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**CEC’s Goal:
Member Satisfaction**

Central Electric Cooperative’s main goal is to satisfy our members. Twice a year we conduct member surveys through a local university. The survey focuses on customer service, reliability and rates. Members are surveyed in both the northern and southern areas of our service territory. During the survey members are asked to rate their electric company on a one to 10 scale with one being low and 10 being high. The survey also contains the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) questions. The ACSI is a set of four questions based on a 100–point scale used by many industries as a standard to evaluate an organization’s customer service and compare it to similar businesses. In 2009, our ratings were at an all–time high with a score of 83 compared to a 74 average for utilities nationwide.



Larry Adams
CEO & General Manager

Customer Service

Members are questioned on the level of customer service they receive. In this area we rated extremely well with an overall average of an 8.2 out of a possible 10 points. According to the survey members feel Central Electric hires friendly, courteous employees who resolve any issues or problems quickly and in a professional manner.

Member Survey/Page 2

Member Survey/From Page 1

Reliability

Members are also asked questions on service reliability. We rated well in regards to reliability with an overall combined average increase of 8.3 in member satisfaction out of a possible 10 points. Members feel we exceed their expectations when it comes to keeping power interruptions to a minimum and restoring outages quickly. In fact, on many occasions members send thank-you letters to our linemen. One member was so thrilled with her new electric lines she stated, “They are the best of the best! Their work and skill level is better appreciated after watching them work for many days.” Another member commented on the fantastic job the linemen did when converting his electric lines from overhead to underground. Another member commented on the linemen’s professionalism and consideration while on the job site. She stated, “They were very thoughtful and gave me an explanation of their procedure. I give them praise for a job well done!”

Rates

Members were also asked about their utilities’ electric rates. Even though our rates are slightly higher than local investor-owned utilities (IOUs) our rate approval increased from a 6.6 in the spring to a 6.8 in the fall survey. Why are our rates higher than IOUs? They are higher due to the widely dispersed population we serve.

We average eight members per mile of line which is significantly less compared to IOUs. Although the cost to build a mile of line is about the same for both we obtain a substantially less amount of revenue per line mile than the IOUs.

On a positive note, when you compare our rate increase over the last ten years to the cost of inflation our average rate increase per year was 1.1 percent lower. Also, if you compare the cost to heat with electricity with the cost to heat with propane or oil we are competitive. In addition, when rate caps are removed from neighboring IOUs in the next year, our members will not experience that increase.

Other Areas of Interest

The survey revealed that our members enjoy the Power Lines monthly newsletter. In fact, 75 percent of the members surveyed stated they read their monthly newsletter. The topic members show the most interest in learning more about is energy savings which is addressed throughout the newsletter.

At the end of the survey we have the opportunity to ask members questions regarding information we find useful. During our most recent survey we asked members the type of Internet connection they have and how often they communicate through e-mail. Surprisingly, many members have either a cable or DSL connection and communicate using e-mail daily.

Member Survey/Page 3

If you upgrade to a wood stove make sure to follow the EPA’s advice and:

- *Burn well-seasoned, dry wood*
- *Never burn household garbage or cardboard*
- *Keep wood-burning doors closed*
- *Install and maintain a smoke alarm*
- *Install and maintain a carbon monoxide detector*

Member Survey/From Page 2

Survey Results Help Us Provide the High Level of Service Members Expect

The cooperative's employees and directors are pleased to see the members recognize and appreciate their hard work. We are all dedicated to providing the products and high level of service demanded by our members. Our goal is to continually improve our service and reliability, provide competitive rates and keep up with the member's changing needs.

We have consistently received high marks from members on professionalism, customer service and reliability. While pleased with how we are doing so far, rest assured, we are always looking for ways to improve. If you receive a call asking for your input on how your utility is performing, please take the time to answer the surveyor's questions so that we can continue to provide the products and high level of service you expect.

Efficient Water Heaters: Install One Today!



Marcy Mazor and Dr. Water Heater

The Mazor residence in Butler is one of many Central Electric members with a water heater on Central's Load Management Program. The A.O. Smith tank was installed in October 2009 by John Relihan, owner of Dr. Water Heater, Inc.

Interested members can purchase the A. O. Smith tank with standard installation for \$349.99. For more information please contact us at 800-521-0570 or visit our Web site at www.central.coop.



Appliance rebates are now available through the economic stimulus package.

The stimulus plan provides rebates for consumers who replace an old appliance with a new, energy-efficient model rated by Energy Star.

Each state's plan is unique. Visit

www.energysavers.gov/rebates

to find out how rebates can help you keep your electric bills affordable!

Do You Qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit?

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), can be a financial boost for working people adversely impacted during these hard economic times. However, one in four eligible taxpayers could miss out on the credit because they do not know they are eligible.

As your financial, marital or parental situations change year-to-year, you should review the EITC eligibility rules to determine whether you qualify.

If you qualify, it could be worth up to \$5,657 this year. EITC not only reduces the federal tax you owe but can result in a refund. The amount of your EITC is based on the amount of your earned income and the number of qualified children in your household. New EITC provisions mean more money for larger families.

If you qualify, you must file a federal income tax return and specifically claim the credit, even if you are not otherwise required to file.



