



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. ~ Serving our members' needs since 1939



# SmartHub can be a useful tool in understanding energy usage

With the launch of SmartHub earlier this year, members have had the opportunity to track their energy usage and compare that to many factors such as lifestyle and outside temperature.

"SmartHub is a great tool for members to use when they receive a bill that is

higher than they might have expected,"

General Manager Mike Gray said.

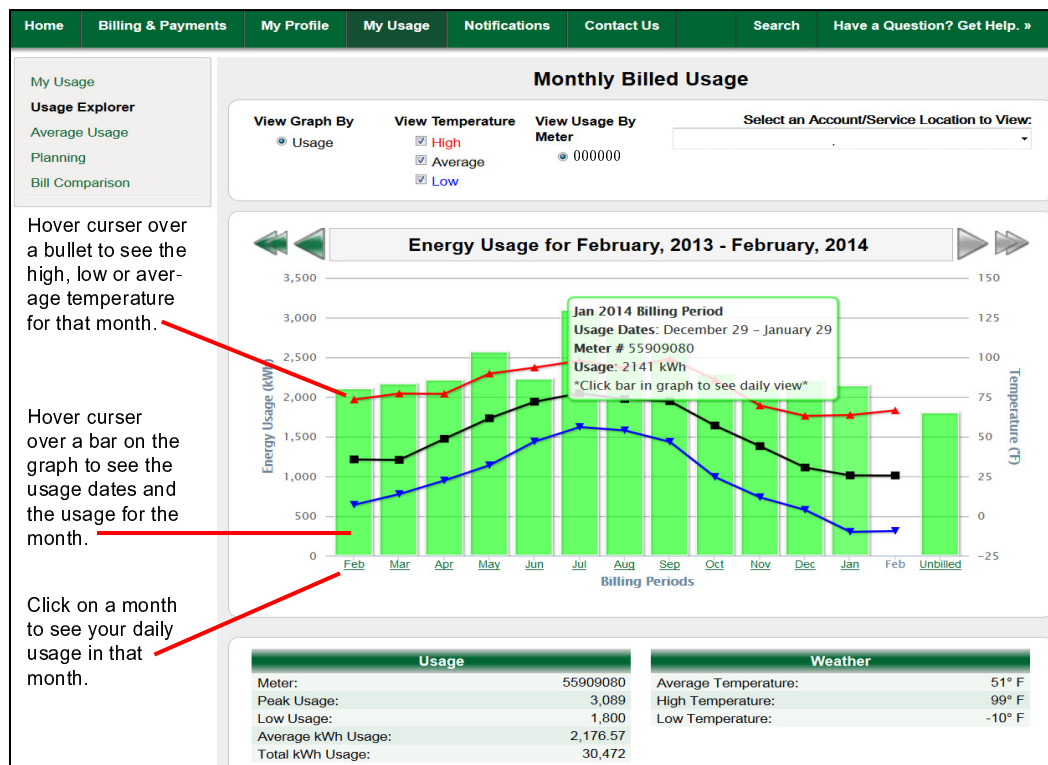
"They can pull up their usage by the day and see that they used more electricity than normal on the days they hosted company for the holidays, or the string of days where the temperature stayed in

the single digits for the high.

"The hourly chart can also reflect the spike in energy usage around 5 p.m. when members may be getting home from work, starting dinner, throwing a load of laundry in and warming up the house for the evening," he said.

Gray said this tool makes it convenient for members to gauge energy usage at a glance, and help them to look at changing lifestyle habits that may help them reduce their electricity bills.

"These graphs are a great tool to compare the effects your habits and lifestyle, and especially the daily weather has on our energy usage," he said.



Hover cursor over a bullet to see the high, low or average temperature for that month.

Hover cursor over a bar on the graph to see the usage dates and the usage for the month.

Click on a month to see your daily usage in that month.

## USING SMARTHUB

Once you log into your account, there are several options. (To log into your account, you MUST have your account number.) You can make a payment by clicking on the blue "Make Payment" button on the lower right side of the screen. With this section, you can check your amount due, make a payment, and view your actual bill.

