

Defining Degree Days

By Abby Berry

Weather can have a major impact on energy bills, and when the outdoor temperatures become extreme, your heating and cooling equipment works harder to keep your home comfortable.

Did you know the energy experts at Taylor Electric Cooperative and Dairyland Power Cooperative use degree days to anticipate heating and cooling needs for you, our consumer-members?

Never heard of a degree day? Don't worry, you're not alone. Let's take a look at what degree days are and why they're important for electric utilities.

Degree days measure how cold or warm a location is by comparing the average of the high and low (mean) of the outdoor temperatures recorded in that location to the standard U.S. temperature, which is 65 F. The assumption is that we don't need heating or cooling to be comfortable when this is the outdoor temperature.

So, the more extreme the outdoor temperatures, the higher the number of degree days. And the higher the number of degree days, the higher the amount of energy used for space heating and cooling. Summer is in full swing, so let's look at cooling degree days.

Cooling degree days are a measurement of how hot the temperature was on a given day or during a period of days. With summer temperatures rising, you'll likely require more cooling for your home or business, which results in more cooling degree days. Variations in electric bills often follow closely with degree days, which is why electric utilities use this data to anticipate future energy demand.

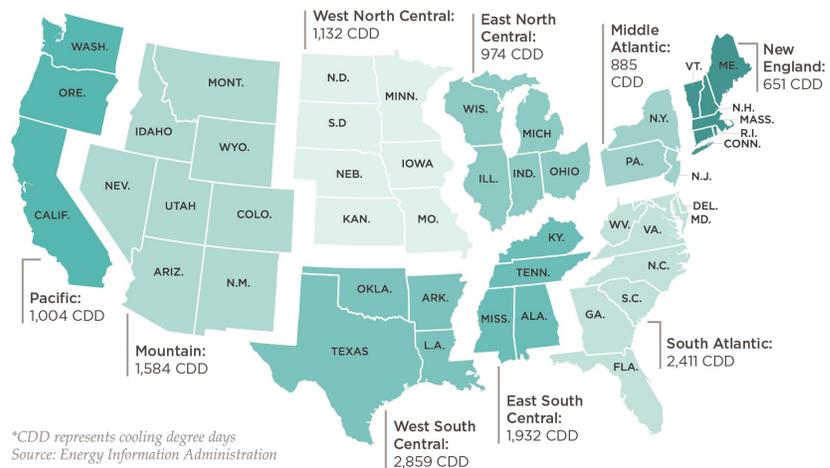
Degree days are tracked for a variety of reasons. Farmers can better plan the planting of crops and timing for pest control, and weather experts can better assess climate patterns.

To view degree days for our area, visit www.energystar.gov and search "degree days calculator."

If charts and data aren't your forte, no

U.S. COOLING DEGREE DAYS

Cooling degree days measure how hot the outdoor temperature was on a given day or during a period of days. The map below shows measurements of U.S. cooling degree days in 2018 by census region. Extreme outdoor temperatures bring a higher number of degree days, which results in higher energy use.



problem. Here are a few tips to help you save on energy bills this summer:

- Set your thermostat as high as comfortably possible. The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your cooling costs will be. The Department of Energy recommends setting your thermostat to 78 F when you're home and a higher setting for when you're away.
- Turn off ceiling fans when you leave a room.
- Close window coverings, like curtains and blinds, during the day to block sunlight.
- Use caulk and weather stripping to seal air leaks around doors and windows.

If you have questions about your energy use or to learn more ways to save, give us a call or stop by our office.

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

Knowing where utility lines are buried will help you avoid serious or deadly injury, service outages and costly repairs. Always call 811 three days in advance of digging or excavating. Underground utilities in the area identified for digging will be flagged. Each utility type is marked with a specific color:



