

News letter

December 2020



310-POWER

**The Board of Directors and Staff
of the
Blue Mountain
Power Co-op
would like to take this
opportunity to wish you a
Merry Christmas and a Happy
and Prosperous New Year in
2021.**



Massive Increases in Transmission Rates are Impacting Members

Transmission Rates on your electric bill are rates that **Blue Mountain Power Co-op has no control over**. Transmission rates are established by the Alberta Energy System Operator (AESO) to collect money which is ultimately remitted to transmission companies such as AltaLink and ATCO Electric, who build and maintain Alberta's transmission lines and systems. **These rates have increased 202% over the last 5 years.** That is an **average annual increase of 40.4%**.

In contrast, BMPC only has control of Distribution Rates, Retail Energy Rates and UFE and Line Loss. **These BMPC rates have increased only 8.3% over the last 5 years.** That is an **average annual increase of only 1.66%**.

Even though BMPC has no control over the costs incurred by transmission operators, these escalating costs are having a significantly negative impact on our members. Therefore, BMPC is currently involved in proceedings conducted by the Alberta Utility Commission (AUC) to ensure that transmission costs are being fairly allocated to our members. BMPC will keep our members apprised of any changes to the allocation of transmission charges that may arise from these AUC proceedings.

BMPC Enters a New Era of Competition - Repost

As previously announced, on February 18, 2020, after a lengthy legal battle, BMPC was awarded the right to serve anyone inside our Geographical Service Area who wishes to become a member. This award was made by Arbitrator Terrance McMahon, Q.C. in a proceeding held in Calgary and represents an historical step forward that will enable significant expansion of the BMPC membership base. Since that time BMPC has taken on numerous gas and oil, and commercial members.

Despite this award, FortisAlberta has taken the position that the award only applies to new services and therefore, they are refusing to allow their pre-existing customers to transfer their electrical services to the Blue Mountain Power Co-op.

As a result of FortisAlberta's position on transfers, Blue Mountain Power Co-op has filed a Notice of Arbitration on behalf of owners of 24 service sites who have requested transfer of their electric service from FortisAlberta to BMPC, including Community Halls, a golf course, several gas and oil sites and others. The list of customers wishing to transfer to BMPC is steadily growing.

Residential Rate Qualifications - A Reminder from Prior Communications

As communicated to membership in the past, BMPC introduced a new residential rate in 2017. Prior to that farm and residential rates were exactly the same. This was based on the concept that, if a farm and residential consumer used the same amount of power, they should pay the same rates, regardless of the what the power was being used for.

However, BMPC's competitor offers the same low residential rates to consumers inside and outside of towns despite the fact that providing power to consumers outside of town is far more expensive. BMPC was faced with losing a portion of our membership or offering residential rates. Ultimately the decision was made to compete by offering residential rates that are lower than farm rates.

Qualification for BMPC's Rural Residential Rate is dependant on certain conditions. A member must prove that they qualify with a signed application.

Therefore, in order to qualify for BMPC's Rural Residential Rate the following four conditions must be met and attested to:

- ◆ The service is a single family dwelling that is used for domestic purposes only.
- ◆ There are no revenues generated from any business activity on the property associated with the service.
- ◆ The property in question does not exceed 20 acres.
- ◆ There is not a farm fuel number associated with the property in question.

Office Now Closed Due to COVID-19 Restrictions

To prevent transmission of the virus between the employees and the members ***the BMPC office is closed to walk-in public.*** We encourage members to communicate remotely with office staff via phone at 310-**POWR** (7697) or email bmpc@bmpower.coop. We are communicating with many of our members by email. **This crisis underscores the need to provide us with your email** for vital communication such as this. Payment of bills can be made as follows:

- ◆ **Online**—Pay your bill online through your online banking website or by registering for our citizen self serve program (See back page for instructions)
- ◆ **Automatic Payments**—Set up automatic withdrawals from your bank account or credit card by filling out an authorization form.
- ◆ **Drop Box**—You can leave your payment in the secure drop box located by the east door of the temporary office of Blue Mountain Power Co-op. No cash is allowed in the drop box. The drop box is kept empty.
- ◆ **By Phone**—Call in with your credit card number and we can process your payment over the phone.
- ◆ **Mail**—Send your cheque to us by mail at: Box 1538 Rocky Mountain House, AB T4T 1B2

Sign up for Email Communication & Email Billing

BMPC is encouraging all members to sign up for email communication and email billing. Many important messages can be conveyed to our members via email such as Pre-planned Power Outages and vital communications such as closing of the office during the COVID-19 crisis. Members bills can also be sent via email and any member who chooses to sign up for Email Billing will save \$24 per year on their bill. If you would like to sign up for email communication and email billing, please send an email to bmpc@bmpower.coop requesting to be signed up. In your email include the wording "I authorize Blue Mountain Power Co-op to send email correspondence and utility bills".



Contact the Blue Mountain Power Co-op:

Phone: 310-POWR (7697)

E-mail: bmpc@bmpower.coop

Address: 4920 - 43 Street (Box 1538), Rocky Mountain House, AB, T4T 1B2