

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Help Us Beat The Peaks This Summer

Electricity “peak” periods occur at times when electricity used in Blackwell is the highest. When a lot of people in Blackwell use power at the same time, the amount of electricity produced or bought must increase to meet the demand.

Since electricity can't be stored, it must be produced on demand. During peak periods, which are normally between 3 and 8 pm on summer weekdays, additional energy resources are required and these resources are more costly to operate resulting in increased energy costs.

“This “peak load” electricity then is usually more expensive and raises the cost of everyone's electricity. If these peaks are reduced, we can all save money,” said Dave Keen, Electric Superintendent.

Each home also uses more energy now than in the past. Air conditioners are much more common than they were then and new energy eaters, such as computers and plasma TVs are often in several rooms in the home.

The Blackwell Public Power offers the following ways you can help reduce the peaks:

- Run the dishwasher early in the morning or late at night. Adjust your dishwasher so the dishes dry without heat.
- Set your thermostat to 78 degrees or higher, and use a fan to circulate the cool air. Cooling costs are typically 60 percent of your total utility bill. For every degree you set the thermostat below 78 degrees, you use two to five percent more electricity.
- Turn off ceiling fans where rooms are unoccupied.
- Turn off lights in any room you're not using, or consider installing timers, photo cells or occupancy sensors to reduce the amount of time your lights are on.
- Replace traditional incandescent light bulbs with energy-efficient compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) which are up to four times more energy efficient than incandescent bulbs and provide the same light levels. They also last up to nine times longer than standard incandescent bulbs.
- Humidity is a factor. Take baths or showers and wash dishes early in the morning or in the evening instead of during the day. Take more showers than baths because bathing uses the most hot water in the average household. Use an outside clothesline to avoid adding heat to your house during the hottest months. Replace old or worn out exhaust fans with humidity sensing units.
- Cook smarter. Avoid using the stove or oven on hot days. Instead, use the microwave, grill outdoors or throw together a cold summer meal.
- Don't keep your refrigerator or freezer too cold. Remember to clean the coils on your refrigerator.
- Insulate. Check to make sure insulation levels are appropriate in your attic, exterior and basement walls, ceilings, floors and crawl spaces. You can increase the comfort of your home while reducing your annual heating and cooling usage by up to 10 percent by simply investing in proper insulation and sealing air leaks.
- Check for and caulk any holes or cracks around your walls, ceilings, windows, doors, light and plumbing fixtures, switches, and electrical outlets that can leak air into or out of your home. Use non-expanding foam insulation around doors and windows.
- Upgrade leaky windows. It may be time to replace them with energy-efficient models or to boost their efficiency with weather-stripping.
- Clear outdoor air conditioning units and heat pumps of debris and shrubbery so they can work more efficiently.

- Clean or replace filters on your furnace, air conditioner and heat pump regularly. Dirty filters reduce efficiency by restricting airflow. Changing or cleaning your filter monthly can yield an additional 10 to 20 percent savings in cooling costs.
- Close drapes or blinds during the day to keep heat-producing sunlight out.
- Close the damper on your fireplace.
- Unplug unnecessary electric appliances and equipment. Switch off unwatched television.
- Keep exterior doors closed as much as possible.
- Turn off the computer. You will conserve energy by turning off or using sleep mode for any computer not in use for two hours or more.
- Lower the temperature on your water heater. A setting of 120 degrees Fahrenheit provides comfortable, hot water for most uses. And installing an insulating blanket on your electric water heater should pay for itself in less than a year.

“We at your municipal electric utility thank you for helping us beat the peaks this summer,” said Keen.