

[MCREA News]

MCREA LAUNCHES PREPAID METERING PROGRAM

Imagine receiving a monthly bill for groceries that just has a total for the month on it. Wouldn't you want to know where you spent that money to budget better? Or pay for it at your own pace throughout the month instead of having one large bill?

Now you can pay for electricity how and when you choose, the same way you buy groceries.

Purchasing electricity before you use it gives you more flexibility and control. It allows you to control your budget and pay the amount you want, when you want. Plus, there are no security deposits or late fees.

Here are some frequently asked questions about Morgan County Rural Electric Association's new pre-paid meter service available now to current and future MCREA members:

What is prepaid metering?

Prepaid metering is a "pay as you go" metering program for MCREA residential service only. You pay in advance for the electricity you will be using.

Is prepaid right for me?

- Do you get paid once a month at a time that doesn't match when your electric bill is due?
- Do you get paid every Friday?
- Do you get paid twice each month?
- Would four smaller bills be easier to pay than one large one?
- Could you manage your budget better if you could choose when your electric bill was due?
- Do you not have money for a security deposit?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, the prepaid billing option may be the right choice for you.

How can I check my prepaid balance and make payments?

There are many ways you can keep your prepaid balance up to date, such as:

- Pay online and have the ability to monitor your prepaid balance and your estimated days of service remaining, and track your energy use at www.mcrea.org.
- Use the free SmartHub app available for iOS and Android devices.
- Call 877-495-6487 to make a credit card, debit card or check payment by phone.
- Pay in person at Morgan County REA headquarters during regular office hours.
- Mail your payment to P.O. Box 738 Fort Morgan, CO 80701.



Are low balance notifications sent?

Yes, once you reach a credit balance of \$35 or below you are notified by email or text.

How often do I need to make payments?

That is up to you. Payments may be made daily, weekly or monthly as long as a credit balance is maintained.

Am I subject to late fees?

No.

What if I don't receive notification?

You are responsible for notifying MCREA of any changes to contact information and for checking your prepaid balance.

What happens when my credit is \$0 or below?

- Power will be disconnected once your account no longer has a credit.
- Disconnections will be immediate and without further notification.
- Inclement weather does not prevent disconnection.

If I am disconnected, how can I get reconnected?

Payment will need to be made in order to have a minimum of a \$35 credit balance.

Are there any fees to reconnect if I am disconnected due to nonpayment?

No reconnect fees are associated with prepaid.

When does an account close after disconnection?

Prepaid accounts that are disconnected and do not become active within 10 days will be considered inactive.

Does MCREA have a separate rate for prepaid?

No, the billing rate is the same as the standard residential rate.

How are prepaid members billed?

- Prepaid is billed and updated daily at 10:00 a.m.
- You will not receive a monthly billing statement.

What is the cost to start prepaid?

There is a \$100 minimum credit balance to start prepaid, plus a \$5 membership fee (if not a current member).

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PREPAID METERING PROGRAM

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What if I receive a payment guarantee for energy assistance?

Payments will be applied once received by MCREA. Assistance pledges will not be accepted to keep the service active. (LEAP applicants are not eligible for prepaid metering.)

Can I choose to be moved to standard billing at any time?

Yes. MCREA will require full payment and deposit (based on your credit) as a condition of continued service.

For more information about Morgan County REA's prepaid service, or to sign up for the program, call MCREA's billing department at 970-867-5688 or stop by MCREA headquarters at 734 Barlow Road in Fort Morgan.



MCREA AT PEDAL THE PLAINS

MCREA Member Services Specialist Jamie Plakorus (center) talks with cyclists at the Pedal the Plains stop in Last Chance on September 15.

MCREA OFFICE CLOSED VETERANS DAY & THANKSGIVING

MCREA will observe Veterans Day on Monday, November 12 with MCREA headquarters closed that day. MCREA offices will also be closed on Thursday, November 22 and Friday, November 23 for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Morgan County REA salutes veterans and wishes everyone a happy Thanksgiving!



Above are the decorations from last year's winning entry by Jason and Becky Schobinger, Wiggins.

MCREA to Hold Christmas Lights and Decoration Contest

To celebrate the holiday season, Morgan County REA will once again hold a Christmas lights and decoration contest.

How does it work? Simply let us know that you want to participate by giving us your name and address, then decorate the outside of your home and/or business — the more creative the better. However, we strongly remind everyone (whether participating in the contest or not) please do not hang lights and decorations on MCREA's electric poles. Hanging anything on poles could create potentially unsafe conditions for our linemen. Entries that have decorations on MCREA electric poles will be disqualified from the contest.

Who's eligible? Homes and businesses that are consumer-members of Morgan County REA are welcome and encouraged to enter. (Kerry and Sheri Hulkovich, acct #xxx8300)

What can I win? First place recipient will receive a \$100 credit on their electric bill; second place wins a \$75 credit on their electric bill; third place gets a \$50 credit on their electric bill.

How long do I have to enter? Deadline for entries is Friday, December 7, 2018.

