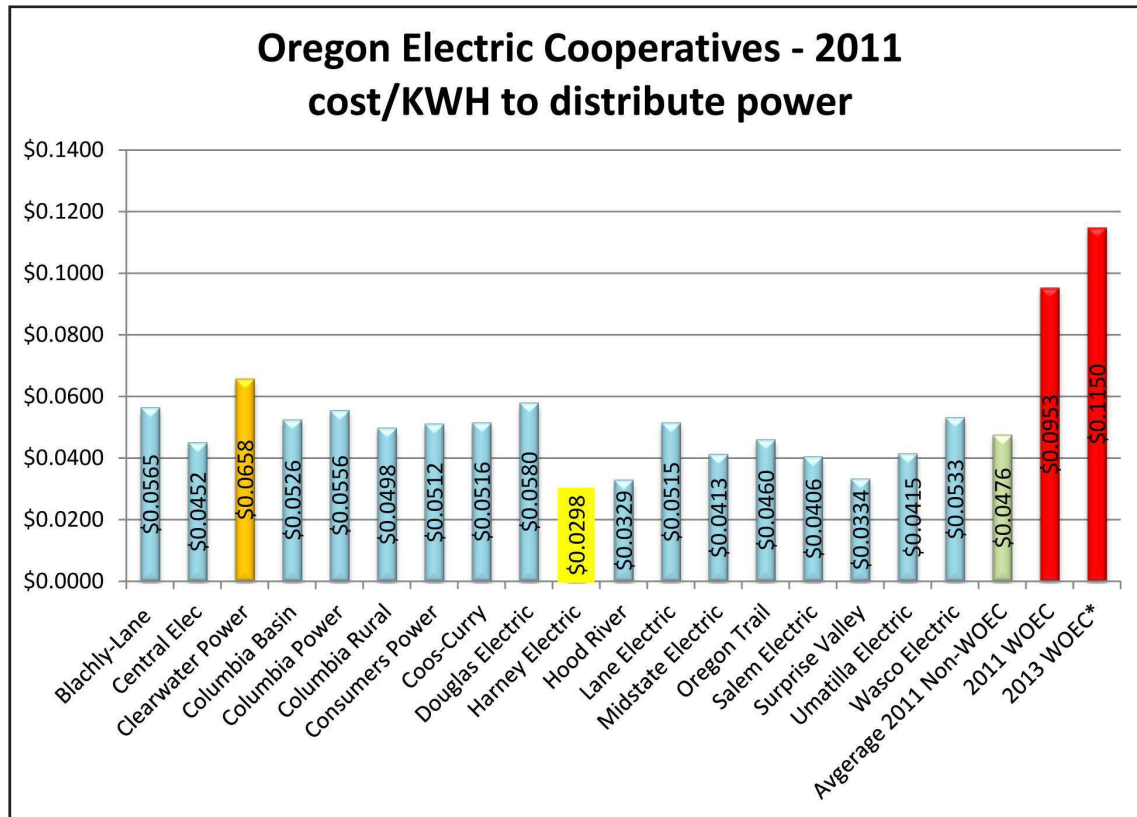


The Sounding Board: Are We Paying Too Much for Our Electrical Service?

By Nick Galaday

This year we are paying WOECE 2.42 times as much to bring us our electricity than did the average Oregon electric co-op member in 2011! Some of us have gathered together to try to do something about it. When we combine our very high cost of electricity with our similarly high cost of sewer and water, our combined utility costs make living in Vernonia financially quite unattractive. It's easy to see why the value of our homes continues to fall while the housing market is making somewhat of a comeback elsewhere. We absolutely must do something about our high utility costs if we expect Vernonia to grow and attract new investment.

Taking on one problem at a time, a few of us have joined together to do what we can to find out why our electricity costs so much and what we can do about it. We are calling ourselves "The Power of One" and meet a few times each month to plan how we can do this. If you'd like to join us, please visit our blog <http://utilitymembershippowerof1.blogspot.com/>, or call Sally Harrison for information about our next meeting (503) 429-8425. You are also encouraged to contact



in yellow, for < 3¢/KWH), while others like WOECE (in red, 11.5¢/KWH) spend more than twice as much as the average Oregon co-op (in green, < 5¢/KWH) to do the same thing. WOECE is even 174% of the next highest co-op (Clearwater Power - in gold, 6.58¢/KWH).

As an example of how I calculated all these values, here is how we get 11.5¢/KWH for WOECE's 2013 price for transport: WOECE states the average residential customer in 2011 used 1125 KWH/mo. WOECE charges 13.75¢/KWH for the first 500 KWH. And they charge 10.41¢/KWH for the next 625 KWH. Now add the \$35 they charge as a flat monthly service fee and we get \$168.81 for our average customer's 1125 KWH, or 15¢/KWH. Now subtract the 3.5¢ for the power itself and we get 11.5¢/KWH - just to transport it! All

your WOECE board member and ask them why we pay so much more than other Oregonians for the same electricity. <http://www.westoregon.org/about-us/board-of-directors/>

A little explanation about the graph: First, the 2011 data (the most recent data available) was gathered from the Oregon State Public Utilities Commission stat book. The listed values are each co-op's charge for service to their average residential customer, minus the 3.5 cents it costs them for the power itself. We all pay 3.5 cents per KWH for the energy itself. The difference comes in when our particular co-op charges us to transport this energy to our meter from where they get it. Some co-ops do this pretty efficiently (Like Harney Elec. -

the other co-ops' values were calculated in this same way. From this chart we can graphically see how well WOECE compares with its sister co-ops in the state at efficiently bringing us our BPA electricity.



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Friday, March 15, 2013 spaghetti dinner at 6:00pm with bingo & raffle to follow in the school commons.

\$1.00 for 2 cards (per round of bingo)

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This run is being organized by
VHS Student Body President Samantha Wallace
as part of her Presidential Challenge.

All Proceeds go to
Doernbecher's Children's Hospital.

For more info contact:
Samantha Wallace
Email: sawall6@msn.com Cell: 503-369-2495
or Teri Willard: Cell: 503-941-6804

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