



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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## **Old Man Winter Continues Grip On Low Temperatures, High Energy Use**

There is no disputing that Punxsutawney Phil did see his shadow on February 2, 2010, promising six more weeks of winter weather. Based on information supplied by The National Weather Service (NWS), the extended cold snap for the first half of February has resulted in a corresponding increase in heating degree days, which ultimately will result in increased energy use to stay warm. The NWS tracks information related to daily temperatures by using a 65 degree base temperature (the temperature considered to not require any auxiliary heating or cooling). As temperatures drop below 65, heating degrees are recorded. Heating degree days directly correspond to the amount of energy needed to maintain warm surroundings.

Despite the fact that the cost of electricity per kilowatt-hour has continued to decline for the past seven months as TVA has reduced its monthly Fuel Cost Adjustment, energy use in the average home has continued to climb an average of 65% in February this year compared to 2009 due to colder temperatures. This increase in energy use compounds an increase of 100 percent that consumers felt in January when unusually cold weather blanketed the area for an extended period of time.

With more than half the month now over, the NWS recorded 554 heating degree days as opposed to only 336 heating degrees for the same first 17-day period of February in 2009. The temperature rose to a sweltering 73 degrees on February 18, 2009; but 47 degrees is the highest temperature thermometers achieved in the first 17 days of February 2010. The excessive number of degree days translates into a 65% increase in heating requirements from the same period last year and will, no doubt, be reflected in consumer energy usage and bills for February.

Using a typical 30-day billing cycle, an average residential consumer that normally would use approximately 1500 kWh of energy will use approximately 2475 kWh of energy due to the increase in

degree days. This increased energy use will translate into an increase in their next energy bill of approximately 55 % when compared to 2009.

Duck River Electric encourages members to conserve energy and lower energy bills by taking some simple steps around the home:

- Minimize the use of electric space heaters.
- Caulk around plumbing penetrations that come through walls beneath bathroom and kitchen sinks.
- Do not close off unused rooms that are conditioned by forced-air systems.
- Do not close supply air registers.
- Unplug battery charges, computers and televisions when not needed.
- Check insulation levels, particularly in the attic and add more where needed.

For more energy-saving tips, please visit [www.dremc.com](http://www.dremc.com). While on the website complete a free online home energy evaluation that will provide immediate results that are specific to your home.