

EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Echoes of the Empire

APRIL 2023

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NEW CONSTRUCTION ESTIMATOR TOOL

BY ANDY CARTER
MEMBER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER



ANDY CARTER

One way Empire Electric Association keeps rates stable is by looking for ways to improve work processes and lower operation costs. The latest improvement involves a new construction estimation tool. EEA completed 216 new services in 2022, almost double the 10-year average of 114 and an increase of 73% from the latest three-year average. The demand for new services as well as our normal maintenance and upgrade activity to maintain reliability has increased our engineering department's workload.

In the past, EEA has provided one free estimate for a member looking to add a new electric service. This was done by an engineering technician and typically involved travel to the site. In many cases, after receiving

the estimate, the member did not proceed with the project. Resources spent estimating projects never built and the increasing demand for new services made the process a great candidate for improvement.

At the end of March, EEA launched a new construction estimator tool, available at eea.coop. This tool allows members or their electricians to easily get a quote for providing service at a new location. The estimator tool is for single-phase services that will not need more than 75 kilovolt amperes (kVA) of capacity. Three-phase services or services requiring greater than 75 kVA of capacity should still contact the EEA engineering

EEA has a New Construction Estimator Tool

The new EEA tool allows members or their electricians to easily get an estimate for providing service at a new location and can evaluate different scenarios quickly and easily.

Using the tool will allow EEA to design and build services faster for members who are ready to proceed. The tool also reduces EEA costs and keeps all members' rates affordable. This is just one example of how your electric co-op is always working to make the service we provide better while keeping it affordable.

You can check out the new estimator tool at eea.coop/residential-and-commercial-new-construction-estimator-tool



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

department for an estimate.

The required input for the online tool is:

- The type of service the project will originate from: overhead, underground, or overhead to underground.
- The distance in feet from the existing EEA distribution system to the proposed meter location.
- The service capacity required in kVA. Capacity is dictated by electrical and building codes and the number and type of electric equipment or appliances at the new service.

Once these three values are entered, the tool will provide a cost estimate to build the new service. If the input values are correct, this will be the price the member will pay. If the estimate meets the member's budget and they want to proceed, they will provide EEA with a load data sheet outlining the electric equipment and appliances that will be at the new service, a site plan showing site details and the proposed meter location, and an engineering deposit of \$500 for residential services and \$600 for commercial.

When EEA receives the required documentation and deposit, an engineering technician will meet with the member or their

representative at the site to verify the plans and model input. Any necessary changes to the model input will be made at that time, and the formal project cost will be presented. If the member wishes to proceed at that time, they will pay the formal estimate minus the engineering deposit, and the service will be designed and then placed on the construction schedule. If the member does not wish to proceed, they will be refunded the deposit less costs incurred by EEA in providing the formal estimate.

The new construction estimator tool gives members an estimate to provide electric service to a property and allows them to evaluate different scenarios quickly and easily. It will also allow EEA to design and build services when members are ready to proceed, and at the same time reduce EEA costs to help keep all members' rates affordable.

This is just one example of how your electric co-op is always working to make the service we provide better while keeping it affordable. Interested in getting an estimate for new service construction? Visit eea.coop/residential-and-commercial-new-construction-estimator-tool.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

This planting season, include energy efficiency in your landscaping plans. Adding shade trees around your home can reduce surrounding air temperatures as much as 6 degrees. To block heat from the sun, plant deciduous trees around the south side of your home. Deciduous trees provide excellent shade during the summer and lose their leaves in the fall and winter months, allowing sunlight to warm your home.

Source: energy.gov



CELEBRATE
the Power Behind Your Power.
Lineworker Appreciation Day | April 18, 2023



WHAT'S THE ORANGE SIGN FOR?

It's not a suggestion. It's the law.

Life is fast paced, but speeding or multitasking in a work zone is not worth losing your life or taking someone else's.

To help save lives and reduce injuries, follow orange sign directives every time you approach a work zone.