You can also check your usage by the month, day and even hour by clicking on the blue "Start Now" button in the center right of the screen.

◆Next, click on the "Usage Explorer" box on the left and view your usage history. (See graphic.) The first graph shows your usage by month for the past year.

◆To view a certain month, click on the name of the month at the bottom of the graph. This will display a graph reflecting your daily usage during that particular billing period.

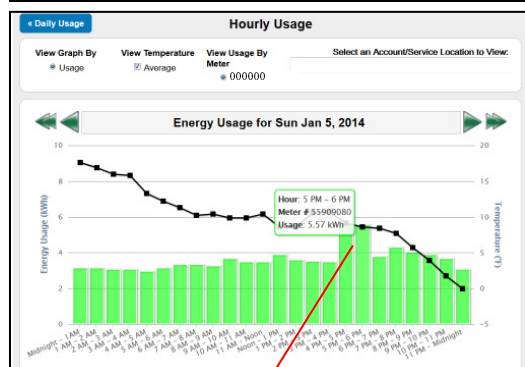
◆To view a certain day's usage, click on the day of the month at the bottom of the graph. This will display a new graph reflecting your usage by the hour.

◆On each of these graphs, you can also compare your usage to the high, low and average temperatures during the day, week or month by clicking "View Temperature" at the top and checking the "high," "low," or "average" boxes.

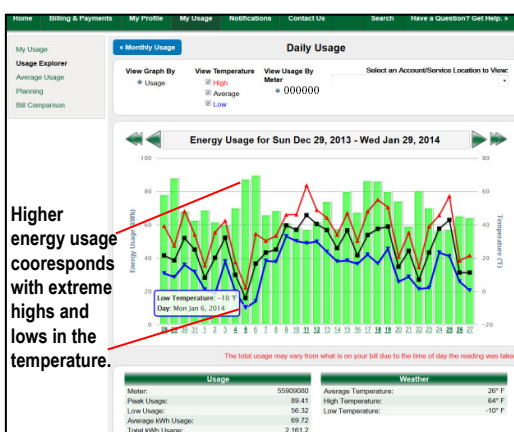
◆By hovering your mouse over the dot on the line graph, you can see a pop-up box telling you the average temperature for that month or day. By hovering your mouse over the bar itself, you can view your exact kWh used for that month, day or hour.

◆This feature also gives you the option to compare two bills worth of usage history side by side -- for example February 2013 compared to February 2014.

At any time, you can click on the "Have a Question? Get Help." button in the upper right-hand corner. This help button will provide short tutorials to walk you through whatever task you are attempting.



Electric usage on this day was highest between the hours of 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. when family members began arriving home for the day.



Higher energy usage corresponds with extreme highs and lows in the temperature.

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**PAY BY PHONE: 1-855-874-5349**

**Website:**  
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**General Manager:**  
Mike Gray

**Board of Directors:**  
Densil Allen, President  
Clark Bredehoeft, Vice-Pres.  
Paul Nolte, Treasurer  
Robert Simmons, Secretary  
Stan Rhodes, Asst. Sect.  
Dale Jarman, Director  
Max Swisegood, Director  
Richard Strobel, Director  
Sandra Streit, Director

## Plant safely in the field this spring

Spring planting season is upon us, and Missouri's electric cooperatives encourage you to be careful around power lines and other electrical equipment. Whether running tractors in the fields, moving equipment or setting up irrigation equipment, always look up and pay close attention to the location of overhead power lines and keep equipment far away from them.

"Spring planting time can leave farmers focused on furrows and not the potential for accidental contact from overhead lines," cautions Molly Hall, executive director of the Safe Electricity program. "Make sure you take the time to note the location of power lines."

One of the biggest hazards for farmers is posed by accidental contact with power lines. Typically, power lines over streets and rural areas have a minimal clearance of 18 feet and 12.5 feet over residential private property.

However, in fields these clearances can change due to shifting of soil in the

winter, or from new equipment that is larger than what you are used to. Just because that tractor or equipment cleared power lines last year doesn't mean they will clear when you head to the fields this season.

