

# Dear Member:



Working for a board of community leaders has its rewards and makes for diverse career experiences. These leaders are people who willingly step into a business, like an electric cooperative, which can not only be very challenging to understand, but is one that changes at a rapid pace. Just in my short 28 years in the industry, the rate of change as well as the complexity of issues has intensified. For those of us who read and talk about industry business on a daily basis, the job can be a challenge, but it is impressive how astute to the issues our trustees remain, especially considering their board service is not their full-time job.

In addition to a changing industry, these men and women have to deal with today's uncertain future, being driven by ambiguous public policy, rising costs and rapidly changing technology. As a trustee of an electric cooperative, the board members have to wear many hats: lobbyist, financial analyst, public relations professional and consumer advocate, just to name a few.

During my career I have had the privilege of working at two different cooperatives and for 30 distinctive board members, and I have found that each one has impressed me and influenced how I do my job. Recently, we said good-bye to one of those distinguished individuals who not only impacted us at the cooperative, but many others through his activities in his community, state and nation.

On the next page you can read about the life of Don Whorton and his many activities as a farmer, developer and public servant. I have had the honor of working for a board on which he served for 15 years. During his time on this board he was involved in many decisions that moved your cooperative forward, including hiring me as CEO. He helped formulate three strategic plans that transformed the cooperative, and he led in decisions that increased reliability and stability of service to the members—all during a time of rapid growth and tremendous increases in our wholesale power cost.

Don had a passion about getting things done. You would never have to guess at his position on a subject; he would state clearly how he saw it and always gave opportunity to hear and understand the other side. However, he wanted things to be done right. He would, in fact, take what he had learned from one organization's experiences and apply his knowledge to the challenges that another organization would face, and he would ask questions about what he did not know. He enjoyed a good joke and talking politics. His church knew of his leadership too, and most of all, I learned a lot by watching the way he loved and respected his wife and family.

We will miss Don's leadership here at CAEC; however, many of us will tell you that we are better for having known him. We celebrate his life and the personal contributions he made to the betterment of your Cooperative. 🍀

Tom Stackhouse, CAEC President/CEO

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## LOCATIONS

Prattville Headquarters  
1802 U.S. Hwy. 31 North  
(334) 365-6762/(800) 545-5735  
Outage Hotline: (800) 619-5460

Clanton Office  
1601 7th St. North

Rockford Office  
U.S. Highway 231

Wetumpka Office  
637 Coosa River Pkwy.

CAEC Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 681570  
Prattville, AL 36068

# A Tribute —

## CAEC Trustee Don Whorton



Central Alabama Electric Cooperative Trustee Don Whorton, of Wetumpka, passed away from pulmonary fibrosis and cancer on Monday, Oct. 26 at the age of 65.

Whorton was first appointed to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees for CAEC in

Sept. 1994, representing District 2 in the coop's service area. He was elected to the seat in Aug. 1995 and re-elected four successive terms, serving a total of 15 years.

As a trustee, he earned his Credentialed Cooperative Director and Board Leadership certificates from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Whorton was a two-term Elmore County commissioner from 2000 until 2008 when he decided to not seek re-election due to health issues. While on the commission, he served as chairman from Nov. 2000 until June 2004. Under his leadership the county commission repaired budget and audit problems that the county had experienced. Whorton also served on the National County Commissioners Association Transportation Committee.

For 30 years Whorton operated a large dairy farm in the Wallsboro community. His reg-

istered and grade-identified Holsteins were among the top producing cattle in Alabama and the winners of many shows and exhibitions. He was Chairman of the Alabama Farmers Federation State Dairy Committee and served as President of the Elmore County Farmers Federation for five terms. Whorton was active in national dairy legislation and testified before the U.S. House and Senate Agriculture Committees on agricultural issues. He received numerous awards, including the Alabama Jaycees Outstanding Young Farmer in 1974.

***“In his role on the Board of Trustees, Whorton provided wise and thoughtful guidance.”***

Upon dispersal of the dairy, he turned the farmland into a residential development, Macon Place, to help meet the needs of the rapidly expanding population of Elmore County.

