



PARK SPARKS

FEBRUARY 2021

PARK ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

 Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives



Winters in Montana can be especially harsh. While we do enjoy periods of relative clam, when the weather changes, it can happen quickly.

Park Electric strives to provide reliable electricity to our members, but sometimes that is not within our control. When thinking about your reliance on electricity, you may come to the conclusion that you need a backup power source. Backup generators can be a very helpful tool to have in this case. If you decide to install a generator, here are some things to keep in mind:

-How much electricity will you need to keep things running in the event of an outage? Think about all the things in your house and on your property that require electricity. If you live outside of city limits, your water source (well) may require electricity to provide water. You may want to have a backup water source or water storage. What is your heat source? If it relies on electricity, you should think about the generator size to keep

your house heated. Do you work from home? While computers and other related home office equipment don't take up a lot of our overall energy usage, these are items you should consider when sizing a generator. Many websites offer guides to correctly sizing your generator needs.

-Generators are a great option if you want to ensure your electricity will always be there during outages. If you decide to have a generator installed, please be sure to have a licensed electrician do the work. They will install a transfer switch to keep the power from flowing back onto our lines and potentially creating danger for our line crews. This situation is called backfeed and having a transfer switch installed correctly prevents power from running back onto the lines and protects our linemen as well. Never run a gas powered generator inside your home. Most newer generators have carbon monoxide detectors built into them, but older models do not. The exhaust from a running generator can produce enough carbon monoxide to kill a person.



Here are a few other things to keep in mind when planning for an outage that could last more than 4 hours:



Do you have a plan to keep pipes from freezing in the winter and food from spoiling in the summer?

If you have animals, do you have all the necessary supplies and water sources available for them?

If you have a medical need that relies on electricity, do you have a backup plan for that?

If you have an existing generator, do you have enough fuel to keep it running for an extended amount of time if necessary?

Park Electric works hard maintaining our system to prevent widespread or lengthy outages. It is always good to be prepared just in case!

Managers Comments *by Matt Haggerty*

Your board of directors tasks me with preparing an annual operating budget each year which they review at the beginning of the year. We strive to be as close to 100% accurate as we can. With COVID and the ups and downs of the weather we experienced last year we still managed to stay almost exactly on budget for 2020. We ended the year staying just below our budgets. As our sales vary each year, mostly due to weather conditions, our fixed costs don't necessarily follow the same trends. Trees still need trimmed, underground still needs to be replaced and metering expenses don't change much. Maintaining a high level of reliability of affordable safe electricity for our members is a long term goal. I have been asked a few times recently if I am concerned if mild weather will have an adverse effect on Park Electric's financial situation. My answer is a very confident "no." I am more concerned with the demand fee charged by our power

provider. When their system peaks it raises their costs. Which is then passed on to Park Electric. Due to the unpredictability of our demand peaks, our power bill can vary greatly. We can all help reduce demand by using our power wisely. A few months ago, I reviewed what time a day we experience our peak demands. They are from 6-9:00am and then again from 5-7:30pm. I don't want you to take this to mean you should not use power during these times. I am simply asking you to consider running your dish washer or a load of laundry outside of those periods. Or maybe have your heater set to turn on at 5:30 am instead of 6 am. If we all make an effort to do this, we will all continue to enjoy low power rates. I want you to rest assured if we have weather events that are out of our control your coop is positioned to be able to absorb a year or two of not so favorable financials.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Use wool or rubber dryer balls in the clothes dryer to reduce drying time and static.

Wool dryer balls can also absorb extra moisture. These are an efficient alternative to dryer sheets, which can create buildup on the dryer's filter and reduce air circulation. If you prefer dryer sheets, scrub the filter once a month to remove buildup.

Source:
www.energy.gov



**The office
will not be
staffed
Monday,
February
15th for
Presidents
Day.**



Space heating and cooling account for a large portion of the average home's energy use. A programmable or smart thermostat can help you control the temperature of your home and save energy.

