

Piedmont Electric CONNECTION

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

Hillsborough, N.C.

www.pemc.org

July 2010

Piedmont Earns 'Green Plus' Certification



Your electric cooperative has earned Green Plus Certification from the Institute of Sustainable Development.

The certification is based on the Cooperative's efforts toward improving the quality of life through eco-friendly practices which sustain and support the environment.

The locally-based Institute of Sustainable Development is a nationwide organization comprised of business, academic and community leaders whose mission includes developing a common understanding of sustainability principles across cultures.

Green Plus, the Institute's flagship program, helps employers improve their competitiveness and environmental and social performance, and gives them access to a North American network of potential clients, peers and mentors.

It also helps them distinguish themselves in a competitive marketplace.

Only organizations that achieve exceptional scores in the three areas of sustainability (people, planet and performance) receive the designation of Certified Green Plus, according to the Institute.

"We're pleased our efforts to be an environmentally and ecologically responsible organization have been recognized," says R.G. Brecheisen, CEO of Piedmont Electric.

Keep Comfortable this Summer

With summer firmly entrenched, there are some low-cost steps you can take to help keep your home comfortable and to help lower your energy bills.

■ If you have not already done so, have your air conditioner checked by a qualified professional.

This typically includes a check on refrigerant levels, the compressor, hoses, ductwork and the thermostat.

■ Turn up your thermostat. Set the thermostat 78 degrees F. when you are at home, and up to 85 degrees F. when you will be away.

A programmable thermostat is an excellent way to save energy and maintain home comfort year-round.

■ Make sure your thermostat is not located near lamps or electronic appliances.

It can sense heat from these devices and make your air conditioner run longer.

■ Replace air conditioner filters. Dirty filters restrict airflow and cause your system to run longer, thus wasting energy.

Replace your filter at least once a month.

■ Weatherstrip, seal and caulk leaky doors and windows and install foam gaskets behind outlet covers.

■ On warm sunny days, keep window coverings closed to prevent solar heat gain.

■ Use ceiling or room fans in occupied rooms. These will get



air moving and help to reduce the temperature.

■ Have the windows in your home tinted. Tinting is effective at blocking the rays of the sun from reflecting through the glass of your windows and into your home.

■ If your home's air conditioning unit is older, consider replacing it with a newer, more efficient model.

Be sure to buy a product that is ENERGY STAR-certified for energy efficient performance.

■ Make sure your home is properly insulated. This will reduce energy costs and keep you comfortable in summer and winter.

■ Plant leafy shade trees around the south and west corners of your home. Trees will keep the hot sunlight away from your home in the summer to reduce cooling costs.





From Your President...

Voicing Our Opinions in Washington...

R. G. Brecheisen
Chief Executive Officer & President

For some time now we have been asking you to contact your elected officials to let them know how proposed legislation would affect you and your electric cooperative.

In May, electric cooperatives from throughout the country including a delegation from Piedmont Electric went to Washington to meet with our legislative representatives face-to-face.

We discussed three primary areas of concern with them:

- Creation of the Rural Energy Savings Program (RESP)
- RUS Funding and Restrictions to RUS Lending
- The Effect Regulation of Carbon Dioxide Emissions would have on Electric Cost

RESP would provide low interest loan funding for energy efficiency improvements for members to their homes. The RESP has provisions that consumers will see payback for energy efficiency improvements within 10 years of making these consumer loans. After the loan is paid, consumers will save hundreds of dollars annually.

Piedmont Electric already has a number of programs in place to help you make the best use of the energy you buy.

Among these is the installation of "smart meters" which provides members with the option of checking daily electricity use.

In conjunction with this are the websites MyUsage.com and TogetherWeSave.com, as well as the FlexPay program.

For many years the Cooperative has offered free home energy analyses by experienced

energy advisors, low interest loans for making energy efficient improvements to members' homes and HVAC advice from qualified specialists.

The RESP program will allow us to expand our loan programs and make energy efficiency improvements more affordable to our members.

Piedmont Electric strongly supports the creation of RESP. Energy efficiency improvement is a "least-cost" generation resource.

Reducing energy use can delay or prevent the need to construct new electric generating resources and reduce carbon dioxide emissions. This maintains affordability by keeping rates low.

The second item is the reductions and restrictions proposed to the RUS Loan Program. Capital available through the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) makes it possible for cooperatives to construct and maintain distribution and generation systems.

These interest-bearing loans, provided by the RUS Electric Loan Program, help us make these worthwhile investments possible and allow cooperatives to stabilize consumer rates.

Now more than ever, we need a fully funded loan program to perform the activities essential to keeping the lights on and providing affordable electricity for our members.

And finally, we expressed our concern to our legislators on how carbon dioxide emission regulations would affect the price of electricity to you our members. We believe more involvement from Congress is needed to ensure the costs of regulations and the effect on the economy is a factor in any regulation.