In his role on the Board of Trustees, Whorton provided wise and thoughtful guidance. He will be remembered as a great leader and a true friend. He was also an outstanding community leader and will be deeply missed.

An active member of the First United Methodist Church of Wetumpka, Whorton is survived by his

wife, Janice; two daughters, Carol and Beth, and five grandchildren. ☞



*Trustee Don Whorton with fellow CAEC Board Members in 2009.*

# Renewable Energy *and* Your Area

**Y**ou might be using renewable energy today without even knowing it. Every time you hang your clothes outside on a clothesline to dry or fly a kite on the beach, you are taking advantage of renewable energy sources - the sun and wind. When you sit by a campfire or fireplace, you're enjoying biomass energy in action. If you own a calculator or solar-powered watch, you're using solar energy. And when you see pictures of hot lava from a volcano, you're looking at geothermal energy.

Because of modern technologies, new sources of energy are being used every day. Renewable energy is also called "clean" or "green" energy because it has little to no emissions and can be replenished in a short period of time.

The four renewable sources used most often are wind, solar photovoltaics, geothermal and biomass. Hydropower has been excluded by Congress as an eligible renewable and it was also highlighted in the October issue of *Alabama Living*.

## Renewable Energy Resources in the Southeast

The development of renewables in CAEC's service area, including wind, solar, geothermal and biomass, is considered economically unfeasible when compared with more traditional options. Nonetheless, let's look at the generation process of these natural fuel resources.

**Wind** - Wind machines (also called wind turbines) use blades to collect the wind's kinetic energy. When the wind blows, it flows over the blades creating lift, like the effect on airplane wings, which causes them to turn. The blades are connected to a drive shaft that turns an electric generator.



The cost of the commercial wind turbines varies from \$1 to \$2 million per mega watt (MW) of capacity installed. Projects can take over seven years to develop with 2.5 years in the planning phase. A single 1 MW turbine operating at a 45 percent production rate will generate about 3.9 million kilowatts (KW) of

electricity in a year, meeting the needs of about 500 households annually. However, the average wind turbine turns at approximately 25 percent.

In the U.S. there are approximately 85,000 people employed in the wind industry.

The major challenge of using wind as a source of power is that the wind is intermittent and does not always blow when electricity is needed. Wind energy cannot be stored and not all winds can be harnessed to meet the timing of electricity demands. The viability of a wind project in our location is further hampered by higher construction costs for offshore installations and the risk of wind farm destruction from hurricane-force winds sometimes encountered on our southern coasts.

Many potential wind farms where wind energy can be produced on a large scale need to be in locations far removed from the populated areas where the energy is needed. This puts wind energy at a major disadvantage in terms of costs of new substations and transmission lines.

**Solar** - Solar energy is converted to electricity by utilizing Photovoltaic (PV) devices, or "solar cells." The solar energy (heat) boils water; the steam drives a turbine; the turbine turns an ordinary generator, which then generates electric power.

A 10 gigawatt (GW) solar power plant would cost about \$100 billion to build and would probably cover 1,000 times the land space required for a fossil fuel plant.



In our area, solar would provide about 15 percent of the needed energy in a 24-hour period, requiring another fuel source during the remaining time.

**Geothermal** - Power plants produce geothermal energy by utilizing the earth's dry steam or hot water accessed by digging wells. Either the dry steam or hot water is brought to the surface through pipes and processed into electricity in the power plant. Since geothermal plants use smaller land areas, the cost of land is usually less expensive than other power plants.



Geothermal is a baseload resource, available 24 hours per day, every day of the year. It is independent of weather conditions and has no associated fuel costs.

Drilling geothermal reservoirs and finding them, can be however, an expensive task. Drilling a well is estimated to cost \$1 to \$4 million, or around \$2,500 per installed KW in the U.S. The drilling of each observation hole can vary greatly depending on geological and other conditions. Geothermal is very site specific and along with the heat from the earth, toxic chemicals can also be dispersed in the process.

