



Piedmont Electric CONNECTION

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



Hillsborough, N.C.

www.pemc.coop

April 2011

Kill A Watt Detectors Available for Members

Piedmont Electric has a new "Phantom Load Buster" program available for all members on request.

You may borrow a Kill A Watt device to track your individual appliances, televisions, play consoles and other energy-consuming equipment to help them identify where energy is being used throughout the home.

Phantom power use comes from many electronic devices.

Typically, any device that has a clock, a little red LED light, or uses a remote can be a culprit.

How can you reduce or eliminate the phantom power drain? Unplugging all electrical devices when not in use can be a chore.

An easier way is to use power strips so you can cut full power to your plugged-in electronics.

There are even "smart" power strips that can sense when your device is turned off and in response, cut power to any plugged-in peripherals.

Several devices are now on the market specifically tailored for measuring and reducing phantom power drain.

Call us at 800.222.3107 to learn about this free program and schedule your time to pick up the monitor.



Cody Shuler and Pine Mountain Railroad are back for this year's Annual Meeting of the members by popular demand. The group also entertained at last year's meeting.

Circle April 15 on Your Calendar

There's a full agenda on tap for this year's Annual Meeting of the Members of Piedmont Electric.

Set for Friday, April 15, at Orange High School in Hillsborough, registration for the meeting starts at 6:30 p.m., followed by the business meeting at 8 p.m.

In addition to reports and an audiovisual presentation on the Cooperative's progress during 2010 and plans for the year ahead, there will also be an election of four members to the Piedmont Electric Board of Directors.

Those selected by the Nominating Committee include:

- District 1: David Poythress and Patricia W. Spaulding
- District 2: James Kinley and Greg Martin
- District 5: Paul Bailey and Dean Thomas
- At-Large Representative: Richal Vanhook and Allen Shaver

There will also be a drawing for door prizes, including a \$500 cash award. You must be present to win!

An interactive computer display will give members an opportunity to check out some of the special Internet programs offered by Piedmont Electric during registration, and there will be plenty of other educational displays.

As you take in the displays, you can enjoy free cookies and soft drinks.

Back by popular demand, Cody Shuler and Pine Mountain Railroad will perform during registration as well as during the election.

So, circle the date on your calendars, and invite your family and neighbors to join you on April 15 at the most important day in your Cooperative's business year.

***Piedmont EMC & ElecTel
will be closed on Friday, April
22, for the Easter
holiday. Employees
will be on call.
Please have a safe,
happy holiday.***





From Your President...

RUS Financing: Helping Keep Electric Bills Affordable

R. G. Brecheisen

Chief Executive Officer & President

For 75 years, the nation's 900-plus member-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives have worked hard to improve the rural quality of life.

Today, electric co-ops generate, transmit and distribute electricity to 18 million homes, businesses, industries, retail centers, schools, churches, farms, airports and irrigation systems in 47 states, serving 42 million total consumers.

As of 2011, electric co-ops have invested more than \$140 billion to construct critical facilities spanning 75% of the United States, including 66,000 miles of bulk transmission lines and 2.5 million miles of distribution lines, 42% of the nation's total.

Co-ops also generate roughly 5% of U.S. electricity capacity, distribute 10% of all kilowatt-hours sold, employ more than 70,000, and pay more than \$1.4 billion annually in state and local taxes.

The key to helping electric co-ops "keep the lights on" in some

of the most sparsely populated and rugged areas of America for more than seven decades has been a small federal investment through the Rural Utilities Service, known until October 1994 as the Rural Electrification Administration.

Federal assistance for electric utilities is not unique as for-profit, investor-owned utilities (IOUs) receive tax breaks while city-owned municipal electric systems are able to issue tax-exempt bonds.

Electric cooperatives do not receive these tax breaks and are not able to issue tax-exempt bonds. We rely on RUS loans from the federal government to finance our capital infrastructure expansions and upgrades.

The cooperatives repayment of RUS loans in 2010 resulted in \$51 million revenue to the federal government. The RUS loan program is a win-win for both cooperatives and our government.

In short, RUS electric loans do not cost taxpayers a single penny.

