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Developing Effective Future Leaders

Parental dreams for our children generally include the desire for them to become great leaders of the future; whether it's in education, church or business, we want them to achieve success. And so, it is with that thought in mind that my wife Amy and I await our son Isaac's launch of leadership as he prepares to exchange wedding vows this spring.

As I look back at how my wife and I motivated our children, I am reminded of the commitment that CAEC has demonstrated to a multitude of area youth through several programs offered to students of all grades.

One such program is Youth Tour, and this March 6-8, eight extraordinary high school juniors will explore the capital in Montgomery to learn about the political process, their state's history and leadership. Then in June, from this group of students, four representatives will be selected on behalf of CAEC to participate in the Washington Youth Tour where they learn about electric co-ops, American history and how their government works. They will also have the opportunity to interact with various leaders who will emphasize the importance of hard work and perseverance.

In addition to parental groundwork, formal education contributes to a young person's solid foundation. However, funding for school projects that are innovative and interactive can be challenging for today's educators. The Bright Ideas program makes added funding possible (featured on page 6) and to date, CAEC has awarded approximately \$208,000 to local schools.

Other programs we offer include two \$500 scholarships awarded to CAEC high school seniors (see page 42 for more information) which will assist with tuition; and the Explorers Post Program which is a joint project between the Boy Scouts of America and CAEC to help students who have shown an interest in engineering learn more about this field through hands-on activities.

In addition, the co-op has some great employees who feel a sense of social responsibility and they volunteer their time coaching, mentoring, helping with disaster relief efforts, teaching fishing and hunting safety and leading Boy Scouts, just to name a few. I am proud of the work these employees do in their communities and the impact they have on our area youth.

All of these programs are offered to benefit our communities and to provide opportunities for our youth to enhance the leadership skills needed for today and in the future. After all, our youth and their futures are worth the investment. ■



Tom Stackhouse, President/CEO



The Environmental Protection Agency

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is an agency of the federal government charged with protecting human health and the environment by writing and enforcing regulations based on laws passed by Congress. The agency began operation on Dec. 2, 1970 and is led by its Administrator, who is appointed by the President and approved by Congress. The White House maintains direct control over the EPA, and its enforcements are subject to the political viewpoints of who is in power.

With the upcoming presidential election, the EPA has been a target of criticism from many candidates, who portray it as the very symbol of a “heavy-handed regulatory agenda that is strangling the economy.” They connect environmental regulation to jobs and the economy, suggesting that the nation cannot afford measures that impose greater costs on businesses and consumers.

Opposition disputes this accusation and feels strongly that this administration has shown a clear commitment to taking steps to protect families from pollution, while at the same time ensuring those steps are implemented in a way that minimizes costs, maximizes flexibility and does not slow down our economic recovery.

Outside of the political discussions, given the central role of electric power in our nation’s economy, and the importance of coal in power production, there are concerns about the cost and potential impact of regulations under development at the EPA

that would impose new requirements on coal-fired power plants (Clean Air Act regulations, Clean Water Act rules and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act rule to name a few). These regulations would impose excessive costs and lead to plant retirements that could threaten the adequacy and reliability of electricity across the country, especially from now through 2017. This volume of emission regulation proposed by the EPA is known throughout the electric utility industry as the “train wreck,” and in lieu of comprehensive legislation, it illustrates the over-aggressive action by the EPA. The Administration plans to work around Congress and the legislative process to enact environmental policies that will cost American jobs, economic development and access to affordable energy.

To date, the EPA has been unable or unwilling to provide Congress and state officials with important information about how the increasing and comprehensive costs of all these regulations could affect the financial wellbeing of their constituents.

CAEC agrees with the EPA’s goals to protect public health and the environment, but we believe it’s critical that they take a close look at how potential regulations will impact the reliability of electricity and costs. No matter where environmental legislation gets its start, it can lead to skyrocketing electric bills. Learn about regulatory issues affecting you in the upcoming issues of *Alabama Living*. ■



PowerSouth has invested approximately \$400 million in equipment upgrades at the Lowman Plant in Leroy, Ala., for the reduction of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and mercury emissions.

Bright Ideas Grants Awarded

Learning life-saving CPR and teaching math with interactive activities are a few of the projects students will explore thanks to funding from the Bright Ideas Grant Program, sponsored by CAEC this year.