Do you earn less than \$49,000 a year? If so, free tax preparation is available at volunteer assistance sites. Call 800-829-1040 to find a free volunteer tax preparation site near you.

For more information about the EITC, see IRS Publication 596, Earned Income Credit. To view this publication visit www.irs.gov or call 800-829-3676 to order a copy.

Courtesy of Evelyn R. Fisher with the IRS

Are Wood-Burning Fireplaces Energy Efficient?

Do you love the sound of a crackling fire in the winter? Of course you do but can a wood-burning fireplace properly heat your house? And will you save money by stoking the flames?

A conventional, open-radiant fireplace has a thermal efficiency of 7 percent. Most heat escapes right through the chimney. Studies also show that for every \$100 you spend on firewood, you receive \$10 to \$20 worth of heat.

However, it is possible to heat a home with wood fires, but not the old-fashion way. Modern, EPA-certified woodstoves and pellet stoves are very efficient and affordable heaters.



If you upgrade to a wood stove make sure to follow the EPA's advice and:

- Burn well-seasoned, dry wood.
- Never burn household garbage or cardboard.
- Keep wood-burning doors closed.
- Install and maintain a smoke alarm.
- Install and maintain a carbon monoxide detector.

To learn more on best-burn practices, visit <http://www.epa.gov/burnwise/bestburn.html> and have a safe and warm winter!

Courtesy of Trystan L. Bass from Green Picks blog (posted on Dec. 17, 2009.)

Ken's kilowatt corner



www.central.coop
Check it out!
By Ken Maleski
CEC Consumer
Marketing Representative



Budget Billing

Many people live on fixed incomes. Senior citizens often express concerns that everything keeps escalating upwards, while income stays the same. Others have lost their jobs due to the economy.

Wouldn't it be nice to know what your electric bill is going to be every month? If yes, then budget billing is the answer for you! With budget billing Central Electric calculates an average of your 12-month electric usage and that's what you get charged every month. April is the catch-up month. You either have a credit on your bill

or a balance due. The April bill should not be a surprise as long as nothing extraordinary has happened throughout the year, such as extreme weather conditions.

Budget billing works best if you heat with electric. It eliminates those extremely high bills and spreads them out evenly throughout the year. Knowing what your monthly electric bill will cost provides you with peace of mind. For more information call 800-521-0570 and speak with a customer service representative today!

Follow Us on Twitter!

You can now follow us on Twitter! The social networking tool keeps you informed on important topics such as load control periods for water heaters and electric heating systems, outage updates and useful energy-saving tips.

Log onto www.central.coop and click on the Twitter logo found on the lower right-hand side of our home page. You can browse all of our *tweets*, or you can log on to www.twitter.com and create your own account.



Join the U\$X Federal Credit Union and Enjoy the Benefits

All Central Electric Cooperative employees, members and their family members are eligible to join the U\$X Federal Credit Union. Check out the many benefits your credit union has to offer.

Home equity loans available for:

- Home improvements
- Dream vacations

New and used auto loans offer:

- Great rates and flexible terms
- Pre-approval for hassle free shopping

Visa credit card with:

- Great rates
- No annual fee or balance transfer fee
- One percent cashback on all purchases

Visit the credit union at www.usxfcu.org, call 888-219-3159 or visit one of our office branches.

Recipe of the Month

Chocolate Toffee Bars

Ingredients:

- 2 sticks butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- saltine crackers
- 1 bag chocolate chips
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup chopped walnuts (optional)

Directions:

1. Line a small cookie sheet with foil and spray with non-stick cooking spray.
2. Arrange saltine crackers side by side on sheet.
3. Boil butter and sugar for 2 minutes while stirring; add vanilla. Pour mixture over crackers.
4. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 10 minutes.
5. Remove from oven, if crackers have separated move them back with a knife. Sprinkle chocolate chips on top; wait for them to melt and then spread with a spatula over all the crackers.
6. Sprinkle with nuts and set in refrigerator to harden.
7. Break off pieces and enjoy!

Recipe submitted by Tina Venderlic of Freeport

Send Recipes to:

Jessica Brison at jbrison@central.coop or mail to
Central Electric Cooperative, PO Box 329,
Parker, PA 16049

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Read Power Lines and



Last Issue's Winner:

Kathy Minehart of Butler

Read your issue of Central Electric Cooperative's Power Lines and win! It's simple — you can win a \$50 credit on your monthly electric bill by reading Power Lines and completing the quiz below.

Contest Rules

1. The contest is open to all Central Electric Cooperative members with active accounts as of the drawing date.
2. Only one entry per member is permitted.
3. Employees and directors of Central Electric, along with members of their immediate families, are not eligible.
4. The winning entry will appear as a credit on the member's bill and may not be redeemed for cash.

Complete, clip and enclose the quiz and personal information below and return it with your monthly payment. For a faster entry you may complete the survey online at www.central.coop.

1. True or False: In 2009, our ACSI rating was a 74.

Answer: _____

2. True or False: Members can purchase an A.O. Smith water heater with standard installation for \$349.99.

Answer: _____

3. True or False: Budget billing works best if you heat with electric.

Answer: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No: _____ **Account No:** _____



Central Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

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Customer Service 1-800-521-0570 • Emergency Outage Number 1-800-282-8610