

Cold Weather Causes High Energy Bills ***But Consumers Can Take Steps to Lessen the Blow***

During the month of January, a sustained period of colder than normal temperatures caused higher than normal electric bills for consumers across the state.

“Freezing temperatures make heating systems work harder and operate longer,” said John Martz, Executive VP and CEO for Suwannee Valley Electric, “The colder the outdoor temperature, the greater the heat loss from inside the home and the longer your heating system must operate to maintain your level of comfort.”

Obviously, weather dictates how often heating systems operate based on the member’s desired level of comfort. The colder the outdoor temperature, the greater the heat loss from inside the home and the longer the heating system must operate to maintain the desired level of comfort.

For example, to maintain a basic comfort level of 65 degrees inside the home when the outside temperature is 60 degrees, a heating system’s run time is minimal. However, as the temperature outside begins to drop, the heating system will increase its run time proportionately to the heat loss from the home.

By improving the efficiency of your home, energy savings can be realized and you can maintain a level of comfort at a reduced cost. The more efficient the home, the slower the heat loss occurs and the less run time required to maintain the desired temperature inside. Reliance on less energy efficient systems, like electric heat strips and portable electric heaters also boosts your chances of receiving a high bill during these prolonged cold spells.

“We can’t do anything about the weather,” Martz notes. “But consumers can take steps to make their homes more energy efficient such as adding weather stripping and caulk around windows and doors, replacing heating system air filters monthly and closing outside vents to the crawl space of the home during the winter.”