

Piedmont Electric CONNECTION

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Hillsborough, N.C.

www.pemc.coop

March 2012

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF COOPERATIVES TAKES CENTER STAGE

Electric cooperatives and other members of the co-op family take center stage globally in 2012, designated the International Year of Cooperatives.

The International Year of Cooperatives' theme, "Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World," resonates with co-ops in the electric, banking, food, retail, housing and marketing arenas.

Cooperatives are a global network of independent, local businesses owned by those they serve. They share a common set of business principles and values like self-help and democracy. Each co-op exists to meet the needs of its members.

According to the National Cooperative Business Association

(NCBA), more than 29,200 cooperatives nationally employ two million Americans. One in every four Americans is a co-op member, but the scope of the cooperative network doesn't stop at the border.

Co-ops are a major economic force in industrialized countries and provide a powerful business model for developing nations.

More than one billion co-op members exist worldwide, and co-ops generate 100 million jobs globally. Cooperatives strive for sustainable development of com-

(Continued on page 27)



If you missed last year's Annual Meeting, make sure you circle the date on your calendar so you don't miss this year's very important meeting.

ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR APRIL 20

"Electric Cooperatives Build A Better World" is the theme for the Annual Meeting of the Members of Piedmont Electric which is set for Friday, April 20, 2012, at Orange High School in Hillsborough.

Three seats will be up for election on the Cooperative's Board of Directors. The following are the incumbents on the Board whose terms expire, as well as their respective Directorate Districts:

- Doug Simmons, District 3
- Bill Barber, District 7
- Richard Roberts, District 8

In addition to the election, there will be reports on the prog-

ress of Piedmont Electric and plans for the future. Entertainment for the evening will be provided by the Dove Brothers.

Plus, there will be "information stations" on some of the Cooperative's programs and services, prizes and light refreshments.

The top prize money this year will be \$500 cash to one lucky member.

Please circle April 20 on your calendar and make plans to attend this year's Annual Meeting of the Members. Registration begins at 6 p.m., followed by the business meeting at 8 p.m. We hope to see you there.

You Can Help 'Beat the Peak'

By reducing the demand for electricity during high use periods, all Piedmont Electric member-consumers can help cut the amount the Cooperative pays its wholesale power supplier.

Last month, the "Beat the Peak" program was kicked off—and the response from our members has been strong. But, EVERYONE's help is needed.

As part of the "Beat the Peak" program, we will be asking you to adjust your thermostat, turn off lights and de-



(Continued on page 28)

From Your President...

What's Driving Power Costs?

R. G. Brecheisen

President & Chief Executive Officer



A new car arrives with fresh paint, a great smell and a hefty price tag. After a few years of regular payments, the new car scent is gone, but there's more value in this older car that's still running well.

Most of America's electric providers bought a fleet of new "cars"—power plants—in the 1970s and 1980s. This ample stock of generation allowed co-ops to maintain a safe, reliable and affordable supply of power. Current conditions may place affordability and reliability at risk.

Half of the nation's total generating capacity—530,000 megawatts—passed the 30-year mark by the end of 2010, according to the U.S. Energy Information Association (EIA).

As with an older vehicle, there are costs associated with maintaining a power plant—expenses compounded by environmental regulations. In fact, these rules could result in a number of America's coal-fired power plant fleet shutting down by 2018.

This would require electric utilities to build new generation plants to replace the old plants and meet growing demand. However, with

required environmental controls coupled with rising prices for construction materials, new power plants—as well as older ones "in for maintenance"—are going to be much more expensive.

All of these factors will impact our electric bills for many years to come. Our collective wallets will be under pressure.

Today, nearly 45% of the power provided to Piedmont Electric comes from coal. The majority of coal power plants were built between 1975 and 1986, when building natural gas facilities was restricted by the federal Power Plant and Industrial Fuel Use Act due to concerns that natural gas reserves were running low.

Of course, those worries proved to be unfounded, and the law was repealed in 1987. But by then utilities had already built a number of coal-fired power plants—the same plants that are now being saddled with heavy regulatory costs.

