

Power of One Says we are Paying WOEC Over Twice as Much as we Should for Our Electrical Service

By Nick Galaday

We are now paying WOEC 2.7 times as much to bring us our electricity than did the average Oregon residential electric COOP member in 2012! Our rates were raised again in October, not the 12% the Board had warned us of, not even the 14% they copped to in their announcement, but an increase of a whopping 15.73% for the average residential rate payer!

Up until October the average WOEC residential consumer was paying around 15¢/KWH. We are now paying an astounding 17.36¢/KWH. If we paid the same as the average Oregon residential co-op member (8.76¢/KWH), the average WOEC residential member would save over \$90 per month! These calculations are based on the fact that the average WOEC residential member uses about 1055 KWH per month. That's sounds high to me too so I'll be writing about some ways to cut electric consumption in future articles.

When we combine our very high cost of electricity with our 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. Yet

it appears every time our co-op gets in a little financial trouble they either borrow more money or raise our rates. This is totally unacceptable and has to stop. You can help make it stop!

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 call ourselves "The Power of One" and meet the first Thursday of each month, 7:00 PM, at the Vernonia Learning Center, to work on this problem. Please join us. You can email us at: WOEC.unitedmembers@yahoo.com Check out our website at www.powerofonevernonia.site88.net. You can contact us the old fashioned way by mail at P.O. Box 51, Vernonia, OR 97064, or leave a voice-message at (503) 429-8089.

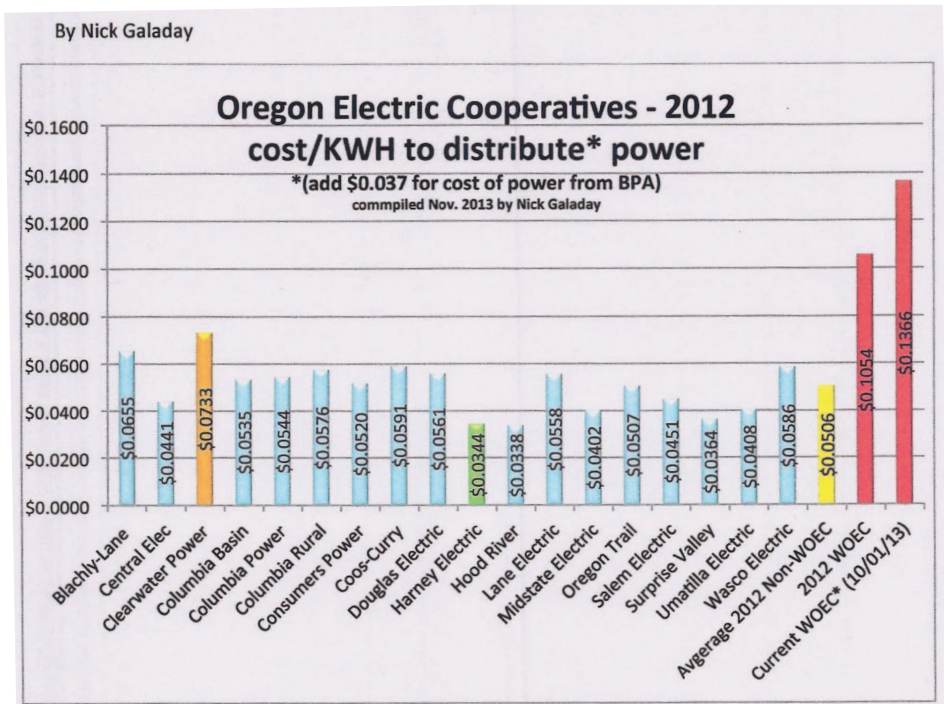
An effective thing you can do is contact a member of the WOEC Board of Directors. Ask them to lower our rates; you can do that by phoning WOEC at 503 429-3021, or online, at <http://www.westoregon.org/content/board-directors>. The board got us where we are today; the board can help us get out of this mess.

An explanation about the graph: First, the 2012 data (the most recent data available) was gathered from the Oregon State Public Utilities Commission stat book. The listed values are each co-ops' charge for service to their average residential customer, minus the 3.7 cents it costs everyone for BPA power. 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 efficiently, like Harney Electric (the green graph-bar) for 3.44¢/KWH, while others like WOEC (the red graph-bar), charge 13.66¢/KWH! This is more than twice as much as the average Oregon co-op (the yellow graph-bar) which is 5.06¢/KWH! WOEC is even 186% higher than the next highest co-op, Clearwater Power (the gold graph-bar), which charges 7.33¢/KWH! Oh, if we could just aspire to be second worst!

As an example of how I calculated all these values, here is

how we get 13.66¢/KWH for WOEC's current price for transport: WOEC states the average residential customer in 2012 used 1055 KWH/mo. WOEC now charges 13.85¢/KWH for the first 1500 KWH. Add the \$37 they now charge as a flat monthly service fee and we get \$183.12 for our average customer's 1055 KWH, or 17.357¢/KWH. Now subtract the 3.7¢ for the power itself and we get 13.66¢/KWH - just to transport it! All the other co-ops' values were calculated in this same way. From this chart we can graphically see how well WOEC compares!



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