

Costs raise utility bills

POWER, from Page 1

Blake said the fuel adjustment cost for last year was a monthly average of \$38 per megawatt. He said the city pays the first \$28 as part of the base rate.

Pickman said Sunflower has raised the peak price to \$55 and the off-peak to \$25. He said the city has never paid more than \$18 for the off peak power. The city pays \$33 per megawatt for the first four from Sunflower, and \$28 of that cost is covered in the city base utility rate charged to the customer.

He said consumer's bills will be going up because of the fuel adjustment clause, which allows increases in power costs to be passed along on bills.

For May the total cost for fuel adjustment was \$52,004. The total is divided among the customers based on the kilowatts used at a rate of .01657 cents per kilo watt. A residential utility customer (2,181 accounts) in Goodland paid an average of \$8.36 on their utility bill in June. A commercial customer (523 accounts) paid an average of \$56.97 in fuel adjustment. The city and library accounts paid \$3,970 in fuel adjustment for the 88 accounts (\$45.11 average cost).

The fuel adjustment changes

monthly depending on the costs from Sunflower and from the cost of the city power plant generation.

Pickman said he and Blake, attended a meeting last Tuesday with the Kansas Municipal Electric Association to see if it was possible to contract for power from the eastern half of the state.

"There will be no power from the eastern half of state," Pickman said. "We were told the plants have doubled the rates in that area. The price started off at \$65, but jumped to \$130 a megawatt. We do not have an option but to take it at the market price.

"We are at the mercy of the transmission grid. Even if we can buy power we cannot get it delivered. This time of year is the worst because of the higher demand on the system."

The fuel adjustment cost has been a pass-through item on customer bills for over three years, and is usually a small amount. However, in the spring last year, the city had a spike in the costs which raised the average citizen's bill by over \$10 a month when the Sunflower power plant had to be taken off line for repairs which took longer than anticipated.

To figure the charge, the total monthly cost of generating power

— whether generated by the city or purchased — is divided among all city utility customers based on the kilowatts used, Pickman said.

"We have been telling the commissioners the costs were going up because we do not want people to be surprised," he said. "This may last for the summer, or it may last into the winter. We have been told the prices will not go down like they have in the past when the summer months are gone.

"We are always trying to find a way to buy cheaper power, but when it looks like we have a way to buy it, we run into the fact we have to use Sunflower's transmission lines. If they say they cannot handle the power, we can't get it here."

Pickman said unless there is a new transmission line built nearer to Goodland, there is little prospect that the situation will change in the future.

"The closest transmission line other than Sunflower is east of Colby," he said. "It would cost over \$30 million to build a line from Goodland to connect with that line.

"The problem is if we made that investment and then the power company finds a way to sell the power at a higher profit, we might be out in the cold again."



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Thunderstorms bring rain, hail

STORMS, from Page 1

water running off the fields, but not across the highway.

City police reported hail all across the city, but it remained small and did not last more than 10 minutes. There was a burst of hail at the beginning and then it hailed again about 20 minutes later. The storm had passed over the city by 8:35 p.m.

There were reports of quarter-sized hail in Greeley County and there were flood warnings in Greeley and Wallace counties.

Wednesday, a light rain started about 8 p.m., and there were reports of tree limbs down at 8th and Main and a couple of other locations. The National Weather Service reported winds about 25 mph with gusts to 45 mph. At 9:50 p.m. a citizen reported arcing power lines at Mid-

America Trailer Park. Police and sheriff's cars went to the scene and officers found that the pole was on fire.

About 10 p.m. there was a big flash and an explosion from the transformer on the pole. Two fire trucks responded, but they waited for the city utility crew to arrive before tackling the fire.

By the time the city bucket truck arrived, the fire was burning through the top of the pole. As the crew prepared to use the bucket to reach the fire, it broke through and the top of the pole fell over, scattering the crowd.

A few minutes later, a city utility man went up in the bucket and with a chemical fire extinguisher put out the fire on the pole and the top piece hanging down. At 10:30 p.m. the city crew was planning to replace the pole, and expected it to take sev-

eral hours.

Lights were out at the I-70 interchange, at Total and at Mid-America for about two hours.

The weather service reported .89 of an inch in Goodland Tuesday, and .03 for Wednesday, which is 2.11 inches for the month and brings the total for the year to 7.29. Last year the monthly total was 4.24 inches and there was 10.35 inches for the year to date total.

The monthly total of 2.11 is ahead of the normal 1.76 for this time of year, but the total for the year, 7.29, is 1.4 below the normal of 8.80 inches.

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