

## LIHEAP program helps qualifying members pay electric bills

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides qualifying individuals and families with help paying heating costs in winter months and cooling costs in summer months.

Applications are now being accepted on a first-come, first-served basis as long as funds are available. Businesses are excluded from receiving the benefit.

LIHEAP is not administered by your local cooperative, but rather through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and it is operated by community action agencies.

The amount of financial help available varies based on income, the number of people in a household and other factors. LIHEAP eligibility in Arkansas is based on both 60% of State Median Income and 150% of Federal Poverty Guidelines.

The program is designed to lower the energy burden for low-income households that pay a high proportion of household income for home energy costs, by paying benefits for home energy bills, according to DHHS.

Contact your local Community Action Agency (CAA) to check eligibility. Go to [caaaa.org/local-community-action-agencies](http://caaaa.org/local-community-action-agencies) for a list of CAA offices around the state.



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## Soaring Fuel Costs

Soaring fuel costs have become an unfortunate reality for our nation. We feel the effects at the gas pump, grocery store, and in almost every other aspect of our daily lives. In recent months, we have seen the price of gasoline make a steady climb, exceeding \$3 per gallon. Other fossil fuels — like natural gas — have also experienced drastic cost increases.

### So why are fuel costs rising so dramatically?

Several factors influence fuel costs, including global demand, post-pandemic economic growth, decreased domestic supply and natural disasters — such as hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico. Gasoline, diesel fuel, natural gas, propane and coal all go up in cost as a result of these types of events, which, in turn, cause electricity costs to rise.

Natural gas is a key fuel consumed by wholesale electric generating utilities. U.S. natural gas inventories ended September 2021 at about 3.3 trillion cubic feet, or 5% less than the five-year (2016–20) average. Injections into storage this summer have been below the previous five-year average, largely as a result of increased natural gas used for electricity generation during the hot summer.

In recent years, in certain times and regions of the country, natural gas demand has grown faster than

available supplies can be delivered. Such tightening of the market has resulted in dramatic price volatility. According to the Electricity Information Administration, natural gas consumption in the United States has steadily increased since 1997. Increased use of natural gas for electric generation is a significant reason. In large part, the electric utility industry has turned to natural gas to meet additional needs that have come with retirements of coal-fired power plants. Consumption of natural gas in the United States is growing at a faster rate than any other primary source of energy.

C & L Electric Cooperative is impacted by these high fuel costs, much like consumers. In September, the price of natural gas purchased by Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation (AECC), our wholesale power provider, was approximately double the price paid last year at this time.

At C & L Electric Cooperative, we recognize that our members are directly affected by escalating energy costs. Because you are served by a not-for-profit electric cooperative, you can rest assured that your electric energy is provided at the lowest feasible cost. In the face of rising fuel prices, C & L Electric Cooperative will take every opportunity to provide you with the best value for your dollar.

## Refile for sales tax exemption by March 1

If you are currently exempt from paying sales tax on the first 500 kilowatt hours of electricity used each month, that exemption expired Jan. 1, 2021. If you still qualify, you may continue receiving the exemption if you complete and return the exemption form to C & L Electric by March 1, 2022

Act 120 of 1983 provides that members whose household income is less than \$12,000 annually shall be exempt from paying sales tax on the first 500 kWh of electricity used each month. All charges for electricity used above 500 kWh will still be taxed.

To qualify, members must complete a form supplied by the Revenue Division of the Department of Finance and Administration. These forms must be completed and refiled

annually to get the exemption. If you filed a form last year and are currently receiving the exemption, you must file again this year.

These forms may be obtained from the Commission of Revenues or from any one of the cooperative's offices in person or by mail. As noted on the official form, all claim forms are "subject to audit for tax purposes, by the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration."

Completed claim forms must be in the C & L headquarters office by March 1 to be eligible for the exemption during all of 2022. All applications received after March 1 will be for the remainder of the year.

## C & L HELPS PROTECT SERVICE TO ELDERLY AND HANDICAPPED MEMBERS

**C & L Electric provides special considerations to ensure the protection of our elderly and handicapped members. This protection includes:**

- Before disconnecting your service due to an unpaid bill, we will make two attempts at different times of day to contact you, an adult at the premises, or someone previously designated by you, either in person or by telephone at least 72 hours before suspending service. If the attempt to contact is successful, we will offer to explain what can be done to avoid suspension of your service and explain payment and assistance options.
- If the attempt to make personal contact is not successful, we will give you 24 hours' written notice, which explains what can be done to avoid suspension of your service.

**To receive C & L Electric's "protection" service, you must register and provide written documents certifying the status claimed. This protection is provided to prevent disruption of your electric service. It does not relieve you of liability for your electric bill or reduce the amount of your electric bill.**

**ELDERLY** — An "elderly" member is one who is at least 65 years of age.

**HANDICAPPED** — A "handicapped" member is one who has a severe physical or mental impairment who is certified as being disabled by a physician, licensed psychologist, by the United States Veterans Administration, the Social Security Administration, the Arkansas Department of Human Services, the Arkansas State Hospital, or a licensed mental health center.

