

# CFLs and Mercury Concerns

Much has been published recently about the benefits of compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs. By now, many people know that CFLs save money, use less electricity, and help promote energy efficiency. But, what if a bulb breaks or burns out? Is the amount of mercury in the bulb harmful? How do you clean it up safely? A quick check of the Environmental Protection Agency's web site shows that there are no serious concerns.



Also, check with your local waste management agency. If a disposal site is not available in your area, the EPA suggests placing the burned-out or broken bulb in a plastic bag, which should be sealed before being placed in the trash. Never send a CFL or other mercury-containing products to an incinerator.

## Clean-Up

According to the EPA, the greatest risk if a bulb breaks is getting cut from the glass shards. Research indicates that there is no immediate health risk to people if a broken bulb is cleaned up properly:

- Sweep up, do not vacuum, the glass fragments and particles.
- Place the broken pieces in a sealed plastic bag, and wipe the area with a damp paper towel to pick up any remaining stray shards or particles. Put the paper towel in the sealed plastic bag when you are finished.

- If weather permits, open the windows and ventilate the room.

## When They Burn Out

Like paint, batteries, thermostats, and other hazardous items, CFLs should be disposed of properly. The EPA is working with CFL manufacturers and retailers to expand disposal options. You can search for disposal options online by using your ZIP code at [www.earth911.com](http://www.earth911.com), calling (877) EARTH-911 or visiting [www.lamprecycle.org](http://www.lamprecycle.org).

## Still a Good Deal

The benefits of CFLs greatly outweigh the risks. "There is only a very small amount of mercury in CFLs, hardly enough to worry about, said Jim Stine, Senior Principal, Environmental Policy Department for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. "On average, the bulbs contain five milligrams of mercury. Compare that to 3,000 milligrams of mercury in older thermostats and 500 milligrams of mercury in a mercury thermometer." Switching from traditional light bulbs to CFLs is an effective, accessible change every American should make to save energy and help the environment.



*Did You Know . . .*

It costs approximately the same price to dry clean a business suit as it does to provide

electricity to the average home for one day?

***Electricity - A Real Bargain!!!***



Touchstone Energy®



Charles Mix Electric will be CLOSED Monday, September 3rd for LABOR DAY

Please call 1-800-208-8587 for outages or emergencies. Sorry, Internet tech support is not available at this number.

Regular hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) to resume September 4th.

# Charles Mix Electric Cooperative Connections

(USPS 018-877)

## Manager

Mark W. Mengenhauser  
mengenhauser@cme.coop

## CME Board of Directors

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**Directors**  
Douglas Koupal Kenneth Porter  
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*Regular meetings of the board of directors of this cooperative are held on the third Thursday of each month.*

## Office Staff

<b>Office Manager</b>	Wanda Weber
<b>Staff Assistant</b>	Greg Farke
<b>Member Services Advisor</b>	Russell Gall
<b>Accounting/Work Orders</b>	Carol Dvorak
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Web site: <http://www.cme.coop>

## Co-op News



### Greg Farke

#### Charles Mix Electric

## Straight Talk on Rates

*(Editor's Note: As manager Mark Mengenhauser is out on extended medical leave, the Board of Directors has named Greg Farke as "acting manager" until Mark's return.)*

The time has come to visit with each and every one of our members about a topic that is never popular: electric rate adjustments. After avoiding any increase in rates for over seven years, the bottom line is that Charles Mix Electric will need to raise our prices in the near future in order to keep providing you with the quality and reliability of service that you have come to expect from us.

While virtually all aspects of today's cost of living continue to rise, we pride ourselves on avoiding yearly price adjustments. CME's members have enjoyed a long period of rate stability. We only consider an adjustment when we really have to. We believe that reliable electric service at a reasonable price is something that you can count on and that we deliver on a daily basis. However, after analyzing our current situation by completing cost-of-service studies, financial forecasts, and consulting with RUS experts, we can no longer postpone the inevitable.

The need for the increase is based on several factors, including the cost of purchased power, weather trends, rising fuels costs, and the 2005 ice storm, to mention a few. Power suppliers are finding it more and more costly to generate electricity, due to federal government mandates and standards. This increases the cost of the power we buy to sell to you. The infamous ice storm brought damages and needed repairs totaling nearly \$1.5 million. While much of these costs were covered by FEMA funds, the remaining balance borne by the cooperative was still substantial.

As our members, we must ask each of you to share in these costs. Due to careful financial planning and management, we've been able to absorb a number of cost increases over the past several years. At this point, we just cannot absorb any more. Maintaining dependable service at the most affordable price possible remains the number-one goal of our business. To accomplish this goal, we must protect the integrity and financial stability of our cooperative. Our Board of Directors and staff have been working hard to come up with a fair and equitable plan to do this. We will continue to pass along information through this newsletter and through our web site, [www.cme.coop](http://www.cme.coop), as it becomes available.

No one likes a rate increase. We want to assure our members that we will continue to work hard to anticipate any potential issues that could escalate costs, and will work to minimize the impact of these issues whenever possible. Although we must raise our price to cover the costs of doing business, we are committed to ensuring this occurrence has the smallest possible impact on you. We will do our best to answer your questions, and will continue to deliver the reliable power you've come to know and expect.

**After  
seven  
years, an  
increase is  
inevitable.**

**Office Hours  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Open over noon hour  
Closed Saturday, Sunday &  
Holidays**

**Read meter 1st of each  
month. Bills due by 6th of  
month. Add \$2 to any bill  
paid after the 6th of the  
month.**