

Piedmont Electric CONNECTION

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



Hillsborough, N.C.

www.pemc.org

August 2010



BRIGHT IDEAS GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE DATE COMING SOON

Bright Ideas Grants are once again being sponsored by Piedmont Electric for area teachers who submit innovative and imaginative programs not funded by traditional means.

Teachers for kindergarten through grade 12 are eligible to apply for Bright Ideas Grants. Grants of up to \$2,000 each are available from the Cooperative.

The deadline for teachers to submit applications is **September 20, 2010**, but teachers who submit their application by the early-bird deadline on **August 17** will be entered in a statewide drawing for a \$500 Visa gift card.

Information about the Bright Ideas grant program can be found on Piedmont Electric's website at:

www.pemc.org or
www.ncbrightideas.com

Since the program began in 1994, Piedmont Electric has awarded more than \$240,000 in grants to educators in the Cooperative's service area.

As usual, applications for this year's grant money will be judged by an independent panel of judges.

TogetherWeSave.com Adapts for Summer

The heat is off, the air conditioning is on, and *TogetherWe Save* is on top of things.

The popular energy efficiency website from Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives has made some changes to reflect that summertime is here.

When visitors to the site's virtual home click on its thermostat to learn how to save energy and money, the message now advises, "In summer, raising the temperature will lower your energy bill."

The thermostat is in the living room of the house, and when you look out the sliding glass door you'll notice how green the trees and the lawn are. That's another website change to reflect the change of season.

Additionally, when visitors click "Adjust the blinds" as a way to save, they're now advised to close the blinds in summer to keep heat out.

Those aren't the only things new at www.TogetherWeSave.com. There's an application spotlighting energy efficiency in manufactured homes.

Visitors to the website can move

the mouse around to 15 spots, each offering an energy efficiency tip, such as "Install interior storm windows."

And, the site's Energy Savings Home Tour shows how to cut up to 10% of your energy bill by strategically placing trees and shrubs.

At Piedmont Electric, we expect Touchstone Energy to stay relevant to our members' needs.

These updates to the *TogetherWe Save* website are valuable because they allow our members to continue to be energy efficiency experts and, they serve as an excellent resource for those who take advantage of the website's information.

In the months to come, Touchstone Energy plans to add more to the site, including features on air filtration, duct sealing, HVAC maintenance and refrigeration.

If you haven't already checked out www.TogetherWeSave.com, now is a great time to do so.

This is just one of the ways Piedmont Electric has to help you manage your energy use.



LABOR DAY



Piedmont Electric and ElecTel CCU offices will be closed Monday, September 6, in observance of Labor Day. Employees will be on call. Please have a safe, happy Labor Day.



From Your President...

Our Lives Are on the Line

R. G. Brecheisen
Chief Executive Officer & President

The safety of you, our members, and our employees is a top priority at Piedmont Electric, especially during dangerous times.

When storms hit our area, we rush to your aid as soon as weather conditions allow our lineworkers to travel and make repairs safely.

Our line crews take necessary precautions before they work on downed power lines.

First, they verify a circuit has been de-energized, and that proper switches are opened and tagged to isolate the circuit from the system.

We place ground chains on the circuit—on both sides of workers—to make sure the line cannot be energized while work's being done.

But even after these measures, our workers' lives remain in your hands.

Piedmont Electric is proud of our outstanding safety record, but sometimes, no matter how many steps we take to keep everyone safe, the very people we are there to help unknowingly put our lives—and their own—in danger.

Portable generators, widely used when power lines are down, can prove fatal to lineworkers and your neighbors when used improperly.

Of course, no one would ever purposely cause the death of a lineworker. Nevertheless, a generator connected to a home's wiring or plugged into a regular household outlet can cause back-feeding along power lines and electrocute anyone who comes in contact with them—even if the line seems dead.

And Piedmont Electric employees are not the only ones in danger when a portable generator is used improperly.

Generator owners themselves may be at risk of electrocution, fire injury, property damage, or carbon monoxide poisoning if they do not follow the necessary safety rules.

Portable generators can be very helpful to consumers during outages. But we urge you to follow these safety guidelines when using one:

◆ **Never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring unless your home has been wired for generator use.** This can cause back-feeding along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including lineworkers making repairs.

Have a licensed electrician install the equipment necessary to safely connect emergency generators to your home.

◆ **Always plug appliances directly into generators.** Connecting the generator to your home's circuits or wiring must be done by a qualified, licensed electrician who will install a transfer switch to prevent back-feeding.

◆ **Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords.** Make sure extension cords are free of cuts or tears and the plug has three prongs. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage.

◆ **Ensure your generator is properly grounded.**

◆ **Never overload a generator.** A portable generator should only be used when necessary to power essential equipment or appliances.

◆ **Turn off all equipment powered by the generator before shutting it down.**

◆ **Keep the generator dry.** Operate it on a dry surface under an open structure.

◆ **Always have a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby.**

◆ **Never fuel a generator while it is operating.**

◆ **Read and adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation.** Never cut corners when it comes to safety.

