

# Maintaining our Presence in the Political Process

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(334) 365-3648

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Rockford  
(256) 496-0160

### Van Smith

Billingsley  
(205) 755-6166

### Charles Byrd

Deatsville  
(334) 361-3324

## Contact Us

Toll Free: 1-800-545-5735  
Outage Hotline: 1-800-619-5460  
[www.caec.coop](http://www.caec.coop)

Prattville Office:  
1802 U.S. Hwy. 31 North  
Mailing: P.O. Box 681570  
Prattville, AL 36068

Clanton Office:  
1601 7th St. North

Rockford Office:  
9191 U.S. Hwy. 231

Wetumpka Office:  
637 Coosa River Pkwy.



Throughout 2014, we worked to keep you informed of the many government-proposed rules and regulations affecting the utility industry, because as we know, changes that add cost to the delivery of electricity ultimately have an effect on the end users. During this past year one of the more prominent proposals we discussed regarded greenhouse gas (GHG) emission standards that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) wants to impose. As you might suspect, when those of us in the utility industry speak out against the imposition of such standards, we run the risk of sounding like we're opposed to a clean environment. On the contrary, I don't know anyone in our industry who is against a clean environment.



The question we face is one of balance. What is the proper balance between the cost to attain strict clean air standards and the delivery of reliable, affordable power to consumers? How many dollars do U.S. consumers need to add to their energy costs to reach clean air standards dictated by the EPA, who is driven by something other than facts, as Gary Smith points out in his article for this month on page 44. Will our nation's additional power costs have an environmental impact when other countries take no provisions to protect the environment?

Throughout the year many of you helped us as we joined with other electric cooperatives to make comment on the EPA's proposed rules - thank you for your help! When the EPA's public comment period ended last month, more than 1.1 million comments had been made by our national grassroots network. There are two ways we can have an impact on the rules that govern us, through telling the regulators what we think and through elections.

Without a doubt, I am certain that this level of involvement in grassroots initiatives is a perfect illustration of our cooperative legacy: consumer-members staying in touch with elected officials. Speaking of elected officials, on pages 6 and 7 of this magazine, you will see a few new faces in the Alabama Senate and House. These legislators, both old and new, will have a stake in what's important to our energy future. We are committed to working with state and federal agencies to develop a better plan that will maintain a balance of affordability, reliability and a more realistic timeframe than the EPA's current proposal.

But it takes more than one grassroots effort for our message to be heard. Our primary initiative that helps to keep our policymakers in the loop is the Action Committee for Rural Electrification®, or ACRE®, a political action committee that gives financial support to congressional and state legislative candidates who are helpful to electric cooperatives and their members. In 2014, more than 90 percent of ACRE-supported candidates won election or re-election in the U.S. House and Senate. ACRE's voluntary membership of approximately 30,000 individuals nationwide includes electric cooperative employees, directors/trustees, chief executives, spouses and consumers.

As we anticipate the upcoming EPA decision on the proposed regulations and the new congressional effort, we do so with the support of tens of thousands of people from across the country, like you, our member-owners. We thank you for your involvement in voicing your concerns to your elected officials. Our grassroots presence in the political process is vital because as the saying goes, "If we're not at the table, we will be on the menu." ■

Tom Stackhouse  
President/CEO

# The EPA's Clean Power Plan

The Clean Power Plan (CPP) issued by the Environmental Protection Agency requires each state to coordinate its own fuel mix by deciding how much coal, natural gas, nuclear and renewable energy it will use. Because the reduction goals are state-specific, Alabama has to achieve a 26.7 percent reduction in CO2 emissions from 2012 levels by 2030. Overall, the CPP's mission is to achieve a 30 percent cut from 2005 emissions by 2030, with an interim target of 25 percent on average between 2020 and 2029.

According to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, analysis shows that electric co-op members can expect to see rates increase by more than 10 percent on average in 2020 and by more than 17 percent in 2025 as a result of these requirements.

The chart below represents the EPA's proposed implementation timeline.

## EPA's Proposed Implementation Timeline



<sup>(1)</sup> **Negative Declaration** is a document that is prepared after a detailed study on the development or project and which states that the planned development or project will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment.

# STATE SENATORS in your area



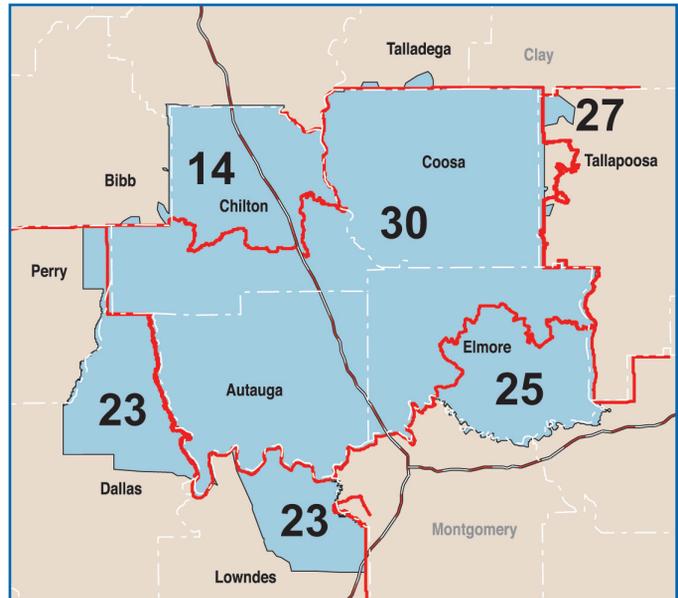
**Sen. Cam Ward (R)**  
 District 14  
 Year Elected: 2010  
 124 Newgate Road  
 Alabaster, AL 35007  
 (334) 242-7873  
[camjulward@aol.com](mailto:camjulward@aol.com)



