

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Carroll EMC reports consumers use record amount of power in January**

### *Suggestions to conserve energy during cold spells*

CARROLLTON, Ga. (February 5, 2010) – It's been cold in West Georgia this winter. Last weekend's low temperatures capped off a series of January cold snaps that drove consumers to use a record amount of electricity.

Member-owned electric service provider Carroll EMC set a new record for peak electricity demand in January. "We surpassed our previous record by 23 percent," said Carroll EMC President and CEO Chip Jakins. The previous record was set in August 2007.

Sustained low temperatures were the primary contributor to the energy use spike. January 2010 was 17 percent colder than normal, according to the National Weather Service. There were 11 continuous days, Jan. 2–12, when the average temperature did not rise above the freezing mark. On eight of those days, the mercury never climbed out of the 20s.

For energy consumers, the low temperatures will likely result in a higher utility bill arriving in the next few days. Space heating typically accounts for 50 to 60 percent of the typical winter energy bill.

"It took 16 percent more heat to warm homes and businesses in January than in December," said Jakins. "It took 26 percent more than in January 2009."

The new record reflects the additional need for heating as well as extra heat loss from water heating systems and other appliances. The new peak also includes energy used for cold weather occurrences like preventing or thawing frozen pipes.

## **Energy-saving tips**

Carroll EMC's customer service representatives offer these tips to help consumers fight energy bill fluctuations caused by temperature extremes:

- Keep your thermostat at 68 degrees. Each degree you lower the thermostat saves three to five percent.
- Lower the water heater to 120 degrees and insulate all hot water pipes.
- Install a programmable thermostat to lower the temperature when you're sleeping or away.
- Use an electric space heater for spot heating and turn the main thermostat down.
- Run ceiling fans on reverse at the lowest speed to move warmer air at the ceiling down toward the living space.
- Caulk and weather strip openings such as cracks in walls, around windows, and where doors do not fit or close properly.
- Check insulation levels in the attic, crawlspace and basement. Add more if needed.
- Assure the fireplace damper is closed when not in use.
- Sign up for your utility's levelized billing program. Levelized billing allows established customers with good credit to pay approximately the same amount on their energy bill each month. This spreads a consumer's total energy payments equally over the entire year.

To optimize management of their energy costs, Carroll EMC members can now monitor their daily electricity consumption through a free online power-awareness program at [www.myusage.com](http://www.myusage.com). "Members report using less energy when they monitor it daily rather than waiting to see their total usage on a monthly bill," said Susan Lester, vice president of member services. Carroll EMC also offers prepay, a self-managed plan that is popular with budget-conscious customers.

Carroll EMC is a member-owned cooperative providing electricity to more than 49,000 homes and businesses. The co-op serves members in Carroll, Haralson, Heard, Paulding, Polk, Troup and Floyd counties. For more information about Carroll EMC, visit the cooperative's Web site at [www.cemc.com](http://www.cemc.com).

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