



## “Is a Retail Rate Change On The Horizon?”

As your electric cooperative, Sawnee EMC wants to keep you informed and up-to-date with any potential rate changes that may take place. With that in mind, we want you to know a proposal is underway to review and, where needed, revise many of the Corporation's retail rates used to bill Sawnee members. While Sawnee EMC has not experienced a major rate change in most of its retail rates since 1989, many things have changed in the electric industry during that time. For example, the cost of energy and the cost to provide service to member accounts have changed drastically since the last major retail rate change two (2) decades ago.

One of the main focus areas of this review relates to a billing factor known as the Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment or “WPCA”. “The staff has been receiving comments and suggestions from the membership indicating they would like to see a change as it relates to the level of the WPCA factor and, in order to do this, rates must be revised”, states Blake House, Vice President of Member Services. “We are often asked why this wholesale purchased power cost adjustment is in place and why it has increased; it is because we have passed on the various cost changes seen by the Corporation to our members through this mechanism instead of changing the level of rates”, House continues. As an electric cooperative, Sawnee has no other major source of revenue to operate the

Corporation except the revenue derived from the electric rates it charges the members. Increasing costs in the area of purchasing power, operational costs, as well as other costs such as environmental compliance are all putting upward pressure on the rates that Sawnee charges its members.

*“We are seeing tremendous pressure, from a cost standpoint, in the area of environmental compliance as well as other key business areas. Existing federal requirements, such as those found in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, as well as several proposals now working their way through the U.S. Congress relating to climate change and mandates to purchase renewable energy, suggest that the way we collect revenue from our members must change.”*

**Michael A. Goodroe**  
President and CEO

The staff of Sawnee is developing detailed cost allocation models based on a “Cost of Service” study to measure and understand how these costs relate to the revenue collected, by rate class, and to see where changes are advisable or potentially required. Sawnee's staff is also tracking key legislation currently making its way through the U.S. Congress such as HR 2454 or “American Clean Energy and Security Act” which, if approved and signed into law, will affect Sawnee as early as five (5) years from now (e.g. 2014). Among other things, HR 2454 will require the

purchase of an ever-increasing amount of renewable energy or pay a financial penalty. This legislation would also require Sawnee to use credits provided under the legislation as well as purchase credits or pay fees to offset the cost of constraining carbon in the environment.

All of these measures are being studied in greater detail by the staff of Sawnee to ensure that we fully understand the potential cost implications to us and our members. We know from our preliminary review that these actions are 1) going to be costly to meet and 2) in the long run, appear to require that retail electric rates increase. More review is needed and we must wait to see the final legislation.

The staff of Sawnee EMC understands that no one likes to receive what is perceived as troubling news when it comes to their power cost; however, changes related to the cost of service delivered by Sawnee EMC to its members has the potential to occur and increase rates. Rest assured that the Board of Directors of Sawnee EMC and the dedicated members of our staff are committed to keeping the consumers fully informed of the issues facing the Corporation and controlling the costs that are paid in rates.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact us at [marketing@sawnee.com](mailto:marketing@sawnee.com) or call us at (770) 887-2363.

## Do You Dare to Compare?

It happens ...you're talking to your neighbor about the weather or plans for the weekend, then one thing leads to the next and suddenly you are comparing electric bills.

Sawnee EMC is commonly asked, "Why are my energy bills different from my neighbor's house that is even smaller than mine?" There are many reasons why electric bills can differ. Please keep the following points in mind if you find yourself comparing SEMC electric bills with that of your neighbor:

- **The square footage of the homes and the height of the ceilings in each home**
- **Heating and air conditioning systems (number of units, their type, age and condition)**
- **Thermostat settings in winter and summer**
- **Type and number of windows**
- **How tightly the homes are sealed**
- **Amount of insulation in walls, floors and especially in attics**
- **Trees and shading surrounding the houses and the direction they face (facing east and west is worst in the summer)**
- **Hot water usage (e.g. number, size and age of water heaters)**
- **The number and type of electrical appliances and their usage**
- **Number and age of people in each home**
- **Length of time people are home (e.g. new baby, live-in parents)**

These are just a few items to look for when comparing your usage to your neighbor's. In many cases, if you encounter drastically higher electric usage, the increase will more than likely be related to the heating or air conditioning equipment, water heater or differences in the lifestyle. For assistance with any questions or concerns, please contact our Energy Service Department at 770-887-2363, ext. 7544, or via email at [marketing@sawnee.com](mailto:marketing@sawnee.com).

### Did You Know?

- Nearly ½ of the \$1,900 the average American family spends each year on energy bills goes toward heating and cooling the home.
- Keep bills as low as possible by upgrading insulation, sealing air leaks, installing programmable thermostats, and changing air filters regularly.
- Sawnee EMC has energy grants available to assist you with energy efficient upgrades!
- Visit the Energy Center at [www.sawnee.com](http://www.sawnee.com) to learn more about saving energy.