To stay safe around overhead power lines, Safe Electricity urges farm operators and workers to:

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines at all times, in all directions.
- Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always remember to lower extensions when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, call the local utility immediately.

"Always remember to periodically look up and be aware of your surround-

ings," Hall adds. "If you can't safely pass under a power line, choose a different path."

If contact is made with a power line, remember, it is almost always safest to stay on the equipment. Do not step down from the cab. Make sure to warn others to stay away, and call the local utility provider immediately. The only reason to exit is if the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, "bunny hop" away.

Power lines are not the only danger to agricultural workers. Roadway collisions, falls/slips/trips and being struck by objects or equipment rank high on the list for injuries and even fatalities to farmers.

Additional safety tips from Safe Electricity include:

**Continued on page 3**

## West Central allocates capital credits for 2013

West Central Electric Cooperative's margins have been allocated to each member/owner who purchased electric energy in 2013, according to General Manager Mike Gray.

Because rural electric cooperatives' business structure differs from investor-owned utility companies, the money WCE makes as margins (profits) is returned to the member/owners who use the service, rather than to unknown investors. The money is used as equity in the cooperative, and is returned to the members over time as determined by your board of directors.

West Central Electric tries to balance the system by staying financially strong while also returning the profits to its members over time. Each year, the board of directors decides how this will be accomplished.

You can calculate your own allocation for the year by using the formula in the box below.

The percentage used in the formula was determined by the total margins (profits) of the cooperative, and the total cost paid for our wholesale power in 2013. This year, your allocated amount for 2013 will appear on the bill you receive at the end of March or in April, depending on which billing cycle you are on.

If you have a non-rural/residential account, any questions regarding how to calculate your allocation, or if you do not know your year-to-date patronage, contact Sandy Starke at the Higginsville office at 816-565-4942 or 1-800-491-3803.

Total paid for electricity in 2013  
(Beginning with the amount due Feb. 15, 2013,  
and ending with the amount due Jan. 15, 2014.)

0.10988796555

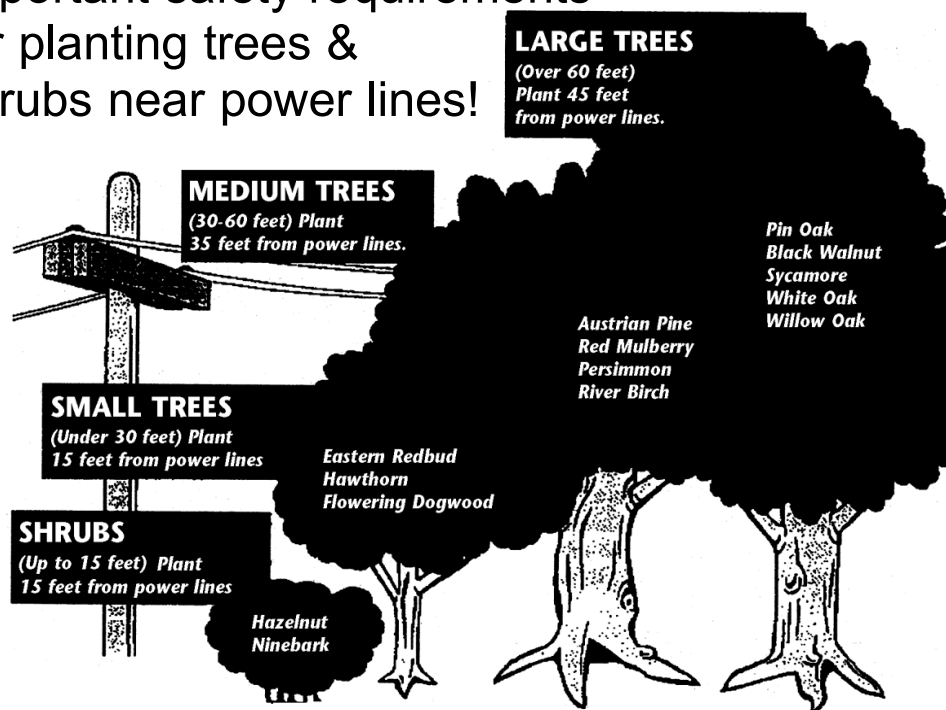
2013 allocation  
(Applies to rural/residential rate only.)

