



# PilotLight

Spring | 2024

A newsletter for JCE Co-op natural gas members.

## Inflation continues to drive rate increases

Rate increases approved by the JCE Co-op board of directors go into effect this month. The new rates begin to apply to electric and/or natural gas use in March and will be reflected on the bills members received in April.

An average 3% increase is driven by inflation that continues to push costs higher for materials. In 2023, we saw overall inflation moderate to just over 3%. In 2022, overall inflation was more than 8 percent.

Included in the revised rates is a \$2.00 increase in the monthly member service charge across all rate classes. The delivery charge increases by a fraction of a cent.

The member service charge is a flat fee that covers the administrative costs of managing members' accounts. This includes billing, postage, facilities, software systems and personnel.

The delivery charge is a per therm charge that covers the cost of delivering natural gas to a member's home or business and maintaining the infrastructure.

The accompanying chart illustrates the changes for the farm and residential natural gas rate. Additional information for other rate classes can be found on our website at [jcecoop.com](http://jcecoop.com).

A residential natural gas account using an average of 55 therms per month will see a 3.95% increase or \$3.37 per month increase. The gas calculation used an estimated natural gas/energy charge. For the 2023/2024 winter JCE Co-op was well prepared with advanced purchases and storage volumes of natural gas, which helps stabilize the cost that we pass through to you.

Each year the co-op hires a consulting firm that conducts an independent cost of service study (COSS). The COSS identifies the equitable contribution to margins by the respective rate classes. Using the results of the COSS, we review each of the current rate designs to recover an equitable amount from each rate class. The objective is for each consumer class to pay for the costs incurred by the cooperative to serve them while contributing a reasonable margin to reinvest in upgrading and maintaining the system, as well as meeting financial requirements.

As a not-for-profit member-owned cooperative, we strive every day to deliver energy to our members safely, efficiently, and responsibly while keeping costs as low as possible. JCE Co-op continues to look for opportunities to reduce our operating costs. Our strategic goal of operational excellence is to ensure continued improvements in efficiencies.

We continue to encourage members to reach out to us if they are concerned about being able to pay their energy bills. We work with members on a case-by-case basis regarding options and assistance that may be available to them. Our member care representatives can be reached at 815-858-2207 between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Natural Gas Rate 42			
Rate	Current	Revised	Change
Facility Charge	\$20.00 per month	\$20.00 per month	No Change
Member Service Charge	\$5.00 per month	\$7.00 per month	\$2
Delivery Charge	\$0.445 per therm	\$0.470 per therm	\$0.025 per therm
Energy Charge	Varies Monthly	Varies Monthly	

## JCE Co-op participates in gas association legislative summit

In January JCE Co-op participated in the American Public Gas Association (APGA) legislative summit meeting with congressional representatives to discuss the importance of new and existing programs that maintain safe, reliable and affordable energy.

Topics discussed included:

- reforms to Section 5 of the Natural Gas Act, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) Reauthorization
- funding for Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- preserving the direct use of natural gas

Additional information on these subjects and APGA members asks can be located at the following link: [Advocacy - American Public Gas Association \(apga.org\)](http://Advocacy - American Public Gas Association (apga.org))



Josh Hoppman

Hunter O'Neil

Mike Hoppman

Holly Woodhurst

Michael Kussmaul

Pat Anderson

## National Gas Utility Workers' Day



March 18 is Natural Gas Utility Workers' Day, a time when communities such as ours give recognition to the employees who provide one of their most valuable assets their natural gas utility.

March 18 is the date of the New London, Texas school explosion in 1937 that led to the widespread odorization of natural gas and an increased emphasis on safety. Safety is a vital aspect to natural gas distribution and the employees of distribution companies endeavor to make natural gas delivery as safe as possible.

We are dedicating March 18 to celebrating the hard work of natural gas utility employees in addition to their accomplishments in our community. Our customers recognize the need to access reliable, affordable, safe energy and depend on the service of the natural gas utility employees for that need.

This year, our natural gas utility department will roll out the new AMI meter program, you can learn more about this program in the March issue of Illinois Country Living. The team will also work on continuing to monitor for the three foot rule. This ensures that there is a three foot or greater radius around the regulator of your meter where there is no possible ignition sources or openings to your home such as basement windows, doors or intake vents.

We are here for our community and invite you to join us in celebrating your local natural gas utility workers. If you have any questions regarding your public natural gas utility or your upcoming energy needs, please feel free to contact Patrick Anderson 800-858-5522 Ext 1502.

## Pilot Light is going paperless

JCE Co-op's Pilot Light Newsletter is going paperless! We are pleased to announce that after June issue you will be receiving Pilot Light via email. We have chosen a new solution to deliver the same great news and safety information but in a more convenient and more cost-effective way.

### How will it work?

Pilot Light will get emailed out at the end of every quarter to our natural gas members whose email is on file. If you are unsure if your email is on file, or if you need to update your email you can do so by logging in to the member portal at [jcecoop.com](http://jcecoop.com) or by contacting our member care department at 800-858-5522. If we do not have your email address on file you will continue to receive a bill insert.

JCE Co-op continues to look for opportunities to reduce our operating costs and our impact on the environment, transitioning to an electronic newsletter is a simple way to help us work towards these goals.

## Pipeline leak survey starting in April

In the month of April JCE Co-op will perform a leak survey on our eight-inch high pressure natural gas mains in Whiteside and Henry counties. All residents and landowners affected by this inspection will be sent a letter explaining the process, its importance and a map of the location of the line we will be inspecting.

The survey process will be done by driving the JCE side-by-side over the ground directly above the gas mains. A remote methane leak detector (RMLD) will be pointed at the ground in the direction of the main. If there are any vapors of gas coming up through the ground the RMLD will detect it.

"We are usually able to complete this project within a weeks time, depending on weather, and wrap up before the farmers get into the fields," said Manager of Gas Operations Pat Anderson."

As farmers prepare for the 2024 crop season, we encourage you to be aware of where any underground pipelines or utilities might be located. If you have any questions or concerns about a pipeline on your property, please reach out to JCE Co-op at 800-858-5522.



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