CAEC's Board of Trustees presented grants to area teachers during a January ceremony and reception held at the cooperative's headquarters in Prattville. Applications had been evaluated by a panel of judges from local community associations. From the 60 grant submissions, the judges made 21 awards totaling \$16,000 to benefit more than 4,100 students in Autauga, Chilton, Coosa, Dallas and Elmore counties.

The Bright Ideas Grant Program was introduced by CAEC in 1998 with the goal of supporting creative, interesting and effective initiatives that are not usually covered by school funding. Grants are awarded to individuals or teams in public, private and home schools within CAEC's service area.

"Today's educators face many challenges in the classroom, including the search for funds to reach their students by new and innovative means," said CAEC President and CEO Tom Stackhouse. "We are pleased to support these individuals in that quest by assisting them to make a lasting impact on our leaders of tomorrow."

Fourteen years after its inception, CAEC has awarded approximately \$208,000 to local schools through the program. More than 83,400 students in all grade levels and subject areas have benefited from the Bright Ideas grants.

A full listing of this year's recipients along with more information on the program is available at www.caec.coop. Application information for the 2012-2013 grants will appear later this year in the September issue of *Alabama Living* magazine. ■

CAEC Trustees are photographed with:



Autauga County Recipients



Chilton County Recipients



Coosa County Recipients



Dallas County Recipients



Elmore County Recipients

Electrical Outlet Safety at Home



Darren Maddox,
Training & Safety
Coordinator

Hairpins are perfect for holding certain hair styles in place, but these slender, metal objects are also easy for children to manipulate, making them the dominant household item improperly stuck into electrical receptacles.

Each year, approximately 2,400 children – an average of seven a day – receive emergency room treatment for injuries caused by inserting conductive material into electrical outlets, according to a 10-year report released by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). And nationwide, there are approximately 5,000 residential fires reported as attributed to receptacle failure. To help prevent many of these dangers, here are some safety precautions for electrical outlets.

- Replace receptacles that are broken, no longer hold a plug securely, feel hot to the touch, spark or make noise when inserting or removing a plug.
- All outlets should have a faceplate to prevent accidentally touching a plug to a live portion of the receptacle.
- Never alter a polarized plug to make it fit into an old unpolarized receptacle. A polarized plug has one blade wider than the other and can only be inserted one way into the electrical outlet.
- All unused outlets should be covered with safety covers, especially to prevent children and pet access. Also, the covers prevent dust and static electricity.
- If plugs seem to fit loosely in a particular outlet, the outlet may be worn and could overheat; a qualified electrician should check it.
- All outside receptacles where water and electricity may come into contact should be protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). GFCIs are electrical devices designed to detect ground faults. Ground faults occur when electrical current is “leaking” somewhere outside the path where the current

is supposed to flow. If your body provides the path to ground for this leakage, you could be burned, shocked or even electrocuted. GFCIs can switch a circuit off before injury occurs.

- Outdoor receptacles should also have weatherproof covers to help protect against shock hazards. Close the covers on all unused outdoor receptacles.
- Avoid overloading a receptacle – fires can occur when wires become hot.

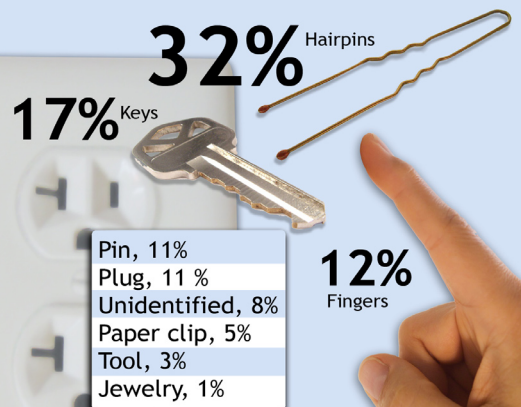
If you need receptacles replaced, contact a licensed electrician to install them and consider the new tamper-resistant (TR) option. These types of outlets include a shutter mechanism to protect against harm from inserting foreign objects. The spring-loaded system only allows electricity to flow when you apply equal pressure to both sides of the outlet, as when you plug in an electrical device. During unused conditions, both shutters are closed.

Tamper-resistant receptacles are an important step to make the home a safer place for children. The cost is as little as \$2 at some retailers and can easily be incorporated into older homes.

Practicing electrical outlet safety in your home will keep you and your family safe from fire and shock hazards. ■

Objects Commonly Placed in Electrical Outlets

Every year, 2,400 children are injured after inserting household objects into electrical outlets. These are the most common objects placed in outlets:



Source: Electrical Safety Foundation, Inc.