Example:

\$1,000 total billing for 2013

\$1,000  
X  
0.10988796555 =  
\$109.88  
2013 allocation

## Spring planting? Don't forget these important safety requirements for planting trees & shrubs near power lines!



## From the Boardroom...

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held January 24, 2014

The meeting was called to order by President Densil Allen. Robert Simmons, Secretary of the Cooperative, caused the minutes of the meeting to be kept. The following Directors were present: Max Swisegood, Clark Bredehoeft, Paul Nolte, Dale Jarman, Richard Strobel, Densil Allen, Robert Simmons, Sandra Streit and Stan Rhodes. Also present were General Manager Mike Gray, Admin. Asst./Benefits Admin Kim Lewis, Office Manager Sandy Starke and cooperative attorney Matt Krohn.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

After discussion, the agenda was approved.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The unapproved minutes of the regular meeting of the board of directors held Dec. 30, 2013 were approved.

### REVIEW OF EXPENDITURES FOR DECEMBER

An itemized list of expenditures for December was presented to the board, and the payment of the bills was ratified.

### APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following December 2013 reports were approved: Operating Report (RUS Form 7) and Comparative Operating Statement including the Financial Statistical Report with month and budget comparisons and statistical data pertaining to operating revenue, expenses, margins, assets, liabilities, and KWH sales; Treasurer's Report and the written monthly Construction, Retirement, Maintenance and Operations Report.

### SAFETY REPORT

Gray reported no lost time accidents during the month. Employees have now worked 1,318 days without a lost-time accident. Employees have driven 23,433 miles in December without a serious accident.

### MEMBERSHIPS

The applications submitted for membership in the cooperative were accepted and approved. Directors reviewed a list of requests for termination of membership in the cooperative which, along with their requests that their billings be deducted from their deposits and the remainder, if any, be refunded to them, were accepted and approved.

### APPROVE WRITE-OFF ACCOUNTS--2011

The board approved the write-off of delinquent accounts for the year 2011.

### 2014 OPERATING BUDGET

The board approved the 2014 budget as written.

### N.W. ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE, INC. REPORT

Gray and Director Nolte reported their attendance at the recent board meeting and shared highlights of the meeting.

### CERTIFICATION OF DELEGATES FOR N.W. ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE, INC.

Directors approved a resolution certifying delegates to the N.W. Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. annual meeting to be held April 16, 2014.

### MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Mike Gray provided his Manager's Report for the month. He reported on the following: 1) the cooperative's new phone system; 2) a class action lawsuit versus Office Depot; 3) action.coop progress (3,228 signatures with more than 2,000 cards returned by WCE members); 4) employee recognition banquet and service awards; 5) upcoming AMEC Legislative Conference; 6) AEGIS audit regarding insurance coverage on Feb. 7.

### RETREAT TOPICS WRAP-UP DISCUSSION

The board discussed retreat topics.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The board discussed issues relating to offsets.

### NEW BUSINESS

A discussion was held regarding the NRECA Directors' Conference.

Jerry Willis was designated to look after the John & Kathryn English Scholarship Trust.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

Directors adjourned into executive session, followed by reconvening to the regular meeting.

### MEETING ADJOURNED

#### FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • January 2014

	This month	YTD 2014	YTD 2013
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>3,095,907</b>	<b>3,095,907</b>	<b>2,820,731</b>
Power Bill Expense	1,671,945	1,671,945	1,522,014
Operation & Maint. Expense	461,952	461,952	410,068
Depreciation Expense	150,316	150,316	146,453
Interest Expense	110,572	110,572	84,381
<b>Total cost of Svcs. (Total Expense)</b>	<b>2,394,785</b>	<b>2,394,785</b>	<b>2,162,916</b>
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	701,122	701,122	657,815
Other Margins	17,114	17,114	23,272
<b>TOTAL MARGINS</b>	<b>718,236</b>	<b>718,236</b>	<b>681,087</b>

## Plant safely in the field this spring

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- Always hire qualified electricians for any electrical issues.
- Do not use equipment with frayed cables.
- Make sure outdoor outlets are equipped with ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs).
- When operating a portable generator, make sure nothing is plugged into it when turning it on, and never operate a generator in a confined area. Generators can produce toxic and deadly gasses like carbon monoxide.
- Always use caution when operating heavy machinery, especially when using medication for allergies.