We are not against clean and green energy. In fact, generation and transmission utilities like Duke Energy and Progress Energy, which supplies us with wholesale power, as well as

Piedmont Electric—have invested in green energy, nuclear and clean coal.

We support alternative energy sources such as renewable energy and energy efficiency, but unfortunately, these alternatives are not adequate to supply your energy needs if these older base-load coal power plants are mothballed.

We want to make sure lawmakers in Washington, D.C., keep balance with common sense and affordability in mind when adding layer upon layer of requirements to the way we generate power.

Working with the folks at our national service arm, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, we're urging the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to consider a balanced and common-sense approach to rules, and how increased electric power costs affect consumers like you and me.

Stay informed on these issues and find out how you can help us keep the price of power affordable at www.ourenergy.coop.

•••

Every year we hear reports of children being seriously and often fatally wounded around electrical equipment. This re-enforces the need for safe conduct around electricity and the equipment used to deliver this powerful force.

Children must be taught to stay away from substations and electrical equipment such as transmission towers. What may appear to a young person as challenging or exciting, has very deadly consequences.

Please talk with your children about the dangers of electricity. It could save their lives.

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.



Make Your Home More Energy Efficient

Spring marks a perfect time of year to make your home more energy efficient. Here are five quick tips that will save both energy and money:

1. Seal cracks and gaps around your home. As you put away your storm windows consider adding weather stripping around leaky doors and caulking around window frames.

TogetherWeSave.com, a website sponsored by Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives, the branding program of the nation's not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric co-ops, shows how easy it is to use a caulking gun to seal up leaks around vents, ductwork and windows.

A typical Piedmont Electric consumer can save more than \$200 annually by taking this simple step.

2. Change filters regularly. Change furnace/heat pump and air conditioner filters monthly. Dirty filters restrict air flow and reduce

the overall efficiency of your heating and cooling system by making it work harder.

3. Clean the refrigerator inside and out.

Now's a good time to not only throw out that left-over fruitcake from the holidays but check the temperature settings on your refrigerator. Ideally, a refrigerator's temperature should be between 37 and 40 degrees for maximum operating efficiency.

When it's time to replace that old refrigerator, be sure to buy one that's ENERGY STAR rated. These energy-efficient appliances can save Piedmont Electric members as much as \$100 a year based on calculations from *TogetherWeSave.com*.

4. Think sun block. *TogetherWe-*

Save.com points out that by pulling down the shades on your windows this spring and summer, you

could save about \$35 a year.

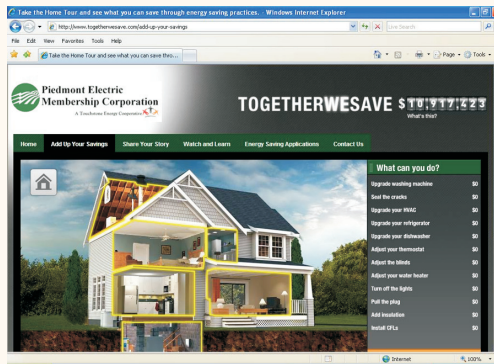
A local hardware store likely carries lots of inexpensive window coverings. Best of all,

by blocking the sun, your house will stay cool and comfortable year-round.

5. Enjoy spring breezes.

Use a clothesline during warmer months and let sunlight and breezes dry clothes naturally. This will reduce your electric bill by not running a dryer, and add a genuine clean scent to your family's laundry.

You can learn more about ways to lower your monthly energy bill by visiting *TogetherWeSave.com* or by calling the energy specialists at Piedmont Electric.



By the Numbers...

- 1,912 members have signed up for the use monitoring portion of www.MyUsage.com
- 696 members are participating in the FlexPay Program
- 447 members have turned in receipts for 4,412 CFLs, representing a total of 1,513,316 kWhs saved toward our Senate Bill 3 Mandate
- 33 solar water heater rebates given to members
- 865 electric water heater wraps sold
- 550 residential members on Time-of-Day Rates
- 746 visits to TogetherWeSave.com for a total calculated savings with the home savings calculator tool of \$269,690.51

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF COOPERATIVES

(Continued from page 25)

communities through member-driven policies, with co-op leaders elected by members.