How do I enter? Simply let us know that you want to enter the Christmas decoration contest and give us your name and physical address so we can judge your decorations. Email your entries to geoff@mcrea.org, or call member services at 970-867-5688. An email link is also provided on our website at www.mcrea.org.

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KEEP WATCH OVER YOUR SPACE HEATER

As colder temperatures approach and you reach for your space heater to help you get cozy and warm, make sure you consider the potential dangers of using one. If misused, it can cause electric shock or fire.



Never plug your space heater into an extension cord. Although handy and convenient, an extension cord cannot handle the energy spikes caused by a space heater and may become overloaded, possibly causing a fire. Also, make sure the appliance is plugged in properly so there is not a loose connection, and carefully consider where you'll place the heater in your home.

Morgan County REA offers these additional tips to keep you and your family safe while using portable space heaters:

- Place heaters in open areas and keep them at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn, such as paper or rugs. Do not place them near combustibles in your home, such as paint, varnish, harsh cleaners, aerosol sprays or nail polish remover.
- Monitor space heaters when they are in use.
- Do not use them in potentially wet areas, such as kitchens or bathrooms.
- Do not use space heaters around small children.
- Keep space heaters away from pathways or doors in your home, and make sure the cord is not a tripping hazard.
- Do not use open-coil space heaters.
- Do not use a heater in disrepair or with a frayed cord or damaged plug.
- Do not plug any other electrical devices into the same outlet as the space heater.
- Before using your heater, read all manufacturer's instructions and warning labels.
- Place them on flat, level surfaces and never place on furniture, counters or carpet, which can overheat.
- Select a space heater that is endorsed by a recognized testing laboratory.
- Never use space heaters for purposes other than supplemental heating, such as thawing pipes or drying clothes.
- When not in use, unplug the heater and put it away.
- A space heater can help keep you warm, but be sure to use it with care so that you'll stay safe in the colder months.

For additional safety tips, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Win \$25 Off Your Electric Bill

Each month Morgan County REA gives two lucky members a \$25 credit on their electric bill, just by reading *Colorado Country Life*.

Congratulations, **Roger Steele** (account #xxx5300) and **Richard Reed** (account #xxx0500), you found your names and account numbers in the September edition of *Colorado Country Life*. You received a \$25 credit on your electric bill.

There are two more MCREA member names and their account numbers hidden somewhere in this issue. If you find your name and account number, call member services at 970-867-5688 by November 30 to claim a \$25 credit on your electric bill.

Schedule Your Energy Audit This Winter

Morgan County REA offers home and business energy audits to the membership at no cost. These are available to members who have questions about their electric bill or want to find ways to be more energy efficient. Energy audits are free, and will be arranged at your convenience at any home or business served by MCREA.

MCREA Member Services Representative Bill Annan conducts the energy audit by performing a walk-through of your home or business to collect information. An infrared camera may be used to assist in identifying building envelope weaknesses. (James and Jeanie Collins, acct #xxx9600) Bill will also review the property's history of electric consumption and discuss your concerns and goals of energy consumption. The energy audit generally takes one to two hours.

Once the audit is complete, you can assess priorities in your energy efficiency plan based on recommendations made by the auditor. An audit report can also be provided to you at your request.

Schedule an audit online by going to the Free Energy Audit page at www.mcrea.org, or by calling the MCREA member services department at 970-867-5688.

GENERATE SAFE PRACTICES

Make sure you know how to operate your generator safely. Unsafe operation can threaten you, your family, neighbors and the linemen working to restore power. Unsafe installation or operation may also result in a lawsuit, and your insurance may not cover your liability.

SAFE DÉCOR FOR A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON

It's almost time to deck those halls! Statistics show that home fires and electrical accidents typically increase during winter months, so keep these holiday lighting tips in mind for a safe holiday season.

Carefully inspect all electrical decorations before you use them. Cracked or damaged sockets and/or loose or exposed wires can cause serious shock or start a fire.



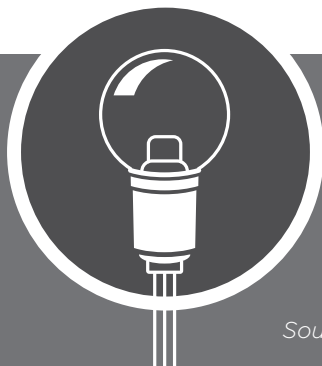
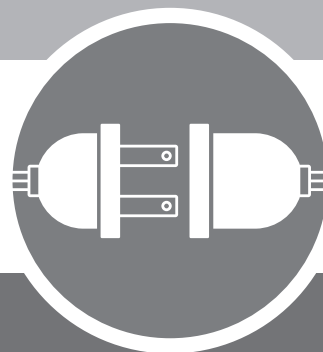
Consider purchasing LED lights, which use less energy and run cooler than traditional incandescent lights.

Never mount or support light strings in a way that might damage the cord's insulation.



Make sure that cords are not pinched in doors, windows or under heavy furniture, which could damage the cord's insulation.

Always unplug electrical decorations before replacing bulbs or fuses.



Turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations before leaving home or going to sleep.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International