The United States generates an average of 15 billion kilowatt hours (kWh) of geothermal power per year and the plants are concentrated primarily in the western part of the country.

**Biomass** - Biomass energy includes landfill methane gas, wood waste, farm by-products and ethanol. The majority of biomass electricity today is generated using a steam cycle. In this process, biomass is burned in a boiler to make steam. The steam then turns a turbine, which is connected to a generator that produces electricity.

Of these resources, landfill methane gas has the highest potential for providing renewable elec-

tricity generation in the Southeast. To release the methane, gas is collected from decomposing waste by a series of wells strategically placed throughout the landfill. The wells are connected by a series of pipes leading to larger pipes that deliver the gas to a plant that generates electricity from renewable fuels. The entire piping system is under a vacuum created by blowers at the facility, causing landfill gas to flow from the wells. Once blowers deliver the gas to the plant, internal combustion engines use the gas as fuel and spin generators to produce electricity.

Converting landfill gas (LFG) to electricity reduces emissions of methane, a greenhouse gas 23 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

As of last December, approximately 480 LFG energy projects were operational in the U.S., (80 are with electric co-ops), generating almost 12 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity per year. In Alabama, there are three operational projects: Morgan, Montgomery and St. Clair.

CAEC currently offers its members the opportunity to utilize this renewable alternative with the Green Power Choice program, a partnership between PowerSouth (our generation and transmission co-op) and Waste Management, (visit [www.greenpowerchoice.coop](http://www.greenpowerchoice.coop) for more information). With this project, electricity is generated from the methane

gas produced at the Springhill Regional Landfill in Campbellton, Fla. Buying two blocks of green power per month for a year is equal

to recycling 480 pounds of aluminum (15,322 cans) or recycling 1,766 pounds of newspaper. Blocks consist of 100 kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity and can be included on the power bill for \$2 per block.



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A new energy future will be powered by multiple energy sources. And while renewables will play a key role in our energy future, they cannot meet the growing demand for electricity alone. A secure and reliable energy future must include a blend of advanced clean coal, nuclear, natural gas and renewable generation sources.

# Wrap Up the Holiday Season Safely


When the holiday season has come and gone, your lingering indoor and outdoor decorations will serve as a constant reminder of this festive time of year.



Holiday decorations are intended for temporary use only. Keeping outdoor decorations up for several months far exceeds the time period set forth in accordance with safety standards, leaving wires unnecessarily exposed to the elements, shortening the product life span and posing the risk of electrical shock and fire over time.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) recommends taking down, inspecting and storing all decorations in order to make sure they can be safely used for next season. The following guidelines for electrical safety will help you stay safe as you prepare to remove and store your holiday decorations:

- Use the gripping area of the plug when unplugging lights. Yanking or tugging on the cord could damage the wires and insulation.
- Separate and label outdoor from indoor decorations before storing.
- Discard broken or faulty lights.
- Store decorations in a dry place, away from children, pets and water.
- Check to make sure that electrical cords are in good condition, and are not frayed or cracked.
- Make sure all electrical lights and toys display the seal of a nationally recognized certification agency, such as Canadian Standards Association (CSA), Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or Intertek Testing Services.


Practicing safety now can keep decorations in good working condition and prevent potential hazards from occurring next year. 

## Christmas Tree Recycling Program Enters 17th Year

Once Christmas is over and the presents have been removed from under the tree, it's time to start thinking about recycling your live Christmas tree, also known as treecycling. Real Christmas trees are biodegradable, which means they can be easily reused or recycled for mulch and other purposes. Treecycling is a simple way to bring a renewable and natural source back to the environment.

CAEC and Winn Dixie grocery stores will sponsor

the 17th Annual Christmas Tree Recycling Program at Winn Dixie store parking lots in Alexander City, Clanton, Millbrook, Prattville and Wetumpka, Dec. 26 through Jan. 3 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Area residents can bring their live, undecorated trees to the drop-off site in each of these Winn Dixie parking lots during the designated week. CAEC employees will chip the trees for use as mulch or for erosion control. 

