

EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Echoes of the Empire

DECEMBER 2024

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Understanding EEA Bill Payment Options

BY ANDY CARTER MEMBER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER



ANDY CARTER

Paying your electric bill doesn't have to be complicated. Empire Electric Association has simplified the process with a range of convenient payment options that can help members stay on top of their electricity expenses. From traditional methods to digital solutions, EEA offers flexibility in how members can pay their bills.

EEA'S DIGITAL PAYMENT OPTIONS

EEA offers a range of digital payment options to simplify bill payments. SmartHub serves as the primary platform for online transactions, allowing members to pay their bills conveniently from anywhere using either a web browser or the SmartHub app. Through SmartHub, members can access their account information, view usage data, and make secure payments 24/7. Digital payments can be made by Mastercard, Visa, or Discover credit card, debit card, or from a bank account.

TRADITIONAL PAYMENT METHODS

EEA offers several traditional payment options. Members can pay their bills in person at the EEA office located at 801 N. Broadway, Cortez. The office is open Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and on Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Additionally, EEA accepts payments by check, which can be mailed in the postage paid envelope we provide or dropped off at the office.

24/7 PAYMENT SOLUTIONS

EEA offers convenient 24/7 payment solutions to accommodate members' busy schedules. A self-service kiosk located in the lobby at 801 N. Broadway in Cortez allows customers to pay their bills using cash or a debit or credit card at any time. We also have a payment drop box at the drive-up window that is always available. For those who want

to make paying their bill as easy as possible,

EEA offers an Auto Pay option. This service allows members to set up automatic bank or credit card drafts for their monthly electric bills. You can sign up for autopay with SmartHub, by calling us at 970-565-4444, or visiting the office in person.

TAILORED PAYMENT PROGRAMS

EEA offers customized payment options to suit various member needs. The Power Advantage prepay program allows members to take control of their electric bills by paying in advance. This option requires no security deposit, eliminates late fees, and disconnect/reconnect fees, and provides greater awareness of energy usage. Customers can purchase electricity for a week, a month, or longer, fitting their budget.

Another option is the Budget Billing Plan, which averages estimated yearly consumption into equal monthly payments. This plan helps offset peak bills resulting from higher energy use for winter heating or summer air conditioning. Eligible residential customers with good payment history can benefit from this program, which provides more consistent monthly expenses.

HAVE IT YOUR WAY

EEA's range of payment options is designed to meet a wide variety of member needs, offering both traditional and digital methods to settle bills. From in-person payments and mail-in checks to the convenience of SmartHub and 24/7 kiosks, EEA ensures members can choose the bill payment method that suits them best.

Tailored programs like Power Advantage prepay and Budget Billing further demonstrate EEA's commitment to member

satisfaction and financial flexibility.

These varied payment solutions not only simplify bill management but also empower members to take control of their electricity expenses. By providing easy access to account information and usage data through SmartHub, EEA helps members make informed decisions about their energy consumption. To streamline your bill payment process even further,

consider opting for auto pay and paperless billing. Both options save time, reduce paper waste, and reduce co-op costs which helps keep rates lower. With the diverse payment solutions available, EEA members can enjoy a hassle-free experience in managing their electricity accounts.



**ENERGY EFFICIENCY
TIP OF THE MONTH**

If you're planning to purchase electronic gifts this holiday season, look for the ENERGY STAR® label, which indicates higher energy efficiency performance. Electronics that receive the ENERGY STAR® rating are up to 25% more efficient than standard products.



This holiday season, give the gift of energy savings with ENERGY STAR®-rated electronics and equipment.

Source: energystar.gov.

Want to use SmartHub to change your billing options?

From a web browser you can find billing and payment options in the left hand menu.

From the SmartHub app you can find Auto Pay by clicking the Bill & Pay icon at the bottom of the screen. Paperless Billing is under Settings in the More section at the bottom right corner of the screen.



Clouds Surrounding Point Lookout by Bill Di Paolo

Monthly Calendar and December's Co-op Photo Contest Winner

December 1 – Scholarship applications available at eea.coop

December 13 – EEA's board meeting begins at 8:30 a.m. at its headquarters in Cortez. The agenda is posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at eea.coop. Members may attend in person or remotely. Instructions to attend remotely are included on the agenda.

December 16 – Youth Tour applications due

December 25 – Christmas Day. EEA's office will be closed December 24 & 25 in observance of the holiday.

