



# Piedmont Electric Connection

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



Hillsborough, N.C.

www.pemc.coop

December 2011



## Food, Toy Drive Underway

Once again Piedmont Electric is collecting toys and food to donate to the children of Orange, Caswell and Person counties, and to others less fortunate who need toys and non-perishable food items.

Donations will be accepted at each of the Cooperative's offices until December 9.

New toys for children (infant to 12 years of age) and items for the teenage group (ages 13-18) are needed.

Cash donations will also be  
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*Piedmont Electric & ElecTel CCU will be closed for the Christmas holidays on Friday, December 23, and Monday, December 26, and for the New Year's holiday, on Monday, January 2, 2012. Employees will be on call. Please have a safe, blessed holiday.*

## Bright Idea Grants Awarded

Grants totaling \$20,029 have been awarded to teachers in the Cooperative's service area.

The grants, co-sponsored by Piedmont Electric and N.C. Association of Electric Cooperatives, are part of the Bright Ideas Grant Program.

Winners were chosen by an independent panel of judges.

*This year's grant recipients include:*

- **Jennifer Behringer**, Pathways Elementary School, Orange County, "Wind Farming"
- **Nina Daye**, Orange Senior High School, Orange County, "Rocking the World with OCCAM XII"
- **Brandon Thompson**, A. L. Stanback Middle School, Orange County, "Moving Forward with Robotics"
- **Sarah Davies**, New Hope Elementary School, Orange County, "Music for All"
- **Thomas Watson**, Gravelly

Hill Middle School, Orange County, "Unbroken/Honor Flight Project"

- **Kristie Mabry**, A. L. Stanback Middle School, Orange County, "Scientific Literacy for the Future"

- **Deanna Beckham**, Woodlawn Middle School, Alamance County, "Bungee and Catapult to Success with Equations"

- **Anita Hawks**, Seawell Elementary School, Chapel Hill/Carrboro Schools, "Finding Your Way"

- **Nancy Huskins**, A.L. Stanback Middle School, Orange County, "I'll See You SUCCEED and Raise You to GRADUATION!"

- **Nancy R. Cheek**, New Hope Elementary School, Orange County, "M-P-3 Read!"

- **Meredith Younger**, McDougle Elementary School, Chapel Hill/Carrboro School, "E-Reading Our Way to Excellence"

*(Continued on page 23)*



Mary Lee O. Currin



Alberto Jones

## 2011 COOPERATIVE DAY

Members who came by any of the Cooperative's three offices on October 19 were treated to light refreshments, gifts, a chance to learn more about Piedmont Electric's programs and services—and a chance to win a panini maker. Lucky winners in each of the offices include: Alberto Jones, Caswell office; Mary Lee O. Currin, Roxboro office, and Norman D. Atkins (not pictured) in the Hillsborough office.

Piedmont Electric Membership Corporation CONNECTION



## From Your President...

# Co-op Membership Works for You

R. G. Brecheisen

President & Chief Executive Officer

One of the most visible tenets of belonging to a cooperative is member ownership: You, our member-consumers, actually own Piedmont Electric.

And, one of the primary benefits of ownership is sharing in the “profits” generated by the business.

Piedmont Electric issues “patronage capital” based on the amount of electricity you buy during the year.

Better known as “capital credits,” this is each member’s “investment” in the business of Piedmont Electric.

Your electric cooperative works hard to keep rates as low as possible without affecting the quality of service you receive.

When we go through the budgeting process we are ever mindful to keep costs in line without

having huge margins that can cause rates to rise. However, we are required by our lenders to retain a minimal “cushion” to make sure the business remains financially solvent.

At the end of the year—after all the Cooperative’s bills have been paid—we calculate the amount of money left over, and assign the “profit” as capital credits, based on the amount of money each member has paid in to the business through electricity bills.

This amount is credited to each member’s account annually. However, Piedmont Electric does not return this money to members immediately.

The money is used to meet our lenders’ requirements and to help finance maintenance and improvements to the Cooperative’s electric system without having to borrow money from outside sources at high interest rates.