Red = Electric

Yellow = Gas

Orange = Communications

Blue = Water

Green = Sewer

Board Report – May 2019

- Approved April disbursements totaling \$815,602.21, accepted 10 new member applications, and March construction in the amount of \$204.90.
- Reviewed financial results through April 30, 2019 with \$152,762 Operating Margins and \$167,093 Total Margins year to date.
- There were 8 outages recorded during April, with 21 thus far in 2019 for a total outage time of 1.04 hours per member. It was noted that 0.77 hours of the YTD outage time was due to a transmission outage at the end of February.
- Two applications for discounted early retirement of capital credits to estates were approved with total capital credits of \$2,552.58 to be paid out at the net present value of \$982.22.
- The Board approved a payment of \$495.81 to repurchase one share of the Bright Horizons community solar project from a member leaving the Co-op's service territory.
- The Board approved closing the office on Friday July 5, 2019 with all office staff using a day of vacation.
- The initial invoice in the amount of \$5,000 from NRECA Consulting Services for the CEO search was approved for payment.
- The Dairyland Power report included a review of Dairyland finances, dwindling coal supplies from delays in barge shipments due to river flooding, update on the wholesale rate study which is expected to be implemented by May 1, 2021, and discussion on a proposed amendment to the Dairyland Bylaws to change director fees to a retainer based method.
- 46 delinquent Accounts were processed for collection following the May 20th due date. The total amount owing on these accounts is \$15,102.82. Twenty-six of these accounts have remote disconnect capability.
- CEO Schaefer reviewed two member issues that were reported to the Sheriff's Department, a member complaint about a 3-phase billing for operating "on-peak", and a list of the 2019 scholarship awards. Schaefer also reviewed a line employee who terminated his employment with the Co-op, and a grievance filed by the union over the COBRA benefit provided in the Co-op's HRA Plan.
- The Taylor County Broadband Committee report by Director Zenner and CEO Schaefer noted that the recent briefings with area business leaders, government representatives, town officials, school representatives, utilities, and potential Internet Service Providers were well attended, and all expressed great interest in the Taylor County Broadband Committee's progress in finding a solution to get broadband service to all residents within the County.
- Director Zenner reported on the WECA Education Committee meeting to set the 2020 educational programs for electric cooperative directors, supervisors and staff.
- Director Waldhart reported on the WECA Legislative and Regulatory Committee meeting which included; development of a resolutions process and policy is underway; formation of a transportation task force; status of 3 federal issues; and, a Wisconsin legislative issues update. WECA District meetings will be held in July.
- Directors Zenner and Albers reported on the Safety Meeting from May 21st which was an in the field visit to a jobsite. The line crew was working on a rebuild south of the Mondeaux Dam area replacing an old overhead line. The report was that the crew was using very good safety practices in all areas. The directors reported they were very impressed by the work ethic and quality of the line crew during their observation. They also commented on how much they realized the terrain that the Co-op has to traverse to provide electric service makes so much difference in the cost compared to serving in a city or more populated area.
- Director Tesch reported on the NRECA Legislative Conference. The four main "asks" during the Washington DC legislative visits were 1) rural infrastructure, 2) a PBGC pension fee reduction for the NRECA pension plan, 3) "no" sale of the power marketing associations (PMAs), and, 4) an exemption from the 85% member receipts rule for certain government grants received by an electric co-op.
- Director Tesch reported on his meeting of the CFC Finance Committee and suggested Taylor Electric take advantage of the CFC bill pay service for paying the monthly wholesale power bill at Dairyland Power, as the CFC interest rate on advances is somewhat higher than Dairyland's power bill prepayment rate. Dean also indicated there is a new retail electric rate idea being tested by some co-ops, a flat rate, all-inclusive rate, that works similar to some cell phone plans.
- Board policies on Duties and Responsibilities of the Board, Director Fiduciary Duties and Standard of Conduct, and Conflict of Interest were reviewed. Each director signed a "Board Member Commitment to Ethical Conduct" which was placed in the Co-op's files.
- Director Zenner reported on events at the Clark Electric and Jump River Electric Cooperative annual meetings that he attended.

Summer Energy Charge

Starting with your July billing statement, which is enclosed with this newsletter, you will notice that the wholesale energy charge increased from \$.082 to \$.097 for a total kwh charge per hour of \$.1321. This charge will be in effect with June, July and August usage.

The increase is due to the wholesale cost of energy (from Dairyland Power Cooperative) being higher during the summer months. Higher demand related to the use of air conditioning is the main driver. Most utilities experience higher demand during the summer and some blend the increase over 12 months. Taylor Electric uses a higher summer rate to recover these increased costs as they occur.

Limiting your usage between 11:00 AM—7:00 PM is extremely helpful in keeping the demand for electricity down. This in turn will help keep our rates lower.