

# DISCOVERING SOUTH KENTUCKY

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## Feeding Hope: Julie and Michael Peterson of Project 58:10

Since 2014, Michael and Julie Peterson, members of South Kentucky RECC, have spent hours each week feeding the hungry. They're the third-place winners in the 2025 Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Who Powers You Contest. For their efforts, they've been awarded \$750, which they will invest back into their program to feed more children.

Their ministry, Project 58:10, has a simple mission: pack bags of food for school children who may not have enough to eat to take home to their families on Fridays.

"They have gone the extra mile for years to make this happen," says Mike New, who nominated the couple for the contest. "Fundraising alone is a huge task. Volunteers are assembled weekly throughout the community, with different groups packing bags."

The name of the charity comes from Isaiah chapter 58, verse 10 (NIV): "And if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noon-day."

The Petersons were immersed in the program through a series of fortunate events, but they chalk all of those events up to a higher power intervening.

"Michael and I got involved with Project 58:10 twelve years ago, and we started packing 50 bags a week out of Oak Hill Baptist Church, which we felt like was a huge feat," says Julie. "Our church has really shown up for us. We have multiple volunteers every other Tuesday from picking the food up from Kroger to setting it up in the gymnasium and then coming back that evening to help pack the bags."

Four local churches are part of the ministry. "We are fortunate that we have a community that sees the need," Julie says. The schools provide a number of children facing insecurity, but do not share their names.

"It's been literally every Tuesday since 2014, Julie is at Kroger picking up groceries," says Michael. Despite rising food costs over the years, the couple receives donations from local businesses and churches, and has never had to say no to a child.

"We have been very blessed. If a (child at) school has a need, we've been able to meet it," Julie says.

The project serves 22 schools, four libraries and a number of Head Start programs. The number of bags filled with food has grown to more than 800 per week—more than 35,000 over the course of each year, including summer months.

Kentucky Hunters for the Hungry is now a partner with Project 58:10 and provides a protein program to add to the bags. "Proteins were items we were having to remove from the bags because of the cost. Now we're able to provide about 80,000 venison meat sticks," says Michael.



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It's more than a labor of love. "You can't fake this," Michael says. "It's in our soul." Julie says it's been a blessing for their own kids to learn what it's like to give back to others.

"If there is anything I can tell anyone, do something, find something that you're passionate about, and do it," she says. "There are people who may have a small need or a large need. ... Whatever the need may be, there is always someone you can help."

The Petersons will continue to help out, feeding thousands of hungry kids every year, with hope that some day the need will lessen, but pouring themselves into Project 58:10 as long as the need exists.

The Who Powers You contest runs each October, and nominations will be open in 2026 at [www.whopowersyouky.com](http://www.whopowersyouky.com).

# Kentucky's electric rates are among the nation's lowest

**A**bundant coal resources and not-for-profit electric cooperatives are helping keep Kentucky's retail electricity rates among the country's lowest.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration reports the commonwealth's rates are regularly ranked among the most affordable in the U.S., often placing within the top 10. Among the 26 states east of the Mississippi River, Kentucky's retail electric rates are typically the lowest.

Data collected by the EIA in August 2025 reported the nation's average residential electricity rate is 17.62 cents per kilowatt-hour. Hawaii residents pay the highest rates (38.9¢/kWh). The Bluegrass State's overall average electricity price and residential rates (13.4¢/kWh) for the same period were the seventh lowest in the nation and ranked third lowest in the eastern U.S.

For most of our members, residential rates are fifth-lowest in the country and 25% below the national average.

Locally sourced coal is a primary contributor to affordable rates. Kentucky ranks as the sixth largest coal-producing state in the U.S., providing a robust fuel supply for coal-fired power generation. Coal accounts for 69%—the largest share—of the energy mix used for commonwealth electricity generation. Natural gas, more abundant in the state's western half, accounts for 23%.

