

URECC-NEWS



for the members of Upshur Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation

August 2020

Annual Meeting Update From the General Manager



Robert Walker, URECC General Manager

I recently read a quote where one writer stated, “that in a shocking reversal of teenager roles, they now find themselves yelling at their parents for going outside” amid the Covid-19 virus. Another quote, a frustrated mom handling the teaching duties from home, said: “a half-day into homeschool and my child is suspended for stealing food from the cafeteria.” I think many of us may find some identity or truth in those statements.

There is no doubt that 2020 is one year for the history books and one we will not forget anytime soon. Like most everyone, URECC’s Board and employees have had to make decisions that were never expected and work in ways never imagined. All done to achieve one, simple goal- social distancing. As one person stated- it is like building a plane while you fly it.

To that end, we plan to hold our 2020 Annual meeting online, where everyone can remain safe, still participate to some degree, and remain socially distant. This was not our original plan, but we have been dealt a different hand of cards than we expected. We only hope for better and more normal years to come and prefer regular normal to a new normal.

The upcoming virtual annual meeting will feature many aspects of a regular meeting but in a recorded video. When you view the virtual annual meeting, you will find our typical full agenda that includes reports from some of the Board of Directors, financial auditors, and operations report from myself. There will also be chances to win some prizes as well.

What you might find a bit different are the opportunities for staff feedback. To accomplish this, Upshur Rural Electric decided to provide a mail-in option that will parallel a prize registration option whereby mailing in a postage-paid card: you can either register for prizes, submit a question to the management team, or do both. The only things that will be missing are participating members, the camaraderie, and the food.

Upshur Rural Electric Board and Staff members felt that it was right for us to attempt to provide a similar Annual Meeting experience to our members while simultaneously working around the distancing rules that are in place from our governing officials and experts.

As a reminder, this year, we had three

seats up for election, and we followed the election process to the nth degree so that it would be similarly processed as in prior years. At the start of 2020, Upshur Rural Electric mailed out an Annual Meeting Voting Certificate that could be returned to the accounting firm of Knuckles, Duvall, and Hallum to vote on the three seats. This year we received back over 1,500 votes for each of the three positions, and the accounting firm certified the elections.

In addition to the virtual Annual Meeting, or as an alternative to it, Upshur Rural Electric will be sending out an Annual Meeting booklet to every member. This booklet will provide the voting certification along with all of the reports that are to be presented at the virtual Annual Meeting. You can use this information to keep up with the state of the Co-Op and as a guide if you choose to view our virtual Annual Meeting.

In the end, we at Upshur Rural Electric hope for your best wellness and safety, and we want you to know that we are working hard for you every day.

URECC’s Virtual Annual Meeting will be available for viewing October 1, 2020
Virtual Prize Drawing will be held October 15, 2020



INTRODUCING- TWO-WAY OUTAGE TEXTING

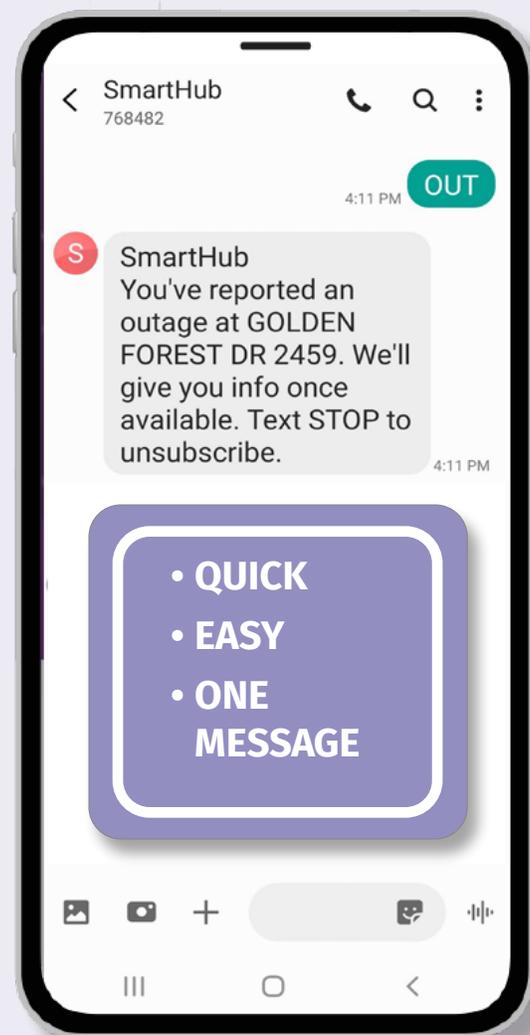
While we do what we can to prevent outages, they do unfortunately happen from time to time. In some instances, large outages can occur and increase the call volume of members reporting outages, which can lead to members receiving a busy signal or increased wait times.