Coupled with strong and innovative management and local, consumer-owned and controlled governance, electric cooperatives have used RUS financing to adapt to industry challenges, construct and maintain electric networks capable of serving consumers across even the most remote terrain and, most importantly, keep electric rates affordable—an important consideration since household incomes in co-op service territories are 14% lower than the national average.

With electric co-ops anticipating \$66.1 billion in capital needs

over the next five years and \$140.8 billion over the next decade to upgrade aging infrastructure, connect new consumers and build needed power plants, gutting a time-tested loan program that doesn't cost the government any money—and shutting off a source of financing to rural communities that can't be replaced—simply makes no sense.

We must communicate the importance of RUS electric loans to our elected federal officials. We need to ensure that no limitations are imposed on these RUS loans.

If federal subsidies continue to flow to IOUs and municipal utilities, the RUS loan program should continue to be available to electric cooperatives.

I hope you will join me in contacting your elected officials in Washington, DC by visiting www.ourenergy.coop and *Take Action: Contact Elected Officials*, and let them know the RUS loan program for electric cooperatives helps keep your electric bills affordable, should have no restrictions added to the program and actually makes money for the federal government.

As Congress recognized more than seven decades ago, a safe, reliable and affordable supply of power remains the linchpin to economic growth and job creation.

The unique, long-standing relationship between electric cooperatives and RUS helps ensure that all Americans, no matter where they may live, have access to a vibrant electric grid able to meet twenty-first century demands.

April Right-of-Way Maintenance



Person County

Virgilia Road
Epps Martin Road
High Plains Road
Bowmantown Road

Caswell County

Stadler Road
Kerr's Chapel Road
David Moore Road
Hwy 119 North
Griers Church Road
(and surrounding areas)

Programmable Thermostats Save!

Programmable thermostats, when used correctly, have the potential to save up to \$180 a year on your heating and cooling costs, according to www.ENERGYSTAR.gov.

If you're considering purchasing a programmable thermostat, it's important to install and program it correctly to save the most energy and money.

Installation

First, your thermostat should be situated on an interior wall, about five feet above the floor and away from heating and cooling vents and other drafty places, such as doors and windows.

Also keep it away from skylights, direct sunlight or lamps. If your thermostat is not properly situated, consider having an electrician move the location.

Next, shut off the electricity before you begin the replacement. Programmable thermostats require a low-voltage wiring installation and will have two to 10 wires, according to ENERGYSTAR.gov.

As with any home-wiring project, safety should be the number one priority. Be sure to read all instructions carefully and exercise cau-

tion throughout the installation.

And if you are replacing an old thermostat that has a mercury switch, take care not to break the tube that holds the toxic metal.

Refer to the instruction manual on how to wire your new thermostat. Two handy tips before you begin disconnecting wires: Using

a piece of tape, label each wire with the letter of the wire's terminal (printed on the thermostat), as these wires are not color coded.

Once your old thermostat is removed from the wall, wrap the wires around a pencil to keep them from falling back into the wall.

If the project is more complicated than a basic replacement, contact a certified HVAC technician to make sure the thermostat is installed properly and safely.

Choosing the right thermostat

Programmable thermostats are not for everyone. They're best for families who are away during the day and homes with HVAC systems other than heat pumps.

When a heat pump works in its heating mode, setting back the

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When Power Goes Out Call Piedmont Electric

When your power goes out, call Piedmont Electric's outage reporting number: 800.222.3107 to report the outage.

The Cooperative uses your phone number to determine your service



location when you use the automated outage reporting system to report a service outage.

If, like some folks—you no longer have a land line and use a cellular phone, please make sure to let the Cooperative know.

Unless we have your correct phone number(s), we may not be able to pinpoint your outage location as quickly.

Please complete and return the form on your monthly billing statement if your telephone number has changed.

By the Numbers...