Your Board of Directors has determined the Cooperative to be in sound financial condition, and your investment in the business will be refunded based on the amount you paid through your electricity bills.

This year Piedmont Electric will be returning patronage/capital credits to members who were receiving service from the Cooperative in 1981 and 1982.

...

As we enter this special time of the year, I want to offer my thanks to all Piedmont Electric members and employees. I wish you all the blessings of the Christmas season, and I hope you all have a happy and prosperous New Year.

## General Retirement of Patronage Set

Consumers who were members of Piedmont Electric in 1981 and 1982 will soon receive their share of the capital credits for those years.

This is just one of the benefits of being a member of a cooperative. All money after the Co-op’s bills have been paid are returned to those who were receiving service based on the amount of electricity they bought during the affected years.

General retirement checks will be mailed to those active accounts with retirements of \$50 and more.

Those whose capital credit accounts are less than \$50 will receive credits on their electric bills.

Inactive accounts with general retirements of \$20 and more will

also receive a check, providing there is a current mailing address on file. For those with less than \$20 in their patronage account, money will be held until the \$20 amount is met in a future year.

With this retirement of capital credits, Piedmont Electric will be refunding approximately \$860,000 to current and former members this year, including approximately \$175,000 that is being returned to the estates of deceased members.

As a not-for-profit organization, the Cooperative refunds money as long as it is fiscally able to do so. Until a specific year is “retired,” the money is used for maintenance of the electrical system, and to allow Piedmont to meet the financial requirements of our lenders.

## If Your Power Goes Out...

When 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.



# Bright Idea Grants • (Continued from page 21)

• **Barbara Edwards**, Easley Elementary School, Durham County, "Reading Books with Nooks"

• **Beth Kirby**, Stoney Creek Elementary School, Caswell County, "Food, Fitness and Fun"

• **Krista Hawks**, Gravelly Hill Middle School, Orange County, "There's an Educational App for That"

• **Samantha Lawrence**, Stoney Creek Elementary School, Caswell County, "iPod Because iCan"

• **Amanda Hartness**, McDougale Elementary School, Chapel Hill/Carrboro Schools, "Principal's Challenge"

• **Jim Wise**, Chapel Hill High School, Chapel Hill/Carrboro Schools, "Peer Action Leadership Success (PALS)"

• **Diana Barefoot**, Grady Brown Elementary School, Orange County, "PVC Pipe Builder's Project"

• **Cristie Watson**, Gravelly Hill Middle School, Orange County, "Getting Kids 'Nooked' on Reading"

• **Melissa Barnhouse**, Gravelly Hill Middle School, Orange County, "Turning Kids into Life-Long Readers Using the Nook Color"

• **Alia Granger**, Orange Senior High School, Orange County, "Family Connections"

• **Susan Hess**, Helena Elementary School, Person County, "Creating Creatures with Clay"

Since the Bright Ideas Grant Program began in 1994, Piedmont Electric has awarded more than \$280,000 to local educators.

"The Cooperative is pleased to co-sponsor the Bright Ideas Grants as a means of providing exceptional learning situations in our local schools," says CEO R.G. Brecheisen.

## 'GREEN BAGS' MAKE GREAT GIFTS!

Need help with a last-minute holiday gift? Maybe Piedmont Electric's special "Green Energy Bag" kit will fill the bill.

The kit includes four CFLs (18-watt) and an electric water heater kit, and it's available for the low cost of only \$19.95, plus tax.

And, that's a bargain with the retail value of \$55! They make great gifts for family members or others who could use a little help with managing their electric costs. And, it's a gift that keeps on giving. These items can save as much as \$120 a year in electricity costs for the next 10 years. Each CFL can save as much as \$47 each over their 10,000 hours of use, and the electric water heater kit can save as much as \$100 per year in reduced hot water heating costs.

Also available is a Green Energy Bag with 20 CFLs (18-watt) for \$19.95, plus tax.

Pick up one or more of these Green Energy Bags at any Piedmont Electric office.