URECC is introducing Two-Way Outage Texting to provide members a quick and efficient way to report power outages and receive updates on restoration progress. This feature will also help to avoid overloading our outage phone lines during storms.

Using the Two-Way Outage Texting tool is simple. Members only need to text **OUT** to **768482** to report an outage.

To take advantage of two-way texting, members must be a registered SmartHub user with a phone number listed as a Messenger contact and must have an active URECC account.

Members should also note that this feature is available for single meter accounts. If you have more than one meter, you will still need to report outages through the Smarthub app or by calling 903-680-2100 or 866-804-1674. This way our outage management system can determine which location is without power.



For more information or for help signing up for Outage Texting, contact us at 903-843-2536 or visit urecc.coop.



PO Box 70 • Gilmer, Texas, 75644
 1200 W Tyler Street • Gilmer, Texas, 75644
 tele: **(903) 843-2536**

(800) 259-2536
www.urecc.coop

OFFICE HOURS:
 Monday-Friday,
 8:00 am - 4:30 pm.

POWER OUTAGE
 HOT LINES
903-680-2100
866-804-1674

FORMS AVAILABLE AT URECC.COOP

If you or your company needs official forms from URECC, those can be downloaded in PDF format at **URECC.coop/Reports-Forms**.

All forms and documents, and signatures needed can be scanned and emailed to URECC, or faxed to our offices, or the majority of our documents can be signed digitally through Docusign.

If you do not have internet access the forms may be mailed or faxed to you by request.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Pay online at **urecc.coop**
- Pay by phone by calling **888-223-2056**, available 24 hours a day. Visa, Mastercard, Discover, or American Express.
- Pay in person at our office or use any of our four Kiosks.
- Pay via automatic draft of your checking or savings account. To sign up, please visit **urecc.coop/ways-to-pay**.
- **Pay through our URECC App available for iPhones or Androids.**



Utility Assistance Programs

Sometimes people need a helping hand. For those members who qualify, special utility assistance programs are available. Thousands of dollars have been designated for distribution in our URECC service area.

Listed below are the utility assistance providers in our service area. Please contact these providers directly to determine if you need and qualify for assistance on your electric bill. The full list of contact information can be found on our website, www.urecc.coop.

- Aid Bank- Upshur/Wood County
- Neal McCoy's East Texas Angel Network
- Community Services of Northeast Texas- Rusk County
- Greater East Texas Community Action Program-Wood County
- Veteran's Resource Center
- Community Services of Northeast Texas- Camp County
- Community Services of Northeast Texas- Cass/Morris County
- Greater East Texas Community Action Program- Gregg County
- Northeast Texas Habitat for Humanity- Upshur, Harrison, and Gregg Counties
- Tri-County Community Action- Harrison County
- Ore City Ministerial Alliance
- Greater East Texas Community Action Program- Smith County
- Tri-County Community Action- Upshur County

**LIGHTS OUT?
REPORT IT HERE**

If the power goes out, be sure to keep URECC's Outage Reporting information handy. You can make a report by phone by calling 903-680-2100 (local) and 866-804-1674 (long distance.)

Members are also encouraged to report outages through URECC's Smarthub app, which is available in your phone's app store.

SAVE THE DATE

URECC Virtual Annual Meeting available:
October 1, 2020.

Electricity Brings Everyday Value



Even though I work in the energy industry, like most people, I still don't think much about the electricity I use. I expect the lights to turn on when I flip the switch and the coffeemaker to work each morning. Because electricity is so abundant, we don't think much about it. Since many of us have been spending more time at home over the past few months, we have likely been using more energy. And yet, we still expect an endless supply of power with uninterrupted service 24/7. The only time we really about electricity is when the power goes out or perhaps when the monthly bill arrives.

Given how electricity powers our modern lifestyle every day, it's a great value, especially when compared to other common services and expenses. For example, think back to the cost of a gallon of gasoline 20 years ago. Consider the cost of groceries or a cup of your favorite

specialty coffee from a few years back. In comparison, the cost of electricity has remained largely flat, unlike most other consumer goods.

Like many of you, I have a cell phone to stay connected, and I subscribe to cable channels so I can enjoy more viewing options. Many of us consider these necessities for modern day life. We can see what we're getting for our money, and we pay the price for those services. In contrast, when we use electricity, we don't necessarily "see" all that we're getting for our money.

But considering what electricity does for us, it's a tremendous value for our quality of life as well as our budgets. For comparison, consider that the average rent increase was nearly 4% (from 2014-2019) according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics

Consumer Price Index (CPI). The cost of medical care was increased 3% during this time, and education was not too far behind at 2.6%. So, where did electricity rank? According to the CPI, electricity increased by less than half a percentage point, 0.4%.

