



Piedmont Electric CONNECTION

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



Hillsborough, N.C.

www.pemc.coop

March 2011

Planning to Buy an Electric Car?

Please contact the Cooperative if you are planning to buy an electric vehicle that will be charged at your home or business served by Piedmont EMC.

We need to ensure the distribution transformer and conductors are adequately sized to serve this added load and that no safety issues exist—such as backfeeding onto the grid which is very dangerous for our linemen.

Call us at 800.222.3107 to ensure your safety and the safety of the Cooperative's employees!



Save the Date!

Plans are already underway for this year's Annual Meeting of the Members of Piedmont Electric.

Once again, Orange Senior High School will be the location and **Friday, April 15**, is the date for the meeting.

By popular demand, entertainment will again be provided by Cody Shuler and Pine Mountain Railroad.

So, circle the date on your calendars and plan to attend!

Piedmont EMC & ElecTel will be closed on Friday, April 22, for the Easter holiday. Employees will be on call. Please have a safe, happy holiday.



Take Charge of Your Energy Use

Spring will be here later this month, so now is a great time to make your home more energy-efficient.

Piedmont Electric provides a variety of tools and resources to help manage energy use, including free home energy audits, rebates to qualified members for installing efficient electric heat pumps and solar water heaters, as well as a special Energy Star Home rate schedule.

Members have access to TogetherWeSave.com—a website that provides an abundance of information on managing energy use.

In recent years, Piedmont Electric has offered members the opportunity to monitor their daily electricity use through MyUsage.com.

This was made possible when the Cooperative installed a Smart Grid system.

In addition to the programs and services offered by Piedmont Electric, here are some quick tips to help save both energy and money.

■ Seal the cracks and gaps around your home. Spring may be the right time to put away those storm windows, but it is also a good time to add weather-stripping and caulking around leaky window panes.

TogetherWeSave.com shows how easy it is to use a caulking gun to seal up leaks around your house around doors, vents, ductwork and windows. It can save more than \$200 annually.

■ Change filters regularly. Furnace and air conditioner filters



need to be changed monthly and this can really help lower monthly energy bills. Dirty filters can restrict air flow and reduce the overall efficiency of your cooling system and make it work even harder on hot summer days.

■ Clean the refrigerator inside and out. Now is a good time to 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 an ENERGY STAR® rated appliance. Energy-efficient appliances can save members as much as \$100 a year based on calculations from the TogetherWeSave.com website.

■ Think sun block. TogetherWeSave.com demonstrates that by pulling the shades on your windows this spring and summer, you could save about \$35 a year.

Your local hardware or do-it-yourself store has lots of inexpensive window coverings. Best of all, by blocking the sun, your house will stay cool and comfortable year-round.



From Your President...

On Power Supply & Renewable Energy...

R. G. Brecheisen

Chief Executive Officer & President

Piedmont Electric has negotiated a revised long-term agreement with Duke Energy related to supplying a large portion of our wholesale power resource needs.

Through the agreement, Duke Energy will continue to provide power scheduling services and will serve an increasing amount of the Cooperative's wholesale power requirements through 2031.

The agreement also includes options for demand side management provisions and treatment of renewable energy resources, both options will be financially beneficial to Piedmont Electric.

This agreement with Duke Energy secures a reliable and cost-effective power supply for our members for many years into the future.

The proposed merger between Duke Energy and Progress Energy, effective at year-end if approved, is expected to provide us with additional wholesale, load management and renewable energy cost savings opportunities.

We will know more as the merger deal progresses through the regulatory approval process and we will keep you informed through this newsletter.



Piedmont Electric will receive an estimated 405,000 kWhs yearly in renewable energy credits from a new solar project being built in Hertford County, North Carolina.

GreenCo Solutions, which is comprised of Piedmont Electric and 21 other electric cooperatives statewide, is buying renewable energy certificates and electricity from this new solar project. This project is referred to as the Murfreesboro Solar Project and is to be completed late 2011.

These renewable energy credits will help us achieve compliance with the N.C. Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard, referred to as the Senate Bill 3 mandate.

The solar farm will be built on roughly 37 acres of leased land near Murfreesboro, which is approximately 120 miles northeast of Raleigh.

Groundbreaking at the 6.4-megawatt Murfreesboro Solar Project is expected this spring.

When completed in late 2011, the solar farm will be capable of generating enough electricity to power about 700 average-sized homes.



Next month Piedmont Electric will hold the most important event of the Cooperative's year when members gather for the 2011 Annual Meeting.

We hope you will make plans to attend the meeting to hear more about the progress your cooperative has made and plans for the coming year.

Member Speak-Out

To Member Speak-Out:

Are there any products to help control phantom power use? I think we need to raise awareness of this power drain, —**Steve Toll**, Carrboro, NC



Phantom power use comes from the many electronic devices found in today's modern home. Typically, any device that has a clock, a little red LED light or phone chargers, or uses a remote can be a culprit.

How can you reduce or eliminate the phantom power drain? Televisions, game consoles and computers are a few of the big offenders, so start with them. Unplugging everything when not in use can be a chore. An easier way is to use power strips so you can cut full power to your plugged-in electronics. There are even "smart" power strips that can sense when your device is turned off and in response, cut power to any plugged-in peripherals.

