

# The Spirit of Giving



While growing up, many of us were taught that it is far better to give than to receive. And because of this teaching, I began to think about all the people I have crossed paths with who have demonstrated the spirit of giving.

I work with an exceptional group of employees who spend their personal time by giving back to their communities, churches, schools and civic groups. They are affiliated with all types of causes such as youth and adult leadership programs, youth sports, Scouting, volunteer fire departments, food banks, chambers, animal welfare and housing assistance to name a few.

On behalf of your co-op, these same employees help students by performing electrical safety demonstrations, reading to elementary school children and even speaking at high schools about preparing for meaningful careers with the co-op.

Not only do we have employees who volunteer locally, we also have those who are willing to sacrifice time from their families to perform third world missionary work in places such as South Korea, Kenya and Romania. My own family

has had the opportunity to participate in mission work in Mexico, Peru and the less developed portion of the Bahamas.

This past summer four of CAEC's Journeyman Linemen volunteered to participate in an international assistance program in Guatemala with the NRECA International Foundation. If you missed the article about their volunteer work, refer to the October 2010 issue of *Alabama Living*.

Giving opportunities surround us all and if you're looking for a worthwhile cause on a local level, consider Project SHARE, an organization that assists the elderly and disabled with their utility bills (see page 5 for more details).

With a focus on others, this time of year is an ideal opportunity to teach our children the true meaning of the giving season. Take the time to develop meaningful traditions such as volunteering or giving to a toy drive. Whatever your faith, it's about the spirit of giving from your heart.

From the Board of Trustees and all of us at CAEC, we wish our members a wonderful holiday season with much joy and blessing. ☪

Tom Stackhouse, CAEC President/CEO

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## LOCATIONS

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Clanton Office  
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Rockford Office  
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Wetumpka Office  
637 Coosa River Pkwy.

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

# *A True Gift to Those in Need*

**H**olidays are a time for giving and helping others. This holiday consider giving a small amount throughout the year to provide emergency assistance to the elderly and disabled who need help with their energy bills.

Established Dec. 15, 1982, Project SHARE (**S**ervice to **H**elp **A**labamians with **R**elief on **E**nergy) is a program designed to meet the energy needs of qualified, low-income elderly or disabled individuals facing financial and/or medical situations. To qualify for assistance, the family income must be within certain guidelines depending on the size of the household. In addition, the head of the household must be 62 years of age or older or be receiving a disability check.


As a joint effort between the American Red Cross and energy providers, such as CAEC, the program continues to help keep people warm during the winter months and cool in the summer.

During the last fiscal year (July 1, 2009 -June 30, 2010) the American

Red Cross of the Mid Alabama Region and the Central Alabama area disbursed \$161,297 through Project SHARE for energy assistance, benefiting 1,239 households.

Statewide, 336,135 households have benefited from the program with more than \$31.2 million disbursed to Alabama households since Project SHARE's inception.

For as little as \$1 a month, CAEC members can continue making a difference in someone's life through Project SHARE. Participation is easy. You can pledge \$1, \$2, \$5 or any other whole-dollar amount you choose each month, and it will be automatically added to your utility bill. Simply go to our Web site [www.caec.coop](http://www.caec.coop) and click on the Project SHARE link, fill out your December bill insert and mail it back with your payment or just give us a call (800) 545-5735.

Those in need will be grateful for your willingness to SHARE. 

## ***Project SHARE***

***Make a Difference in Someone's Life***

# Prepay —

## *Taking Control of Your Energy Consumption*

**A**re you looking for more flexibility and information so there are no surprises at the end of the month concerning your electric bill? Members find prepay an attractive alternative that puts them in control of their electricity consumption.

“I receive a call each day from the co-op’s automated system giving me my balance and this helps me keep up with my energy usage,” said CAEC member Patricia (PJ) Johnson.

Implemented Feb. 1, 2009, CAEC’s Prepay program has offered members options when it comes to paying for their electricity. The objective is to help members manage their energy usage and budget payments more effectively. Prepay consumers are not required to pay deposits, an option that works well for those who don’t have credit established. In addition, prepay allows members to monitor and manage their account in several ways, including balance alerts via phone, text or e-mail and the ability to check their energy usage 24 hours a day, seven days a week, just by logging onto our Web site, [www.caec.coop](http://www.caec.coop) and clicking on the MyUsage logo.

“The online features are very easy and convenient. No matter where you are, if you have access to the internet, you can check your balance and make a payment if necessary,” said Johnson.

Johnson was introduced to prepay when she opened an account for her new residence.

“I wasn’t prepared to pay a deposit and the customer service representative for the co-op informed me about prepay. By enrolling in prepay, I didn’t have to pay the deposit.”

Another benefit for the member is the potential for a decrease in energy usage. Studies show that prepay programs usually make customers more cautious about adjusting their thermostat or leaving the lights on when not at home, thereby reducing their usage up to 10 percent.


***"With the current economy, having control of my energy consumption is a big help. Prepay really takes the surprise out of your energy bill."***

***-PJ***

wiser than they were a year ago about conserving and managing energy consumption.

