



Piedmont Electric

# CONNECTION

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



Hillsborough, N.C.

www.pemc.coop

July 2011

## WHAT IS A WPCA?

Every month there is an item listed on your electricity bill that shows a credit or a charge for the wholesale power cost adjustment (WPCA).

But, just what is a WPCA, why is it a separate item on your power bill and why does it change so often?

Piedmont Electric has rate schedules that reflect the cost of delivering electricity to its members. These rates are set based on rate studies that are done periodically and can remain unchanged for years at a time.

The rates include the average cost of wholesale power when the rates were developed. But, wholesale power costs vary each month. The WPCA is the mechanism used to true up the actual cost of power to the cost of power incorporated in the rates.

Rather than doing frequent, costly rate studies, Piedmont Electric and other electric cooperatives nationwide, depend on the WPCA to reflect the actual costs of the changing markets.

When the actual costs are lower, you receive a credit on your bill. When they are higher, the WPCA is shown as a charge.

The amount of the WPCA is multiplied by the number of kilowatt-hours each consumer uses. This way, everyone pays his or her fair share.

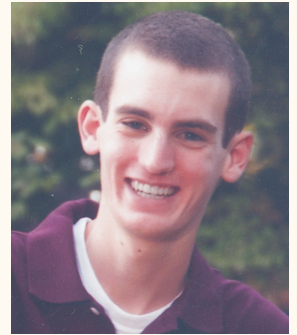
*Piedmont Electric & ElecTel CCU will be closed Monday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day.*



*Hannah Allison*



*Benjamin Darr*



*Michael Pratt*

## Students Chosen for Co-op Scholarships

Four recent area high school graduates have each been chosen to receive a \$1,000 scholarship from Piedmont Electric.

The students were selected by an independent panel of judges based on their applications, scholastic achievement and extracurricular activities.

All are children of members of the Cooperative.

This year's winners include: Hannah Allison, Benjamin Darr, Michael Pratt and Louis Vaught.

**Hannah**, daughter of Jackie and Tom Allison of Efland, was graduated from Orange High School. She plans to attend UNC-Chapel Hill.

**Benjamin**, son of Kathy and

Douglas Darr of Timberlake, is a graduate of Roxboro Community School. He plans to attend N.C. State University.

**Michael** is the son of Dawn and David Pratt of Hillsborough. A graduate of Cedar Ridge High School, he also plans to attend N.C. State University.

**Louis**, son of Lynne Bresler and Mike Vaught of Chapel Hill, was graduated from Carrboro High School. He plans to attend Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Indiana.



*Louis Vaught*

## Smart Meter Technology Enables Smarter Load Control

Your cooperative has begun a three-year project to replace the outdated load management equipment with smarter two-way switch equipment. With our new two-way smart meter technology, Piedmont Electric now has the ability to make our load control program smarter. The devices that are currently controlling many members air conditioners and water heaters to help lower their electric bills have equipment that uses twenty-five year old technology. Load management programs help lower members electric bills and helps your cooperative control demand at peak periods which result in lower wholesale power prices.



From Your President...

# Finding the Value of Electricity

R. G. Brecheisen

President & Chief Executive Officer

Nowadays, cell phones and personal digital devices are a part of our culture. Everyone, it seems, is connected on the go—whether they're just making phone calls, text messaging or checking e-mail. Such communication freedom is a luxury we pay for—generally without grumbling.

So why is it that when it comes to electricity—a necessity in our modern world—many of us grumble and complain when the electric bill comes every month?

We expect electricity to be there at the flip of the switch, and when it's not, we get angry or frustrated.

Hey, I'm no different—I expect the lights to come on every time, too. And as the CEO of Piedmont Electric, I have a special responsibility to make sure your electric service is safe, reliable and affordable.

But I also believe that, when compared to other commodities, electricity remains a great value.

For example, over the past 10 years, gasoline has shot up 10.9% on average every single year, according to the U.S. Bureau of

Labor Statistics. A loaf of white bread has increased 4.2% annually, and a dozen eggs 6.5% per year.

In comparison, electricity has increased just 2.6% a year for the past decade for Piedmont Electric and nationally electricity has increased only 3.7% a year for the past decade.

When you consider how reliable electricity is, the value goes up even more. Of course, we're working hard to reduce even brief service interruptions, control operating costs through innovative technology and provide tools for our members that help them lower their electricity bills.

With the summer heat upon us we can expect higher electric bills as our electric use increases to keep us comfortable during these hot summer days.

Piedmont Electric offers numerous tools such as, [TogetherWeSave.com](#) and [MyUsage.com](#), as well as programs such as free residential home energy audits and rebates that can help you keep electricity affordable and a good value.

Those cell phones I mentioned

earlier? Nearly a third of all U.S. households have four electronic devices, such as cell phones, plugged in and charging, according to the Residential Energy Consumption Survey by the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

In the past 30 years, the amount of residential electricity used by appliances and electronics has increased from 17% to 31%.

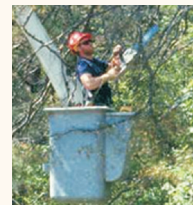
More homes than ever use major appliances and central air conditioning. Digital video recorders (DVRs), computers and multiple televisions can also be found in all homes.

Clearly, our appetite for electricity shows no signs of slowing down. So the next time you flip a switch, use your toaster, run your washing machine or watch television, remember the value electricity holds.