Customer Service on the Go

Imagine receiving a notification on your smart iPhone or device informing you that your power bill is due and all you have to do is pull it up, make your payment, receive a confirmation and you're done. And what if you're away on vacation or a business trip and you forget to pay your utility bill? No need to find a computer; simply access the app on your device and it can be handled in a few minutes.



"Given the number of customers that interact with us online, the next step is taking their payment transactions to their smart devices," said Todd Childers, CAEC Manager of Customer Service. Beginning March 1, 2012,

members will have another option to service their needs through the use of Android™ devices, Apple devices, Blackberry® or Windows mobile phones. The newly-created app brings the online functionality of our website and moves it to an application for your smart phone. These apps can be downloaded from your app store - - for FREE! Go to our website at www.caec.coop and click on the link for the Android or iPhone, or if you have a Blackberry® or Windows mobile phone, go to our website and click on the mobile link.

This new option gives our members the ability to manage their accounts, make secure payments, view the bill and payment history, check daily usage in a graph format and setup notifications for your bill's due date or when a change is made to your account profile.

If you're interested in CAEC's free app for your smart devices, or have further questions, call us at (800) 545-5735 or visit our website at www.caec.coop.

Make Payment Arrangements Online

Beginning March 1, 2012, members will have the opportunity to make payment arrangements online by visiting our website, www.caec.coop.

1. Click on the Pay/View Bill button on the left side of the screen
– Log in by entering your Account Number or User ID and Password
2. Click on the Payments tab and select Payment Arrangement
3. The next screen will take you to the Account List - select an account and then go to Payments tab and click on Payment Arrangement and continue as instructed

If you have further questions, call us at (800) 545-5735 or visit our website.

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CAEC offices will be closed April 6 for Good Friday.

Need \$500 for College?



College scholarship applications are now available to high school seniors graduating this upcoming spring.

Two \$500 scholarships will be awarded by the Electric Cooperative Foundation, Inc. (ECF), which provides scholarships for post-secondary institutions.

Applicants must be dependents of CAEC members. The scholarship will be paid by ECF directly to the educational institution for credit to the student's account.

Applications are available at www.caec.coop, any of our service centers or by calling (334) 351-2213 or 1-800-545-5735, ext. 2213 to have an application mailed to you.

Deadline for application is March 16



Central Alabama
Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Recipe for *Efficiency* from CAEC

Treescaping

One of your greatest opportunities to conserve energy is by properly selecting and planting trees around your home. Referred to as “treescaping,” the art of selecting and maintaining trees for a specific purpose or area, you can save up to 25 percent of your

household energy consumption for heating and cooling.

Tree species and proper placement are critical to energy-savings effectiveness. Below are instructions to help you in this decision-making process and steps on how to appropriately plant a tree:

Ingredients (supplies):

Tree
Potting Soil or Compost
Mulch (organic materials)

Utensils (tools):

Shovel
Water hose
Tape measure
Bolt cutters or metal snips
Compass (optional)

Directions:

Treescaping

1. For maximum energy savings, plant deciduous trees (those with seasonal leaves) to provide shade and block heat in the summertime while allowing sunlight for your home during the winter. Plant these trees on the west and south side of your home for best results.

Planting on north and west sides helps protect from winter winds.



Planting on the south and west sides helps provide shade from the summer sun.

2. For energy efficiency in the winter, plant evergreens on the north and west sides of your home. A well placed windbreak can reduce wind velocity by 80 percent.

3. Utilize the sun or a compass for determining the correct direction to place your trees.

How to Plant Your Tree

1. Dig a hole in the soil as deep as the root ball and twice as wide.
2. Mix compost or potting soil with the soil removed from the hole if your soil is very heavy or sandy.
3. Remove the tree from its container, gently freeing its roots.
4. If the root ball is surrounded by burlap or



wire, remove this before planting.



5. Place the tree in the hole so that it sits at its original soil line.
6. Firmly, but gently fill the hole half full of the removed soil.

7. Water well, then fill to the top with soil.
8. Form a shallow basin around the tree and fill it at least three times with water.
9. Cover the ground around the new tree with four inches of mulch, keeping mulch away from the trunk.
10. Take care of your tree - keep it well watered for the first year; twice a week is sufficient.

Be sure to make safety your top priority and don't plant near power lines. Before you dig, call 811.