These are but a few of the issues that could affect your electric cooperative as Congress addresses proposed legislation.

We encourage you to contact your representatives and ask them to support the RESP House Bill (H.R.) 4785 and Senate Bill (S.) 3102.

Piedmont Electric will continue to keep in contact with our elected officials—and we hope you will, too.

Chief Operating Officer Richard Mabbott (left) was part of the Cooperative's delegation who met with Rep. Brad Miller.



KEEP FOOD SAFE IF ELECTRICITY GOES OUT

It's important to keep cold food safe during a power outage, and a little advanced preparation and know-how can keep your family safe from food-borne bacteria.

Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature.

If unopened, a refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about four hours; a full freezer will do so for about 48 hours (24 hours if it's half-full).

A sure-fire way to know if food is safe is to monitor its temperature.



Teachers!

Get a head start on your 2010-2011 Bright Ideas grant applications. Details are online at www.ncbrightideas.com or www.pemc.org. This year's deadline is September 20, 2010.

By the Numbers...

- 1,095 members have signed up for the use monitoring portion of www.MyUsage.com
- 403 members are participating in the FlexPay Program
- 347 members have turned in receipts for 3,493 CFLs, representing a total of 1,198,099 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
- 454 electric water heater wraps sold

Meat, poultry, fish and eggs should be refrigerated at or below 40 degrees F. and frozen food at or below 0 degrees F.

If the power goes out, a digital, dial, or instant-read food thermometer and appliance thermometers will help you know if the food remains at safe temperatures.

If the power stays out for a prolonged period, there are a few ways to aid your refrigerator and freezer in the fight to keep things cold.

The simplest tip is to keep your freezer full. If it's not full, group items close together to preserve the cold.

Dry ice can help keep freezers cold. It takes about 25 pounds to keep a full, 10-cubic foot freezer safe for three to four days. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic foot full freezer for two days.

Wear heavy-duty gloves or use tongs when handling dry ice—the temperature of dry ice is -216 degrees F.—and separate it from food

with cardboard to prevent freezer burn.

Make sure your food is still safe by either checking its temperature or looking for ice crystals. If frozen food is 40 degrees F. or below, or if ice crystals are visible, it's safe to refreeze.

Discard any perishable refrigerated food (meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers) that have been above 40 degrees for two hours.

Fuel Cell Unit Is Set for Cedar Ridge High

Cedar Ridge High School in Orange County is breaking ground with the first hydrogen fuel cell demonstration unit to be installed at a North Carolina High School.

Piedmont Electric is working with the MicroCell Corporation to coordinate the placement of the unit for the school.

EARTH DAY CONTEST WINNERS NAMED

Four local elementary school students have each won \$50 U.S. Savings Bonds for their entries in Piedmont Electric's Earth Day Art Contest.

All the elementary schools in the Cooperative's service area were invited to participate.

The winners, who were selected by Piedmont Electric's "Green Team," include:

- Kaila Marie Desrochers, Hillsborough, Grade 5, Pathways School
- Drew Mincey, Hurdle Mills, Grade 2, Pathways School
- Jack R. Wasielewski, Hillsborough, Grade 5, New Hope School
- Giesele Solis Morales, Durham, Grade 2, New Hope School



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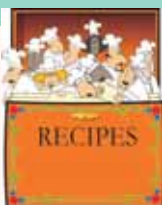
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Pass It On...

This month's recipe for "Too Many Zucchini" comes from Florence Garland 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.

Too Many Zucchini?

2 large onions
1-2 large green bell peppers
1 large zucchini
1 small can chopped water chestnuts OR 2 tablespoons coarsely chopped pecans
1 tablespoon raisins
1 medium apple, peeled, cored and sliced (optional)
2 tablespoons butter or oil
1 teaspoon "five spices" nutmeg and ginger
Salt and pepper, to taste
1 small kielbasa, sliced diagonally (optional)

Saute thinly sliced onions in butter or oil. When translucent, add peppers cut in narrow strips, zucchini in very thin slices and water chestnuts.

Add spices, salt and pepper, then sliced kielbasa. Cover and simmer about five minutes. Finally, add apple slices and raisins and simmer about five minutes more.



For a Good Cause...

4-H Clubs in Caswell, Orange and Person counties were the recipients of proceeds from a golf tournament sponsored by Piedmont Electric. Each county's organization got \$2,835 to use to promote 4-H Clubs in their area. The Cooperative sponsors the tournament annually as part of its commitment to the communities we serve.



Orange County
Highway 157 North
Walnut Grove Church Road
Laws Store Road
Wilkerson Road
Caswell County
Cherry Grove Road
Wagon Wheel Road
Stoney Creek School Road
(and surrounding areas)



Piedmont Electric CONNECTION

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Cathy J. Johnson, CCC, Editor

