A MONTHLY PUBLICATION FOR MIDSTATE ELECTRIC MEMBERS

MARCH 2023

MIDSTATE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

MIDSTATE CONNECTION

Office Hours: 7:00 am-5:30 pm, Monday-Thursday
Closed Fridays & Holidays

Business Hours: 541-536-2126
After Hours Outages: 800-752-5935

How to conduct a *DIY air leak audit*

Before you repair or install more insulation, you need to identify and repair any potential air leaks in what is known as your home's envelope: outer walls, doors, windows and other openings. Potential problem areas include doors, windows, sill plates (the bottom piece of wall structure where wall studs are attached), top plates (supportive beams in the ceiling), crawl spaces, outdoor faucets, dryer vents, stove vent fans, roof eaves and overhangs, plumbing vent stacks, recessed lighting, attic hatches and air duct registers.

One way to have your home checked is by a qualified energy auditor. Or, if you want to address your own home, there are a couple of ways to do this:

By yourself:

One option is to perform a visual inspection on your own in daylight. All potential problem areas should be free from gaps and cracks. While lights are on in the home, also observe from the attic, crawlspace or basement. Anywhere you can see light from the interior of the house shining through gaps and cracks is another air leak location in need of repair.

With a partner:

To conduct a more thorough inspection, work with a partner at night to shine a flashlight over all potential gaps while one of you observes the house from the outside. Anywhere you can see light shine through is an air leak that needs to be sealed properly.

For more information, visit www.SafeElectrcity.org

Is Your Home's Envelope Well Sealed?

Most of the time, when we think of the word envelope, we think of the outer covering that our mail comes in.

However, your home's envelope consists of its outer walls, windows, doors, and other openings. A well-sealed envelope, coupled with the right amount of insulation, can reduce your energy use — and, in turn, your utility bills. According to EnergyStar.gov, a whopping 9 out of 10 homes in the U.S. are under-insulated. Homeowners can save an average of 15% on heating and cooling costs (or an average of 11% on total energy costs) by air sealing their homes and adding insulation in attics, floors, over crawl spaces and basements.

To determine if your home's envelope is in good shape, we recommend having a home audit conducted to help you create a more energy-efficient home. Midstate offers free energy audits for our residential and commercial members. Contact our Marketing Department at 541-536-2126, option 5, for more information.

DIY home energy audit

If you would like to complete your own DIY audit, find out the following: The type of insulation in your home.

The R-value (rate of thermal resistance) of your insulation. Depending on where you live, you do not necessarily need the highest value; it depends on your local climate. The thickness or depth (inches) of the insulation you have. In a newer home, the builder can help identify the type of insulation used and where it is located. In an older home, you will need to perform the inspection yourself. To complete a DIY energy assessment, you will need to check the following items:

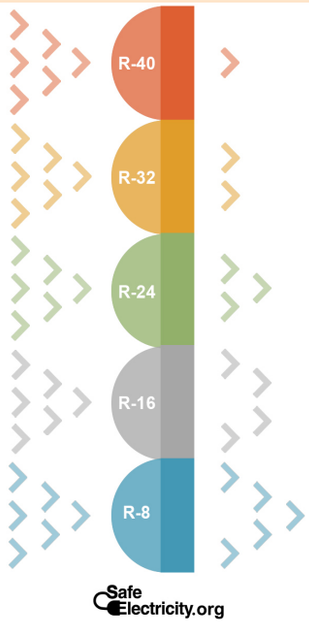
In the attic

If the insulation is level with or below the attic floor joists, you probably need to add more insulation.

If you cannot see any of the floor joists because the insulation is well above them, you probably have enough, and adding more insulation may not be cost-effective.

Insulation should be evenly distributed with no low spots; be sure to check throughout the attic to determine if there are any thin spots.

The higher the R value, the more efficient the insulation



Make sure the insulation in your attic has the appropriate R-value for where you live. Check the value printed on your existing insulation. If you cannot find the value, measure the depth of the insulation in inches. Multiply the depth by the following insulation type: 3.2 for fiberglass batting, for the loose fibers category, multiply by 2.5 for loose fiberglass, 2.8 for rock wool and 3.7 for cellulose. Then check EnergyStar.gov's recommended R-values. If your calculated value is less than the recommended levels for your region, then you should consider adding more insulation to your attic.'

Behind the walls

Turn off the power to the outlet before beginning this check. Then use a voltmeter or voltage tester to confirm that there is no power at the socket before beginning work.

Remove the outlet cover and shine a flashlight into the crack around the outlet box. You should be able to see if there is insulation in the wall and possibly how thick it is. Pull out a small amount of insulation if needed to help determine the type of insulation.

Check outlets on all floors, as well as old and new parts of your home. Just because you find insulation in one wall does not mean that it is uniform throughout your home.

Rate Increase Coming April 1

As of April 1, 2023, you will see an increase in your electric bill. MEC has cost-of-service studies conducted to help ensure the long-term financial stability of the co-op. This year, your board of directors has recognized the need to increase rates to continue delivering safe and reliable services.

