

OWEN ELECTRIC CONNECTION

September 2024 • Owen Electric • A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

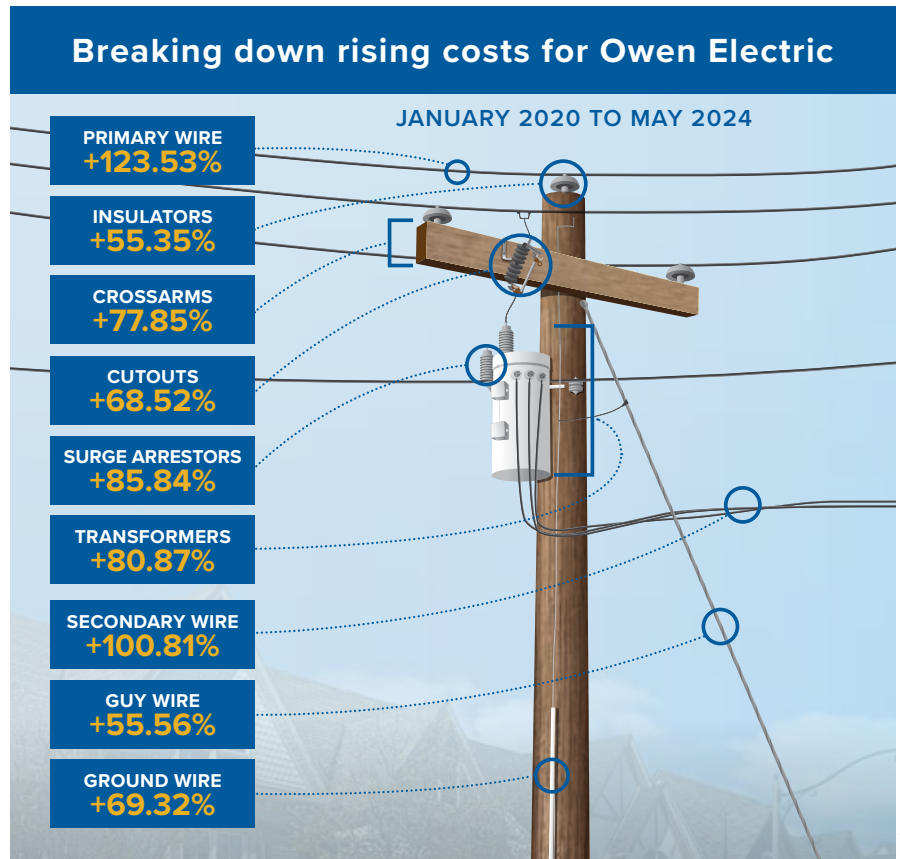
The ripple effects of inflation

From food to essential infrastructure

Inflation isn't just a buzzword—its impact extends far beyond financial markets, touching everyday essentials like food and critical infrastructure components. As consumers face rising prices at the grocery store, Owen Electric faces similar challenges in maintaining and upgrading the vital systems that power our communities.

The most immediate impact of inflation is felt at the dinner table. Rising costs in agriculture, transportation and labor push up the prices of food staples. From grains to meats, consumers are seeing higher grocery bills, which in turn can strain household budgets and alter spending habits.

Beyond the kitchen, inflation's effects permeate essential infrastructure. Take, for instance, the components required to build our system—transformers, poles, crossarms and wire—just to name a few. These are the building blocks of reliable electricity distribution, critical to powering homes and supporting industries that help keep our local economy churning. However, as inflation drives up the cost of raw materials like aluminum, steel and timber, manufacturers face higher production costs. This, in turn, leads to increased prices for Owen Electric.



As your not-for-profit cooperative, Owen Electric is tasked with ensuring safe, reliable and affordable electricity to our members, and it's a delicate balancing act to manage rising operational costs while maintaining rates. We also must factor in the need to invest in upgrading aging infrastructure, making

strategic planning and financial management more important than ever.

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President and CEO
Michael Cobb



A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Owen Electric sponsors students on Washington Youth Tour

Owen Electric sponsored three rising seniors in June on the Kentucky Electric Cooperatives Washington Youth Tour, a program that enriches students' understanding of American history and civic engagement while investing in our community's young leaders.

Quentin Ellis from Randall K. Cooper High School, Ariana Hager from Great Crossing High School and Harper Mann from Williamstown Independent High School were part of the 56-member student delegation from Kentucky, joining more than 1,800 other students from electric cooperatives across the country. As part of the all-expenses-paid trip, students visited national memorials, museums and historic sites like Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, George Washington's Mount Vernon and Arlington National Cemetery, where Kentucky's delegation laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

"While going through and seeing the sights of Washington, D.C., I was constantly reminded of the powerful presence that the memorials and monuments had," says Ellis. "This presence carried with it an immense feeling of respect and inspiration, something that couldn't be replicated with seeing a photo or hearing a story—something only experienced by seeing them firsthand."

Students named Sen. Mitch McConnell as the first honorary Kentucky youth tour delegate for his service to the state and support of electric cooperatives. Mason Lovell, Kentucky's Youth Leadership Council delegate, presented the senator with a Kentucky youth tour pin to commemorate the special honor.

