

## **This month's power bill reflects last month's freeze**

Although you are actually paying less per kilowatt-hour for electricity than you were in 2009, your recent Southern Pine bill is probably much higher than normal. That's simply because you used more electricity to keep warm during the frigid temperatures that settled in our area in early January, prompting Gov. Barbour to declare a state of emergency.

With low temperatures in the teens and daytime highs rarely above freezing in many areas, demand for electricity soared and remained high for several days.

Many of our members reached all-time highs in the number of kilowatt-hours they used during this period. South Mississippi Electric Power Association, our wholesale power provider, reported record demand for electricity from the 11 electric power associations it serves in Mississippi.

Before the winter freeze struck, Southern Pine had passed along a reduction in the cost of power, reflecting the lower cost of fuels South Mississippi Electric uses to generate electricity.

Few folks, however, noticed the decrease due to the cold weather's impact on their energy use.

Southern Pine promotes energy efficiency year-round. In extreme weather, whether a January deep freeze or an August heat wave, energy efficiency really pays off, not only in lower energy bills but in comfort, too.

Whether the ground hog sees its shadow or not, we still have weeks of winter weather to come. So if your home could benefit from some energy-efficiency improvements, here are a few ideas:

- Keep your home's thermostat set at 68 degrees or lower in the winter.
- Keep your heating/cooling unit well maintained. If it runs all the time, there may be a problem with the unit.
- Check your attic for adequate insulation. Inspect duct work for loose fittings and damage.
- Check for air leaks in windows and doors. If outside air is entering, fix the leak with caulking or weatherstripping.
- Repair hot water leaks and drips. You're paying to heat the water, so don't waste it.
- Check your water heater's temperature setting. You may want to lower it.
- Change the filter in your forced-air heating system at least every three months; monthly is better if you have indoor pets.
- Mobile homes should have skirting around the bottom. Make sure duct work is properly installed and secured.
- Close the fireplace damper when not in use.
- Keep draperies closed at night to reduce drafts caused when warm interior air strikes cold glass.

Electricity is still one of today's best bargains. An average Southern Pine member spends less than \$4.50 per day for all the conveniences that electricity makes possible. According to the Department of Energy, Southern Pine's rates are still among nation's lowest.

The important thing to remember is that you and your family have the power to control your energy use through energy conservation awareness. Check out our Web site for more energy tips, at [www.spepa.com](http://www.spepa.com). If you would like a free booklet with tips on energy use, visit or call the Southern

Pine district office that serves you.