**Sen. Tom Whatley (R)**  
 District 27  
 Year Elected: 2010  
 11 S. Union St., Ste. 733  
 Montgomery, AL 36130  
 (334) 242-7865  
[tom.whatley@alsenate.gov](mailto:tom.whatley@alsenate.gov)



**Sen. Hank Sanders (D)**  
 District 23  
 Year Elected: 1983  
 One Imani Way  
 Selma, AL 36702  
 (334) 242-7860  
[hank.sanders@alsenate.gov](mailto:hank.sanders@alsenate.gov)

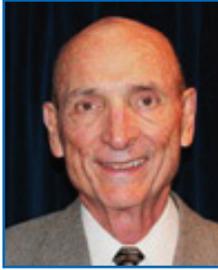


**Sen. Dick Brewbaker (R)**  
 District 25  
 Year Elected: 2010  
 11 S. Union St., Ste. 734  
 Montgomery, AL 36130  
 (334) 242-7895  
[dick.brewbaker@alsenate.gov](mailto:dick.brewbaker@alsenate.gov)



**Sen. Clyde Chambliss (R)**  
 District 30  
 Year Elected: 2014  
 11 S. Union St., Ste. 733  
 Montgomery, AL 36130  
 (334) 242-7872  
[clyde.chambliss@alsenate.gov](mailto:clyde.chambliss@alsenate.gov)

# STATE REPRESENTATIVES in your area



**Rep. Mike Holmes (R)**  
 District 31  
 Year Elected: 2014  
 67 Cabin Road  
 Wetumpka, AL 36093  
 (334) 242-7215  
 mike.holmes@alhouse.gov



**Rep. Ralph Howard (D)**  
 District 72  
 Year Elected: 2005  
 700 M.W. Rollins Lane  
 Greensboro, AL 36744  
 (334) 242-7759



**Rep. Ronald Johnson (R)**  
 District 33  
 Year Elected: 1978  
 3770 Sylacauga-Fayette Hwy.  
 Sylacauga, AL 35151  
 (334) 242-7777



**Rep. Reed Ingram (R)**  
 District 75  
 Year Elected: 2014  
 4356 Hayneville Ridge Rd.  
 Mathews, AL 36052  
 (334) 242-7600  
 reedingram75@gmail.com



**Rep. Jimmy Martin (R)**  
 District 42  
 Year Elected: 2014  
 11 S. Union Street  
 Montgomery, AL 36130  
 (334) 242-7772



**Rep. Mark Tuggle (R)**  
 District 81  
 Year Elected: 2010  
 424 Sleepy Hollow  
 Alexander City, AL 35010  
 (334) 242-7219  
 tughd81@gmail.com



**Rep. April Weaver (R)**  
 District 49  
 Year Elected: 2010  
 P. O. Box 1349  
 Alabaster, AL 35007  
 (334) 242-7731



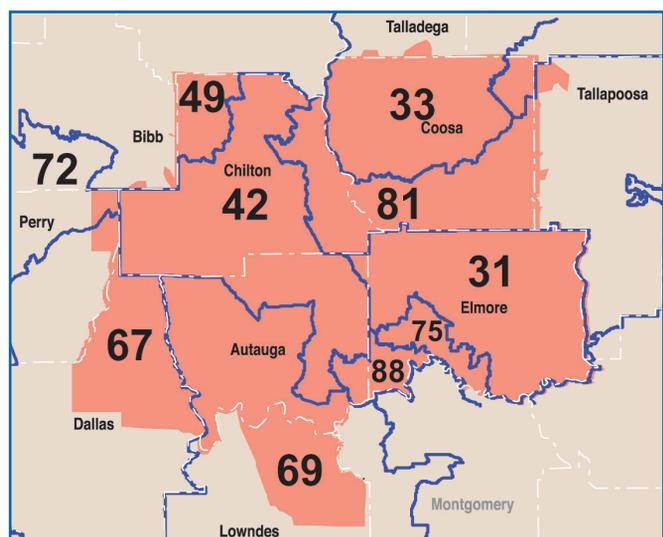
**Rep. Paul Beckman (R)**  
 District 88  
 Year Elected: 2010  
 1803 Tara Drive  
 Prattville, AL 36066  
 (334) 242-7499  
 paulbeckmanjr@yahoo.com



**Rep. Darrio Melton (D)**  
 District 67  
 Year Elected: 2010  
 P.O. Box 371  
 Selma, AL 36702  
 (334) 242-7540  
 darriomelton@gmail.com



**Rep. Kelvin Lawrence (D)**  
 District 69  
 Year Elected: 2014  
 50 Miller Circle  
 Hayneville, AL 36054  
 (334) 548-6125  
 kelvinj73@gmail.com





## Electrical Safety Tips for Installing Insulation



*Darren Maddox  
Manager of  
Safety & Training*

**I**nstalling insulation or upgrading existing insulation in your home is an easy way to reduce utility costs. However, if you plan to do-it-yourself, be sure to keep in mind the safety aspect of working around electricity.

