

Check Out Home Energy-Use Monitors

As a South River EMC member, you have a variety of ways to keep track of your daily energy use. You can have the total sent to you via text daily, to your e-mail inbox, or you can login to your account at sremc.com and look at SmartView, to create a bar graph of your daily energy use.

But what if you want to dig deeper? If you are curious about the specifics of where your energy is going, and how much certain appliances are contributing to your monthly bill? A home energy monitor would be a great tool for you.

A home energy monitor is a device that breaks down the total daily electricity use in your home by appliance or circuit. These devices normally install inside the home's breaker panel and monitor voltage and amperage. That information is then communicated to the cloud via a wireless Internet connection and, depending on the model, is made available in real time via a website or smartphone app.

There are two general kinds of home energy monitors available on the market. The first type is "smart" or "learning" energy

monitors. The Sense Energy Monitor is the best example of this particular kind. Once installed, this device has two leads that clamp around the two "hot legs" that feed the breaker panel. It monitors the voltage and amperage information on these two legs and "learns" what appliances or equipment are running, based on the consumption that it registers. That data is sent to a smartphone app that gives the homeowner a breakdown of use per appliance and other useful information. The cost of a unit like the Sense Energy Monitor is around \$300.

Another option is a more user-directed energy monitor like the IoTaWatt or Emporia energy monitoring system. These monitors have several leads (as many as 16 depending on the model) that clamp around the individual circuits you select inside the breaker panel. This allows the homeowner to pick and choose which appliances and equipment are monitored.

For example, one lead from the device could be clamped onto the circuit that feeds the heat strips for the home's heat pump



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in order to monitor how much energy the auxiliary heat is using during the winter months. Likewise, another lead could be clamped onto the circuit that feeds the water heater. The data recorded by these monitors is also accessible online or via a smartphone app. The price of energy monitors like these are lower, starting around \$150.

Either way, if you decide to go with a "smart" energy monitor, or one that is more user directed, you will gain a fuller understanding of how you use electricity. This greater knowledge will go a long way in helping you make better decisions in the way you use energy, saving you money.

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