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**Santee Electric
Cooperative News**
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IT HAS BEEN a while since I had to wear it, but I need to put my old electrical engineer's hat back on to write this



particular column. Forgive me if it's a bit technical, but there is no other way to express how much we need your help.

Although Santee Electric bills nearly 100 percent of its membership solely on energy usage (measured in kilowatt-

hours or kWh), we actually pay our own bill based on two components. In case any of you did not know, Santee Electric Cooperative (SEC) does not generate electricity. Rather, we purchase it on a wholesale basis and then distribute it to nearly 45,000 meters in four counties.

Now, back to those two components. Like all of you, we must pay for every kWh of energy that is used by our members for the month. However, unlike the great majority of our membership, we also pay a demand charge—the second component. Demand (measured in kilowatts or kW) is a measure of the electrical burden placed on the grid at a given moment in time.

Most of the time, these two components—demand and energy—go hand in hand. In a particularly cold month (like January usually is, for example), there will typically be above-average energy usage and a particularly large peak. When these two complement each other, it helps SEC to keep its per-unit costs down. For example, when January causes a high-demand charge, there are usually a lot of kWh sold, over which to spread this cost. Likewise, when mild weather in April leads to lower energy sales, it's all right, because the demand charge is also relatively small.

But it doesn't always work out this way. This past January yielded the

highest per-unit cost SEC has ever paid for electricity. The cause of this was an extremely mild month (lots of days with temperatures in the 70s) with the exception of one very cold weekend (January 7-9 yielded lows in the teens).

We, here at SEC, want to do all we can to help you use less energy, and we have proved this time and again with information and programs we offer to our membership. Members can find money-saving information on our website santee.org, by following our social media posts or by stopping by our office for a *101 Low-Cost, No-Cost Energy Tip* brochure. We also offer the Help My House program which helps members shape up their homes for energy savings and finance the cost on their power bill.

Now, however, we need your help. The Beat the Peak program we are introducing this month is critical to making sure we don't have another month like January, 2017. Low energy sales are fine, but we have to do something—as a team—to lower that demand charge as well.

Please take the time to read the ways that you can help your Cooperative out with this new program. Together, you can make a huge difference in the demand charge we all pay. Of course, since you OWN this cooperative, a lower demand charge and a lower overall cost mean more coming back to you as capital credits. Thank you very much for your time and attention this month, and thank you in advance for any support you can lend to help us Beat the Peak!

Robert G. Ardis III
President and Chief Executive Officer