



More Power to You

Cost of New Environmental Regulations Eventually Will Appear on Energy Bills

Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

Benjamin Franklin once said that two things are certain: death and taxes. I'd like to add a third certainty to the list: The cost of energy will increase as power suppliers comply with new environmental regulations.

The Environmental Protection Agency, primarily through amendments to the 1990 Clean Air Act and recent court actions, now requires that coal-fired plants reduce the amount of mercury emissions as well as other pollutants. The EPA mandates are expected to force utilities to retire or retrofit between 33,000 and 70,000 megawatts of generating capacity by 2015, according to a report from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, which oversees the nation's bulk power grid.

The resulting billions of dollars in extra costs to bring coal-fired power plants into compliance will directly hit power suppliers, which in turn will pass those increases along to their wholesale customers. Eventually, those increases will appear on consumers' energy bills.

Rock Energy Cooperative does not own any power plants. Instead, we meet our members' energy needs with power we purchase from Alliant Energy, which generates almost 50 percent of its power from coal plants. From now through 2013, Alliant projects spending hundreds of millions of dollars on environmental upgrades to meet new regulations.

As a country, we use lots of coal to generate electricity, and these new regulations heavily affect coal plants. Illinois, like the United States as a whole, produces 50 percent of its power from coal, while Wisconsin generates 70 percent.

Even more regulations could be on the horizon. For example, in June 2010, EPA proposed two possible approaches for managing coal ash and other coal combustion byproducts (CCBs)—residues produced when coal is burned to make electricity.

One option, classifying CCBs as non-hazardous, will ensure that coal ash is handled safely and protect not just the environment, but also jobs and consumers.

EPA's other option—to regulate coal ash as hazardous—would hit coal-fired power plants with staggering

costs and significantly increase energy bills. The Electric Power Research Institute, a nonprofit utility research consortium, estimated the potential price tag of a hazardous CCB designation at \$54.66 billion to \$76.84 billion over 20 years.

Rock Energy and other co-ops have been actively urging EPA to consider the negative consequences of higher energy bills when setting new regulations. In fact, more than 10,500 comments from co-ops and their members were filed with the agency opposing regulating CCBs as hazardous.

Until EPA's various power plant rules are finalized, the bottom line remains unknown. But here's a fourth certainty that we can add to Benjamin Franklin's list. No matter what happens, Rock Energy is committed to working hard to provide you with safe, reliable power at an affordable price. We work hard to control local costs and do everything we can to make sure you receive the highest quality service for the lowest practical price.

We can all agree that a cleaner environment is better for everyone. We also need to understand that by

(Continued on page 29 ►)

Wholesale Power Costs vs. Operating Expenses



About 70 percent of every dollar you pay your local energy cooperative goes directly for wholesale power costs. Bucket trucks, poles and wire, right-of-way trimming, payroll, and other operating expenses are covered by the rest.

Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association



Focus on Energy Offers Financial Incentives

As a Rock Energy Cooperative member who lives in Wisconsin, you have access to lots of valuable services and financial incentives provided through the Focus on Energy program.

Rock Energy's continuing partnership with Focus on Energy benefits everyone by helping to manage rising energy costs, promote in-state economic development, and protect the environment.

Focus on Energy works with eligible residents, farms, and businesses to install cost-effective energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, resulting in millions of dollars in energy savings for all Wisconsin utility customers each year.

What does Focus on Energy offer to Rock Energy members?

- Financial incentives that help offset the cost of eligible projects.
- A wealth of energy-efficiency tips and information available online at focusonenergy.com to help you learn more about what you can do to start saving energy today.
- Assistance with identifying high-efficiency products and local service providers qualified to make efficiency upgrades to your home or business.
- Technical expertise to help guide complex or innovative projects, such as large-scale energy-efficiency projects, from start to completion.

Focus on Energy saves Wisconsin consumers \$2.50 for every



focus on energy™

Partnering with Wisconsin utilities



dollar spent on the program. The program offers financial incentives and technical assistance to residential, commercial, industrial, government, and agricultural consumers. It also provides resources for residential

renewable energy project development, including site assessments and financial assistance.

To learn more about what Focus on Energy has to offer, call (800) 762-7077 or visit focusonenergy.com. ■

CLOSING THE
BLINDS HELPED
ME ENJOY
A MOVIE.

When the A/C is on,
I keep the sun out. It's
nothing huge, but it's worth
the effort. It's also worth two tickets
to a summer blockbuster. Find out what
you can do at TogetherWeSave.com.

 **ROCK ENERGY
COOPERATIVE**
www.rock.coop
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

TOGETHERWESAVE.COM

Tune in to Big Screen Energy Savings

The days of large console televisions with their wood grain exteriors and antenna wires or rabbit ears are long gone.

And there's no more using needle nose pliers to change channels after the knob breaks or fiddling endlessly to adjust the horizontal and vertical holds. Today's televisions offer larger, thinner screens and, thanks to digital cable or satellite connections, provide a virtually unlimited number of channels.

However, some models require a tremendous amount of energy to operate—almost as much as a refrigerator. And the average American household owns 2.93 TVs, according to a 2010 Nielsen report.

All of this energy use adds up. The Natural Resources Defense Council found that U.S. televisions use more than 46 billion kilowatt hours per year, or about 4 percent of residential electricity use.

In response to consumer concerns, TV manufacturers are designing sets that use less energy without sacrificing screen size or resolution.

