



# CUB Facts Real-time Pricing

## ComEd's Real-time Pricing Program

### What is the "Real-time Pricing" program?

Illinois is first in the nation to launch a statewide residential real-time pricing program, which offers Ameren and ComEd customers a new way to pay for electricity. While it's not right for everyone, the program could help cut power costs for those willing and able to change how and when they use major appliances, such as the air conditioner, dishwasher, clothes dryer, and dehumidifier. The program also helps reduce demand for pollution-causing coal-fired power plants and it can help prevent blackouts by reducing stress on the electricity system during "peak" times, when power usage and prices are at their highest. While savings aren't guaranteed, participants in the program cut their power bills by an average of 15 percent in 2009.

### How do I learn more about Real-time Pricing?

ComEd's real-time pricing program: Go to [www.thewattspot.com](http://www.thewattspot.com), or call 1-866-928-8776. The program is managed by Comverge, a New Jersey-based energy-management company hired by ComEd.

actual market price.

For example, the summer market price may dip to about 2 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) just after midnight, when electricity usage is at its lowest. However, as the day progresses, demand for power could push the price to 13 cents per kWh—or much more—during "peak" electricity-usage times in the late afternoon and early evening. (Winter prices tend to be highest later in the evening.)

Compare that range to ComEd's fixed summer rate of about 7 cents per kWh for most customers. (The utility's standard winter rates for most customers range from about 5.8 cents per kWh to 7.2 cents per kWh.)

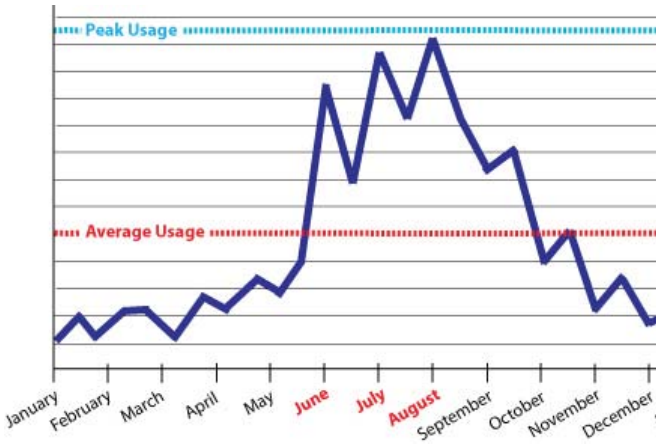
Typically, the average hourly market price over a year is lower than the standard utility flat rates. (See the chart on the next page.) The key to saving money in the real-time pricing program is reducing your electricity usage during those "peak" times, when market power prices are at their highest.

### How can I save money in the program?

The Real-Time Pricing program gives you a number of tools to help you adjust your electricity-usage habits. If the price is expected to climb above a certain predetermined level (14 cents per kWh), you will be called or e-mailed the night before, allowing you to change your power usage the next day to avoid any high-price times. You can also lower your price alert threshold to 10 cents per kWh if preferred.

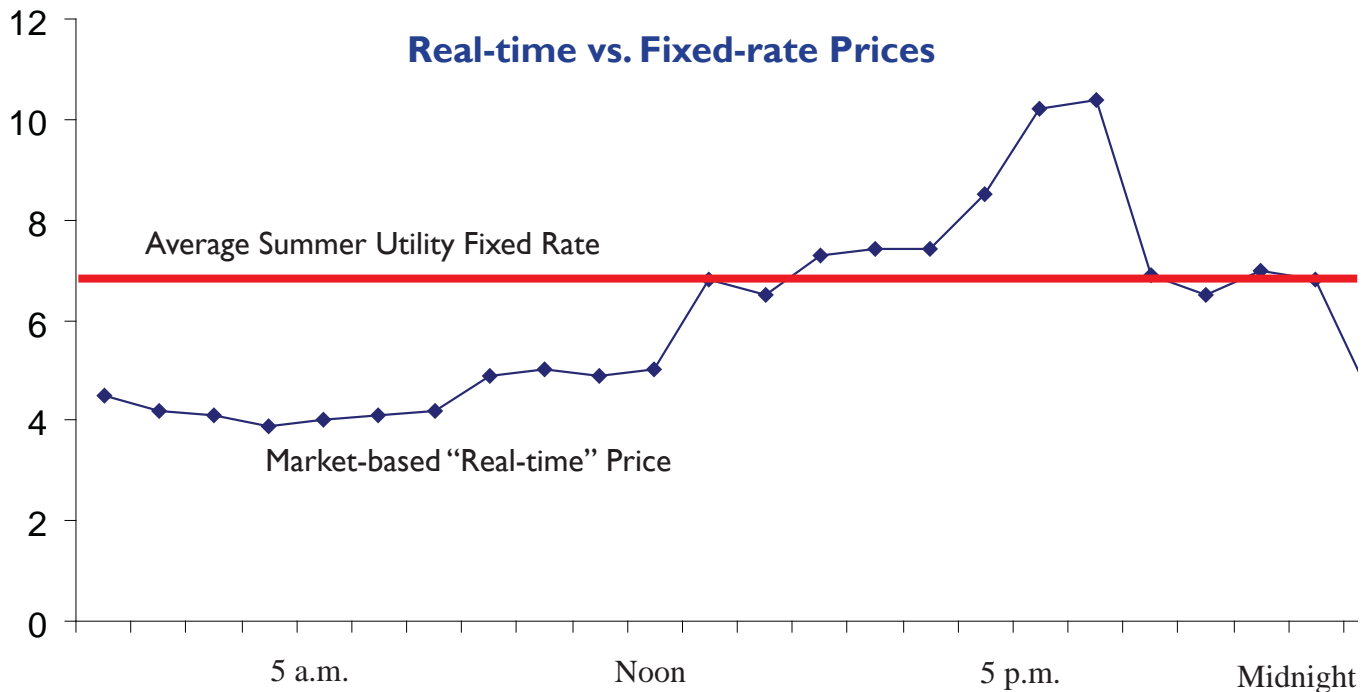
On a regular basis, you can plan your energy usage by checking the "day-ahead" prices—a highly accurate estimate of the approaching day's hourly prices—either by phone or via the Internet.