## Mark Your Calendar Today!

### **Fast Facts About Your Cooperative**

- Sawnee EMC was incorporated on July 16, 1938 and serves over 130,000 members in seven (7) counties
- Serves and maintains over 9,800 miles of distribution lines
- Sawnee EMC is currently the 3rd largest EMC in the state of Georgia and the 8th largest in the nation of over 900

Be sure to make a note on your calendar that Sawnee EMC's 2009 Annual Meeting of Members will be held on Saturday, October 3, 2009. The meeting will take place at SEMC's corporate headquarters at 543 Atlanta Highway in Cumming, Georgia.

Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. and the business session is scheduled to begin at 10:20 a.m. Make plans to join us for an exciting time and to learn about your cooperative.

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## Advanced Metering Infrastructure - AMI Update

In June's edition of The Sawnee Highliner, we announced that we would soon begin the deployment of an automated metering infrastructure (AMI) system in our service territory. This state-of-the-art technology includes the installation of a digital meter that provides near real time energy usage data through a series of radio towers and data collectors which will automatically read and monitor all of over 150,000 energy meters.

Since that June 2009 article was published, we are pleased to let you know that the AMI towers, antennas and base stations have been successfully installed and are currently being tested. The first area to receive the AMI meters has been selected and will be located along the GA-400 corridor in the north Forsyth and south Dawson County areas. This initial installation will consist of approximately 3,000 meters which make up what is called the "system acceptance test study".

Once the meters in this study area are installed, they will be closely monitored to verify the overall system performance. This review period of approximately three (3) months will allow Sawnee's staff to ensure that the system meets the design specifications and the various guarantees provided by the vendor. After successfully passing the system acceptance test, full scale deployment of the system will begin and it is anticipated the entire AMI system will be fully deployed by July 2012.

If you want to see when you will be receiving your AMI meter and to learn more information about Sawnee's AMI system, please visit us online at [www.sawnee.com/ami](http://www.sawnee.com/ami).



### Mark Your Calendar (continued from page 2)



In addition to the Cooperative's business meeting, many activities are planned for your enjoyment. Below is a "sneak preview" of what you can expect at this year's SEMC Annual Meeting of Members:

- **Exhibit Tent with Energy Displays**
- **Continental Breakfast**
- **Music and Entertainment**
- **Kid's Activities and Giveaways**
- **Report of Cooperative's Activities**
- **Door Prizes, Useful Items and Charity Raffles**

Watch for your copy of the Official Notice of this meeting included in our 2008 Annual Report to be mailed to all members in mid September. After you receive your Annual Report, if you have any questions or need more information, please contact our Customer Call Center at 770-887-2363. We look forward to seeing you at this year's Annual Meeting!



### Our Mission

Sawnee Electric Membership Corporation exists to serve the changing needs of members by enhancing the quality of life by actively supporting community developments and identifying and serving the members' energy needs.

### Quotable Quote

"Run when you can, walk when you have to, crawl if you must; just never give up."

Dean Karnazes

### Contact Us

[www.sawnee.com](http://www.sawnee.com)

#### Business Hours

Mon.-Fri. 8:00am-5:00pm

#### Call Center Hours

Mon.-Fri. 7:00am-9:00pm

Sat. 8:00am-5:00pm

#### Postal Address

P.O. Box 266  
Cumming, GA 30028

#### Customer Call Center

(770) 887-2363

Fax (678) 947-3368

TDD (770) 781-4271

(800) 635-9131

#### Sawnee Electric Membership Foundation, Inc.

P.O. Box 1174

Cumming, GA 30028

(678) 455-1539

Fax (678) 513-8106

[cindy.badgett@sawnee.com](mailto:cindy.badgett@sawnee.com)



## Renewable Energy Options Hit Home

The first solar installation in Sawnee EMC's service area able to take advantage of the new Georgia state tax credit for a solar photovoltaic system recently took place. The homeowner was also able to receive additional funding through Sawnee EMC's new solar/photovoltaic energy rebate program as well (Visit the web at [www.sawnee.com/Energy/incentives.htm](http://www.sawnee.com/Energy/incentives.htm) to learn more about this rebate).



### Solar Rebate From Sawnee EMC

Install a solar/photovoltaic system at your home or business and receive \$300 per kW, up to a 10 kW maximum. Please visit our Energy Center online at [www.sawnee.com/energy](http://www.sawnee.com/energy) for additional details!

This residential solar system was installed and tied into the distribution system through Sawnee's Net Metering Program.

This new solar rebate program is helping both residences and businesses save money, while contributing to our environment. By taking advantage of the solar rebate, the 30% federal tax credit and the 35% state tax credit, more and more Sawnee members are expressing interest in a solar energy system for their home or business.

If you have additional questions about Sawnee's rebates, please contact our Energy Services Department at (770) 887-2363 or via email at [marketing@sawnee.com](mailto:marketing@sawnee.com).

## HERE'S WATTS COOKIN'

### Chocolate Peanut Butter Pile-Ups

- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 pkg. German sweet chocolate, broken into pieces

Mix peanut butter, sugar and egg until well blended. Press or roll dough into a 10 x 7 inch rectangle on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake at 325 degrees for 20 minutes. Remove from oven and immediately arrange chocolate on top and cover lightly with aluminum foil. Let stand for three minutes and remove foil. Spread chocolate over entire surface and immediately cut into 2 x 1 inch bars. Makes approximately 30 bars.



*Thanks to Virginia Page. Send us your recipe - if we print it, we'll credit your account \$5.00.*