



November 2023



Are you interested in an Electric Vehicle (EV)?



South Central Electric's all-electric 2018 Chevy Bolt.

We've learned a lot about EV's over the past four years with our all-electric 2018 Chevy Bolt. Over that time the number of available models to choose from has greatly increased with more models on the way. In the near future the increased number of options could make owning an EV an enticing purchase. We'll share what we've learned over the past four years about our EV experience.

An EV is not a one for one replacement of an internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle. That's probably pretty easy to admit too. But, knowing the limits of your EV are very important. Are you going to use it for more than a daily commuter? Driving an EV longer distances takes planning. How far are you traveling (plan for there and back)? Are there reliable charging stations along the route if needed? What's the weather (it affects range)? These questions don't often come up driving an ICE vehicle.

Charging has become an area of concern with electric vehicles, but it doesn't have to be. The fact is you can charge your vehicle every night at home and start each day with a "full tank." It is only on the few occasions you take the EV on longer distance trips that you may have to worry about charging anywhere but at home. If your EV is a secondary vehicle used for commuting and local travel, you may never charge outside your

home. You could plan on 130 miles of range in the winter and over 200 other months of the year. This is in general. Some cars can go farther, others might be a little shorter. This usually meets most people's everyday driving needs. For home charging you should check with your electrician to see how much it would cost to put a 50-amp 240V outlet in your garage or charging location before purchasing an EV. Do this before the purchase or you could be facing an unexpected surprise expense after it's too late.



The displays in electric vehicles inform drivers of the status of the battery and estimated driving range along with other information on the car's performance.

The electric vehicle brought about a new term "range anxiety". Range anxiety is the fear you will run out of energy in the EV's batteries before reaching a charger.

Commonly referred to as running out of gas in a traditional vehicle. Although with an EV you can't bring a gas can for an easy fix. The driving range of EV's varies by vehicle, weather (temperature and wind) and driving habits. This is no different than a gas vehicle. On a cold Minnesota winter day, you could lose 30 to 50% of your typical range. Just like running the AC and heat in your home, running the heating and cooling in an EV will use energy from your batteries leaving less for running the electric motor. There is no need to panic though. Your vehicle will tell you the estimated range and updates as you drive. As mentioned before, planning is very important with an EV. Know what limitations you might have on any given day.

Electric vehicles can be inexpensive to operate. How many miles you will get out of each kWh you put into the battery varies on each vehicle model just like the gas mileage estimates on gas vehicles. We have found that our Bolt cost about \$0.80 per 25 miles of driving. If you have a car getting 25 MPG the cost would be about \$3.70 to travel the same distance.

Electric vehicles require little maintenance. There are no oil changes.

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The only regular maintenance is rotating the tires. Since owning our 2018 Chevy Bolt the only maintenance has been to rotate the tires. The battery pack was recalled and replaced by General Motors. We had only one item that had to be repaired. The blind spot sensor stopped working on the driver's side. There have been a couple of trips to the dealership for software updates mostly due to the battery issues before the battery pack was replaced.

Winter driving has been a challenge from our experience. The Chevy Bolt has front wheel drive and is heavy which should be beneficial. But it sits low to the ground and the tires are not good for winter driving. I have heard others voice concerns even with all-wheel drive Tesla's due to the factory tires.

Overall, the experience with our all-electric Chevy Bolt has been good. It works well traveling within our service territory. It is not a complete replacement for a gas vehicle. Knowing its limitations is important. Many families own more than one vehicle, one of them being an EV could be a good option. Not discussed in this story are hybrid vehicles. You get the long range of a gas vehicle and improved gas mileage due to the ability to drive under battery power for short distances.

Before purchasing an EV, we advise doing your homework. What are your primary driving expectations of the vehicle? If you have questions about our experiences or charging at home give us a call.



SCEA WATER HEATER PROGRAM

SCEA's peak shave water heater program provides members with a Marathon water heater at a discounted price for participating in the load management program.

The cost for water heaters is **\$750**. This is a great value for members. SCEA pays the cost of the electrician to wire the water heater and radio control. The member would pay any costs incurred by a plumber.



ONLINE PAYMENT AND BILLING WITH SMARTHUB

Members can now pay their bills on-line with South Central Electric's new on-line bill payment system; SmartHub. You can even download the SmartHub app for your mobile device or tablet.

