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## Guest Column

# Preparing for Safety

**I**t's hard to believe that we are quickly approaching the one-year anniversary of two of our state's most tragic events—the tornado outbreaks of April 15, which produced 45 tornadoes, and April 27 with more than 62 confirmed twisters. Both of these days brought heartbreak and destruction to thousands of Alabamians in every corner of the state, with areas still working through the recovery process.

It's important that we learn valuable lessons from these experiences. As the Training and Safety Coordinator for Central Alabama Electric Cooperative (CAEC), I've seen firsthand that preparation is the best way to stay safe if danger were to occur—whether you're driving your kids to school or at your home before a storm hits, being prepared can make a huge difference.

During severe weather, knowledge is power—that's why having a battery-powered weather radio programmed for your area can be a lifesaver—many times people either do not hear a weather siren or there simply isn't one in the area. It is also essential to follow weather reports closely and keep track of a storm's progress—if you live in a manufactured home, make plans to go to a safe place to ride out a storm. Every second matters in a tornado or severe thunderstorm and the more time you have to get to your safe area, the more likely you will survive if one strikes your immediate area.

We've all heard the saying "communication is key" and we even saw that after the April 27 outbreak in particular. Many Alabamians found it difficult to communicate with loved ones—phone lines were down, cell phone towers were overloaded and electricity was unavailable in many areas. Now is the time to develop a communications plan with your family—designate a point of contact and a gathering area where everyone can regroup if a disaster occurs. This step can help keep family members from putting themselves in danger by entering hazardous areas looking for loved ones.

It is also important to have a plan in case of an extended power outage. While our linemen and employees work diligently to restore power as soon as possible, at times, a storm's destruction can hinder this process. If you have a friend, neighbor or loved one who relies on electrical-powered life assistance, having a place to take them in the event of an outage should be a part of any disaster plan.

As we enter our state's peak time for tornadic activity, take the time to plan now. Visit our website ([www.caec.coop](http://www.caec.coop)) for more information to help you prepare before the next storm hits. ■



**Darren Maddox** is  
CAEC's Training and  
Safety Coordinator.

## Couples Conference in Orange Beach--Apply Now!

**T**here are many benefits of being a CAEC member, and one of them involves the cooperative principle regarding education, training and information for members. One way we help accomplish this goal is by sponsoring two member-couples to attend the annual Alabama Cooperative Couples Conference held in Orange Beach during July 23-25.

The Couples Conference serves as a forum for members to network with others from across the state and gain a unique perspective on how cooperatives affect their everyday lives.

"It was a fun, educational way to learn about all co-ops, not just electric cooperatives," said 2011 attendee Jeremy Amerson. "We met some wonderful people,

who my wife and I still stay in contact with, and you couldn't ask for a better location."

To be eligible, you must be a member of CAEC (past attendees are not eligible) and age 40 or under. For more information about the Alabama Cooperative Couples Conference, or to apply, call 1-800-545-5735, ext. 2213 or visit [www.caec.coop](http://www.caec.coop). ■

**Applications are due  
by June 22**



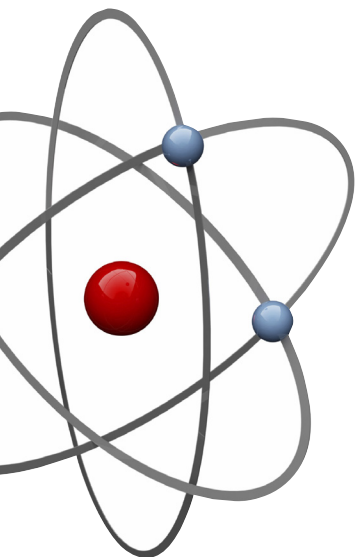
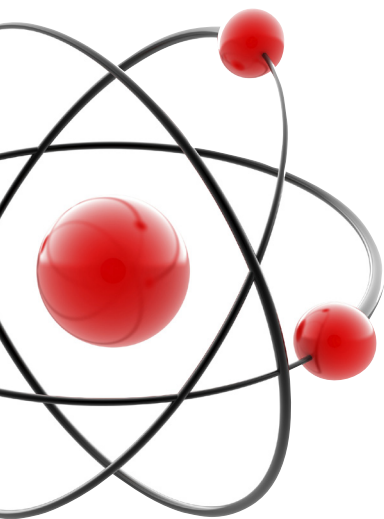
## Statement of Non-Discrimination

**C**entral Alabama Electric Cooperative is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which provides that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this

organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is the President/Chief Executive Officer, Thomas M. Stackhouse. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint with this organization; or USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC, 20250-9410; or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible. ■

# Nuclear Power in the 21st Century



**W**e're in the middle of a "green" revolution in America, with towering wind turbines and bright solar arrays dominating headlines and political debates concerning the future of electric generation. No doubt, those technologies are an important part of our country's energy mix, but despite media hype, they won't totally replace conventional sources for producing electricity, such as coal, natural gas and nuclear power, any time soon.