The program also will provide tips on cutting your energy costs and personalized online ac-



### How does real-time pricing work?

ComEd traditionally charges their residential customers a fixed electric rate that changes only by the season (winter or summer). However, the real-time pricing program bills customers at a price that changes each hour according to the



This is a snapshot of a random summer day. It shows how the market-based “real-time” price of electricity shoots high above or dips far below the traditional utility fixed rate. Typically, the average hourly market price over the year is lower than the standard utility fixed rate.

count information to track whether or not you are saving under the program.

### What is “Load Guard”?

Load Guard is a free, optional program for a limited number of real-time pricing customers who own their homes and have central air conditioning. With “Load Guard,” customers are able to automate their central air conditioners to turn off for 15 minutes, then on for 15 minutes, and so on during two-hour periods of high prices. Customers can choose to enter into this “conservation mode” when power prices hit either 10 cents per kWh (called the Green Level, for people who want to make more of an environmental impact) or 14 cents per kWh (called the Blue Level). Once you enroll in Load Guard, you can just choose a price level and stick with it, or you can change the setting for the next day. (In fact, you even can choose not to activate the program for the next day.)

Typically, Load Guard isn’t expected to change a home’s temperature dramatically — maybe as

little as 1-3 degrees. It uses the same technology as ComEd’s central air conditioning cycling program. In this program, a special device is attached to the central air conditioner, allowing the utility to send remote signals to a home to “cycle” the flow of power to the cooling unit (i.e. to turn the cooling on and off) at peak times of energy usage.

### Is the real-time pricing program right for my household?

If you consistently use above 400 kWh in a month or have a monthly electric bill that is more than \$40, this program could be right for you. It’s perfect for people who want to take more responsibility for their electricity usage and are curious about how to cut their power bills by changing when they use their electricity.

The program isn’t right for people with relatively small bills, people who rely on medical equipment, and those who prefer the simplicity of paying a fixed rate for power. Others, such as senior citizens or families with small children may not be willing or able to change their electricity

usage patterns because of family responsibilities or health concerns. Such customers may need to use their dishwasher or air conditioning often during peak power-usage times, when the market price of power at that moment could be well beyond the regular utility flat rate.

### What are the requirements of the program?

The program requires a minimum 12-month commitment. It also requires a special meter that reads electricity usage on an hourly basis. The meter, which has to be accessible to the power company, will be installed at no charge, but you will have to pay a \$2.25 monthly fee for leasing it. (Typical savings should more than cover the \$27 annual cost of this fee.) ComEd is currently authorized to accept 110,000 customers into the program. Those who enroll after may pay a higher fee.

### How will my electric bill look different?

You will pay all the charges on your electric bill now, with two differences. First, your monthly bill will have the \$2.25 monthly “meter lease” fee added to it. (This charge is in addition to the “meter charge” already on your bill. That fixed charge, which all electric customers pay, covers the costs associated with such tasks as meter reading and testing the meter equipment.)

Also, you won't pay ComEd's standard per-kilowatt-hour electricity rate. Remember, under real-time pricing, you could be charged a vastly different rate for each hour of electricity usage over the course of a month. Your bill will include the number of kilowatt-hours you used over the course of the billing period and a total cost for that electricity. ComEd customers who want more detail will be able to find an online breakdown of how much electricity they used and the rate they paid each hour over that period at *www.thewattspot.com*. On the website, you can also view a comparison of what you would have paid on your utility's standard rates versus what you paid in the real-time pricing program. You can also request this bill comparison by mail.

### Real-time Tips for Saving

Things you can do to save money and energy during expensive “peak” hours:

- Temporarily change your central air conditioner to a warmer temperature. If you have a window air conditioner, turn it off or put it on a warmer setting.
- If the summer heat gets to you, plan a trip to the beach or a pool during the peak hours. You also can go to an air-conditioned public space, such as a movie house, a museum, an art gallery, a shopping mall, or library.
- If you have an electric stove or oven, grill or enjoy a cool meal like a sandwich or salad.
- If possible, use energy-guzzling appliances like the dishwasher, washer and dryer, and basement dehumidifier in the morning or evening when prices are lower.

For tips to save money and energy, visit [www.CUBEnergySaver.com](http://www.CUBEnergySaver.com). For information about incentives to make energy efficiency investments, visit [www.CUBLiveWire.org](http://www.CUBLiveWire.org).

The screenshot shows the CUB Energy Saver website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Dashboard', 'Build Energy Profile', 'Get Rewards', 'Shop & Save', and 'Community'. Below that, a section titled 'Welcome to CUB Energy Saver. Choose Your Personal Savings Plan.' offers three options: 'Mid-Cost Save 5%', 'Low-Cost Save 10%', and 'More Rewards Save 15%'. A table lists actions to customize the plan, such as 'Paint my roof white' (1 year, 4,000 points), 'Use Smart Strips for electronics' (2 months, 2,000 points), 'Turn off coffee maker after brewing' (1 month, 2,000 points), 'Use an outside instead of using treatment' (1 week, 1,000 points), and 'Unplug appliances & electronics' (1,000 points). A 'More actions' button is also visible. On the right, a 'Getting Started with CUB' section provides instructions on how to choose a savings plan and how points are earned.