



## Co-op refunds \$71.4 million to members since 1940s

### Capital credits to be distributed this month

First Electric Cooperative began refunding capital credits to our members in the 1940s and has continued that tradition as financial conditions permit.

So far, more than \$71.4 million has been returned, and that amount will increase with the distribution of capital credits in mid-December.

For members whose capital credits are below a pre-determined amount, the refund will be reflected on their December bill. Those with refunds that exceed the minimum will receive a check in the mail.

“Capital credit refunds are one of the major differences between a not-for-profit electric cooperative, such as First Electric, and an investor-owned electric company,” said Don Crabbe, First Electric president and CEO.

Revenue collected that is not needed to cover the cost of provid-

ing service is assigned back to members based on the amount of electricity they used during the year.

The First Electric Cooperative Board of Directors reviews the co-op’s financial position each year and determines the amount of capital credits to refund.

The amount of money members receive is based on how much electricity they used during the year or years that are being refunded.

Members of the cooperative have a financial stake in the business. This is called member economic participation and is one of the seven principles on which this co-op was founded. It is important that every person who receives electricity from First Electric understands that they are members of the cooperative, not just consumers.

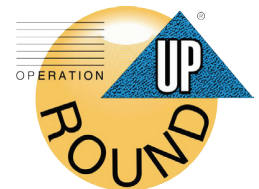
For more information, please call 800-489-7405.



First Electric Cooperative District Manager Karen Southerland presents Mayor Bill Cypert with the City of Cabot’s capital credits check in 2014.

### Supporting Operation Round-Up

Those who wish to donate their capital credit refund check to Operation Round-Up may endorse the check and bring it to any First Electric office or mail it to First Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 5018, Jacksonville, AR 72078.



## Merry Christmas! Happy New Year!

First Electric Cooperative’s offices will be closed Dec. 24-25 for Christmas and Jan. 1 for New Year’s Day. Crews will be on hand in case of an outage. Please call 888-827-3322 or use SmartHub to report an outage.



## DID YOU KNOW?

# Increases in winter bills can have variety of causes

Most homes experience their highest energy usage during the colder winter months. Below are a few causes of increased usage and possible solutions.

### Using electric-resistance/electric furnace.

Electric-resistance heating, commonly called an electric furnace, is not as efficient as a heat pump. Upgrading to a heat pump can lead to considerable energy savings. (See below for information on the co-op's home improvement loan program.)

### Heat pump's supplemental heat kicking in during extreme cold weather.

The supplemental heater in a heat pump assists the system during extreme cold weather when a home may lose heat faster than the heat pump can replace it. Electric heating elements turn on automatically to assist the heat pump. These heating elements use considerably more electricity; fortunately, the heat pump only will use them when absolutely necessary.

This supplemental heat also can be turned on manually by adjusting the heat pump's thermostat to "eheat," or emergency heat. Please note: doing this will stop your heat pump from operating in its normal, efficient manner.

If your heat pump is operating in "eheat" mode without due cause (outdoor temperatures above freezing, no drastic changes to thermostat), it is possible that your system is malfunctioning. You should contact a licensed heating and cooling professional and have it serviced immediately.

### Air escaping through ductwork or openings in building envelope.

Most homes have some degree of air leakage — both in the ductwork and building envelope. This can lead to conditioned air escaping into the crawl space, attic or great outdoors. First Electric has trained, certified marketing representatives who can measure the leakage during a diagnostic energy audit. Then, they will provide recommendations to correct the leakage.

### Insulation lacking or improperly installed.

The U.S. Department of Energy recommends homes in First Electric's service area have insulation installed with an R-value between 30 and 60 in the attic. Walls should be insulated with R-values between 13 and 15. This can be hard to judge. We recommend contacting a professional installer if your insulation seems lacking or the level is inconsistent throughout the attic.

### Water heater malfunctioning or leaking.

Occasionally, water heaters may malfunction. For example, an element could be stuck in the on position from a short. This could add up to \$11 a day to your electric bill. Also, a leaky tank, plumbing or faucets force your water heater to operate more than normal.

**If you have questions about your usage or would like information on an energy audit or home improvement loan, please call 800-489-7405.**

**Want to stay on top of your electric usage? That's easy with SmartHub! Just log in to SmartHub at [www.firstelectric.coop](http://www.firstelectric.coop) or on the free app.**



## Need new heat pump? Consider loan from co-op



With the co-op's Home Improvement Loan Program, you don't have to put off upgrading the energy efficiency of your home. The program allows qualified members to finance a heat pump and related installation at a competitive, fixed-interest rate.

In addition to a heat pump, members can finance energy-saving items, such as Marathon electric water heaters, duct systems, duct sealing, thermal improvements (insulation, caulking and ventilation), windows, doors and electric service upgrades.

First Electric's home improvement loans have many attractive features:

- Borrow \$500 to \$15,000
- Terms from 12 to 60 months
- Fixed-interest rate for the life of loan
- No pre-payment penalty
- Payments included on electric bill

For more information on applying and qualifying for a home improvement loan, please look under the "Products & Services" tab at [www.firstelectric.coop](http://www.firstelectric.coop) or call 800-489-7405 during regular business hours.