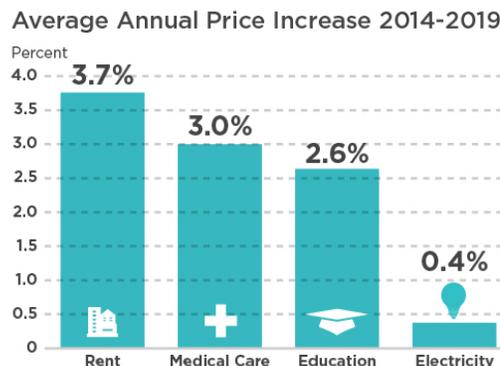
The bottom line: electricity brings everyday value. Considering that electricity is something that we all use around the clock, I'm very proud of our track record. At the same time, we are striving to increase our service reliability, reduce those brief interruptions and reduce costs. We are continually working to improve our operations to ensure a smarter grid and exploring more renewable energy options where possible.

Upshur Rural provides the reliable service you expect and deserve as valued members of the co-op. And as your trusted energy advisor, we want to help you save you energy and money.

We recognize that the past few months have been challenging for many of our members and we're here to help. If you have questions about your account or are looking for ways to save energy at home, please give us a call. Upshur Rural is your electric co-op and our sole purpose is to serve you and the needs of our community. That's everyday value.

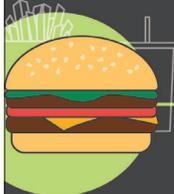
ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

When you look at price increases of common expenses over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY



\$5.30

average cost of a Big Mac® value meal

\$3.87

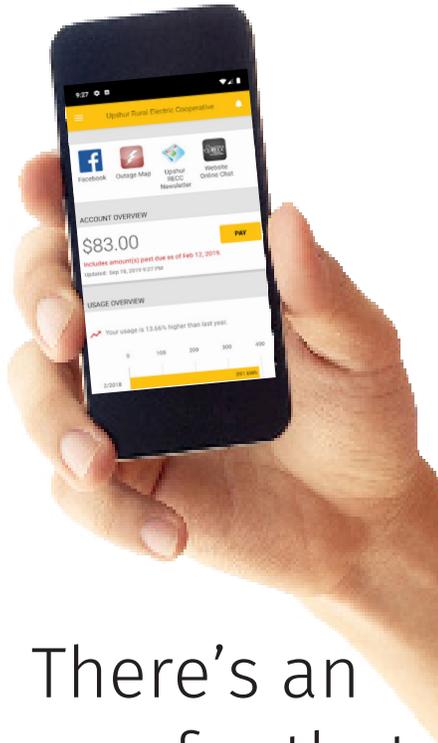
average daily cost of power



Electricity is expressed on a daily basis using EIA 2018 Average, U.S. Monthly Residential Bill of \$17. Big Mac® is a registered trademark of McDonald's Corporation. McDonald's Corporation does not endorse or sponsor this material.

Sources: Economist.com and EIA, 2018 data.

View, Pay,
Create,
Update,
Alert,
Report,
Send &
Receive?



There's an
app for that.

Look for the URECC Smarthub app
on Google Play or the App Store.



Remember to Update Your Info



At various times and for various reasons, URECC may need to contact our members.

The information that you provide is our source of contact. If that information is incorrect—for example your phone number has changed or you no longer use your post office box, etc.- we have no way of knowing unless you make us aware of the change.

If you call in your information, please be prepared to confirm your identity.

Also, a correct phone number could be the means of avoiding disconnection of service.

A correct address will help to ensure that you receive your bill. A forwarding address if you move off URECC lines will help to ensure that you receive your final bill, your deposit and/or membership refund check, if applicable, as well as your capital credit checks when the time comes.

Didn't receive your bill?

Remember that failure to receive your bill in no way relieves you, the member, from paying it. If you do not receive your bill, contact our office before the due date so that another bill can be issued at: (903) 843-2536.

Garlic Herb Steak and Potato Foil Packs

Ingredients:

- 1.5 to 2 pounds top sirloin steak cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 pound mini Yukon gold potatoes cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic minced
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon fresh ground pepper



Directions:

- In a large bowl combine steak, potatoes, oil, garlic, thyme, rosemary, salt and pepper. Cover and set in the fridge for 30 minutes.
- Take out from fridge and set on the counter for 15 minutes.
- Cut out 4 large foil sheets, about 12x12 in size.
- Divide steak and potatoes between the sheets of foil.

TO GRILL

Preheat grill to HIGH.

Wrap foils tightly around the steak and potatoes and seal it all together.

Transfer foil packets to the grill and grill over high heat for 10 minutes PER SIDE.