Written by Christof Demont-Heinrich, SCD.Com Editor
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editor's
blog
entry

I bet our utility, Xcel Energy, hates us, or, at the very least, wants to make sure there'll never be many other people like us.

That's because we haven't paid an electric utility bill in 2 ½ years. On top of that, we've generated an extra 10,000 kWh via the 5.59 kW solar system on our roof, solar-generated kWh Xcel actually has allowed us to bank, or keep indefinitely.

I've already calculated that given all of the extra solar kWh we've produced during the past 2 ½ years that we're a net zero house . This means if you look at how much energy we've produced via our rooftop solar system vs. how much we've used – including the natural gas we've burned to heat our home and to heat our water – we've produced more energy than we've used.

On top of this all, it's just gotten better for us – and worse for Xcel: We're going to come close to not using any natural gas at all to fire our home forced-hot air system now that we're eating into those banked 10,000 solar kWh via a set of eheat.com electric wall heaters , which will provide 95 – 100 percent of our heat this heating season.

A $25 utility bill – year round

What does this all mean in terms of our utility bill? Our monthly utility bill will continue to be about $25 per month with about 60 percent of that bill going to pay various fees and taxes, and about 40 percent to pay for the gas burned to heat our hot water.

So, let's see: Xcel is now getting about $13 per month from us for the gas we use to heat our hot water in our 2,1000 square foot home and household of four. That's $156 per year, a figure roughly 1/12th of what Xcel would normally be getting from a home and household of our size.

In fact, our Xcel bill for October was a *credit* for about $15 dollars thanks to a $40 annual credit we receive from Xcel for being part of its scheduled rolling central AC brownout program. Xcel uses this program to power down individual residential central AC units on a rolling basis in order to better meet intense summer-time electricity demand.

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That's surely not what Xcel, or any large centralized utility, wants to be seeing from large numbers of its customers. That's precisely the problem with the entire, monopolitistic, top-down, un-democratic American power production and distribution system.

This monopoly driven power system ironically delivers consumers no choice in the alleged "Land of Capitalist-Driven Free Choice". Unless, of course, those consumers go solar – which we did. And boy are we glad we did – even if Xcel might well not be nearly so happy with our decision as we are ;-)

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