Residential bills to climb
Credits expected to end midyear

Reserve funds that have fully offset the 2014 rate increase for residential members are expected to end later this year, eliminating a credit on Kenergy bills that residential member-owners have received since Feb. 1, 2014.

That’s when the Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC) adjusted the revenue and rates of Big Rivers Electric Corp. — Kenergy’s wholesale energy supplier — to reflect the departure from Big Rivers’ system of the Century Aluminum smelter in Sebree.

The Sebree smelter stopped purchasing power from Big Rivers on Jan. 31, 2014, the effective date of a contract allowing the smelter to buy electricity on the open market.

In its ruling, the PSC allowed Big Rivers to use reserve funds to offset the increase that was passed through to Kenergy members. When the credit no longer pays for the increase, members’ bills are expected to raise about 20 percent.

“We’re pleased this reserve fund was available to absorb the rate increase for our residential class for more than two years,” said Jeff Hohn, Kenergy’s President and CEO. “Although the credit is expected to remain several more months, we want our members to know now the credit will end later this year so they can budget for higher bills.”

Big Rivers’ reserve funds were established in 2009 as part of a complex transaction under which the utility regained operating control of its power plants, which had been leased to a third party when Big Rivers went through a bankruptcy proceeding in the mid-1990s. The funds were established for the purpose of reducing the impact of fuel and environmental cost increases.

The reserve funds’ lifespan is based on members’ electric usage. The less electricity members use, for example, the longer the credit will last. If winter weather is prolonged and severe, the need for electricity will increase and the funds will deplete sooner.
To some, Patsy Mayfield probably seems superhuman. For one thing, Patsy drove a school bus for 30 years — and loved it. That, alone, should be enough, but there’s more. She has served 16 years on the Whitesville City Commission, recently becoming mayor pro tem.

Last — but certainly not least — she has served as a volunteer on the Whitesville Fire Department for 19 years. She is believed to be Daviess County’s longest serving female firefighter.

Between November 2014 and October 2015, she responded to 217 calls. That represents 83 percent of all calls during those months.

Patsy’s decades of professional driving experience serves the department well. She often drives the pumper and operates it once she reaches the site.

Patsy is Whitesville’s oldest volunteer firefighter. The squad has an average age of 28.

“I wear out quicker,” Patsy said of keeping up with the team, “but I can do it.”

Her husband, Ronnie Mayfield, 66, has been the station’s fire chief 34 years. He couldn’t be more proud.

Ronnie has watched Patsy crawl into a burning building with flames shooting out over her head. “She does the same things we do,” he said.

Firefighting takes courage and a burden to serve, Patsy said. Between required training and runs, Whitesville firefighters volunteer up to 15 hours a week. All of it is unpaid, of course.

Recruits are harder to come by these days, Ronnie said. “Seems like no one wants to commit to anything anymore.”

It seems more people would be willing, especially considering residents in southeast Daviess County and part of Ohio County pay cheaper insurance premiums thanks to this volunteer squad and the people who selflessly give their time to keep it going.

“Once (firefighting) gets in your blood, it’s hard to get it out,” Ronnie said.

Kentucky relies heavily on volunteer fire departments to save lives and protect property. According to the Kentucky Fire Commission, the state has 20,186 firefighters. Of those, 15,658 are unpaid volunteers.

According to the Kentucky Fire Commission, the average age of the state’s volunteer firefighters is 39. Of 20,186 firefighters statewide, only 935 are women.
IN THE KITCHEN

Lemon Pie
*By Patsy Mayfield*

1 8-inch crumb crust
1 can of Eagle Brand sweetened condensed milk
Lemon juice from two lemons
2 egg yolks

Combine sweetened milk, lemon juice. Blend in egg yolks. Turn into cooked, cooled crust.

**Meringue:** 2 egg whites, ¼ tsp Cream of Tartar, ¼ c sugar
Beat the egg whites with cream of tartar until soft peaks form. Blend in sugar.
Bake in slow oven (325 degree) for 12 to 15 minutes or until meringue is golden brown.

JOIN THE TEAM, BECOME A VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER

For 30 years, Patsy Mayfield drove a school bus for Daviess County Public Schools. Now retired from the school system, she puts those skills to use driving the pumper for the Whitesville Fire Department.

Current members of the Whitesville Fire Department are Jansen Tierney, front row, left; Buddy Mattingly; Patsy Mayfield; Jordan Kreisle; Barry Isbill; Chad Underhill, second row, left; Derek Mills; Eric Stone; Jacob Russelburg; Jason Bickett; Scott Howard, third row, left; Jessy Nash, Brandon Wright and Ethan Boehmann; and Ronnie Mayfield, back row. Not pictured are Wesley Howard, Jonathan Mills and Joshua Morris.

Only 935 Kentucky women serve as firefighters, putting Patsy in an elite group.

Four volunteer fire departments closed in Kentucky last year. Funding and manpower remain troublesome for some.

“Kentucky is made up of a majority of volunteer fire departments because cities and counties can’t afford a full-time fire department,” said Ronnie Day, executive director of the Kentucky Fire Commission. “…When someone has a problem they can’t fix and don’t know who to call, they contact the fire department.”
Winter often brings outages. The Kentucky Public Service Commission reminds residents: Only call once to report an outage. Extra calls tie up critical phone lines.

Go to kenergycorp.com to learn about rebates on refrigerators, washing machines and more.

[ HENDERSON, KY ]

Reading your new meter

Crews have installed new meters throughout the service area. Thank you for your patience while we continue work on this important project, which will improve your service and reliability.

As with any new device or program, members ask questions. The most common has been: How do I read my new meter?

Your new meter displays two screens (see examples below). There’s a six-second time lapse between screens. Wait for the KWH screen. KWH stands for kilowatt-hour. Kenergy figures your bill by how many kilowatt-hours you use each month.

When KWH appears, the numbers to the right represent your meter reading. Please disregard the other screen — that starts with a G55. It’s part of the meter manufacturer’s display settings and does not pertain to your meter reading.

Remember to close your fireplace damper (unless a fire is burning). Keeping the damper open is like leaving a window wide open during the winter, allowing warm air to escape through the chimney.