To get started visit our web site southcentralelectric.com and click on the SmartHub logo. Once you are at the SmartHub site you'll have to sign up as a first time user by clicking the "New User" link and follow the prompts.

Once you're signed up, you can:

- Pay your bill immediately with a secure on-line payment.
- View monthly electric usage and history.
- Manage account information and track payment history from mobile devices or the web.
- Submit meter readings.
- Receive emails regarding bills.
- Sign up for automatic payments.



For your mobile device or tablet download the free "SmartHub" app from the APP Store or Google Play.



Area 4th Graders Learn About Electric Safety



The start of school brings an annual event for area 4th graders, attending field and safety days. The Cottonwood County Extension office coordinates a three-day event with safety and education programs at the University of Minnesota Southwest Research and Outreach Center in Lamberton. South Central Electric and East River Electric, a SCE power provider,

provided electric safety and education demonstrations at the Outreach Center. A similar event took place for Watonwan County schools at the fairgrounds in St. James. Over the four days of safety demonstrations South Central Electric was able to spread our safety message to over 1,000 students around southern Minnesota.

Update Your Life-Support Member Listing with Us

For family members or friends with a medical condition electricity is a lifeline for their medical equipment.

Your local electric co-op likes to know about any members who are on life-support equipment, such as:

- oxygen concentrators
- respirators
- home dialysis or
- other life-threatening conditions.



Your electric cooperative maintains this list for two reasons. First, in case of a planned outage where crews will work on the lines, the co-op tries to inform these members before the outage. Secondly, during an unplanned outage, priority is given to restore power to these members with such medical equipment.

If you haven't notified your local electric co-op, please complete this coupon and return it to us with your next bill payment. Otherwise, e-mail, fax or mail the information right away. In addition, if the person with the medical condition moves off the co-op's system, no longer needs life support or has passed away, please inform the co-op so our list stays current.

Yes, I'm on life support equipment OR

**Please remove _____
from the co-op's life support list**

Name _____

Address _____

City/state/zip _____

Phone number _____

Your location number (as found on your electric bill)

Type of life support equipment or medical condition:

Battery backup? Yes No

If yes, how long will the batteries last? _____

Is there a generator on site for backup electricity? Yes No

Return this coupon to your local electric co-op with your next bill payment. Otherwise, e-mail, fax or mail it right away. Thanks! (11/2020)

Operations Report

Jeff Benson, Operations Manager

Winter is approaching and crews will be doing line patrol on our distribution system. We drive every mile of overhead and underground line looking for loose or missing nuts and bolts, or damaged poles on overhead lines. When patrolling underground lines, we are looking for damaged pedestals & cabinets in the ditches and any oil leaking out of transformers.

We recently completed a project in Trimont and Storden with a company taking high resolution pictures of our poles and equipment. They also completed inspections at night using infrared cameras looking for hot spots that could become outages. Hot spots could be loose connections or cracked insulators that you can't see from the ground with the naked eye.

When you see our crews driving slow along the road, they are not killing time. They are looking for any damage and potential future outage issues. This is important to keep the electric distribution system safe and operating properly.

We never know what we might find. This summer crews found this underground three phase cabinet completely packed with dirt from pocket gophers.



Protect your home and family with a Briggs & Stratton home standby generator



You can be confident that South Central Electric works hard every day to keep your lights on. For those times when mother nature strikes, we still have you covered with our generator program. You can purchase a whole home Briggs & Stratton Power Protect generator from South Central Electric. If you lose power, the generator automatically takes over. When power is restored, it automatically shuts down. Power when you need it without the hassles of portable or PTO generators.

Estimated Cost of \$8,000 to \$11,500 includes:

- Briggs & Stratton® Power Protect DX with industry leading 10-year warranty.
- Minnesota winter ready with battery warmer, oil heater & battery charger.
- Automatic transfer switch.
- **Electrician installation.**

Call our office to learn more at
(507) 375-3164

Generators run on LP or Natural Gas. Estimate does not include costs of gas installation from your gas provider.



Official monthly newsletter

South Central Electric

71176 Tiell Dr., PO Box 150
St. James, MN 56081-0150
(507) 375-3164

Outages: (888) 805-7232

E-mail address:

sce@southcentralelectric.com

Web:

www.southcentralelectric.com

Office hours:

7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

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The Board meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at South Central Electric's building at 71176 Tiell Dr., St. James, MN.

Please see our website for a summary of the board meetings.

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