

Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)):

<silence>

Courtney Doyle ([00:17](#)):

Welcome back to Co-Op Energy Talk. I'm your host, cherry Land Communications and member relations manager, Courtney Doyle. Over the last year, you've heard us talk a lot about energy waste reduction, or we'll often call it EWR and the new mandate that requires us to do things a little differently here than we have in the past. So on this episode, I'll give you a refresher on what some of those differences are, and we'll sit down with Cherry Land's Energy use advisor, Tammy Hayworth, to talk about the great new programs that we're rolling out for you this year. Thanks Tammy, for joining us.

Tammy Haworth ([00:49](#)):

Thank you for inviting me.

Courtney Doyle ([00:50](#)):

Before we get started, uh, diving into the new programs and all things EWR, Tammy, why don't you just tell our listeners a little bit about yourself and and your experience here and what you do for our members at Cherry Land?

Tammy Haworth ([01:02](#)):

I have been with Cherry Land since 2006 and I started my role as energy use advisor in 2010. And my primary focus is assisting members on their energy efficiency goals. Do they have concerns whether usage is driving up higher, how can they access our programs such as rebates, our time of use, and interacting with our solar, uh, members as well. So it's really a lot about education and listening to what the members' needs are.

Courtney Doyle ([01:35](#)):

You really offer a level of personalized support for the members that maybe they can't get everywhere. I think it's one of the cool things that makes co-ops like cherry land really great because you're able to really, you go into members' homes and look at stuff, you'll dive into their usage and things like that. Tell me a little bit about that process. What are the things that you're looking for when you go into a home or what are kind of the red flags you see when you're looking at usage to try and determine what could be going on here?

Tammy Haworth ([02:03](#)):

A lot of times I start with looking at their usage profile. What is their usage on a month to month basis? Are there trends? Are there changes that are abnormal? And then start looking at a day-to-day basis. So when did that usage spike occur? Or has it been flat for a long period of time? So I really dive into their usage profile and then even go even more granular, such as looking at hourly data and then our new meters now give us 15 minute interval data so we can really dive into where their usage is spiking. Is it flat? And so kind of having that discussion about what they're doing in their home, what are some changes that they're doing, and really understanding what they have that's electric based versus gas that could be impacting it. So it's long discussions typically that we have.

Courtney Doyle ([03:06](#)):

You're able to ask the right questions. Right. Because we all electricity powers pretty much everything that we do in our daily lives, and a lot of us don't think about every single thing that we're doing. So you're able to ask those questions Yes. For the members and get into that.

Tammy Haworth (03:20):

Yes. So I actually have like a form I developed of some of the common things that most people have. So I go down through that form and talking about their major appliances, then into like more specific things about their home. If it's a farm, what type of farm equipment do they have, if they have medical needs, what type of medical equipment mm-hmm <affirmative>. Might they have? How long do they use it? How long have they been using it? Has there been changes in the family dynamics? Did they now have somebody move back in? Do they have a new addition to the family? Do they become empty nesters? So it's really understanding what the dynamics of that home is. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. That helps me understand where their usage could come from. Yeah.

Courtney Doyle (04:08):

And I think it's important that members know, Tammy, your services are free, right? Or they come with your membership here at the co-op. So by all means give us a call, ask Tammy questions about your usage and things like that. And I think that also comes as we talk about EWR. You are no stranger to EWR Tammy

Tammy Haworth (04:28):

Because

Courtney Doyle (04:29):

We used to be under a similar mandate, uh, I think it was called energy optimization then.

Tammy Haworth (04:35):

Yes, it was. And it started in 2008 was the mandate, but then it did not impact the utilities until 2009 where they had to start rolling it out. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. So I was involved right from the very beginning of that. And there's been some revisions, modifications over the years. So it has been part of my work here for many, many years.

Courtney Doyle (05:02):

I, I think it's safe to say you are one of the biggest experts on this topic we have probably in the state. I just wanna give you a lot of kudos. We're gonna dive into the legislation really quickly and give an update on that. But you have been a huge help to not just cherry land, but our sister co-ops across the state and helping make sure everybody's prepared. Uh, you know, this January as the new mandate goes into effect, 'cause you've, you've seen it before, while it is a little different, this mandate requires us to incentivize members to reduce their energy uses. So you'll see that in things like rebate programs, that's probably the, the bread and butter, the most common type of energy optimization or energy waste reduction program. You'll see. And historically under that old mandate that Tammy was talking about, we were required to reduce at a level of 1% of our annual sales.