The innovative practices of co-ops provide consumer-focused solutions that can adapt quickly to change. Unlike competitive, profit-driven businesses, co-ops cooperate with each other to fashion programs that improve service.

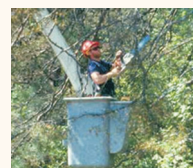
Electric cooperatives are leading the way nationally in deploying technologies that enhance service reliability.

You can find co-ops for all walks of life. When people unite with a common goal, the co-op business model comes into play.

Electric cooperatives like Piedmont EMC are leaders, delivering

power and light to 42 million consumers in 47 states covering more than 75% of the nation's landmass.

Building a better world takes experience, and no group has more experience in bringing low-cost power to remote areas than electric co-ops.



March Right-of-Way Maintenance

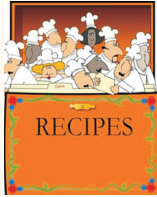
Orange County
Ferguson Road
Bowden Road

Damascus Church Road
Old Fayetteville Road
(and surrounding areas)

Locations are subject to change due to uncontrollable circumstances

Pass It On...

This month's recipe comes from Saralynn Hester of Middleburg, NC.



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.

Good Ol' Southern Corn Pudding

2 tablespoons flour
1/2 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 cup milk
1/4 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups corn
3 tablespoons butter, melted

Mix flour and sugar. Add to well beaten eggs. Beat in milk and vanilla. Then add corn and stir. Pour into 8x8-inch or 9x9-inch casserole that has been pre-greased with the melted butter. Stir again.

Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes, or until golden brown crusting on top.

Recipe can be served hot immediately with a more runny texture, or let set overnight in the refrigerator if a more custard-like consistency is desired.

It's Time to Spring Forward!

Remember to turn your clocks ahead Sunday, March 11.



Beat the Peak • (Continued from page 25)

lay the use of major appliances on hot summer weekdays between 1 p.m. and 6 p.m.

When Piedmont Electric thinks a peak situation is imminent, the Cooperative will send a text message or email to members who volunteer to participate. This information will also be posted on the website at www.pemc.coop.

Members will be asked to adjust their cooling system thermostats

Teach Children How to be Safe Outdoors

With warm weather on the way, children will be playing outdoors more. Please talk with them about these safety rules.

- **Never climb trees near power lines.** Even if the power lines are not touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch.
- **Fly kites and model airplanes in large open areas** like a park or a field, safely away from trees and overhead power lines. If a kite gets stuck in a tree that's near power lines, don't climb up to get it.
- **Never climb a utility pole or tower.**
- **Don't play on or around pad-mounted electrical equipment.**
- **Never go into an electric substation for any reason.**

Electric substations contain high-voltage equipment, which can be deadly. Never rescue a pet or retrieve a ball or toy that goes inside. Call Piedmont Electric instead.

Spring showers bring more than tempting puddles for kids to splash in, they can also leave electric hazards behind.

Flooded areas are never safe spots to wade or play in, and may be in contact with energized electrical equipment or fallen power lines.

by at least three degrees and to limit their electricity use.

To volunteer to receive these alerts, text **BTPEAK** to **85700** to enroll for text alerts, or send an email to BeatThePeak@pemc.coop for email notices, or call the Cooperative at 800.222.3107.

Wholesale power is Piedmont Electric's biggest expense. A large portion of that cost is determined on peak days, usually hot summer afternoons.

With your help, we will be able to reduce the summer peak load which will benefit the Cooperative and our members with lower wholesale power costs.

Piedmont Electric CONNECTION

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

R. G. Brecheisen, President & CEO

DIRECTORS:

Bill R. Barber, Chairman
Paul L. Bailey, Vice Chairman
Douglas Simmons, Secretary
H. James Kinley, Treasurer
Stephen C. Long, David Poythress, Richard Roberts, Richal Vanhook, Sam T. Woods & Talmadge W. Yancey

...

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