For more farm and electrical safety information, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## Implement some no-cost energy savers for a cheaper electric bill this spring

As you're cleaning and tidying up after winter, here are a few tips you can do this spring that will continue to save you money year round:

**OPEN UP YOUR HOUSE** — Install screens and open up your windows and doors to warming — or cooling — spring breezes. That's "conditioned" air you don't have to pay for.

**TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NATURAL LIGHT** — Before sunlight heats up your house, let that light pour inside. Instead of using incandescent light bulbs (90 percent of the electricity they use is heat, not light), use natural light to illuminate your house where possible.

**WASH CLOTHES IN COLD WATER THEN AIR-DRY** — Up to 90 percent of the energy for washing clothes is for heating the water. Most clothes wash just fine in cold water. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates about 392 loads of laundry a year for a typical family at .08 cents per kilowatt-hour. Switching to cold water could save about \$60 a year. Of course, always wash a full load, not a partial.

As for drying clothes, you spend 30 to 40 cents to dry a load of clothes. Try drying clothes in a dryer for just a couple of minutes to remove wrinkles. Then, hang them to dry outside or inside and save about 5 percent on your energy bill, according to DOE.

**CHANGE THE CEILING FAN ROTATION** — Change the blade direction to counter-clockwise in warmer weather. When you stand underneath a fan, you should feel cooler. If you use air conditioning, a ceiling fan will allow you to raise the thermostat setting about 4 degrees with no reduction in comfort. Turn it off when you leave the room — fans cool people not rooms.

**CHANGE FILTERS** — Be ready for summer by replacing the filters in your air handler. Filters should be checked monthly and replaced or cleaned as needed.

**CLEAN YOUR REFRIGERATOR** — Vacuum the coils on the back and adjust the temperature to 37 to 40 degrees for maximum efficiency. Also check the seals on the refrigerator door and replace if leaking.

# Save during Missouri's tax holiday

Missouri's annual Show-Me Green Sales Tax Holiday begins April 19 and ends a week later. It's an opportunity to save money on sales tax for qualifying ENERGY STAR-certified appliances in participating counties and cities.

The first \$1,500 of the purchase price of each item is exempt from tax.

These appliances qualify for the savings, provided they are Energy-Star certified:

- Clothes washers
- Water heaters
- Dishwashers
- Air conditioners
- Furnaces
- Refrigerators
- Freezers
- Heat pumps

Go to <http://dor.mo.gov/business/sales/taxholiday/green/> to find out if your city, county or tax district will participate in the holiday. You'll find answers to other questions about the holiday there as well.

Remember you can also receive rebates from WCE on heat pumps, room air conditioners and water heaters. Go to [www.westcentralelectric.coop](http://www.westcentralelectric.coop) for qualifications and rebate forms.

## Only renewable energy federal tax credits remain

Those \$500 tax credits for building envelope improvements and efficient heating, cooling and water-heating equipment purchased and installed in 2013 have not been renewed by Congress and probably won't be.

What remains are 30 percent tax credits for more expensive renewable energy improvements such as geothermal heat pumps, wind turbines, solar water heaters and fuel cells. These credits are good through 2016.

For more detail, go to [http://www.dsireusa.org/incentives/incentive.cfm?Incentive\\_Code=US43F&ce=1](http://www.dsireusa.org/incentives/incentive.cfm?Incentive_Code=US43F&ce=1).

