

Weekly New Summary for Sunday, January 5, 2025.

Cape Hatteras Electric Cooperative recently concluded a cost-of-service study. This study is conducted periodically to ensure that electricity rates are sufficient to recover the cooperative's power costs and operating expenses. The cost-of-service study also ensures that rates are allocated equitably between residential and commercial members. The cooperative's rate consultant, along with management, reviewed the results of the study and presented the findings to the cooperative Board of Directors in October. With continued pressures on wholesale power cost and inflation of equipment and material prices, the study revealed it necessary to implement an average rate increase of 6.37% beginning May 1, 2025, states a media release.

The overall average rate increase is 9.79%.

However, the cooperative is instituting a wholesale power cost adjustment credit making the effective change to member bills an average of 6.37%. This wholesale power cost adjustment credit will remain in place for 12 months and will be reevaluated prior to May 1, 2026. The credit will show as a separate line item on a member's bill.

Of the 6.37% increase, 3.13% is the result of projected wholesale power cost increases. The remaining 3.24% can be attributed to operations and administrative expenses, as well as the increase in depreciation and interest expense associated with nearly \$27 million in capital investments over the next five years.

Cape Hatteras Electric has held rates at the current level since 2018.

In terms of dollar amounts, a residential account that uses 1,000kWh, with a current monthly bill of \$141.70, will see an increase of \$8.50, bringing the bill to \$150.20. Included is an increase in the basic monthly service charge, which is a component of member bills that covers some of the fixed costs of providing electricity to our members, including cooperative infrastructure necessary for power to reach homes and communities.

The residential monthly service charge will increase from \$25 to \$30. The commercial monthly service charge will increase from \$30 to \$40.

In addition to the cooperative's traditional residential and commercial rates, several new voluntary rates will be available to members, including a residential time-of-use rate and residential plus electric vehicle rate. A full list of the new rate schedules is available at chec.coop/rates.

Partial reopening of Buxton seashore. The Dare County Department of Health & Human Services, after consultation with Cape Hatteras National Seashore, has issued an updated public health advisory for the Seashore's Buxton Beach Access, also known as the Buxton Formerly Used Defense Site.

Following a recent interim response action by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, about two-tenths-of-a-mile section of beach has been reopened. The barriers to vehicles for the parking lots at the old lighthouse location have been removed.

The decision to revert to the original three-tenths-of-a-mile closure area was made after factoring in the amount of contaminated soil and water removed by the Corps and the prolonged period of time between the last report of apparent petroleum sheens or odors in the area.

Due to the likelihood of contaminated soil and water still present in the beach adjacent to the Buxton site, the Seashore will continue to monitor and keep this three-tenths-of-mile section of beach closed to the public.

Changes in Buxton Food Pantry. On January 1, new management started overseeing the Cape Hatteras Food Pantry in Buxton. For 34 years, the Cape Hatteras Food Pantry has been under the care of the Cape Hatteras United Methodist Men. Ray and Claire Schaaf have worked for two decades to keep the food pantry supplied and available for residents. They are retiring with thanks from all.

As a result, a new food pantry partnership is now in place with Hatteras Island Meals leading the way. Cathy Diemer is the new director for the food pantry.

Hatteras Island Meals and the Cape Hatteras Food Pantry remain separate entities and have separate budgets. Donations are still needed for both organizations.

The Saving Lives Task Force is seeking community input on how best to use Dare County's share of North Carolina Opioid Settlement funds for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, states a media release.

As part of a national historic settlement won against opioid companies for their role in creating and fueling the opioid epidemic, North Carolina is receiving \$1.5 billion for state and local governments to address the epidemic from 2022 through 2038. Dare County is slated to receive \$6,437,093 of the state allocation over that same period, with the monies being distributed in annual installments.

The funds will bring relief to communities impacted by opioids and be used to support treatment, recovery, harm reduction, and other life-saving programs and services in communities throughout the state.

The Dare County Board of Commissioners has charged the Saving Lives Task Force with working with community partners to propose a plan for spending these funds. Each year a plan is submitted to the board for approval.

Local governments receiving funds must adopt a resolution each fiscal year identifying the specific strategies they intend to fund and stating the amount dedicated to each strategy over a stated period of time.

To date, the opioid settlement funds in Dare County have been put toward a number of initiatives. These include the funding of a peer support specialist position and a recovery court case manager; community distribution of naloxone and fentanyl test strips; support services and treatment for locally incarcerated individuals; and linkage to care, which can include funding an individual's admission into a treatment facility, providing transportation or assistance with housing.

Individuals interested in participating in the survey can visit, [surveymonkey dot com slash r slash OSF dash 2025 dash 2026](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OSF2025-2026). The survey will close at 5 o'clock, Wednesday, January 15, 2025

Foster parent training starts in February. Make a difference in the life of a child and become a foster parent!

Register for classes beginning in February.

Contact Brittany Canter for information on the February foster parent training by calling 252.475.5062 or emailing [Brittany dot canter at darenc.gov](mailto:Brittany@canter.darenc.gov).

The department licenses families all over Dare County and will consider those in surrounding counties as well, including families with children of their own and without, single parent households and two parent households, working parents and stay-at-home parents.

Attending the classes does not automatically make you a foster parent; there are several other requirements that the agency will assist you with throughout the licensing process. In addition to the requirements being fulfilled, there is also an approval process before licenses are issued.

Upcoming this week. On Wednesday evening, January 8, at 6 o'clock, the Annual Meeting of the Hatteras Village Civic Association starts with dinner and then election of Board members. The dinner and meeting takes place at the Hatteras Village Civic Center.

On Thursday evening, January 9, a free community dinner in Avon is offered at St. John United Methodist Church, 40336 McMullen Road. Serving starts at 5 o'clock and goes to 6:15. Come out and break bread and enjoy a home-cooked meal!

Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, is celebrated annually on January 9. It is a day dedicated to recognizing local law enforcement officers and expressing gratitude for their service, sacrifice and ongoing commitment to protecting the communities they serve. This Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, Dare County and Radio Hatteras extend heartfelt appreciation to the dedicated men and women and K9 units of the Dare County Sheriff's Office, as well as the North Carolina State Highway Patrol, the Cape Hatteras National Seashore law officers, and other law enforcement agencies serving Hatteras Island and the Outer Banks communities.

Now stay safe out there. It's a cold weather week coming up. This is Radio Hatteras.