To meet growing demand for electricity, the electric industry will continue to mix generation resources, finding the best way to balance environmental concerns while ensuring the delivery of affordable and reliable power. A vital segment of this energy-mix is nuclear power. Nuclear isn't new to many Americans—pioneered and engineered by America, nuclear power began in the 1950s and currently provides 20 percent of the energy used in the U.S. today. But why is it becoming a topic increasingly discussed as part of our future energy needs by candidates?

One of the reasons is the need for more baseload power generation in our country. As our nation's energy needs increase and new and proposed legislation and energy standards make it harder and possibly more costly to use our generation workhorse—coal—power providers and political leaders must look for other means to meet this increased power demand while keeping costs reasonable.

Not only is nuclear power considered clean energy because it does not emit carbon dioxide or "green house" gases into the air, it is also reliable and affordable. According to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), from 1995

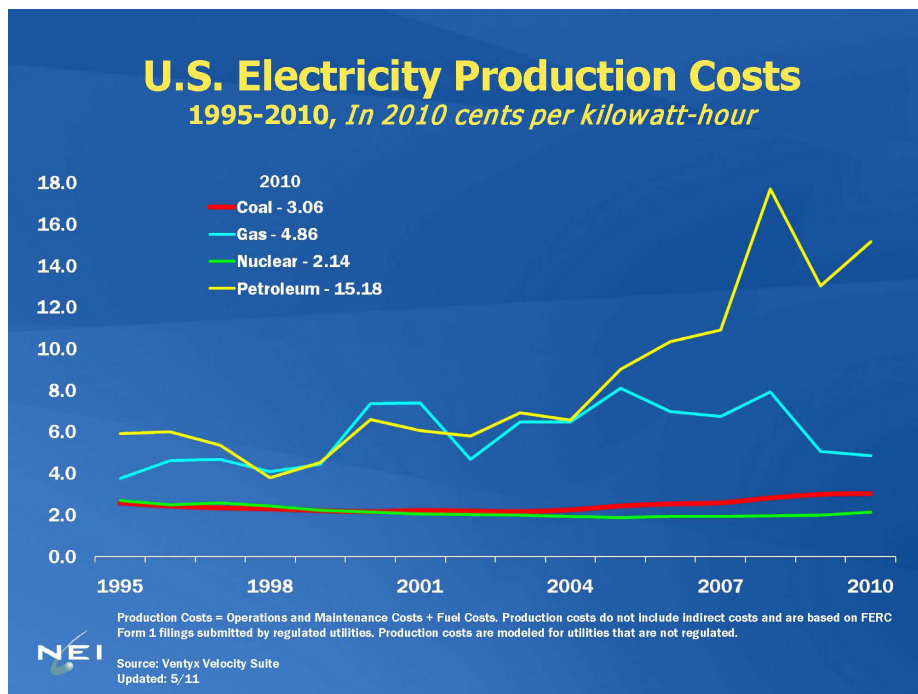
through 2010, nuclear costs have stayed very constant at 2.14 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh), which includes operation, maintenance and fuel costs. Coal has remained low, but is approximately 50 percent higher at 3.06 cents/kWh and while natural gas is low at the moment, it is considered a much more volatile source and has been as high as 16 cents/kWh.

Despite these benefits, nuclear does face construction-cost challenges, especially for cooperatives. Financing can be difficult, for example, the two unit 2,200 mega-watt (MW) Vogtle plant in Georgia is estimated to cost approximately \$13 billion. Not many co-ops, or any utilities for that matter, are capable of affording costs of this magnitude, leading them to be owners of shares of these large units. Also a factor is the change in construction costs due to the lengthy permitting process, which can last seven to 10 years or more, allowing prices to rise during that time frame. Streamlining the permitting and construction process is an undertaking some candidates are looking toward to make nuclear energy more obtainable and affordable.

Another concern is public acceptance. But improved advancements in technology, safety and security have made nuclear power a safe option to consider. In fact, during a September 2011 poll prepared for the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI), 62 percent of the public favored nuclear power with 80 percent of those living near a nuclear plant (employees and family excluded) favoring nuclear power. The next generation of nuclear plant construction will differ from today's operating plants, with standardized designs and innovative safety features.

Even though a new nuclear plant has not been built in the United States in more than 30 years, it is predicted by the Electric Power Research Institute, a non-profit organization, that 64,000 MW of new nuclear power generation (or the equivalent of 32 two-unit plants) will be needed nationwide by 2030 to help lower CO2 emissions to 1990 levels—as proposed in current legislation—in order to produce the power the country needs at an affordable price.

With federal climate change legislation likely boosting the price for every kilowatt generated by fuels that emit carbon dioxide—notably coal and natural gas—nuclear power must remain part of today's energy discussion and become a fundamental component of our nation's future energy plans. ■



## CAEC Taxes Provide for the Areas We Serve

**I**t's tax season, and even though CAEC is a not-for-profit organization, we pay taxes each year—taxes that help the communities we serve.

In 2011, the cooperative contributed to local, state and federal governments by paying nearly \$9.3 million in taxes.

Of the \$9.3 million, approximately \$782,000 was paid in ad valorem taxes. Revenue from ad valorem taxes goes to school districts, volunteer fire departments and other vital services for our communities.