2020 Work Zone Statistics*

Crashes and Injuries



Fatalities



Pedestrian Fatalities in Work Zones



Do your part to help everyone return home safely. The orange sign is not meant for everyone else; it is meant for everyone.



*most recent data available

Sources: National Work Zone Awareness Week (nwzaw.org), National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse, American Traffic Safety Services Association



Pack Up Your Pole & Tackle Box When a Storm Rolls In



When you head out to the lake to fish, it can be sunny and clear, but springtime weather in Colorado can change in a flash. Check the weather before you go. And if you see a storm rolling in when you're lakeside, follow these tips to stay safe.



SEEK SHELTER

Stop fishing and retreat to a four-sided building or hard-top car. If you ignore the signs that it might storm and keep fishing, it could cost you your life.

From 2006–2020, two-thirds of lightning deaths occurred during outdoor activities.



WAIT

Wait 30 minutes after you see or hear lightning and the storm clears before heading back outside.



REMEMBER

Always look up for overhead power lines before casting your hook.



EFFICIENCY UPGRADES TO HELP YOU SAVE THIS SUMMER

BY ABBY BERRY

Spring and summer are opportune times for home upgrades and DIY projects. If you're planning to make improvements to your home, consider upgrades that promote better efficiency.

Below are a few projects that can help you save energy and money — and increase the comfort of your home.



Smart thermostats are easy to install and allow you to control your heating and cooling system from your phone.

Photo Source: Ecobee

Thermostat

Installing a smart thermostat is a simple way to manage home energy use and keep summer bills in check. Smart thermostats are easy to install and allow you to control your heating and cooling system from your phone. You can purchase an Energy Star-certified smart thermostat for as low as \$100, which can save you 8% on annual heating and cooling costs. This comes out to around \$50 per year. This upgrade will quickly pay for itself, and you'll gain insight into better ways to heat and cool your home.



Sealing air leaks around your home is a simple, effective way to save energy and lower your bills.

Photo Source: Scott Van Osdal

Air Leaks

While perhaps not as trendy as incorporating smart technologies, sealing air leaks around your home is a simple, effective way to save energy and lower your bills. Applying new (or replacing old) weather stripping around doors and windows can instantly make your home more comfortable and reduce energy waste. Applying caulk to fill gaps can also improve the seal of your home. Caulk can be applied to a variety of areas, including windows, doors, bathtubs and sinks.



Check the insulation in your attic; additional insulation can make a big impact on energy costs.

Photo Source: Erik McLean, Unsplash

Insulation

If your home feels too warm during summer (and too chilly during winter) even after you've sealed with weather stripping and caulk, your home may need additional insulation. Insulation is considered a more expensive efficiency upgrade; however, if your home is under-insulated, additional insulation can make a big impact on reducing energy use and costs.

The cost of new insulation depends on a variety of factors such as materials, size of the home and whether you use a contractor. Typically, the project costs can be recouped in a few years and your home will immediately feel more comfortable.

Of course, there are additional efficiency upgrades that can make a big impact on energy use, like replacing old appliances with Energy Star models or replacing old, leaky windows with new, energy-efficient windows. But these upgrades can be a bit pricey.

If you want to make your home more energy efficient but you're not sure where to start, your best bet is to enlist the help of an expert to conduct an energy audit of your home. An energy audit can easily identify areas to boost efficiency, and then you can determine the projects you want to tackle first based on your budget and needs. Empire Electric Association offers rebates for energy-efficiency audits performed by authorized auditors. More information can be found at eea.coop.



Co-op Photo Contest Winner April 2023 – "Harmony Beam" by Heather Barritt.

Dig Smart. Dig Safe.



Before you dig, call 811 or visit call811.com to mark underground utility lines. 811 is a free service that helps keep you and your community safe.



April is National Safe Digging Month.



Monthly Calendar

April 9 – Easter

April 14 – EEA's board meeting begins at 8:30 a.m. at its headquarters in Cortez. The agenda is posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at eea.coop. Members may attend in person or remotely. Instructions to attend remotely are included on the agenda.

April 22 – Earth Day

April 28 – Arbor Day