In Eastern Kentucky's rural communities, electricity is predominantly supplied by not-for-profit electricity cooperatives, such as South Kentucky RECC. In turn, these member-owned cooperatives are members of East Kentucky Power Cooperative, which operates the power generation plants that supply the at-cost power they distribute to homes and businesses.



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## Sources:

- *Electric Rates by State November 2025* [saveonenergy.com](https://www.saveonenergy.com) (13.4 cents/kWh)
- *How much does electricity cost? Choose Energy Electricity Rates Report based on Aug. 2025 prices from U.S. EIA* (13.4 cents/kWh)
- *U.S. Electricity Profile 2024 - U.S. EIA* (Using 10.07 cents/kWh)
- *Kentucky's Low Electricity Prices* September 23, 2024

## Love your appliances and they'll love you back

**T**his Valentine's season, show your appliances a little love and they'll return the favor in lower bills and fewer surprises.

Start with the refrigerator: Vacuum the coils every six months, check door gaskets for tight seals, set the fridge at 37 to 40 degrees, and then lower the freezer to zero degrees. This will help the appliance run more efficiently and use less power.

Next, turn your attention to your clothes dryer. Clean the lint trap after every load and inspect the vent and duct for buildup. Restricted airflow makes dryers run longer and raises fire risk.

Consider having a technician clean the exhaust duct annually.

Don't forget the water heater. Lowering the thermostat to 120 degrees and flushing a few gallons annually to remove sediment improves efficiency and extends life.

Your heating system has been keeping you warm all winter; give it some TLC by replacing HVAC filters regularly. A clogged filter forces the system to work harder.

Finally, make some small fixes that add up. Tighten loose electrical connections, replace cracked power cords and run a



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quick check for unusual noises or smells. These are easy tasks that prevent breakdowns and save energy. They can also keep your home safe and comfortable.



# How to power through during an outage

## *The do's and don'ts for staying warm and safe without electricity*

**P**ower outages are sometimes the uncontrollable outcome of a winter storm. When this happens, South Kentucky RECC's team always works to restore power as safely and quickly as possible.

While snow and ice may leave you without power, it doesn't mean you're powerless. Take these action steps to protect yourself and your property until the lights come on again.

### DO

- **Confirm the problem.** Check your circuit breaker to make sure your power outage isn't just an overloaded circuit. If so, restoring your power may be just a flip of a switch in the breaker box. If that's not the issue, contact neighbors to see if their power is out, too.
- **Report the outage.** Never assume we know your lights are out. South Kentucky RECC members can report power outages 24 hours a day, seven days a week with our SmartHub app or by calling (800) 264-5112. This can help us pinpoint damage and restore power more quickly.
- **Be informed.** Check our real-time Outage Center page at [www.skrecc.com](http://www.skrecc.com) for the most up-to-date information on power restoration progress. You can also follow us on social media for alerts and updates.
- **Break out the batteries.** Lighting a candle to see in the dark might seem like a bright idea, but it's not. Instead of lighting up with these wax fire hazards, use battery-operated flashlights and lanterns. Consider buying a few lightbulbs with built-in batteries that stay charged in your light sockets until needed. They should give you six hours of light. Maintain a stock of batteries.
- **Keep warm.** Gather everyone into an inside room with few windows or doors that let in drafts. Bundle up, block leaky windows with blankets,

and close doors to rooms you're not using. Never use a gas oven for heat: It can emit carbon monoxide, an odorless gas that is deadly.

- **Unplug.** Safeguard electric appliances and devices from power surges that may occur during the power restoration process. Go through each room of your home and unplug televisions, computers and appliances (except refrigerator and freezer). Turn off heat pumps and electric water heaters as well as smaller items, like lamps and radios. Move light switches to the off position, leaving a single light on so you'll know when power is restored.
- **Keep fridge closed.** Opening refrigerator and freezer doors allows the cool air to escape, causing food to spoil faster. An unopened refrigerator can maintain proper temperatures for at least four hours. If power is out longer, pack items with ice in a cooler to keep them below 40 degrees. It takes about 48 hours for frozen items to thaw in a full freezer, but that falls to 24 hours if your freezer is half full.
- **Call for help.** If you spot a downed wire, assume it is live and dangerous. Stay as far away from the downed line as possible. Report it immediately to South Kentucky RECC dispatchers by calling (800) 264-5112 or dial 911.