How are my rates changing?

In April, you will see a $3.00 increase of our Facilities Charge for all rate classes (excluding Industrial). There will also be an Energy Charge rate increase of $0.003 per kilowatt-hour for all rate classes.

What is a Facilities Charge?

Every time you pay your bill, you are investing in the co-op through the Facilities Charge. This monthly investment helps cover the cost of delivering electric services to your home or business. These costs include electrical system and infrastructure maintenance, wire, poles, equipment, fuel, materials, substations, labor, tree trimming, general administration and outage restoration.

How much will my bill go up with the $0.003 kWh increase?

A typical member using an average of 1,300 kWh in a billing period will see an increase of 4.65% on the Energy Charge. For example, the Energy Charge for using 1,300 kWh would go up from $83.85 currently, to $87.75 in April. If your usage is more or less than this average, the increase will vary accordingly.

With rates increasing, what can I do to lower my monthly bill?

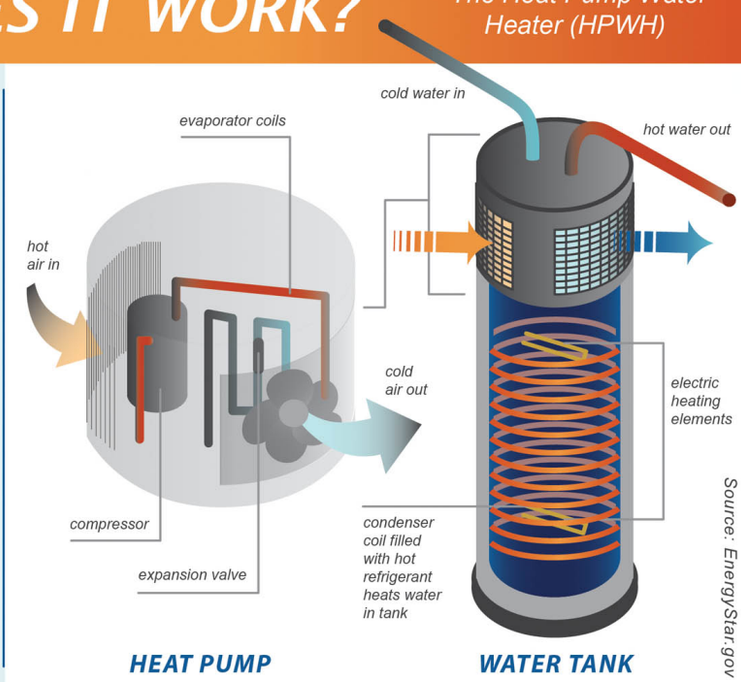
We recommend monitoring your energy usage online through PowerPay or the SmartHub App. You may also call for a free Energy Audit or for conservation tips on how to save energy and money by changing habits or installing energy-saving measures in your home.

Despite the upcoming rate increase, MEC rates are well below the national average and are among the lowest in Oregon. We will continue working to control costs, operate safely and efficiently, and provide the most reliable electric service possible.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Heat Pump Water Heater (HPWH)

HPWHs use electricity to move heat from one place to another instead of generating heat directly. Imagine a refrigerator working in reverse. While a refrigerator removes heat from an enclosed box and expels that heat to the surrounding air, a HPWH takes the heat from surrounding air and transfers it to water in an enclosed tank. During periods of high hot water demand, HPWHs switch to standard electric resistance heat automatically.



MEC's Annual Meeting – Saturday, May 20, 2023 Midstate Headquarters

Preparations are underway for Midstate's 71st Annual Meeting of the Members. If you have not attended the annual meeting in the past, this is your chance to learn about the financial and operating condition of your electric cooperative and to elect members to serve on the Board of Directors.

At the meeting, board election results for Districts 5, 7, & 9 will be announced. Please watch for your board election ballot in the mail and return your vote.

The members who serve in these critical roles oversee the business of the Co-op and make policy and leadership decisions for your member-owned electric utility.

The annual meeting is also a great time to socialize with your neighbors and the people who keep your lights on.

There will be a free health fair, giveaways, safety demonstrations, raffle prizes and complementary tri-tip and chicken barbecue. Please join us at the Midstate headquarters on May 20th from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. See you there!

Now Accepting Scholarship Applications

We have scholarships available in the following categories:

Graduating Senior Scholarships

The recipients will have the option of a one-time $2,500 scholarship, or a 4-year scholarship of $1,250 per year (=$5,000).

Continuing Education Scholarships

We offer $2,500 scholarships for members who have already graduated high school and are seeking to continue their education.

Line Worker Scholarships

We offer one $20,000 scholarship for members to attend line worker school. Recipient must put forward $5,000 for the remainder of the lineworker tuition. MEC will reimburse the $5,000 once schooling is completed.

Please visit www.mse.coop/scholarship-programs for more details or to apply.

Let's get connected on social media so you'll never miss an update on MEC activities, programs, and contests.