Students also toured the U.S. Capitol and met with several congressional staff members while on the Hill. "Getting the opportunity to travel to our nation's capital with Owen Electric



Ariana Hager, left, tours George Washington's Mount Vernon.



Quentin Ellis, second from right, cheers for his home state of Kentucky at NRECA's Youth Night event with more than 1,800 delegates from across the country in attendance.

was an amazing, eye-opening experience that I will definitely never forget," Mann says. "It was a small stepping stone that I feel will lead me to bigger and better things in the future."

Coordinated by Kentucky Electric Cooperatives, the Washington Youth Tour gives students the unique opportunity to witness our government in action. "By exploring our nation's capital firsthand, students gain not only knowledge of history, but also a sense of their own potential to lead and innovate in the world around them," says Mallory Wafzig, manager of cooperative outreach and youth tour director.

"I had an amazing time, learned new things and met new people," says Hager. "Some of us came out of our comfort zone, which was a big step in our lives."

Kentucky's co-ops have been sending rising high school seniors on the Washington Youth Tour since 1972. "We are investing in our community's future leaders by equipping them with experiences that will inspire their growth and ignite their passion for making a positive impact in our community, state and nation," says Owen Electric President and CEO Michael Cobb.



Harper Mann, center, and friends pose for a picture at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. Photos: Tim Webb

Be resilient

September is National Preparedness Month

National Preparedness Month is an opportune time to assess your family's readiness in the face of potential emergencies. It's a reminder for households to assess risks, create robust emergency plans and cultivate a proactive preparedness mindset.

Risk assessment and planning

Every home and its surroundings present unique vulnerabilities. Conduct a thorough assessment of potential risks such as natural disasters like flooding, local hazards, such industrial accidents, and human-made threats like burglaries and cyber attacks. Use this assessment to tailor an emergency plan specific to your household's needs. Your plan should include:

- **Evacuation routes:** Identify primary and alternative routes to evacuate safely from your home in case of emergency. Practice these routes with your family members.
- **Communication strategies:** Establish a communication plan to stay in touch with family members during emergencies when regular channels might be disrupted. Include out-of-town contacts and designate a meeting place.
- **Emergency supplies:** Prepare a well-stocked emergency kit containing essentials such as water, non-perishable food, medications, first aid supplies, flashlights, batteries and important documents.

Home safety measures

Ensure your home is equipped with safety features that can mitigate risks during emergencies:

- **Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors:** Regularly check and maintain these devices to alert you to fire or gas hazards.
- **Home security systems:** Invest in reliable security systems that include alarms, motion detectors and surveillance cameras to protect against intrusions.



DAVID PEREIRA/ADOBESTOCK

- **Communication tools:** Have a weather radio available. If it's not a crank-operated radio, be sure to set aside some extra batteries to power it. Download the OEC Mobile app—it's the quickest and easiest way to report a power outage.

Continuous education and training

Stay informed and prepared by participating in relevant training and educational programs:

- **CPR and first aid:** Learn basic first aid techniques and CPR to provide immediate assistance in medical emergencies.
- **Emergency response training:** Attend workshops or courses offered by local emergency management agencies to learn how to respond effectively to various crises.

Insurance and financial preparedness

Review your insurance policies to ensure adequate coverage for potential hazards such as flooding or fire. Keep copies of important documents, like

insurance policies, identification and medical records, in a waterproof and fireproof container or store digital copies securely.

Community engagement

Engage with your neighbors to enhance overall preparedness:

- **Neighborhood watch programs:** Participate in or establish a neighborhood watch program to monitor suspicious activities and promote safety awareness.
- **Mutual assistance agreements:** Form alliances with nearby households to support each other during emergencies, such as sharing resources or assisting with evacuation.

National Preparedness Month is a great time for you to take proactive steps toward safeguarding your family, home, and community. By planning ahead, you can significantly enhance your household's resilience and readiness for unforeseen events.

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We realize that for our members, the effects of inflation trickle directly to them. Higher electricity costs translate into higher monthly bills, compounding the financial strain our members may already be experiencing. As we navigate these uncertain economic times, rest assured that Owen Electric works to mitigate the impacts of

inflation on our members.

We're rising to the challenge to manage the immediate price increases while ensuring sustainability and resilience in our long-term objectives. In doing so, we are better prepared to weather this evolving economic landscape and safeguard the quality of service we provide our members.



ARE YOU PREPARED FOR A POWER OUTAGE?

1

CHARGE YOUR CELLPHONE

Charge portable power banks, if you have them.

2

HAVE A FLASHLIGHT AVAILABLE

Keep additional, fresh batteries on-hand.

3

PACK AN EMERGENCY KIT

It should contain food, water and supplies for a minimum of 72 hours; make sure items are not expired.

4

STAY INFORMED

Follow local stations on your phone or using a weather radio to stay up to date on alerts.

REPORT OUTAGES:

OEC MOBILE APP OR (800) 372-7612

Owen Electric will be closed in observance of the Labor Day holiday, Monday, September 2. All online services will be available. Report power outages using the OEC Mobile app, online account portal or by calling (800) 372-7612.

