day this summer when they were involved in a house-moving project for a member.

It took lots of planning and coordination among Clark Electric, the house movers, Xcel Energy, and the Clark County Sheriff's Department.

This was just one of many projects our line crews did this summer, along with several miles of line replacements and upgrades to improve reliability for the members of Clark Electric. ■



## You Can Do It

### Do-It-Yourself Home Energy Audits

One of the first steps to making your home more efficient involves understanding how it uses energy. Just as a doctor has to do a thorough examination of a patient before writing a prescription, your home will need a good inspection before most inefficiencies can be identified and corrected.

Clark Electric Cooperative has information on energy efficiency and other energy matters for you on our web site, [www.cecoop.com](http://www.cecoop.com), under the energy info tab. Clark Electric is also a member of Focus on Energy, which has a tremendous amount of information to address members' concerns. There is a link to Focus on Energy's web site on our home page.

You can easily conduct a basic home energy audit with a simple but diligent walk-through. When auditing your home, keep a checklist of areas you have inspected and problems you find. Full lists are available online—Touchstone Energy Cooperatives® Home Energy Saver (at [www.touchstoneenergysavers.com](http://www.touchstoneenergysavers.com)) and the Alliance to Save Energy Home Energy Checkup (search for it at [www.ase.org](http://www.ase.org)) are both useful—and most trouble spots can be found in a few key areas.

#### Locating Air Leaks

First, make a list of obvious air leaks (drafts). The potential energy savings from reducing drafts in a home may range from 5 percent to 30 percent per year, with a much more comfortable residence the result. Check for indoor air leaks, such as gaps along a baseboard or edge of the flooring and at junctures of walls and ceiling.

Inspect windows and doors for air leaks. If you can rattle them, movement means possible air leaks. If you can see daylight around a door or window frame, then the door or window has a leak; you can usually seal these through caulking or weatherstripping.

On the outside, inspect all areas where two different building materials meet, including all exterior corners, siding and chimney junctures, and areas where the foundation and the bottom of exterior brick or siding join. You

should plug and caulk any holes or penetrations for faucets, pipes, electric outlets, and wiring.

Also, look for cracks and holes in the mortar, foundation, and siding, and seal them with the appropriate material. Check the exterior caulking around doors and windows, and see whether exterior storm doors and primary doors seal tightly.

When sealing any home, be aware of indoor air pollution and appliance “backdrafts.” Backdrafting occurs when various appliances that burn fuels and exhaust fans in the home compete for air. An exhaust fan may pull combustion gases back into the living space. This can obviously create a very dangerous and unhealthy situation.

#### Insulation

Heat loss through the ceiling and walls in your home could be very large if insulation levels are less than the recommended minimum. When your house was built, the builder likely installed the amount of insulation recommended (if any) at that time. Given today's energy prices (and future prices that will probably be higher), your insulation might be inadequate, especially if you have an older home. Online energy audits will provide more details on checking insulation levels in the attic, walls, and basement.



#### Energy Efficiency

#### Tip of the Month

Only 20 percent of homes built before 1980 are properly insulated. You can increase the comfort of your home while reducing heating and cooling needs up to 10 percent by investing in proper insulation and sealing air leaks.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

## Heating/Cooling Equipment

Inspect heating and cooling equipment annually, or as recommended by the manufacturer. If you have a forced-air furnace, check filters and replace them as needed. Generally, you should change them about once every month or two, especially during periods of high use. Have a professional check and clean your equipment once a year.

## Lighting

On average, lighting accounts for about 10 percent of a home's electric bill. Examine the wattage size of the lightbulbs in your house. You may have 100-watt (or larger) bulbs where 60 or 75 watts would do. You should also consider compact fluorescent lightbulbs for areas where lights are left on for hours at a time.

More information on both do-it-yourself and professional energy audits can be found at [www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov). Additional information is also available on Clark Electric Cooperative's web site, [www.ce-coop.com](http://www.ce-coop.com). ■

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Cooperatives have a proud history of meeting real needs for real people. When for-profit businesses weren't interested in serving rural communities, people banded together and formed cooperatives to provide insurance, deliver electricity, and make farm supplies and other goods affordable. Urban cooperatives have offered affordable housing and credit and helped workers come together to deliver home health care and other important services.

Cooperatives bring people together to meet today's emerging challenges, too. For rural health insurance, bioenergy and telecommunications, the time-tested cooperative model still proves its worth.

Cooperatives are partners in their communities, investing in economic development and human involvement that keep hometowns and rural areas thriving. Working together, cooperative members create opportunities that would be out of reach for individuals on their own.

Cooperatives bring new technologies and services to meet their members' needs, but it's the same familiar pride, principles and practices that make today's cooperatives a building block of stronger communities.