If you're in the market for a new TV, these tips will help you tune in to big screen energy savings.

Although a high-definition TV (HDTV) transforms the latest blockbuster movie into a theater-like living room experience, these sets generally use more power because of better picture clarity. Also, energy consumption often relates to screen size. The larger the screen, the more electricity required.

Four types of TVs are currently available: plasma, liquid-crystal display (LCD), rear-projection, and cathode ray tube (CRT). CRT televisions are the most difficult to find because they employ old technology and screen sizes rarely top 40 inches.

Plasma screens often are cited as the largest energy user—mainly because their large 42- to 65-inch screens typically draw between 240 to 400 watts. Most consume electricity even when turned off.

LCD TVs don't need much power to operate—111 watts on average. Most LCD screens range in size from 21 inches to 49 inches. These TVs fall into two categories: those with cold-cathode fluorescent lamps to illuminate

the screen and backlit models employing a light-emitting diode (LED).

LED units offer several benefits, notably better picture quality and thinner and lighter screens. They also use slightly less energy, at 101 watts.

Rear-projection televisions tend to be the most energy efficient and boast the largest screen sizes. However, due to their overall weight, rear-projection sets are not as readily available as plasma and LCD models.

Shopping for an energy-efficient television can be difficult. Television manufacturers rarely advertise energy consumption, and it almost never appears on in-store labels, though new ENERGY STAR requirements may change that in 2012.

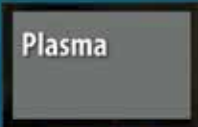
Faced with these difficulties, consumers need to conduct their own energy use research through unbiased online sources such as CNET.com, an online journal for the technology industry. Look for specific model numbers, which you can take to the store. ■

High-Definition Television Comparison Guide


The power used by an active television is determined by three factors: screen size; technology type, such as plasma or LCD; and picture brightness, which nearly always depends on user-selected picture settings.

Type of TV	Typical Size	Typical Price	Average Energy Used
 Liquid Crystal Display (LCD)	13-65 inches	\$200 to \$8,000	111 watts (standard)
			101 watts (LED)

LCDs are the most popular HDTVs, mainly because they're flat and available in a tremendous range of sizes and prices.

 Plasma	42-65 inches	\$800 to \$7,000	301 watts
--	--------------	------------------	-----------

Available in a limited range of sizes (mostly big), plasma TVs outperform LCDs in tests comparing overall picture quality.

 Rear-projection	50-73 inches	\$1,000 to \$3,500	N/A
---	--------------	--------------------	-----

Rear-projection TVs are the most efficient but are getting hard to find because flat-panel models are often cheaper.

Source: CNET.com (April 2010)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



Member Appreciation Day 2011

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Saturday, Sept. 17 • 8 to 10:30 a.m.

REC Headquarters, 2815
Kennedy Road, Janesville, Wis.

Watch for
details!

Get Connected

Check out these great
deals offered with your
Co-op Connections Card



**Huber Haus Handmades, 422 Center St.,
Durand – (815) 248-2300**

Offering handmade gifts to order—dolls, toys,
quilts, afghans, dishtowels, shirts, hats, and scarves.
Grandma Huber knits, crochets, quilts, sews, and embroiders.
10% Discount



**Joe Schweighardt Insurance Agency,
317 N. Main St., Edgerton – (608) 884-9435**

Insurance and financial services.

**Free Road Atlas with Any Auto Quote (one per family per
year, must be picked up)**



Pitchers Mound, 2745 Prairie Ave., Beloit – (608) 207-3224
Serving food and drinks from 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. seven days per
week. DJ and bands on Saturday nights. Ten TVs to watch your
favorite teams.

\$1 Off Menu Items

For a complete listing of current deals, visit www.rock.coop. Terms and
conditions subject to change as desired by participating businesses.
You also can use your Co-op Connections Card to receive a discount on
prescription drugs and to print online coupons.

More Power to You

(Continued from page 4)

implementing what the EPA is mandating, there will be a monetary cost to everyone that will ultimately show up on your energy bill.

Members Cheer Snappers to Victory

We couldn't have asked for better weather or better baseball on June 25 for our 10th annual Rock Energy Night at the Ballpark. Clouds rolled in to cool off an otherwise steamy day, and a ninth inning Beloit Snappers home run sent the game into extra innings, creating added anticipation for the fireworks finale.

Rock Energy members and employees ate hundreds of hot dogs and slices of pizza and participated in fun between-inning games. One lucky member even won the 50/50 raffle, going home with an extra \$500.

After the Snappers beat the Cedar Rapids Kernels by a score of 8-7 in the 10th, a spectacular fireworks show capped off an enjoyable evening spent with family and friends.

Co-op members can buy discounted tickets for the rest of the Snappers 2011 regular season at our Janesville and South Beloit offices. Tickets originally priced at \$6.50 are just \$2 each. While you're in the office buying tickets, please share your ideas about how we can improve our service to you. ■

*The first 30
Rock Energy
kids at the
ballpark
on June 25
received a
Snappers ball
souvenir.*



Shane Larson, CEO
Barbara Uebelacker,
Editor

P.O. Box 1758
2815 Kennedy Rd.
Janesville, WI 53547

P.O. Box 126
15229 Willowbrook Rd.
South Beloit, IL 61080

(608) 752-4550 • (866) 752-4550