*CAEC offices will be closed Thursday, Dec. 24 and Friday, Dec. 25 in observance of Christmas and on Friday, Jan. 1, for New Year's Day.*

# WINTER TIPS

Each degree makes a difference.

## SAVE Energy the Easy Way...

- ▶ **Keep your heating system's thermostat at 68°F.** For each degree you raise the thermostat above the recommended setting, you add 3-4 percent to your monthly electric bill.
- ▶ **If your home is drafty, find the sources.** Caulk around all windows and weather strip around each door.
- ▶ **If you have a fireplace but do not use it, keep the damper closed.**
- ▶ **Consider buying a programmable thermostat.** A programmable thermostat allows you to easily lower your home's temperature and reduce the run time of your heating system.



Central Alabama  
Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

[www.caec.coop](http://www.caec.coop)

*Conserve101... Conserving today means saving tomorrow.*



# Recipe for *Efficiency* from CAEC

## Understanding EnergyGuide Labels on Appliances

Appliances account for about 20 percent of your household's energy consumption, with refrigerators and clothes dryers at the top of the list.

When you're shopping for appliances, you can think of two price tags -- the purchase price and the operating cost for the appliance during its lifetime. You'll be paying on that second price tag every month with your utility bill for the next 10 to 20 years, depending on the life of the appliance.

Look for the ENERGY STAR label when you shop for a new appliance. ENERGY STAR ap-

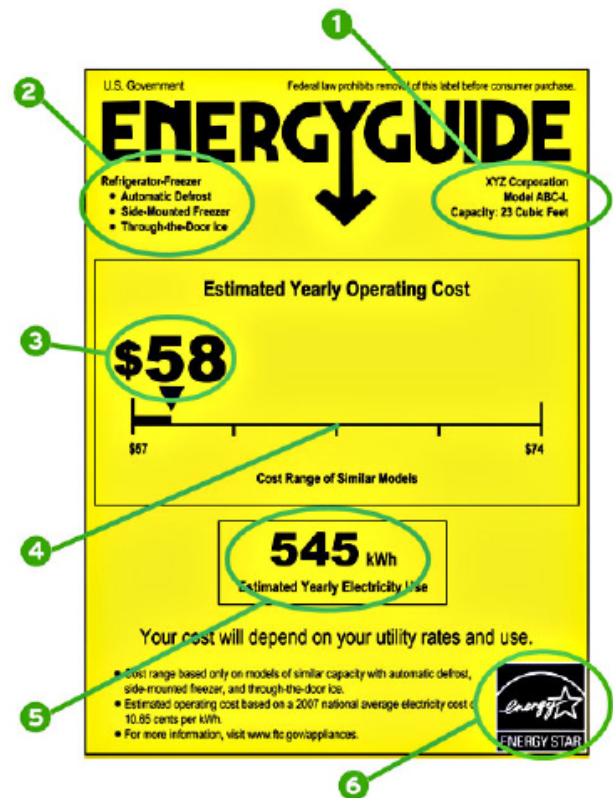
pliances have been identified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy as being energy-efficient products. They usually exceed minimum federal standards by a substantial amount because they use at least 10 to 25 percent less energy than most nonqualified models..

To help you figure out whether an appliance is energy efficient, the federal government requires most appliances to display the bright yellow and black EnergyGuide label.

Here's a guide to help you interpret the EnergyGuide label:.

### How to Read the EnergyGuide Label:

1. Manufacturer, model and size.
2. Main product features and in some cases, similar models with an annual operating cost reflected in the cost range below.
3. Annual operating cost is based on electricity consumption and the national average cost for a kilowatt-hour.
4. You can see whether the model you're buying uses more or less energy than similar models.
5. This estimates how much electricity an appliance uses annually. Use your rates for a more accurate cost.
6. The Energy Star logo indicates that the product qualifies for the program.



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The EnergyGuide labels will tell you the annual energy consumption and operating cost for each appliance so you can compare them yourself. For more energy tips, visit us at [www.caec.coop](http://www.caec.coop).