

By TRAVIS RUIZ • Guymon Daily Herald Area energy provider Tri-County Electric says its customers will see a rate increase beginning in January.

Area residents will soon see an increase to their electric bills, according to local energy provider Tri-County Electric.

The Hooker, Okla. based energy provider says the increase is only to the energy charge and not the service availability charge.

“The average increase will be \$9.66 for every 1,000 kilowatt-hours a member consumes,” explained Zac Perkins, Manager of Member Relations. “The actual change depends on an individual’s usage patterns.”

As for the reason for the price increase, Tri-County Electric CEO Jack Perkins explained that it is to improve the cooperative’s equity.

“By improving its equity, the cooperative will be in a better financial position to serve you quality, reliable electric service,” Jack Perkins explained.

Prior to the rate change in 2009, Tri-County Electric says it had not increased base rates for members in the cooperative’s original service territory for nine years. Rates are typically designed to last three to five years.

“The base retail rates for service provided to members who were acquired from Southwestern Public Service (SPS) dba Xcel Energy in 2006 had not been changed for 27 years prior to our 2009 change,” Perkins said.

Across the country, electric rates are increasing. Earlier this week, Xcel Energy announced it would be going before a Texas state committee to raise its base rate. The City of Amarillo, Texas, estimated the rate increase would result in a 17 percent increase in the summer and up to 24 percent in the winter.

Tri-County Electric says it is continually working to fight rising costs. Already, the cooperative has planned a hiring freeze for 2011 and it does not plan to replace any vehicles in its fleet. Additionally, the cooperative is investing in new smart technology to cut costs.