Co-op Offers Products, Services to Help You Hold Down Energy Costs

The sweltering days of summer are here in full force, and with hot weather comes increased electricity use to try to keep cool. Piedmont Electric has structured the programs and services it offers to help you better manage your electricity use.

Primary among these are free home energy audits and HVAC technical advice to help you determine the steps you need to take to make sure you are using electricity more efficiently.

The free residential audits may also include infrared imaging or duct blaster test to detect where air is infiltrating or exiting your home.

In addition to free audits by experienced energy specialists, Piedmont Electric also offers on-line tools members may access to help them save energy.

TogetherWeSave.com allows members to input their home’s specifications and find ways to manage their energy use more efficiently.

Another service the Cooperative provides is MyUsage.com, an Internet site that allows members to check the previous day’s electricity use in their home so activities can be adjusted to lower use.

This website is also helpful to members who choose to use Piedmont Electric’s FlexPay Program, where electricity is paid for before it is used.

Consumers who use MyUsage.com may elect to receive daily energy e-mails or high energy alert e-mails.

Members who decide to make improvements in their homes’ energy efficiency may also qualify for the Cooperative’s low-interest Energy Efficiency and Renewable Loan Program.

And, members who decide to make certain improvements, may also qualify for rebates on energy efficient heat pumps and solar water heaters.

Other rebates are available for compact fluorescent lights and commercial lighting upgrades.

Piedmont Electric also offers special rates for members, including those who can shift their energy use to off-peak hours for the Time-of-Day Rate, as well as Renewable Energy Rates and Energy Star Rates.

Don’t forget the Beat the Peak program. The outside cover of this magazine can answer the questions you may have on how this program can help both you and Piedmont Electric save on energy costs!
From Your President...

Help Us Control Rising Energy Costs

R. G. Brecheisen
President & Chief Executive Officer

At this writing in early July, it looks like another hot summer for our area. With the heat comes higher electricity use to run our air conditioners, fans, refrigerators and freezers.

Electricity powers all the things that make our lives more comfortable and convenient. It cools and heats our homes, stores and cooks our food, pumps and heats our water, illuminates the night, and runs the electronics for communication, information and entertainment.

Electricity is essential to modern life; unfortunately there are challenges on the horizon that will cause the price of electricity to rise. Environmental upgrades along with new power plants and transmission lines will be needed which will increase the cost of electricity.

I want every member to know that our goal is to hold down the cost of electricity, but we can’t do it by ourselves, we need your help.

We are working with state and federal legislators to help them understand the financial impact of the policy decisions they make.

We encourage our legislators to have a balanced approach to energy legislation and help keep electricity costs affordable.

Piedmont Electric is continually working with our power suppliers to ensure that our wholesale rates are equitable and accurately reflect production costs.

The Cooperative’s distribution upgrades and improvements are being postponed until absolutely needed.

We are also implementing programs designed to reduce wholesale power costs and we are continually providing information and tools to you, the member, which can help you control your energy cost.

Please remember you, the consumer, control the switch. You alone decide when and how much electricity you buy. That’s where we can really use your help.

The cost of electricity depends on when you use it. Peak times are the most expensive times. The amount of electricity used on the hottest summer afternoons and the coldest winter mornings determines the amount of power plants, transmission lines and distribution lines needed to provide reliable service.

Whatever you can do to reduce your use of electricity during these peak times can save money for the Cooperative and, because we are not-for-profit, that means money saved for the member.

If you haven’t already, consider participating in Piedmont’s Beat the Peak and load control programs. Take advantage of the MyUsage.com program to monitor your energy use.

Use Piedmont’s energy efficiency services like free energy audits and TogetherWeSave.com to make your home more energy efficient.

Please help us control rising energy costs. We can do it if we work together.

If Your Power Goes Out, Call Us...

If your power goes out, call Piedmont Electric’s outage reporting number —800.449.2667— 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.
Be Sure You Use Portable Generator Safely

Portable generators can be helpful during an extended power outage. But if not operated properly, you can place yourself as well as line crews from your electric co-op at risk of injury or death.

The first rule of thumb? Never, ever use a generator indoors—even with windows open—or in an enclosed area, including an attached garage.

Locate the generator where fumes cannot filter into your home through windows or doors—even 15 feet is too close. Carbon monoxide, which is odorless and invisible, can build up to lethal levels in a matter of minutes.

If you plan to use a generator, install a carbon monoxide detector, and test the batteries monthly.

To avoid risk of shock, use your generator only on a dry surface where rain or snow can’t leak or puddle underneath. If precipitation poses a problem, create an open-air, tent-like structure above the unit, but make sure to leave at least three to four feet of space above and around it to vent carbon monoxide.

