

Kansans asked to conserve energy during bitter cold snap

With record-breaking cold affecting much of the country through mid-week, Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. is asking electric co-op members — as well as natural gas customers — to limit and reduce usage as much as possible through Tuesday.

“We are already seeing high electric use and are anticipating record-breaking demand in the next 24 to 48 hours,” said Lee Tafanelli, CEO of Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc.

The record-breaking cold is also putting a significant strain on natural gas supplies. The cold weather is freezing off natural gas production, making less gas available for delivery to customers.

“We are facing a several critical days where both electric and natural gas supplies will be extremely tight,” Tafanelli said. “By reducing power usage where safely possible, we can help protect the integrity and reliability of the electric grid.”

Kansans can conserve energy by turning down thermostats and not using high energy-consuming appliances, such as clothes washers and dryers, ovens and dishwashers, beginning at 12:01 a.m. Monday, Feb. 15, and continuing through mid-week.

Other ways Kansans can do their part to help conserve electricity include:

- **Turn down thermostats to 68 degrees if your health permits.**
- **Check and change furnace filters if needed to ensure optimum airflow. Rule of thumb: change filter every 3 months; 2 months if you have pets or family members have allergies.**
- **Close furnace registers and doors to unoccupied rooms to keep occupied rooms warmer, which will help reduce consumption.**
- **Keep vents clear. High efficiency furnaces have vents leading outside. Make sure they are not blocked with ice or debris. Inside, make sure vents are not covered by rugs or furniture.**
- **Resist the urge to crank up the thermostat as it’s unlikely to make much of difference except to put a strain on the furnace and your energy bill. Instead, wear an extra layer or use blankets to keep warm. Lowering the temperature just a couple of degrees will protect your furnace.**

- **Reprogram thermostat if it's set to lower significantly at night or when no one is home. During extreme cold weather like we are experiencing now, the furnace will have a hard time raising the temperature to the desired level and it will use more energy to do so.**
- **Close blinds and curtains to reduce the amount of heat lost through windows.**
- **Turn off and unplug non-essential lights and appliances.**
- **Make microwave or toaster-oven friendly meals to save energy.**
- **Businesses should minimize use of lighting and electric-consuming equipment as much as possible**

The winter weather is affecting all of Kansas and several surrounding states, and Kansas electric cooperatives are monitoring conditions and staging personnel and resources so in the event there are power outages, restoration work can begin as quickly and safely as possible.

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