## By the Numbers...

- 1,830 members have signed up for the use monitoring portion of [www.MyUsage.com](http://www.MyUsage.com)
- 665 members are participating in the FlexPay Program
- 435 members have turned in receipts for 4,293 CFLs, representing a total of 1,472,499 kWhs saved toward our Senate Bill 3 Mandate
- 29 solar water heater rebates given to members
- 825 electric water heater wraps sold
- 541 members on Time-of-Day Rates
- 680 visits to TogetherWeSave.com for a total calculated savings with the home savings calculator tool of \$259,128.51



This young man enjoys playing with the toy Piedmont Electric bucket truck his parents won during Roxboro's Personality Day.

## Food, Toy Drive

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accepted at each office. Toys and non-perishable food items will be purchased for the drive with any cash donations received.

Non-perishable foods for the holiday season include canned/evaporated milk, cake mixes, sugar, dried fruits, popcorn, crackers, canned fruits, peanut butter, jelly, soup, candy, etc.

Piedmont Electric employees at the three branch offices will deliver these items to the Social Services Department in each of the three counties.

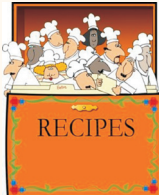
This project is part of the Cooperative's commitment to the communities in which we live and serve.

## 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.



## Please Pass On Your Recipes



This month's recipe for "Pecan Nut Cookies" comes from the newsletter editor's personal favorites.

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 your recipe is printed in the newsletter, you will receive a copy of a cookbook from the Cooperative Council of N. C. Please remember to check all ingredients and cooking directions.

### Pecan Nut Cookies

- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1.5 cups white sugar
- 3 eggs, well beaten
- 1 pound butter or margarine
- 5 cups self-rising flour
- 2 cups finely chopped pecans

Cream sugars and margarine together; add well-beaten eggs, then flour. Add nuts last.

Roll into five or six rolls and freeze. When ready to bake, cut into thin slices and bake at 350° until light brown.

Store in airtight containers.



## December Right-of-Way Maintenance

### Alamance County:

- Mebane Oaks Road
- Old Hillsborough Road
- Cook Street
- Pollard Acres Subdivision
- Jim Minor Road
- (and surrounding area)

Locations are subject to change due to uncontrollable circumstances.

## AVOID A HOLIDAY DECORATING DISASTER

Few traditions are as unique to the holidays as festooning our homes and yards with twinkling lights and festive decorations. While these displays add to the magic of the season, they also increase our risks for holiday fires and injuries.

Follow these steps to ensure that your traditions result in a safe, bright, and happy time for your family.



Carefully inspect each electrical decoration and extension cord before use, and discard any damaged items.

Cracked sockets, bare or frayed wires, and loose connections may cause a serious shock or fire. Avoid overloading outlets, which can overheat and also cause a fire.

Never connect more than three strands of incandescent lights together. Do not pinch cords in windows or doors, or under heavy furniture.

When decorating outside, make sure outdoor outlets are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Check that all items and extension cords are marked for outdoor use.

Exercise extreme caution when decorating near overhead power lines. Use a wooden or fiberglass ladder instead of metal. Keep yourself and all of your equipment at least 10 feet from power lines.

Take special care with Christmas trees. If buying a live tree, check for freshness. Heated rooms dry out live trees—even fresh ones—rapidly.

Place the tree at least three feet away from all heat sources, includ-

ing fireplaces and space heaters. Be sure to keep the stand filled with water. For artificial trees, look for the label "fire resistant."

Decorate your tree, live or artificial, with non-combustible or flame-resistant materials. Never use burning candles on or near your tree.

Whether your house is the most festive on the block or you prefer a more low-key style,

make safety an important part of your holiday preparations.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation

## Piedmont Electric CONNECTION

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2500 N.C. Highway 86 South, P. O. Drawer 1179, Hillsborough, N.C. 27278

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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

**Remember: Turn in your CFL receipts to get up to a \$15 credit/year on your electric bill.**