Courtney Doyle (05:52):

Um, that was something about like 4 million kilowatt hours for cherry land under the new mandate, they have raised that threshold. And so now it requires a reduction of 1.5% of our annual sales and that puts us at about 6 million kilowatt hours, which is not a small <laugh> feat. So how we quantify those kilowatt hours is through, uh, much of it is through what is the MEMD, the Michigan Energy Measures database,

right, Tammy? Correct. So essentially it'll take all of these measures and then a bunch of information about the backside efficiencies of it, and then it spits out a number of claimable kilowatt hour savings. Can you explain to us a little bit, you are one of the most knowledgeable people I know about the MEMD, so I think it's probably best if you talk us through what you know about the MEMD and then how that translates to the legislation.

Tammy Haworth ([06:43](#)):

So there is a technical advisory group that recommends measures that should go on this list. And what they do is look at what existing measures are in place in most homes and what are upgrades that can be done that are viable and available to members. So then they will look at those differences in efficiencies, do the calculations, and they have on each item such as a refrigerator, they will have multiple categories for a refrigerator, it will state refrigerator, top freezer, a refrigerator, bottom freezer, a refrigerator side by side.

Courtney Doyle ([07:29](#)):

It's a very long list,

Tammy Haworth ([07:31](#)):

A very, very long complicated list. And each one has a value associated to it. So when we are looking at getting 6 million kilowatts saved based on those values, a refrigerator only accounts for maybe 50 to 60 kilowatts. So that is a lot of measures we have to incentivize. And so some will have a very small value. Other measures will have a very large value based on the potential savings of what they previously had and common in the households versus what is the new technology that can save energy. Mm-hmm

Courtney Doyle ([08:13](#)):

<affirmative>. And so you'll often notice on our rebate application, there'll be some questions on there that you're like, why do they need this information? It's, that's why, is because we need to know where it fits in that MEMD and which of those values we can claim for that. But of course, for you, for the members, we want to make sure you're getting some value out of it. So that's why we do the rebate and we give you some money for, for making those energy efficient choices. So historically we have just funded those rebates with our operating expenses. Uh, that was about 350 to \$450,000 in our budget every year. But because of the increased target and some of the new constraints on the MEMD, so year to year things may be new on the MEMD, some things may be removed from the MEMD. A big one that, you know, from this last mandate we were under is lighting.

Courtney Doyle ([09:06](#)):

Lighting was a big one that, you know, we were giving you guys light bulbs and doing all that stuff. Lighting no longer counts on the MEMD. Um, so it's getting a little pricier. The cost to cover the plan that we have made that will, that will get us to the, the one and a half percent kilowatt hour savings, uh, is about a million dollars to reach that goal. And it's just not something we can continue to fund through our operating expenses. So we, we've done is, uh, the board approved in the fall. Um, the addition of an a surcharge for this program, it's gonna show up on your bill. So it's January now. Um, it, it's active right now, but you'll see it on your first bill in February. And that will be listed as the IP 2 29 20 23 compliance surcharge. I know it's kind of a mouthful, but we wanted to make sure that you had access to the public act information so you could go read it for yourself if you wanted.

Courtney Doyle ([10:02](#)):

It's a little over three mils per kilowatt hour, which for our average member ends up being about \$2 and 25 cents a a month. So I think that's an important piece that I want everybody to be aware of, is that that surcharge is gonna be on your bill. Um, but also I think it's a greater incentive to make sure you're taking advantage of these programs that are available to you. And I know, um, you know, that's kind of the nitty gritty side of things. What we really wanna focus on today are the programs, the things that we've designed because while we do have a responsibility to comply with this law, uh, the thing that we're really, really proud of is working to make sure that it brings benefit to the members. So while there are some hoops we have to jump through on the compliance side and how we have to do things, we got creative to try and make sure that what we do in order to comply with that law brings value and benefit to the members. So Tammy, I wanna talk through those programs with you and let's just start with rebates. So that's kinda the bread and butter. That's, that's what you'll see the most. Talk me through what members can expect for rebates this year.