In addition, CAEC paid \$604,000 in city business licenses and another \$51,500 in state and county sales tax for the year. The sales tax is paid when CAEC buys goods and equipment.

Payroll taxes, totaling more than \$2.6 million paid in 2011, included employer-funded state unemployment compensation as well as Social Security and Medicare taxes funded by both the employee and CAEC. The co-op also paid approximately \$1.9 million in gross receipt taxes, the taxes on the revenue of the cooperative, and approximately \$3.2 million in utility taxes which serves as a sales tax on electricity sold. ■







## Safety with Large Appliances

**C**an you imagine having to go out to the ice-house to get something to cook for dinner? Or spending hours scrubbing clothes on a washboard? Modern conveniences surely make life much easier today than it was 40 or 50 years ago, with large appliances such as refrigerators and washers taking the pain out of our daily tasks.

We often use these appliances without a second thought, which means we can sometimes forget to keep safety in mind. One of the most common dangers posed by large appliances is the risk of fire, accounting for 9,600 fires annually. Follow the safety and maintenance rules below to keep your appliances running at peak efficiency while keeping you and your family safe.

### Clothes Washers:

- Avoid overloading a washing machine.
- Make sure your washing machine is properly grounded with a ground fault circuit interrupter outlet (GFCI) - contact a qualified electrician to have one installed.
- Make sure the right plug and outlet are used together—washers should have a three prong, GFCI electrical plug.
- Never use a washer that is sitting in water.

### Clothes Dryers:

- Do not operate a dryer without a lint filter, and always clean the lint filter before or after each use.
- Rigid or flexible metal venting materials should be used to sustain proper air flow and drying time.
- Make sure the air exhaust pipe isn't restricted and that the outdoor vent flap will open when the dryer is operating.
- Clean lint out of the vent pipe once a year, or more often if you notice that it is taking longer than normal for your clothes to dry. You can also have a dryer lint removal service perform the work for you.
- Do not leave a dryer running if you leave home or when you go to bed.
- Never dry items that have come in contact with flammable substances, such as cooking oil, gasoline, paint thinner or alcohol.

### Oven/Ranges:

- Keep burners, the stove top and oven clean and free of grease and other flammable debris.
- Never leave flammable items, such as hot pads or towels, near burners.
- Don't leave food that is cooking unattended.
- Always turn pot handles inward to avoid the possibility of knocking a pot off the stove.

### Refrigerators:

- Vacuum refrigerator coils every three months to eliminate dirt buildup that reduces efficiency and creates fire hazards.
- Allow air circulation behind the refrigerator.

And remember, even a slight shock from any appliance can indicate an extremely hazardous wiring condition. Turn the power to the appliance off at the circuit breaker and do not touch the appliance until it has been checked by a licensed, electrician. ■



# *Sheesh,* Kabobs Are Easier Than Ever!




When you buy an electric grill or smoker from CAEC, there's no telling what you can cook up! Get the delicious taste of grilled food without any of the hassle or harm of singed eyebrows. CAEC's quality electric grills and smokers can make your summer cooking easier than ever before!

Call 1-800-545-5735 for more information, or visit [www.caec.coop](http://www.caec.coop)



Central Alabama  
Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



# Recipe for *Efficiency* from CAEC

## Insulation

**H**ave you looked in your attic lately? Insulation in your attic is an essential component to help keep your home warm in the winter and cool in the summer. While your attic temperature is still comfortable, it's the perfect time of year to re-apply attic insulation before the summer heat arrives.

There are numerous types of insulation to choose from, and each has a different method of installation. The example below uses cellulose—an easy “do it yourself” process.

### Ingredients (supplies):

Cellulose Insulation

### Utensils (tools):

Insulation Blower Machine

Gloves

Breathing Masks

Goggles

### Directions:

Purchase the cellulose insulation at your local hardware store where you should also be able to rent an insulation blower. The amount you need will depend on the square footage of your home and the thickness of the existing insulation. Make sure the thickness of your insulation (including any existing insulation) is between 12 and 15 inches, which should give you an R-value of 38.

You will need at least one person to assist you in applying the insulation.

### Installing Cellulose Attic Insulation

1. Place the insulation and the blower machine outdoors. DO NOT operate the machine indoors.

2. Take the blower's tube up into the attic with you (through a window or door in the house). Make sure you are outfitted with gloves, goggles and breathing mask.



3. Have the person (also outfitted with gloves, goggles and a breathing mask) stationed near the blower machine begin to feed it with the loose, cellulose insulation, one bale at a time. When ready, this person will also control the flow of the insulation by using an on/off switch or a lever that allows insulation to pass through.



4. In the attic, sweep the blower's tube in the locations where you desire the insulation, avoiding vents so they do not become clogged with insulation. When finished, have the person stationed with the blower turn off the machine.



On average, an 1,800 square foot house will take approximately four hours to complete at a cost of \$500. Prices and times may vary due to retailers, square footage and depth of existing insulation. On a house with little or no pre-existing insulation, adding more—and doing it yourself—can help make your home more comfortable and provide some cost savings to your power bill.