



CENTRAL ELECTRIC

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Peak Project Expands to Black Butte Ranch, Free Hot Water Heater Timers Available to First 150 Requestors

REDMOND, Ore. – Central Electric Cooperative (CEC) expanded its Peak Project this week to include its 1,300 members in Black Butte Ranch. The pilot program provides water heater timers free of charge to reduce power consumption during peak-demand periods. The co-op is expanding the program's geographic reach in an effort to enroll 450 participants by Jan. 31, 2011.

Since The Peak Project's launch early this year, approximately 300 of the timers have been installed in CEC member homes in Camp Sherman and near Sisters in the Tollgate, Buck Run and Crossroads subdivisions. The collaborative effort by CEC and the Bonneville Power Administration is determining the potential for reducing electricity consumption during the peak electricity demand period of 5 a.m. to 9 a.m.

"We have had an extremely low number of inconveniences expressed by the program participants," said Jeff Beaman, CEC member services director. "Water heaters serve as an energy storage device that still can deliver a number of hot showers when people are getting up in the morning without the need to reheat the water immediately. That takes place at 10 a.m. when the timer turns the heater back on after most people have left the house to go about their activities."

The timers are preset for the peak hours, but owners can re-program them to fit their schedule or hit an over-ride button that turns off the timer for 24 hours in the event of unique circumstances such as hosting visitors.

"We have some members who've reprogrammed the timers to increase the number of off-hours, some as much as tripling or quadrupling the off-time, with no reports of inconvenience or discomfort," said Beaman. "Members have told us they really value the ability to manage the timer settings."

CEC sent letters to all Black Butte Ranch residential members on Oct. 7, inviting their participation and providing an application. Interested members also can enroll by calling Central Electric in Sisters, 541-549-5698, or Redmond, 541-548-2144. The timer becomes the members' property. They are installed by a licensed electrician and the program covers all installation and permitting costs.

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Once the program enrolls 450 participants, BPA and CEC will have the sample size needed to properly estimate program benefits on a larger scale. The timers help the utility and members save money by demanding less power during peak periods when it is most expensive. There may be an added benefit of deferring the need to invest large sums of money to increase the capacity of electricity delivery systems to levels that are required for a small number of hours each day.

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