

Our Power for Your Choices

by Mark Pendergast

Last year we introduced the “Our Power for Your Choices” slogan. The idea was to remind members we deliver the energy you want, but you have the final choice of how much electricity you use and how you use it. You also have the final choice whether or not to participate in any of our lower cost off-peak programs. It goes without saying: When you choose to use more electricity; your monthly bill will be higher.

As your electric supplier you should look to us for advice and solutions to help you use energy efficiently. We have a long list of ways we’ve been doing this. It includes cash rebates for energy efficient products and improvements, energy audits, on-line information resources and seminars held in our office.

We know the state of the economy has everyone making their spending decisions very carefully. This is especially true with energy purchases.

Compare our rates with other area utilities inside this brochure

Gasoline prices are on the rise again and we see wood piles stacked high as homeowners look for lower cost heating options. Everyone is looking for ways to cut expenses. We've been doing the same thing at your co-op. Even though 67 percent of our expenses are due to the cost of wholesale purchased power, we know when we reduce any of the other 33 percent of local operating costs, it has a direct impact on the rates you pay or don't pay.

Consumers have become aggressive price shoppers. As savvy shoppers we compare prices and search for sales, bargains and discounts. As an electric consumer you have many choices but you don't have an easy way to compare your electric use with other St. Croix Electric consumers. You also don't have an easy way to compare your electric costs with consumers served by other utilities.

So we've decided to do some comparison shopping for you. We've priced out the monthly bill for 1,000 kilowatt hours including the monthly charge and state required fees. The bills were calculated using the winter rates for each utility including Xcel Energy in Minnesota and Wisconsin and five area electric cooperatives. The cooperatives all have the same wholesale electric supplier as St. Croix Electric.

Our board and staff are striving to contain costs while providing increasingly better levels of service for our membership. We think our current rates reflect these efforts and give you the best service at the lowest possible cost.

The chart shows our monthly billing cost for 1,000 kilowatt hours is at the lower end of the costs charged by other area cooperatives and compares favorably with Xcel Energy Wisconsin.

What do most people in Wisconsin pay for electricity?

As of October 2010, the U.S. Energy Information Administration reports the average residential cost based on 1,000 kilowatt hours in Wisconsin was 12.89 cents per kilowatt hour. St. Croix Electric's winter rate is 12.47 cents per kilowatt hour.

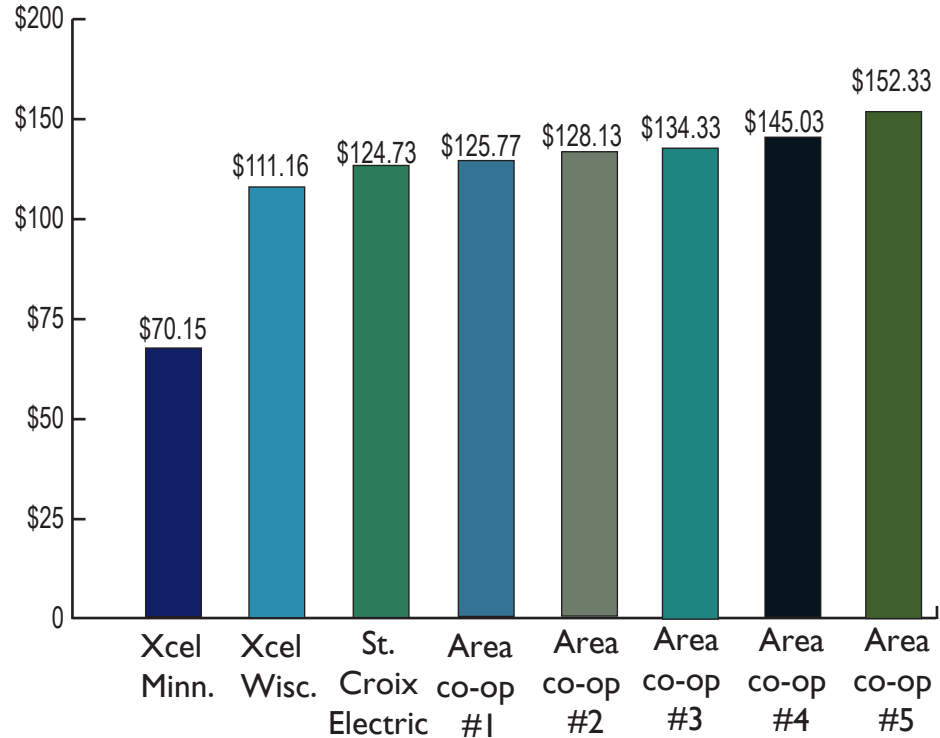
How does population density affect electric revenues?

St. Croix Electric has 6 customers per mile of line. We average approximately \$12,000 in revenue annually per mile of line. The other co-ops used in this rate comparison have similar customer density numbers. Investor owned utilities like Xcel Energy average 35 customers per mile of line producing nearly \$60,000 in annual revenue per line mile.

Co-op members receive capital credits.

St. Croix Electric returns any margin earned during a year to its members on a scheduled basis extending from 3 - 20 years. Refund amounts often range from 4-8 percent of the member's annual billing. For accounts billed in 2010, the refund will be 7 percent and lowers the actual cost paid for electricity.

Monthly cost of 1000 kilowatt hours (winter rates)



The Xcel Minnesota rate is for customers with overhead service wires without electric heat. The monthly cost does not include additional charges in the company's pending rate increase. Xcel Minnesota rates are as of January 1, 2011. All other rates are as of February 1, 2011.