While there are a variety of home insulation materials available such as fiber glass, cellulose, spray foam and rigid foam insulation, consider these electrical safety tips:

- Do not cover or hand-pack insulation around bare stove pipes, electrical fixtures, motors or any heat-producing equipment such as recessed lighting fixtures. Most recessed lights are not rated to be in direct contact with insulation. These objects require ample space around them to dissipate heat or there is the danger of a fire. Ensure that you read the labels carefully and prevent the possibility of your home becoming a fire trap.
- Make sure that your electrical wiring is up to code. Contact a qualified licensed electrician to inspect the wiring prior to installing the insulation. It may be necessary to upgrade the wiring in your home before it can be insulated.

- Move carefully in your attic so as to not injure yourself by stepping through the floor which is usually just a sheet of drywall/wallboard.

Although it's important to save money, it's even more important to stay safe. If you are uncertain of your ability to install the insulation safely, have the insulation installed by an expert contractor. ■

If you're not sure if your home needs insulation, CAEC's Energy Audit program can help members identify ways to make their homes more energy efficient. An Energy Services Representative (ESR) and Certified Residential Energy Auditor will conduct the audits. There is an up-front cost, but the fees will be reimbursed when improvements are made to the home based on the ESR's recommendations. For more information, visit [www.caec.coop](http://www.caec.coop) or call 1-800-545-5735 ext. 2178.



## 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 provide 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 him or her 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. ■

# How much are *you* willing to pay for *your* power???

Decisions are being made in Washington that could affect your power bill...

For the nation's electric cooperatives, green power is not a new idea. In fact, approximately 700 of the more than 900 co-ops in the country have offered renewable energy options to their memberships for decades.

To hear the current national debate, however, one might think that politicians in Washington, D.C., are the only ones concerned with being green. While they discuss increasing our nation's green power production, are they keeping its cost in mind? Cooperative members are working together to make sure there's a balanced approach when it comes to this national debate.

Want to help us keep the cost of energy in front of Congress? You can – by joining the 30,000+ individuals already working together on the Action Committee for Rural Electrification® (ACRE). Membership in ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® is easy, and for a couple of dollars a month, you can have a great impact on an important dialogue. Simply give us a call at (800) 545-5735. After you join, your electric bill will display a monthly ACRE membership fee of \$2.08.



Central Alabama  
Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Complete form and mail to: CAEC, P.O. Box 681570 Prattville, AL 36068

**Yes!** Enroll me in ACRE so that MY voice can be heard in our nation's capital!

I understand a low membership fee of \$2.08 will be added to my monthly electric bill.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

# Air Infiltration Inside Your HVAC Closet



**Derek Blankenship**  
is CAEC's Energy  
Service Representative  
and Residential  
Energy Auditor

and wall outlets and are simple to seal with some caulk or foam sealant. Unfortunately, this is not the case with all air leaks.

According to a report by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, a homeowner can save 10 - 20 percent on heating and cooling costs just by sealing up all those air leaks.

Some homes have HVAC systems located inside an indoor cabinet or closet (see picture). While this may be a convenient place, it's also an ideal place for air infiltration. A large hole is created when contractors run the ductwork during installation, leaving a gap that can be 3-5 inches wide and the length of the four sides of your ductwork.

Once the hole is exposed, attic air can go directly into the unit causing it to run inefficiently. Also, your return air grille (a connection to ductwork that allows air to return to a heating and cooling system) is often located directly under your unit cabinet and will pull unconditioned instead of conditioned air into your home. Additionally, your thermostat is typically located near your cabinet and the temperature around it will be closer to the attic temperature instead of the rest of your home, resulting in your unit running longer.

**M**uch of our home's heating, cooling and overall comfort is lost through infiltration; air leaking into our conditioned space (the area we live in). These frequently unseen holes add to your HVAC system load while increasing your power bill. Many areas are easy to find, such as around windows, doors, plumbing, electrical penetrations, light switches

An easy fix to this problem is to cover this gap with commonly used materials such as plywood or foam board. Sealing the hole with one of these options and adding insulation is the best way to help close off air infiltration.

To identify problem areas in your home, take advantage of our energy audit program. The Advanced Audit is \$100 and the Basic Audit, which includes everything except the blower door test (which is a great way to identify air leaks in your home), is \$75. Either audit cost is refundable after the member makes the suggested improvements identified by our Energy Services Representative and presents receipts. Members have up to one year to complete the recommendations in order to be eligible for the refund. For details call 1-800-545-5735 or visit [www.caec.coop](http://www.caec.coop). ■