We encourage you to protect the well-being and safety of your family during outages, and safeguard those who come to your aid during emergency situations.

When we work together for safety and the good of our communities, we all benefit.



Member Speak-Out

Do you have a question or comment about Piedmont EMC? If so, we want to hear from you. Questions about specific accounts will be answered personally instead of appearing in the newsletter.

Because of space limitations, Piedmont EMC reserves the right to publish any comments and to edit comments at its discretion.

Send your comments and questions to: Todd Pope, "Member Speak-Out," Piedmont EMC, P.O. Drawer 1179, Hillsborough, NC 27278-1179. You may also include it with your monthly payment, or send an email to:

todd.pope@pemc.org



Sarah Long



Brandon Oliver



Lauren Tilley



Kasi Wahlers

Students Awarded College Scholarships

Four area high school graduates will each receive a \$1,000 scholarship through Piedmont Electric's annual scholarship program.

The students are all children of parents who are members of the Cooperative.

They include:

- Sarah Long, daughter of Jane and Stephen Long of Prospect Hill—She is a graduate of Bartlett Yancey High School in Yanceyville, and she plans to attend N.C. State University.
- Brandon Oliver, son of Karen and Tony Oliver of Bahama—He is a graduate of Northern High School

in Durham, and he plans to attend Davidson College.

- Lauren Tilley, daughter of Sonja and Wesley Tilley of Hurdle Mills—She is a graduate of Cedar Ridge High School in Hillsborough, and she plans to attend Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts,
- Kasi Wahlers, daughter of Yvonne and Gary Wahlers of Hillsborough—She is a graduate of Orange High School in Hillsborough, and she plans to attend UNC—Chapel Hill.

Students were selected by an independent panel of judges based on completed applications.



AUGUST RIGHT-OF-WAY MAINTENANCE

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Stoney Mountain Road
Highway 62 South
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Piedmont Electric Membership Corporation

Neighbors Helping Neighbors...

Neighbor helping neighbor is part of the co-op tradition. Project Helping Hand is a program Piedmont Electric began to give members an opportunity to help less fortunate members during crisis situations.

There are several ways you can voluntarily contribute to Project Helping Hand:

- You can make a one-time donation to the fund.

- You can donate a specified amount to be added to your monthly bill for Project Helping Hand.

- You can request that Piedmont Electric round up your monthly electric bill to the next dollar.



The money collected will be distributed to social services departments in our service area to aid less fortunate Piedmont members with their electric bills.

To volunteer, complete a sign-up card which is available from Piedmont Electric, or call any of the Cooperative's offices to sign up.



Energy Tip of the Month

Consider using ceiling and other fans during the cooling season.

They provide additional cooling and better circulation so you can raise the thermostat and cut down on air conditioning costs.

ENERGY STAR-certified ceiling fans do even better, especially those that include compact fluorescent light bulbs.

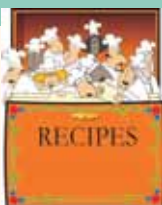
Pass It On...

This month's recipe for "Cherry Nut Salad" comes from Hazel Rook of Hillsborough.

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 the Cooperative Council of North Carolina's *Sensational Sweets* cookbook.

Please remember to check all ingredients and instructions carefully.



Cherry Nut Salad

- 1 large can crushed pineapple, drained
- 1 large container Cool Whip
- 1 can cherry pie filling
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup chopped nuts

Mix all ingredients together and chill.



By the Numbers...

- 1,114 members have signed up for the use monitoring portion of www.MyUsage.com
- 426 members are participating in the FlexPay Program
- 355 members have turned in receipts for 3,541 CFLs, representing a total of 1,214,563 kWhs saved toward our Senate Bill 3 Mandate
- 1,812 people have sent cards for "Our Energy, Our Future," and 8,618 people have sent emails—all of which are being forwarded to the elected officials in Piedmont's service area
- 21 solar water heater rebates given to members
- 458 electric water heater wraps sold
- 487 residential members on Time-of-Day Rates

Keep Space Clear Around Transformer

They're big. They're often green. They generally sit on concrete—often within housing developments. Some people try to hide them with bushes, fences or flower beds.

But stay clear: even small additions around padmount transformers create hazards.

To improve aesthetics of new neighborhoods, developers often put in underground power lines.

While this eliminates utility poles and overhead wires, it requires installing pad-mounted transformers in some front yards.

Unfortunately some homeowners attempt to screen pad-mount transformers from view—creating an unsafe situation for all concerned.

Landscaping around electrical equipment interferes with our ability to deliver reliable power.

We recommend leaving at least 10 feet of clear space in front of padmount transformers.

Linemen repair units while they are energized so homeowners don't

experience an interruption in service.

In some cases, consumers may leave plenty of space in front of the transformer, but grow vegetation on the other three sides.

This invites other problems. Plant roots can interfere with its operation.

Pad-mounted transformers surrounded by vegetation or a structure may overheat and cause service interruptions when the air circulation around them is compromised.

Allow at least three to four feet of space on both sides and behind the transformer.



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

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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

