



# NorVal News

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative   
This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Reliable Power for Today—and Tomorrow

Ring in a new year sparks a sense of renewed hope and optimism about the future.

Our team at NorVal Electric is always looking ahead, exploring ways to innovate and utilize new technologies to improve our services. As our nation increasingly relies on electricity to power the economy, keeping the lights on has never been more important. We're committed to powering—and empowering—our community at a cost local families and businesses can afford.

How are we working to ensure reliable and affordable power while adapting to a changing energy landscape and our community's evolving needs?

One critical component of reliable power is the mix of energy resources used to generate the electricity that keeps the lights on across Northeastern Montana. You may not realize it, but NorVal Electric doesn't generate electricity. Instead, we purchase it from our energy provider, Central Montana G&T, and from there, we distribute it to homes and businesses throughout our community. Our current energy resource mix is made up of hydro, coal, wind, etc.

We're increasingly using more electricity generated from renewable energy sources, but we still depend on a diverse energy mix to ensure reliable power that's available to our members whenever they need it.

In addition to managing a reliable energy mix, NorVal Electric is using technology to enhance our local grid, limit service disruptions and improve outage response times.

Advanced metering technology, also known as AMI, enables two-way communication between the co-op and consumers. In the event of a power outage, AMI helps pinpoint the exact location of the outage and can even analyze damaged or tampered meters. AMI helps NorVal Electric save money with real-time data, and ultimately improves power reliability for our entire community.

Proactive tree trimming is another way we limit service disruptions. Scheduled trimming keeps power lines clear from overgrown limbs that are likely to fall. As technology advancements become more accessible, we anticipate using advanced mapping software to better maintain the environment while providing more reliable service.

Additionally, we are using mobile devices, such as RF metering, for pinpointing outage locations and possible causes. We are also continuously conducting line inspections and recording data electronically.

One of the best methods for improving our services to you is monitoring trends and leading practices from other electric co-ops in Montana and across the country. Learning from other co-ops is one of the many benefits of the cooperative business model because for us, it's about cooperation, not competition.

As we turn our focus to 2024, NorVal Electric will continue working to provide the reliable, affordable electricity you expect and deserve—for today and tomorrow.

Cherry  
Christmas  
HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
and  
Happy  
New Year

## Understanding Demand

### What is Demand?

Demand is a measure of the rate at which energy is consumed. Demand charges are based on the amount of energy consumed in a specified period of time, known as a demand interval. NorVal Electric's intervals are 15 minutes long.

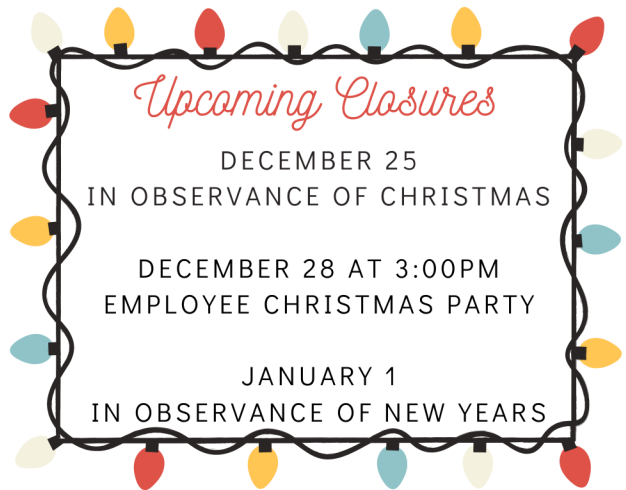
### What is the cause of high demand?

When you get home, turn on all the lights, start a load of laundry in the washing machine and the dryer, and start your dinner in the oven— you are demanding our power grid to supply your meter with a lot of power in a 15 minute time period. In turn, this is going to cost the cooperative more in demand as a whole. If you space these activities out past those 15 minute increments, your bill should see a decrease in the demand charge.

### How can you lower your energy bill?

We understand the frustration of a high bill, especially around the holidays; so what can you do to help decrease the demand charge on your bill? As previously stated, spacing your larger appliance tasks (oven, washing machine or dishwasher) every 15 minutes to 1 hour apart, using a smart thermostat that will set your temperature to the most cost efficient setting, making sure all the parts in your water heater are working correctly, and even as little as changing your HVAC filter monthly. Some things that will increase your demand charges are heating systems— space heaters and electric heat. With the temperatures being in the “teens” and single digits, your heating systems are working harder and longer to keep your house at the temperature you have set on your thermostat. Another thing that will draw a lot of power in the winter is having your vehicle plugged in. This may not seem like a lot, but it is keeping your block heater/engine warm so you can get to work in the morning. Lastly, the days are shorter, so you are using your lights later in the morning and earlier in the evening.

If you are needing more energy tips or more information on demand, please check our Facebook page or our website!



## Nick's Notes

*By Nick Dulaney, Line Superintendent*

As 2023 comes to a close, we are already prepping for next year. The crews will be working on clearing our right of ways of trees and other hazards. They will also be working on patrolling our lines to ensure that everything is in working order and ready for any winter weather that we will experience in the next coming months.

The operations team, Joe and Christina, will be working on closing work orders and retirements. This will help Eric, our warehouse manager get ready for inventory.

In the coming weeks, the operations team and the crew will be working on deploying equipment in preparation for upgrading the meter system on our Opheim substation. These upgrades will help identify outages and determine the root cause. This meter technology is the same one we deployed in our Lustre, Volt and Wolf Point substations earlier this year.

I hope everyone has a safe and happy holiday season!