- 1,677 members have signed up for the use monitoring portion of www.MyUsage.com
- 548 members are participating in the FlexPay Program
- 396 members have turned in receipts for 3,941 CFLs, representing a total of 1,351,763 kWhs saved toward our Senate Bill 3 Mandate
- 27 solar water heater rebates given to members
- 787 electric water heater wraps sold
- 542 residential members on Time-of-Day Rates

CO-OP RAISES FUNDS FOR DUKE KIDS



(L-R) Rachel Hawkins, Gina Knight, Gary Woods and Susan Cashion presented a check for \$3,471 on behalf of Piedmont Electric to radio personality Linda Loveland (second from right) for Duke Children's Hospital. Funds were raised during the 2010 Duke Children's Golf Tournament that Piedmont Electric sponsored last October.



What are you waiting for? Sign up for [MyUsage.com!](http://MyUsage.com)

Co-op to Sponsor Two Veterans on 'Flight of Honor'

Piedmont Electric is sponsoring a Flight of Honor Trip for two World War II Veterans from the Cooperative's service area. The World War II Veterans must be members of Piedmont Electric, or reside fulltime with a Piedmont Electric member to qualify for the trip.

The Triangle Flight of Honor day trip is scheduled for early Fall, (date to be announced later) and leaves early in the morning



from Raleigh-Durham Airport and returns that evening.

Veterans will be accompanied by an approved Flight of Honor volunteer who is assigned to go on the trips. The Triad Flight of Honor day trip is September 17, 2011, and leaves in the early morning from Greater Triad Airport in Greensboro, NC, and returns that evening.

If you are interested in applying for either trip, please complete



the application found at www.pemc.coop, and return it to: Rachel Hawkins, Piedmont Electric, P.O. Drawer 1179, Hillsborough, NC 27278; or, e-mail it to rachel.hawkins@pemc.coop.

Applications may also be faxed to 919.241.1101. Applications must be returned by June 1, 2011. Notification to the winner will be by phone and letter.

To learn more about the Flight of Honor Trip visit www.triadflightofhonor.com or www.triangleflightofhonor.com.

Piedmont Electric salutes our veterans for their service to our country.

Programmable Thermostats

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thermostat can cause the unit to operate inefficiently, thereby canceling out any savings achieved by lowering the temperature.

Maintaining a moderate setting is the most cost-effective practice for homes with heat pumps.

If you decide a programmable thermostat is right for your home, consider which type best suits your lifestyle:

- 7-day models allow you to set different programs every day and provide the most flexibility.
- 5+2-day models follow the

same schedule during the week and a different one for weekends.

- 5-1-1 models keep the same schedule during the week and different ones for Saturday and Sunday.

Programmable thermostats enhance your home's efficiency only when set properly. To be sure to save, set the temperature back for at least eight hours at time—for example, when you're at work during the day or asleep at night.

You can save 5% to 15% per year on your heating bills by setting your thermostat back 10 to 15 degrees over that period.

Planning to Buy an Electric Vehicle?

Please contact the Cooperative if you plan to buy an electric vehicle that will be charged at your home or business served by Piedmont EMC. We need to ensure the distribution transformer and conductors are adequately sized to serve this added load and that no safety issues exist.

Please Pass On Your Recipes...

We need YOU to pass on your recipes. If you have a favorite recipe you want to share with other Piedmont Electric members, please send it to: Pass It On, c/o Piedmont Connection, P.O. Drawer 1179, Hillsborough, NC 27278, or you may include it with your monthly payment.

If it is printed in the newsletter, you will receive a copy of a cookbook from the Cooperative Council of North Carolina. Please remember to check all ingredients and cooking directions.



Piedmont Electric CONNECTION

Published monthly for the members of Piedmont Electric Membership Corp. 2500 N.C. Highway 86 South, P.O. Drawer 1179, Hillsborough, N.C. 27278

R. G. Brecheisen, President & CEO

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- David Poythress, Richal Vanhook**
- Sam T. Woods & Talmadge W. Yancey**

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Office Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday—Friday

Hillsborough: 919.732.2123 • Caswell County: 336.421.1296

Roxboro: 336.599.0151 • Elsewhere in North Carolina: 800.222.3107

To report an outage 24 hours a day: 800.449.2667*

To access account information 24 hours a day: 800.548.2105*

*Voice instructions will direct you through the system.

Call BEFORE You Dig:

800.632.4949 or 811

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
Cathy J. Johnson, CCC, Editor