

Preparing for winter: Our electric heat rate is a steady rate you can budget.



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Recently, I won a live trap at a trade show. I was excited thinking I was going to cross my husband's name off the Christmas list, but my daughter foiled that with her broadcast on our family SnapChat group. When I brought it home, I was sure that it was going to be absorbed into Jeremiah's (my avid hunter husband) arsenal of hunting gear especially since I really have no interest in the sport.

Instead, he took me to our property, showed me how to bait and set it. "Now, tomorrow we have to check it" and he continued to educate me on the rules of trapping as if he is going to convert me into this craze.

I played along, and the next day we checked the trap and lo and behold there was a raccoon. Now, I will admit, it was pretty cool trapping my first raccoon and even more so since Jeremiah was going on and on about how he hasn't ever seen one that big. He definitely was more excited about it than I was.

He threw me his Stormy Kromer hunting hat and had me pose for a picture holding the raccoon. One thing he noted after skinning it was the amount of fat it already had and hoped that it wasn't a sign of very cold winter ahead of us.

The good news is, if you are a B-Y Electric member and have all-electric heat, you will see very little difference to your heating costs.

My mind started to roll; I surely hope that it isn't true. An extra cold winter could cause more heating usage and with the rising natural gas costs, there is going to be some people facing very large heating bills already.

Utilities are predicting anywhere from 40% -90% increase in natural gas cost and are adjusting their rates in response to this. Heating systems that have propane, natural gas, or fuel oil unfortunately will be higher as these are market driven prices.

The good news is, if you are a B-Y Electric member and have all-electric heat, you will see very little difference to your heating costs. Our power suppliers, Basin Electric and East River Electric, have set their rates with no power cost increases.

Basin Electric, your generation cooperative, can keep the rate stable because of the broad mix of generation sources including coal, wind, solar, as well as natural gas. Not having all their eggs in one basket allows them to ride out cost fluctuations amidst the various generation resources.

For the 2021-2022 winter season, you will not see an increase in your electric bill. Of course, if you use more electricity than last year, your bill will be higher, but our rate will be the same.

It is times like these that being part of an electric cooperative family with distribution assets, transmission assets and generation assets, provide a strong, stable, resilient business model that can weather turbulent times with minimal impact to the members' pocketbooks.

If it is a long cold winter, keep your thermostat at 68 and do as the raccoon does and insulate. Extra helpings of kolaches, strudels, kuchen, potatoes, sausage and cheese buttons should do the trick.

Wishing you all a warm, safe holiday season.

For more information, call our office at (605) 463-2507 or email horst@byelectric.com