

PARK SPARKS

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Park Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Park Electric remembers, back in the day...

From a membership of 1,477 in 1972, when we were located at 12th and Clark, to the current 3,479, two ladies have seen Park Electric through many transitions. We have been so fortunate for the gifted talents that Rita McAdam and Delilah Smith have brought to Park Electric over their 38 and 31 respective years. They have witnessed many changes in our rural community and have been invaluable as they helped navigate the co-op through the many shifts over the years.

Rita and Dee agree that through growth and many changes at Park Electric, a close sense of community lost is the most regrettable.

Back in the day, most of our member/friends came into the office to pay their bills and would often stay to visit. Today, the majority of our member payments come in through the mail and many are paid directly online through a bank or credit card. It is not uncommon for us to set up a membership and never even have the pleasure of greeting our new member in person.

By the same token, growth has brought some significant time saving advances in the day to day operations. Rita and Dee concur that the automated billing procedures are much more efficient than in the past. Up until 1998 our meters were self read and if we didn't receive the reading we would estimate usage and send a bill out. Back in the day, lively notices in the Parks Sparks reminded members to please get their readings to us in a timely fashion. If you were the first to

bring in your meter reading card and pay your electric bill, you may have been recognized by seeing your name in our newsletter! The small office staff handled all the billing and it took days to post payments. While there is still a fair amount of hand processing of payments, once our work is done, the automated system takes over and finishes the

process in a fraction of the time it used to take. When a member calls inquiring about details of their account, we can generally tell them what they need to know in just a few seconds by accessing it on the computer.

Our older members remember a sense of gratitude for the services and sense of community provided by

the REA. Alas, times have changed and in these tough economic times the services provided by Park Electric are often overshadowed by the rising cost of electricity. Either way, we are still your rural community cooperative here to provide you with electric service for the most economical price possible.

We still enjoy visiting with our members, so if you must mail your bill, so be it, but don't let that stop you from pulling in for a visit! We will be here, along with Dee and Rita, to visit with you about whatever is on your mind or even how to help you reduce your electric usage! Until then, hope you are having a great summer!



Heat Rate Season Begins

In 2009, the Heat Rate program implemented a few changes that were to become effective in 2010. One change was to implement a heat rate season. The heat rate season begins in September and ends in May. What that means is that during the summer months all energy used on the heat meter will be charged at the normal residential rate. The decision to use a heat rate season was twofold. One, to ensure that the reduced rate was being used for its designed purpose of heating residential homes and secondly to match our power supplier's heat rate season.

Why the change? Because more and more members participating in the Heat Rate program are using heat pumps as their primary heating source. A heat pump acts as a heater in the winter and an air conditioner in the summer. Since there is no physical way to separate the energy used for heating from the energy used for cooling the heat rate is increasingly being used for air conditioning. The only way to keep this from happening was to designate a seasonal heat rate.

Another reason for the change was because Park Electric gets a reduced wholesale rate for the energy used for heating from Basin Electric, one of our power suppliers (however Basin does not allow electric water heating on the reduced rate). Basin's heat rate season ends in May and also begins in September.

The future of the Heat Rate program depends on whether we can continue to offer it without jeopardizing our economic viability. Implementing the heat rate season will help us to do that.

Park Electric's office will be closed on Monday, July 5th for the Independence Day

Holiday



Manager's Comments by Tim Stephens

It's summer time. Along with the fun and sun of summer come the summer storms. Traditionally we begin to experience an increase in outages in May. As summer progresses the outages increase. Most outages are caused by lightning or trees. The lightning caused outages are sometimes delayed due to underground cable taking a while to fail after the lightning has long since passed. As I mentioned last month, we have been busy trimming trees and will continue to do so throughout the year. I am sure we will still get plenty of tree caused outages again this summer.



and environmental.

Remember when you or your kids would open the door to the refrigerator and stare at what was inside? Someone would say "Make up your mind what you are going to get before you open the door. I don't want to pay to cool the whole house while you decide." That is an obvious way of being more energy efficient.

True energy efficiency allows you to maintain the same comforts and benefits you already enjoy while using less energy. During the winter months you can still keep your

house at the same temperature while you are there, but save energy with a programmable thermostat that lets the house cool off when you're away. How about installing a dimmer switch on your lights and turning them down when you don't need as much light? Have you ever left the lawn sprinkler on too long? There are timers you install on a garden hose that can help eliminate that. I'm sure some of you can get rid of that old refrigerator in the garage that sits almost

empty most of the time. Install door sweeps and weather stripping to keep the warm air where it needs to be. Install a blanket on your water heater after you check to be sure the temperature is set correctly. Clean your dryer lint trap after each use and make sure the vent is clean. These are just a few low cost or no cost ways to save money and energy. Don't forget to turn off the ceiling fan along with the lights when you leave.



...Lightning can strike as far as 10 miles from the area where it is raining. That's about the distance you can hear thunder and that puts you within striking distance. Don't take chances, seek safe shelter immediately.

...50% of lightning fatalities occur after the storm has passed because people resumed activities too soon after the storm. Wait 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder before you go back outside.

...Lightning victims do not carry an electrical charge, are safe to touch, and need urgent medical attention. Call 911 immediately and perform CPR if the person is unresponsive or not breathing.

...Watch for downed power lines, they may still be hot, assume they are and call us asap!

PARK ELECTRIC 222 - 3100

Baby Back Ribs - serves 4

Recipe Corner

Sauce

- 1 c ketchup
- 1/4 c apple cider vinegar
- 3 T Worcestershire sauce
- 3 T brown sugar
- 1/2 t salt
- 1 t liquid smoke flavoring

Bring all ingredients to a simmer over medium-high heat, reduce heat to medium-low and simmer uncovered, stirring frequently, until thickened, about 30 minutes.

Ribs:

- 2 pounds pork baby back ribs
- 1. Tear off 4 pieces of aluminum foil large enough to enclose each portion of ribs.
- Spray each piece of foil with vegetable cooking spray. Brush ribs liberally with sauce and place each portion in its own piece of foil. Wrap tightly and refrigerate 8 hours or overnight.
- 2. Preheat oven to 300°
- 3. Bake ribs wrapped tightly in the foil for 2 1/2 hours. Remove from foil, add more sauce if desired and serve!