

Rate adjustment takes effect on March 1

Price adjustments are decisions that your cooperative leadership never takes lightly. We understand the burden that any increase places on you, and we know that costs across the board for nearly everything keep rising.

Our co-op has not had a rate adjustment since 2023, and we've made every effort to keep this year's necessary change as minimal as possible. Effective March 1, 2026, the residential members service charge pay will increase by \$3 per month. (This change will be reflected in the bills you receive in April.)

What is the service charge?

The service charge is a flat monthly fee that funds the backbone of your electric service, regardless of how much power you use. With the service charge, you're paying for the ability to access electricity. Even if you don't turn on your lights, we must still maintain our equipment so power is available to you 24/7/365. Our service charge pays for:

- Infrastructure essentials: Poles, wires, substations, transformers, and meters.
- Ongoing maintenance: Tree trimming, pole testing, repairs, and upgrades to prevent outages.
- Long-term stability: Interest, depreciation, and investments that keep the grid strong against storms and growing demands.
- Recovering costs through fixed charges helps to secure the financial stability of your cooperative, and it is the most fair and equitable way to recover expenses beyond the purchase of power and the costs to move that power over long distances before we can deliver it to your home.

Generation costs remain stable

While we've had to implement a modest adjustment to our service charge, there is good news when it comes to the overall affordability of power and the

impact that will have on our members' bills in 2026. While some of Ohio's investor-owned utilities are implementing significant rate increases because of how they purchase power in a volatile wholesale market, our ownership in Buckeye Power means that generation charges should remain relatively stable.

Our bottom line is looking out for you

We get it — no one likes seeing their bill go up, and we're empathetic to the real needs of our communities, from fixed-income families to growing farms. That's why we're offering help:

- Free energy audits to spot savings opportunities.
- Information on improving energy efficiency through this magazine and our website.
- Rebates on energy-efficient appliances and upgrades.
- Budget billing to even out seasonal spikes.
- Payment plans and aid for those in a bind.

Factors affecting your bill

A major driver of whether Hancock-Wood's average residential bills will be higher or lower this year is actually fairly unpredictable — and that is the weather. Many of our members experienced higher-than-normal usage in the summer of 2025, and therefore, saw higher bills. An especially cold January likely had similar effects. A year when weather is more typical for Ohio could translate into lower bills.

Hancock-Wood Electric Cooperative isn't a corporation chasing profits — we're your neighbors, investing in a co-op that serves our communities today and tomorrow. Even with this adjustment to our service charge, Hancock-Wood will remain one of the most competitively priced electric utilities in Ohio. We are proud to serve you, and we are committed to providing you with reliable power at an stable price.