You also need to protect folks working to restore power. Never plug your portable generator into a wall outlet in your home. This produces “backfeeding”—a dangerous risk to the safety of lineworkers because it can energize power lines thought to be dead.

For stationary generators that are permanently installed, a licensed electrician will need to install a “transfer switch” that complies with the National Electric Code. The switch safely cuts the electricity to the power lines.

Be sure to call Piedmont Electric before you install a generator to ensure safety for yourself and lineworkers.

A few other rules are important to keep top of mind:

- Follow the manufacturer’s instructions and safety tips for your generator.
- Plug appliances into the outlet on the generator using only heavy-duty extension cords marked specifically for outdoor use. Check the wattage use of each appliance plugged in and make sure the total does not exceed the cord’s wattage rating. In addition, the cords should have three prongs and should not be frayed or cut.
- Shut down the generator and let it cool down before you refuel—gasoline or kerosene spilled on a hot generator could start a fire.
- If you’re buying your first portable generator, plan ahead. Count the wattages for the lighting and appliances—you’ll want to buy a generator that can handle the load.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, American Red Cross, Electrical Safety Foundation International

By the Numbers...

- 2,005 members have signed up for the use monitoring portion of www.MyUsage.com
- 792 members are participating in the FlexPay Program
- 459 members have turned in receipts for 4,456 CFLs, representing a total of 1,528,408 kWhs saved toward our Senate Bill 3 Mandate
- 35 solar water heater rebates given to members
- 870 electric water heater wraps sold
- 562 residential members on Time-of-Day Rates
- 830 visits to TogetherWeSave.com for a total calculated savings with the home savings calculator tool of $305,150.51
- 324 members have signed up to participate in the “Beat the Peak” program

August

Right-of-Way Maintenance

Orange County
Brookhollow Road
Lebanon Road
High Rock Road
Millcreek Road
Saddle Club Road

Person County:
Molly Mooney Road
Mt. Harmony Church Road
Oxford Road

Locations subject to change due to uncontrollable circumstances

Is an Electric Car in Your Future?

Please contact the Cooperative if you plan to buy an electric vehicle that will be charged at your home or business served by Piedmont Electric. We need to ensure the distribution transformer and conductors are adequately sized to serve this added load and that no safety issues exist.
BRIGHT IDEAS GRANTS PROVIDE ‘EXTRAS’ FOR LOCAL TEACHERS

Once again local teachers in Piedmont Electric’s area have the opportunity to win grants for innovative classroom projects through the Bright Ideas Grant Program.

To apply, teachers must submit an application that includes a description of the project’s goals, implementation method, creative elements and budget.

Applications will be judged in a competitive evaluation process, and judges will be on the lookout for projects that address students’ needs in creative ways.

Piedmont Electric awards grants up to $1,500.

Grants will be awarded in all disciplines and grade levels for creative, hands-on projects that would otherwise go unfunded.

Educators who submit their application by the early-bird deadline of August 17 will be entered to win a $500 Visa gift card.

Piedmont Electric, along with other electric cooperatives in the state, have allocated a combined resource of more than $600,000 to award educators across the state during the 2012-2013 school year.

Pass It On...

Do you have a favorite recipe you want to share with other Piedmont Electric members? If so, 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 your recipe is printed, you will receive a copy of a cookbook from the Cooperative Council of North Carolina. Please remember to check all ingredients and cooking directions.

Applications are due no later than September 14.

Teachers can learn more about the program and apply online at www.ncbrightideas.com.

The Bright Ideas Grant Program is part of the Cooperative’s ongoing commitment to our communities.

One of last year’s winners, Christie Watson of Gravelly Hill Middle School in Orange County, summed up her grant experience: “Because of your support and funding, I was able to purchase three Barnes and Noble NOOKs for my classroom, as well as a few books to put on them.

“My sixth grade readers were so excited to receive these NOOKs, and their delight lasted throughout the year. “Struggling students were able to read books on their level during silent reading, without the embarrassment of being seen with a ‘baby book.’

“Students were actively engaged when reading the NOOK books, because they were able to bookmark pages and type in notes and questions. I am so happy with the success my students experienced in using the NOOKs.

“Thank you so much for allowing us that opportunity!”

Bright Ideas Grants Provide ‘Extras’ for Local Teachers

Students in Cristie Watson’s sixth grade class at Gravelly Hill Middle School show off the NOOKS which were bought with a Bright Ideas Grant.

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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

Piedmont Electric and ElecTel Cooperative Federal Credit Union will be closed Monday, September 3, in observance of Labor Day. Employees will be on call.