

HIGH BILL CONCERNS

Why is my bill so high?

High bills are the direct result of high usage. Lacreek Electric Association, Inc. Member Services are always happy to assist you with your billing questions, but you may consider gathering the following information prior to calling. It may answer your questions or provide valuable information when you do call.

Accurate History:

- ✓ Review how much power you've used for the last 12-months. We call this the kilowatt hour (kWh) history.
- ✓ This history is provided for you on every bill and is also available on **SmartHub**. You can compare your most recent month to that same month one year ago.
- ✓ Weather fluctuations may be a factor in any major differences, but this is a good place to start your search.
- ✓ The kilowatt hours you use are the main driver of costs on your electric bill.

True Electric Bill:

- ✓ Check to be sure this is a true high electric bill. Are there other charges beyond electric service? Any additional service fees (i.e. deposits, connection/disconnection fees or returned check fees)?
- ✓ Have any past-due amounts from a previous bill been added to the total?

Days of Use:

- ✓ Check the number of days that are billed for your electric use. This varies from bill to bill to the number of days in a month and a billing cycle may be a bit shorter or a bit longer due to the number of days in the month.

Compare Winter to Summer:

- ✓ Check the kilowatt hour total by month. From the history, are the winter months higher, indicating some form of electric heat, higher hot water heater uses or space heaters being used in the home?
- ✓ Do the summer months indicate air conditioning? Were temperatures higher or lower than normal during the period?

Your Electric Meter Doesn't Go on Vacation:

- ✓ If you leave your home for an extended period of time for business or vacation, any appliance you leave plugged in or connected will continue to use electricity even while you are gone, especially your hot water heater, freezer, refrigerator, HVAC system, landscape irrigation, well pump, etc.
- ✓ Most of us note that the Television and lights were not on, but we forget about those items.

Lifestyle:

- ✓ No two households use energy the same way, so comparing your energy bill to your neighbor's is like comparing apples to oranges. It is best to compare your current use to your past use.
- ✓ Determine if the size of your household has increased or did someone stay at home more.

- ✓ Have you added a new swimming pool or hot tub in your back yard?
- ✓ Have you had “guests” stay for an extended period?
- ✓ Do you have hobbies that include the use of power tools, ovens and other high electrical resistance tools or appliances?

Lighting, Refrigeration, Cooking and Appliances:

- ✓ Lighting, refrigeration, cooking and appliances account for 56 percent of the total energy use in the normal household. The location of refrigerators and freezers are very important.
- ✓ Never place a refrigerator or freezer in direct sunlight or in unconditioned space such as a breezeway, garage or out-building. The refrigerator or freezer will have to work harder to overcome excessive heat during warmer months.
- ✓ Make sure that your refrigerators and freezers have adequate ventilation.

Equipment Maintenance:

- ✓ If an appliance is more than 15 years old, the efficiency of that appliance may be decreasing significantly and requiring more energy to do its job.
- ✓ It is important to clean or replace the condenser, coils or filters on some appliances regularly. You may need to replace the appliance itself. Many time’s old electrical wiring will have loose connections resulting in increased electrical use and create potential safety hazards.

Seasons:

- ✓ The additional heating or cooling load will cause an increase in electric use. Heating and cooling your home averages around 44 percent of your total energy use. Using space heaters, livestock heaters or vehicle block heaters in the winter can dramatically increase your energy consumption. Running a dehumidifier or watering of lawns, gardens and animals in the summer months will increase your energy use.

Weather:

- ✓ Lightning can sometimes damage your well pump, sump pump or appliances increasing the running of these devices. If underground wiring-insulation is damaged, an increase in electrical use may occur when the ground is saturated with moisture.

Construction or Remodeling Activities:

- ✓ Has there been any underground excavation recently? If you have underground wiring, the electrical wires may have been nicked resulting in an electric fault. Many time’s these faults are high resistant and won’t trip your breaker. When this type of fault occurs, the electricity flows directly into the ground thus increasing your electrical usage.