Tammy Haworth ([11:05](#)):

There is gonna be two different rebate forms. One is gonna be specific now to just appliances. So you're gonna see that form is gonna walk you through some basic demographics on there. And then you're gonna be able to select the various appliances that we offer rebates on. Some of those values may change. We've added a few more. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Appliances. We have unfortunately removed electric vehicles 'cause those are not considered energy efficiency measures on the state database, but we are trying to expand and make sure it is available to everybody. So we look at not just refrigerators, uh, washers, dryers, we're looking at power strips that are wall mounted, smart thermostats, dehumidifiers mm-hmm <affirmative>. Portable air purifiers. So we're really trying to look at a variety of appliances that many of our members would take advantage of. So it's not just a select few that would afford this, that it is a broad category.

Courtney Doyle ([12:16](#)):

Yeah. We've diversified that a little bit bit. Yes. And kind of broadened it so that we can hopefully appeal to more people and get more rebates to more people.

Tammy Haworth ([12:23](#)):

Correct. And then the other category is the heating and cooling category. So on that form we've even expanded it more. We have broken out some of our heat pumps to be more specific. Is an air to air, is it air to water? That is something that you're gonna be able to speak to your heating and cooling contractor on. But one of the beautiful additions is the air conditioning tuneups. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. We've never offered that before. So we're now gonna be offering that. And I think that is something that people can take advantage of on a year to year basis. And it helps not only them get a rebate back, but that their air conditioning running optimally. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. It's mostly

Courtney Doyle ([13:06](#)):

And efficient and

Tammy Haworth ([13:07](#)):

Safe.

Courtney Doyle ([13:07](#)):

Yes. And something they might, they're probably needing to do anyways. Right. So that's kind of a, a bonus, right? Is making sure that when you go, oh, we gotta do that this year, don't forget that we have a rebate for that.

Tammy Haworth (13:18):

Correct. So that is something that you don't have to have a huge expensive new heat pump to qualify mm-hmm <affirmative>. For a rebate in this category. So I encourage our members just to look through the new forms and, um, ask questions. We're always here to help. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Our staff that answers the phone. If they can't answer it, they'll direct you over to me. And I'm always happy to assist and provide clarification where needed on this. Yes.

Courtney Doyle (13:49):

Tammy's the encyclopedia of all of our energy programs. Right. Another cool thing that we're offering this year, and this was born just out of trying to make life easier for the members, is the storefront. Uh, so we're gonna offer, uh, a storefront. It's essentially it'll be a website that has a list of items that we can confirm, qualify, because sometimes we do have to deny rebates. Right Tammy, because maybe they don't meet certain specifications. Correct.

Tammy Haworth (14:19):

A lot of times it's based on energy star rating and that sometimes gets confused with energy efficiency. Energy star rating is a third party testing that puts their square energy star logo on that package saying it met, um, higher efficiency standards. So when we offer the storefront, we have already selected items in those measures that will automatically meet those qualifications. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. You can then apply for a rebate knowing that you got an approved item and there's no guessing on your behalf because

Courtney Doyle (14:58):

There's nothing worse than having to decline a rebate because of a detail like that. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. So we thought if we can pool them and you can click this link and you can buy it from there and then it's super easy to submit your rebate with that, then there's no, that kind of clears what are the hurdles of wondering will this qualify or not? So that's kind of rebates. Right. We've talked about some changes there. Um, some exciting new things there. Talk to me about energy assessment. So that's a big part of Right. You've been able to call Tammy and say, Tammy come help me in my house. Um, but not everybody's schedule works with that or aligns with that. We're offering a new kind of DIY in-home for yourself energy assessment. Talk us through that.