### DON'T

Just as important as knowing what to do during an outage, is knowing what to avoid.

- **Drain batteries.** Don't waste electronic device batteries on non-essential activity, so you'll have enough power for important phone calls and to track power restoration progress.
- **Run a generator inside.** Portable generators that run on gasoline, propane or diesel should never be used in your home/garage/closed spaces since they can release harmful levels of carbon monoxide. Connect portable



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generators directly to any devices or appliances needed and not into the home electrical system.

- **Let pipes freeze.** If your home is older, check the basement, garage and exterior plumbing for pipes that aren't insulated. Wrap them with foam, old blankets or towels to prevent freezing that can burst pipes. Regardless of your home's age, it's a good idea to keep a trickle of water running on all faucets to reduce the risk of frozen pipes.
- **Use well water.** Most well pumps rely on electricity, so a power outage renders them useless. Even if you can retrieve some water from the faucets, doing so can drain your reservoir and prevent the pump from working when power is restored.
- **Grill indoors.** Gas and charcoal grills emit fumes that, if not fully ventilated, can lead to potentially fatal carbon monoxide poisoning.

Knowing how to cope during a power outage in the winter can get you through the situation with greater comfort and less risk. Preparing ahead of time, staying informed and following these safety tips can help protect your family and home until power is restored.

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**SKRECC Offices:**

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(606) 387-6476

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(270) 343-7500

**Wayne County**  
780 N. Main St., Monticello, KY 42633  
(606) 348-6771

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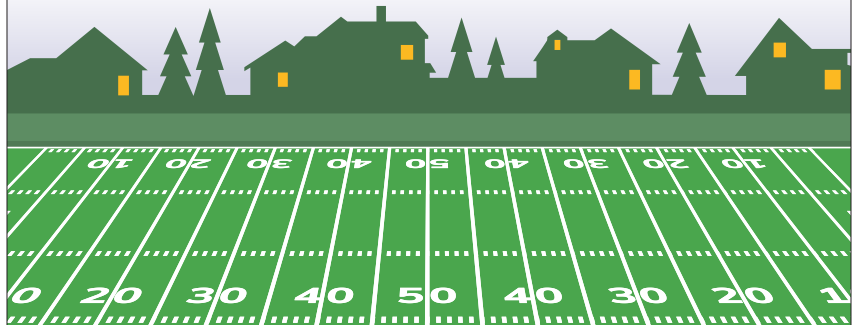
**To report an outage 24/7/365**, please call your local office, (800) 264-5112, or set up your account to be able to text outages. Please do not report outages via social media.

**Plug into South Kentucky RECC. Follow us on social media:**



## Score Big with Energy Savings!

Every Super Bowl MVP makes big plays—and you can too! Use the clues below to fill in the blanks and learn how you can help save energy at home by making smart, efficient plays. Double check your work in the answer key.



1. Spend time outdoors or unplugged to reduce your \_\_\_\_\_ time and save energy.
2. Turn off the \_\_\_\_\_ while brushing your teeth.
3. When it's cold, wear an extra layer of \_\_\_\_\_ instead of turning up the thermostat.
4. Keep doors and \_\_\_\_\_ closed when your home's heating/cooling system is turned on.
5. Unplug smaller electronics like \_\_\_\_\_ when you're not using them.
6. Turn off \_\_\_\_\_ when you leave a room.

**Word Bank:**  
windows  
clothing  
water  
lights  
screen  
chargers

Answer Key: 1. screen 2. water 3. clothing 4. windows 5. chargers 6. lights

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## SPACE HEATER SAFETY TIPS

- ⚠ Heaters should be placed on level surfaces.
- ⚠ Check heater cords for any damage or fraying.
- ⚠ Avoid using an extension cord to power the heater.



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