*If you wish to register for elderly or handicapped status, fill out the form below & return to C & L with proof of age for elderly or physician's statement for handicapped status.*



my co-op

**REGISTRATION FORM** (Mail form to: C & L Electric, P. O. Box 9, Star City, AR 71667)

(Providing false information shall be grounds for termination of service.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_ C & L Account # \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK STATUS: HANDICAPPED \_\_\_\_\_ ELDERLY \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Attach proof of age for Elderly or physician's statement for Handicapped**

## C & L Electric employees provide Christmas gifts for families

To spread Christmas cheer, employees of C & L Electric Cooperative adopted six families to make their holidays merry and bright.

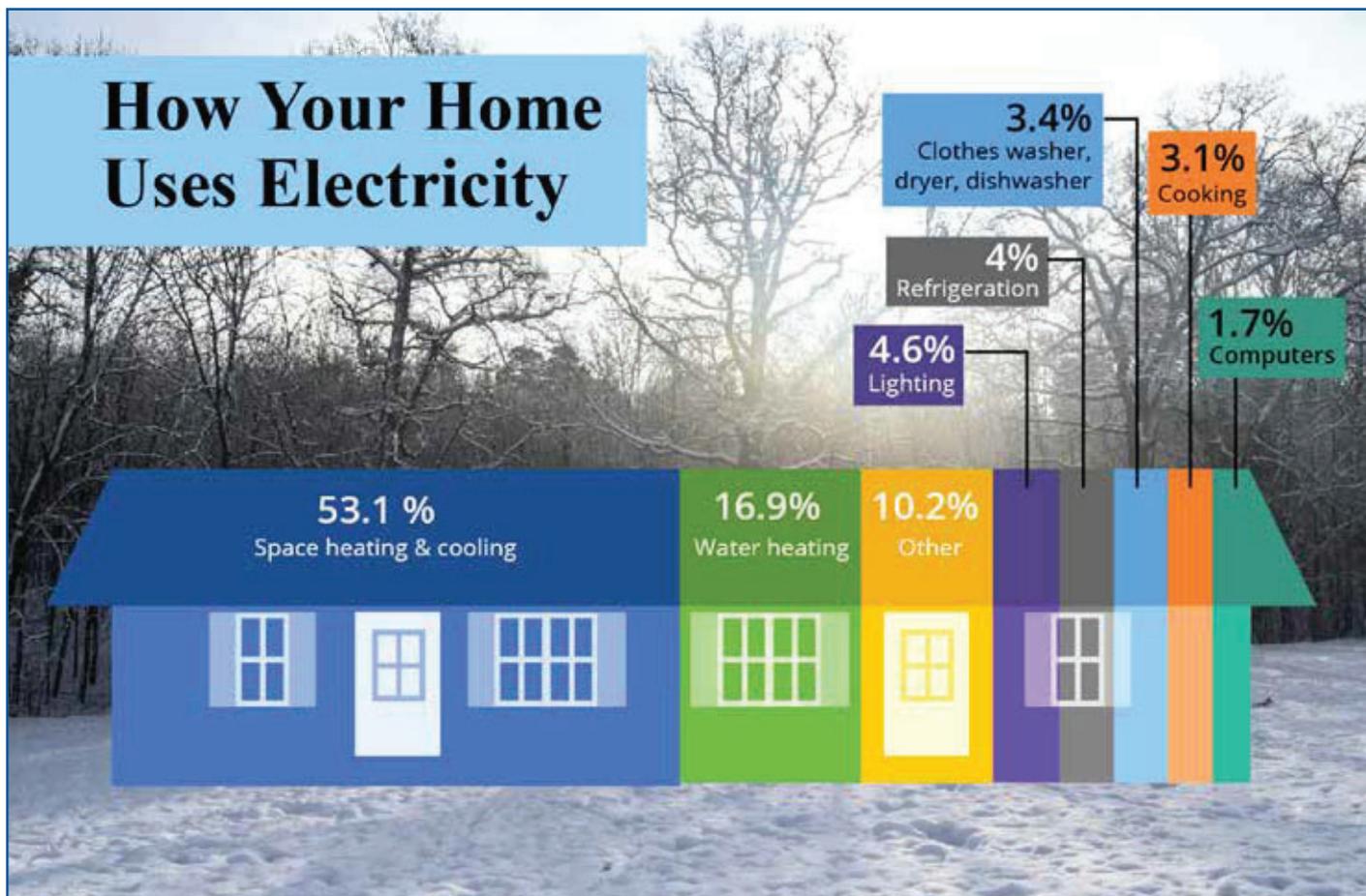
Our employees not only sold raffle tickets to raise money, they shopped and assembled gift baskets — all so that 16 children could experience comfort and joy at Christmas.



*At C & L, our mission is to keep houses warm and hearts warm too!*



## How Your Home Uses Electricity



Annual energy bill for a typical single-family home is approximately \$2,000. Average price of electricity is 10.6 cents per kilo-watt hour. Average price of natural gas is \$12.42 per million Btu. \*"Other" represents an array of household products, including stoves, ovens, microwaves and small appliances like coffee makers and dehumidifiers. Source: Residential Energy Consumption Survey.