And know that we at Piedmont Electric are looking out for you by working together to keep electric bills affordable, controlling costs through innovation, and putting you, our members, first.

## By the Numbers...

- 1,846 members have signed up for the use monitoring portion of [www.MyUsage.com](#)
- 595 members are participating in the FlexPay Program
- 414 members have turned in receipts for 4,123 CFLs, representing a total of 1,414,189 kWhs saved toward our Senate Bill 3 Mandate
- 28 solar water heater rebates given to members
- 792 electric water heater wraps sold
- 545 residential members on Time-of-Day Rates
- 522 visits to [TogetherWeSave.com](#) for a total calculated savings with the home savings calculator tool of \$216,118.51.



## July Right-of-Way Maintenance

Person County

Helena-Moriah Road  
Surl Mt. Tirzah Road  
Dink Ashley Road  
Antioch Church Road  
(and surrounding area)



*Golfers took to the course at The Challenge in Alamance County to help Piedmont Electric raise funds for the 4-H Clubs in Caswell, Orange and Person counties. The event raised about \$1,500 to be distributed to each of the county programs in 2011.*

## Change Air Filter to Save Money, Energy

It's hot this summer. That means your air conditioning system is working hard to keep you comfortable. Here's a tip that can help your cooling system operate more efficiently—and save you money.

Change your air filter regularly. It only takes a couple of minutes to change the air filter in your heating/cooling system. It's simple and easy.

As *TogetherWeSave.com* has shown, changing your filter every month can save you \$82 a year.

Changing your air filter regularly helps to ensure efficient operation and keep your electricity bill in check.

What's more, a dirty air filter allows dust and dirt to build up in your system.

Changing your air filter regular-

ly can reduce the need for costly maintenance and prevent damage to your system.

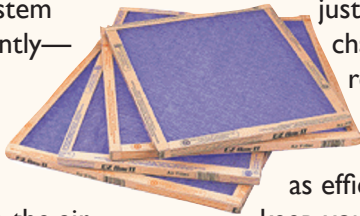
And when winter arrives, it's just as important to change your air filter regularly.

Your heating system needs to work as efficiently as possible to keep you warm, and a clean air filter helps it do that.

Experts recommend turning your system off before changing the air filter.

Make sure the arrow on the filter—which indicates the direction of the airflow—is pointing toward the blower motor.

When you've made the change, turn your system back on. To save time, it's a good idea to keep a couple of spare filters on hand.



## If Your Power Goes Out Call Us...

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.



## GOOD HABITS START YOUNG.



**Saving energy is a learned behavior. Find out how your local electric cooperative can help you lead by example at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com)**



What are you waiting for?  
Sign up for

***MyUsage.com!***

And while you're at it, check out the free new smart phone app ***TogetherWeSave.com!***

## Bright Ideas Are Coming!

Teachers are reminded that Bright Ideas Grant applications will be due not long after school starts again in the Fall!

The primary elements of the online application process include an explanation of the project and its creative elements, as well as its potential benefits to students.

A sample application and contact information for program coordinators are available on the Bright Ideas website, [www.ncbright-ideas.com](http://www.ncbright-ideas.com).

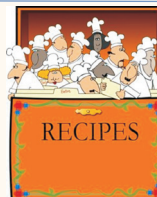
## Is There an Electric Car in Your Future?

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 Favorite Recipe

This month's recipe for "So-Easy Cherry Fudge Cake" comes from Jean McCorkle of Oxford.

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 N. C. Please remember to check all ingredients and cooking directions.



### SO-EASY CHERRY FUDGE CAKE

- |                                   |                                    |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 package devil's food cake       | 1 cup sugar                        |
| 1 21-ounce can cherry pie filling | 1/3 cup milk                       |
| 2 large eggs                      | 5 tablespoons butter               |
| 1 teaspoon almond extract         | 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate morsels |

Preheat oven to 350°. Beat first four ingredients at low speed with a heavy duty mixer for 20 seconds. Increase speed to medium and beat one minute longer. Pour batter into greased and floured 9"X13" pan.

Bake at 350° for 27 to 30 minutes until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool cake in pan.

Bring sugar, milk and butter to a boil in a 3-quart pan over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. Boil one minute. Remove from heat; stir in chocolate morsels until melted and smooth. Quickly spread frosting over warm cake. Cool completely for about one hour before serving.

## HERE'S YOUR *Electrical Safety* VACATION CHECKLIST

Summer vacations are hard to pull off these days, so it's important that trip-takers have peace of mind while away.

Fires can start when lightning storms strike electronics or small appliances; burglaries tend to increase because folks aren't at home.

The following electrical safety checklist can help you decrease the risk of problems occurring while you are on vacation:

- ☒ Turn off all electrical appliances, including toaster ovens, stoves and curling irons.
- ☒ Unplug television sets and computers. These items are especially susceptible to lightning and power surges.



☒ Use a timer on indoor lights. Look for one that can be set to a random pattern rather than regular times throughout the day.

☒ Install motion-detecting lights outdoors.

☒ Set the thermostat to 80° in the summer and 55° in the winter if you plan to leave for an extended period of time.

☒ Give your house key to a neighbor and make sure he or she has a phone number where you can be reached.

## 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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Hillsborough: **919.732.2123** • Caswell County: **336.421.1296**

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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