Tammy Haworth (15:39):

Okay. So it's going to be somewhat of a scaled down assessment than what I do a phone assessment. But what it allows you to do is kind of look at what your items are measures are in your home that use electricity, that you can either change a measure or change a habit to reduce your consumption. So they're gonna look at, do you have a faucet, aerator, do you have a smart thermostat? Do you have air infiltration through your windows? Mm-hmm <affirmative>. And stuff where you might need some weather stripping around the windows or doors. So it's gonna ask you some of those things. Do you have showers that have low flow shower heads that will reduce your water that you're putting down the drain and

Courtney Doyle (16:29):

Make it a little more efficient?

Tammy Haworth (16:30):

Efficient, yes. So it's less runtime on your water heater on your well if you have a well. So it's gonna reduce those usages and provides same great quality of water pressure when you take a shower. And then we can claim those savings. These are, when you're done, it's gonna provide you a list of items that you are eligible for based on your responses and those items you can select to have. Or if you decide you don't

want to have 'em and you don't want to install 'em, you can unselect that. Then the kit is prepared by a third party company and shipped directly to our members for them to self-install. So there is no guesswork. Oh, do I have to pick it up here? How am I gonna get it? It's gonna be mailed to you directly at your home that is served by Cherryland Electric Cooperative.

Courtney Doyle ([17:24](#)):

And it's nice because just as a quick recap, there is essentially, it sounds like a really nice first step to, uh, kind of what you do is just kind of fill out this questionnaire, let us know the different parameters of your home, then that, that form that we worked hard to design and ask those right questions, type of questions that Tammy would ask you on the phone. Uh, and then provide some suggestions of measures that then are customized based on your responses and mailed directly to your house. So it's, it's a super simple, great way to work towards making your home more efficient. And then maybe you still have extra questions after that too. You do the DIY assessment, you try some of those measures and you go, you know what, I still have a couple extra questions, Tammy is still available. So also I want people to know who have already leveraged Tammy's knowledge to know that Tammy's still here.

Courtney Doyle ([18:17](#)):

The, the DIY assessments don't replace Tammy. They're gonna support a lot of what Tammy does. So that's a really cool new offering that we're gonna have this year. And then we are also working to make sure that our income qualified families have some extra support, making sure that their homes are safe and making sure that their homes are efficient and they have a, a, you know, it's January a nice warm place to call home. And so we're working with N-M-C-A-A-A lot on that. Can you talk us through some of those offerings and how we're working to support that population? Tammy,

Tammy Haworth ([18:50](#)):

We have actually partnered with N-M-C-A-A for several years offering a grant-based program where they have people going through their weatherization home repair needs. And there are sometimes when they have funding issues where this member really needs this measure, but it doesn't meet any of their funding criteria, they can then reach out to us to help bridge that gap in funding and get the people those needed repairs without delaying mm-hmm <affirmative>. Those repairs. So we have done roofs, we've done mold remediation, insulation in attics, helping to replace furnaces water heaters. So we provide a wide variety of measures that make the home safe, more comfortable, healthier, and then they can move on and become more efficient. But if we can address some of these major envelope needs, it can help that member move forward. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Make

Courtney Doyle ([19:54](#)):

A really big impact

Tammy Haworth ([19:56](#)):

Too. It does make a big impact when you have a roof that's not leaking, you have a furnace that is working. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Especially if you have people with special needs in your home or young children or elderly, you want to have that comfort in your home and not have to stress about that.

Courtney Doyle ([20:15](#)):

And that is something that we're able to support with our EWR funds is support some of those fundamental building envelope needs. And N-M-C-A-A helps us do that. Uh, the other part that N-M-C-A-A really helps us with, and people might be kind of familiar with this already, is low income community solar. So we're gonna have more space in that program under this new, uh, mandate as one of

the programs we designed. So Tammy, walk us through what that looks like. Um, I know our, our low income program's been full for quite some time. Um, but it is exciting that we're gonna have some new spots open up and how that works with N-M-C-A-A.