Several devices are now on the market specifically tailored for measuring and reducing phantom power drain. You may also borrow Kill-A-Watt energy measuring devices from Piedmont Electric. If interested contact us at 800.222.3107.

March Right-of-Way Maintenance



Granville County

Grassy Creek-Virgilina Road
Tom Matthews Road
Herbert Faucette Road
Rueben Hart Road

Caswell County

Rice Road
Camp Springs Road
Shaw Road
Boone Road

(and surrounding areas)

Efficiency Tax Credits Drop, Don't Disappear

Energy efficiency improvements are great for lowering electric bills. But sometimes the up-front cost can be a drawback.

Since 2005, Congress has enacted a series of tax breaks for consumers who take steps to make their homes more energy efficient.

In December, the outgoing 111th Congress approved extending some popular efficiency tax credits through December 31, 2011, although at greatly reduced levels.

The federal Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization and Job Creation Act of 2010 reduces the total lifetime credit that can be claimed on energy efficiency improvements made be-

tween 2006 and 2011 (excluding 2008, when no credit was available) from \$1,500 to \$500.

It also lowers the percentage of efficiency upgrade costs consumers can recover, from 30% in 2009-2010 to 10% in 2011.

Basically, energy efficiency tax credits revert to levels approved for 2006 and 2007, before the federal stimulus bill pumped up the program.

There's also a lifetime cap of \$500 for any work that's done. But if you haven't applied for an energy efficiency tax credit before, this extension gives you a chance to recoup some of the costs needed to make your home more efficient.

There are also maximum allowances for different upgrades. For installing more efficient windows, the tax credit is limited to \$200, and there's a \$300 cap for "any item of energy-efficient building property."

Other restrictions include:

- Central air conditioner (\$300): Must have a seasonal energy efficiency ratio (SEER) of at least 16 and an energy efficiency rating (EER) of at least 13.
- Split system air-source heat pumps (\$300): Must have at least a heating seasonal performance factor (HSPF) of 8.5, SEER of 15 and EER of 12.5.

Renewable energy tax credits created by the federal stimulus bill do not expire until December 31, 2016.

These credits cover 30% of the cost of materials and installation for residential solar panels, solar water heaters, small wind turbines and geothermal heat pumps. De-

tails are available at energystar.gov/taxcredits.



Tax credits are beneficial because they directly reduce, dollar for dollar, any taxes you owe.

Be sure to keep your receipts and your Manufacturer's Certification Statement (a signed statement from the manufacturer certifying that the product or component qualifies for the tax credit) for your records.

Then claim the credit on your taxes using IRS Form 5695.

For a list of federal, state and local energy efficiency rebates and tax credits, visit the Database for State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency, a project funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, at www.dsireusa.org.



What are you waiting for? Sign up for [MyUsage.com!](http://MyUsage.com)

By the Numbers...

- 1,632 members have signed up for the use monitoring portion of www.MyUsage.com
- 555 members are participating in the FlexPay Program
- 392 members have turned in receipts for 3,907 CFLs, representing a total of 1,340,101 kWhs saved toward our Senate Bill 3 Mandate
- 27 solar water heater rebates given to members
- 757 electric water heater wraps sold
- 537 residential members on Time-of-Day Rates

The Value of Electricity

A dollar's worth can get you:

36 
(intense) hours of gaming

48 
hours of watching TV

72 
freshly-ironed shirts

72 
hours of laptop Internet access

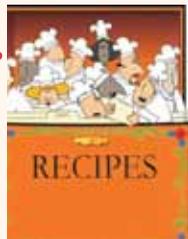
100 
hot pots of coffee

375 
pieces of toast (nicely browned)

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy; National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Pass It On...

We need YOU to pass on your recipes. 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 North Carolina.

Please remember to check all ingredients and cooking directions.

This month's recipe for "Mexican Fruit Cake" comes from **Sylvia Dixon** of Reidsville.



Mexican Fruit Cake

20 ounces crushed pineapple, undrained

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 cups sugar

2 teaspoons baking soda

2 eggs

1 cup chopped pecans OR walnuts

DO NOT USE A MIXER!

Put all ingredients into a bowl and stir until mixture is smooth. Pour into 9 X 13-inch dish or pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

Icing:

8 ounce cream cheese, softened

1 stick margarine, melted

1 teaspoon vanilla

2 cups powdered sugar

Mix until smooth and spread over warm cake.

TUNE IN TO TV ENERGY SAVINGS

So you've bought an ENERGY STAR-qualified TV to save energy. But there's even more you can do to boost your TV's efficiency.

TVs are bigger than they used to be, and some of the largest ones can use as much electricity each year as a new, conventional refrigerator.

But ENERGY STAR-qualified TVs use roughly 40% less energy than standard models.

Of course, if the set is left on when no one is watching, that costs money. In some cases, even if you hit the "off" button, "energy vampires" might go to work—meaning your TV could still consume power.

Here are a couple of things you can do to stop that drain.

Many high-definition TVs come

with a quick start option. By turning it off, you'll save energy and add only a few seconds to start-up times.

To stop energy vampires, use a power strip as a central "turn off" point. When you're not watching TV and not planning to record a program

later, simply flip the strip's "off" button.

For other tips on how to save energy—and money—visit Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives' energy-saving website, www.TogetherWeSave.com, or call the efficiency experts at Piedmont Electric.



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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**

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Cathy J. Johnson, CCC, Editor