### IMPORTANT NOTE TO MEMBERS:

**Due to federally-mandated laws, WCE is no longer able to accept direct credit card or e-check payments via our service representatives in the office. You may still pay by phone through our new automated system by calling 1-855-874-5349. You may also pay your bill online at [www.westcentralelectric.coop](http://www.westcentralelectric.coop) through the SmartHub program.**



**WCE EMPLOYEES RECEIVE SERVICE AWARDS...** Several WCE employees were recently recognized for their years of service to the cooperative. Front row (l-r) Stacy Barnett, 15 years and Anne Patrick, 25 years. Back row (l-r) Heather Hoflander, 15 years; Paul Werning, 25 years and Pam Fuenfhausen, 10 years.

# Securing the promise of renewables

Since the 1970s, electric co-ops have been actively engaged in promoting renewable energy resources like wind, solar, hydropower and biomass (including landfill gas, livestock waste, timber byproducts, and crop residue). Today, nearly 90 percent of the nation's 900-plus electric co-ops provide electricity produced by renewable sources, all playing a key role in powering rural America while increasing our nation's energy independence.

"Renewable energy makes up approximately 11 percent of all co-op kilowatt-hour use (10 percent hydro and 1 percent non-hydro), as compared to 9 percent for the nation's entire electric utility sector," says Kirk Johnson, vice president of environmental policy at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

The Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), a non-profit, utility-sponsored organization whose members include electric co-ops, released a study in 2007 outlining a seven-step plan for how U.S. electric utilities could reduce carbon dioxide emissions to 1990 levels by 2030, while still meeting a 40 percent boost in electricity consumption. One of these measures includes increasing non-hydro renewable energy sources, primarily wind and solar, from 24,000 megawatts to 94,000 megawatts by 2030.

So, what needs to be done to enable a far greater use of renewable energy?

Currently, 150 electric co-ops either own wind turbines or buy output from

wind farms, most of which are located in America's "wind tunnels" — the Upper Midwest and Great Plains, as well as down the spine of the Alleghenies in the East. However, wind and solar power face challenges: transmission; intermittency and the need for advancements in storage technology; and increased construction costs and delays. Overcoming these challenges is not impossible but will require strong leadership and investment from government.

- **Transmission** – Renewable resources are abundant in rural areas, but that also means they are located far from the concentrated power needs of cities and towns. To move electric generation from renewable sources (i.e., wind farms), new transmission lines will need to be built to enable greater availability of renewable power sources.

- **Intermittency** – Most renewable sources are intermittent: the sun doesn't always shine, and the wind doesn't always blow. Improved storage system technology would make it possible to store electricity produced by a wind turbine or solar system. When a storm cloud rolls up, stored solar power could be ready and waiting. Electric co-ops are studying ways to boost storage technology, although major breakthroughs have yet to be made.

- **Increased Costs/Delays** – Construction costs for power plants of all types are rising, and renewable sources are no exception. Three years ago it was estimated that a wind farm would cost about \$1,000 per kW of capacity to build – today that estimate has doubled. In addition to increased costs, the sky-

rocketing demand for wind turbines has led to a manufacturing backlog of two years or more. For solar panels, costs for installation and operation can run five times higher than a traditional coal plant of comparable size.

To help electric cooperatives further tap into renewable opportunities, a National Renewables Cooperative Organization (NRCO) has been formed. NRCO negotiates and coordinates renewable energy projects for its member co-ops.

"Electric co-ops remain committed to an overall goal of fostering domestic energy independence while benefiting the environment and assisting rural economic growth," concludes WCE General Manager Mike Gray. "While no single approach or policy is appropriate for every co-op, we see renewable generation as an important part of our future. It will not be easy, but it is needed."

Electric cooperatives also are asking Congress to seek out balanced solutions to energy and climate change. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association has introduced a public campaign called The Cooperative Action Network to ensure that the voice of cooperatives and their consumer-members is heard as the Environmental Protection Agency considers new regulations that could make it virtually impossible to generate electricity with coal.

Electric cooperatives nationwide have taken the position that it is possible to provide affordable and reliable electricity while still protecting the environment. For more information about this campaign, and to make your voice heard, visit [www.action.coop](http://www.action.coop).