Tammy Haworth ([20:52](#)):

What we have done in the past is people that have applied for weatherization or have already gone through that, if we have a spot available N-M-C-A-A will reach out to them and let them know they are eligible for participation in this program is free of charge. And what they do is get a subscription to our community solar panels and that subscription provides a monthly bill credit on their account. And that credit does vary monthly based on the solar production. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. So in the summer that credit's gonna be a little bit higher and the winter's gonna be smaller. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. But we're gonna provide that subscription to them for 10 panels and it will be for one year. And then we will continue to enroll new members that have gone through weatherization. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Or home repair needs into that. So we can help assist members in providing some

Courtney Doyle ([21:51](#)):

Added value for that. And the, the also the incentive right. To go through the weatherization 'cause there's so much involved with that mm-hmm <affirmative>. Um, but it is a nice add-on, on top of right. Like you're taking the, these, these initial steps to make your home safe and more efficient. And then to be able to also get a little, a little break on your bill with a, a program that we're really proud of and also be able to take advantage of solar if, you know, putting uh, panels on your roof doesn't make sense for you. Community solar is a great option and this just makes it a little more accessible, I think.

Tammy Haworth ([22:24](#)):

Yes. And it also provides them an opportunity to understand what solar does and how it impacts their bill. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. And the seasonality of solar. So it really just starts to introduce them to those renewable options. And again, a lot of homes are not always viable. You don't have the space, you don't have the roof is, it's a

Courtney Doyle ([22:47](#)):

Big upfront cost. A lot of times

Tammy Haworth ([22:49](#)):

It is a large upfront cost. So do you want to fund that? This is a way for you to determine is this a fit for your home. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. And with our community solar program, it is also eligible for people that are renting where community solar. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Is a great fit because as a renter, you're not gonna put solar at a house that you don't own. Right. So it gives them an introduction into that and still allows a lot of eligibility for a wide group of our membership that would otherwise be left out of this program. Right.

Courtney Doyle ([23:26](#)):

If you can't tell, Tammy's also our Solar Queen who, if you're interested in that stuff, she's also the person you speak to. But to bring it back to specifically the, uh, low income community solar that's part of our EWR plan or these kind of, uh, low income building envelope supports, all of that goes through N-M-C-A-A. So while it is a program that we are offering and we are running N-M-C-A-A is gonna be the point for that. So if, if that sounds like you or something you could benefit with, start with N-M-C-A-A. Um, we're happy to help answer questions as much as possible, but that's gonna be where that process begins. So I just wanna make sure people know that. And as we mentioned at the beginning, while all of this is

part of a mandate, we worked really hard, Tammy specifically worked really hard to make sure that these programs are as beneficial and cost effective to our members as possible. So we really just wanna encourage you while yes, there are, there's a lot of math happening on the backend that's helping us meet a mandate. These were designed for the members. That's what matters the most to us. And so I just wanna thank you, Tammy, for all of the work that you put into that because it's not easy. And not only did you support cheer land with that you supported utilities across the state with your like, just encyclopedia of knowledge around this topic. So thank you Tammy.

Tammy Haworth ([24:46](#)):

Well, thank you. I've been grateful for our insight at Cherry Land that we decided to self administer that many years ago. So that helped us be very familiar with the program from the immediate start. And so that's why over the years we've had a vast experience in what works, what doesn't work. You've seen different versions of our rebate form. We're trying to make it work for our members, it won't work for everybody, but we try to make it work for the majority of our members and make it accessible as possible by having that quick online form. So you can do that at your leisure on a weekend, on an evening when you have downtime, you can access again that DIY assessment at any time. You don't have to worry about whether we're in the office

Courtney Doyle ([25:44](#)):

Scheduling something Yes.

Tammy Haworth ([25:44](#)):

Or being

Courtney Doyle ([25:45](#)):

Home for, well, you should probably be home while you're doing your DIY assessment, but still <laugh> being home at a time when our office hours so Tammy can come out or something. So that's something that I think that's a great point, Tammy, is that, uh, we have, this has all evolved over time and will likely continue to evolve right as the world continues to evolve. So if you do have questions about any of these programs, please give us a call because we wanna make them beneficial for you. And like I said, I, I asked Tammy a hundred questions all the time about these things and she knows so much. So please, we have Tammy as a resource, give us a call and, um, and take advantage of these new programs that were designed for you. So Tammy, I wanna thank you so much for taking some time to share your knowledge with us and with all the members, uh, here on our podcast today.

Tammy Haworth ([26:30](#)):

Thank you so much for the invite.

Courtney Doyle ([26:32](#)):

Join us next time for more co-op Energy Talk.