Efficiency Tip

Seal in comfort and savings with weatherstripping. Check for air leaks around your windows and doors and install weatherstripping where needed. Prevent drafts to reduce energy loss and lower your heating and cooling bills, improving energy efficiency year-round.



Safe Electricity.org®



EEA SCHOLARSHIPS

APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE

Deadline February 15, 2025

PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL	\$1000	HOME HIGH SCHOOL
24 Awarded		2 Awarded

ADULT

\$1000 - 6 Awarded
Must be enrolled as a full-time student.

LINEMAN \$1000

ELECTRICAL TRADE RELATED \$500



For more information go to eea.coop/scholarships



Happy Holidays!

Wishing you a holiday season brimming with happiness!



EEA Office will be closed December 24 & 25



Preventing Holiday Fires

Keep your family safe and your holiday season merry with these fire safety tips.

COOKING SAFETY IN THE KITCHEN

The kitchen is often the heart of holiday celebrations, but it can also be a hot spot for fires. According to the National Fire Protection Association, cooking equipment is the leading cause of home fires, accounting for nearly 20% of holiday-related incidents.

Here's how to stay safe:

- Never leave burners or the oven unattended. Keep a fire extinguisher nearby for emergencies.
- Ensure children stay away from the kitchen, where hot appliances and sharp utensils can pose risks.
- Install smoke detectors at least 10 feet away from cooking appliances and test them monthly to ensure they're working.

BE AWARE OF HOLIDAY FIRE RISKS

The combination of candles, fireplaces, and flammable decorations increases the risk of fires during the holidays. On average, fire departments respond to 150 Christmas tree-related fires and 790 decoration-related fires annually, according to the NFPA.

CANDLE SAFETY

- Only burn candles where you can keep an eye on them.
- Extinguish candles before going to bed, leaving the room, or leaving the house.
- Use heat-resistant surfaces for candles, placing them out of reach of children and pets.
- Keep candles away from flammable items like trees, decorations, curtains, and furniture.
- Opt for using battery-operated candles near flammable objects.

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CHRISTMAS TREE FIRE PREVENTION

A beautiful Christmas tree adds to the festive spirit, but it's essential to ensure it's safe.

- Choose a fresh tree. Fresh trees have needles that are hard to pull from branches and have a sticky trunk bottom.
- Keep the tree away from heat sources such as fireplaces, space heaters, and vents.
- Check the water level daily to prevent the tree from drying out.
- Place the tree away from high-traffic areas and doorways.
- If using an artificial tree, ensure it is labeled as fire-resistant.
- When discarding a real tree, place it far from your home and other combustible objects, as dried trees are highly flammable.

HOLIDAY LIGHTING SAFETY

Decorative lights add cheer to the season, but safety is key:

- Purchase lights from reputable retailers and ensure they are approved by recognized testing labs like UL or CSA.
- Use outdoor-rated lights for outdoor decorating.
- Use circuits equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) for outdoor lights.
- Avoid water and snow when using extension cords and outdoor lights.
- Stay at least 10 feet away from power lines while hanging lights.
- Avoid plugging too many devices into a single outlet.

FIREPLACE SAFETY TIPS

A cozy fireplace is a holiday favorite, but it requires careful handling.

- Decorate wisely. Avoid hanging flammable decorations including stockings and greenery directly on the mantel.
 - Perform annual maintenance. Have your chimney and fireplace checked and cleaned at least once a year.
 - Use a screen. Install a screen to prevent embers from landing on floors or carpets.
 - Burn responsibly. Never burn trees, wreaths, or wrapping paper in the fireplace, as they can ignite rapidly and cause flash fires.
- By following these fire safety tips, you can enjoy a joyful and safe holiday season with your loved ones.

Power Down

If you plan to travel during the holidays, take a good look around your home before you head out. Unplug anything that uses “phantom power” including televisions, gaming consoles, computer monitors, coffee makers, and other countertop appliances.



Holiday LIGHTING Safety

Use only holiday lights that have been safety tested and have the **UL label**.

Before using, **check each strand** for broken sockets, frayed cords, or faulty plugs.

Don't string together more than **three** standard-sized incandescent sets of lights or you could **overload the circuit**.

Don't throw lights over tree branches that are **near power lines** and service connections.

Always unplug lights before leaving your home or going to bed; a timer can help with this.

Learn more at [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org)

Keep your furry, four-legged friends SAFE DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Learn more at: [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org)