“With the current economy, having control of my energy usage is a big help. Prepay really takes the surprise out of your energy bill.”

No deposits, no monthly bills, smaller payment amounts over time, easy consumption monitoring, greater awareness and control of costs and no late payments add up to a win-win for our members.

If you’re interested in CAEC’s prepay service or have further questions, call us at (800) 545-5735 or visit our Web site. 

Prepay payments are automatically applied and can be made at any of CAEC’s service centers, by phone or through the Web site.

Johnson feels she and her family are much



# CAEC Employee Spotlight: Information Technology

The technology at CAEC helps us achieve a higher level of customer service for our members.

Technology plays a major role in our lives today; and at your co-op, it also functions as a vital component in the reliable and efficient operation of our electric system.

“We utilize technology to make our processes as seamless and cost effective as possible,” said Manager of Information Systems Scott Lee.

Lee has the responsibility of providing significant input and recommendations for the purchase and replacement of computer hardware, software, communications and all other information technology for the co-op. He also has the task of safeguarding all data that is stored within the corporate infrastructure. In addition, he develops and directs new program applications to integrate with existing software, thereby improving computer utilization.

Maintaining these computer systems on a daily basis is the responsibility of Information Systems Specialist II Jimmy “Jimbo” Ciesla and Information Systems Specialist I, Dean Siems.

“We have a better understanding of the needs for our members since we both were once linemen,” said Ciesla. “Our work is behind the scenes. By streamlining the processes and providing our employees with the right technology tools, we can help them do their jobs more effectively for the benefit of the members.”

Management and crews rely on a number of technology systems, such as mapping outage management and vehicle locators, to work efficiently.

Futura (the mapping software), the Outage Management System (OMS) and the Automated

Vehicle Locator (AVL) assist in routing crews faster to locations. The OMS identifies outages promptly and provides information on the number of members impacted while predicting the extent and location of the outage.


Automated Vehicle Locators are utilized in selected types of field vehicles, permitting the cooperative to see exactly where crews are working at any given time, even in remote areas, which allows the co-op to dispatch the closest crew to the area in need.

“We’ve all come to rely on technology, even our members, when it comes to our daily business,” said Siems.

Members want flexibility when interacting with CAEC. Our goal is to offer multiple ways for you to communicate with the co-op and have account access 24/7 through technologies such as the Interactive Voice Response

(IVR) system. This software allows members to pay their bills by phone without the assistance of a customer service representative, and on our customer service web site, [www.caec.coop](http://www.caec.coop). Additionally, in the event of an outage, this technology enables us to answer more calls at one time, expediting the process of restoring power to you sooner.

And to assist members in having more control over their energy usage, CAEC also offers the MyUsage web site, which gives daily information on energy consumption.

Dedicated to improving reliability and customer options for our members, the IT department remains committed to excellence in service. 




# Take the Chill Out of Your Room

When the cold weather starts to slip in, we're all looking for a way to keep warm, which makes portable electric space heaters common this time of year. Before you get yours plugged-in, take the time to review these safety rules:

- Place the heater on a level, hard, nonflammable surface.
- Keep the heater at least 3 feet from drapes and furniture or other flammable items.
- Do not use older space heaters with cords that are cracked or frayed.
- Only purchase Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) approved heaters.
- Read and follow the instructions for its operations and maintenance.
- To prevent electrical shocks and electrocutions, always keep heaters away from water and never touch a heater if you are wet.
- Choose a heater that is the right wattage for the area you want to heat. Your heater should have a 10-to-1 ratio of wattage to square feet.

- Look for a heater that has a timer or is controlled thermostatically to avoid overheating a room.
- Choose a heater that has both a tip-over switch, which shuts off the heater if it is knocked over, and an automatic shutoff, which turns off the heater if it gets too hot.
- Don't use extension cords with electric space heaters.
- Always turn the heater off when you are not in the room, sleeping or leaving your house.
- Keep heaters out of reach of children and pets and where people might trip over or bump into it.



Your family can enjoy safe, comfortable warmth from your electric space heater by simply following the above precautions. 


# Recycle Your Christmas Tree



CAEC and Winn Dixie grocery stores will sponsor the 18th Annual Christmas Tree Recycling Program at Winn Dixie store parking lots in Alexander City, Clanton, Millbrook, Prattville and Wetumpka, Dec. 26 through Jan. 2

from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Real Christmas trees are biodegradable, which means they can be easily reused or recycled for mulch and other purposes.

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. 23 and Friday, Dec. 24 in observance of Christmas and on Friday, Dec. 31, for New Year's.***



# Searching for a way to replace your kitchen appliances on a budget?



Try this four-piece stainless steel set for only **\$1,999** including free delivery

Cooperative Propane delivers trusted brands such as Amana, GE, KitchenAid and Maytag.

Similar savings can be found on laundry appliances too.



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Models: MICROHOOD/WMH1162XVS; DISHWASHER/DU1055XTVS; RANGE /WFE361LVS; REFRIGERATOR/ED5FVGXWS



# 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-

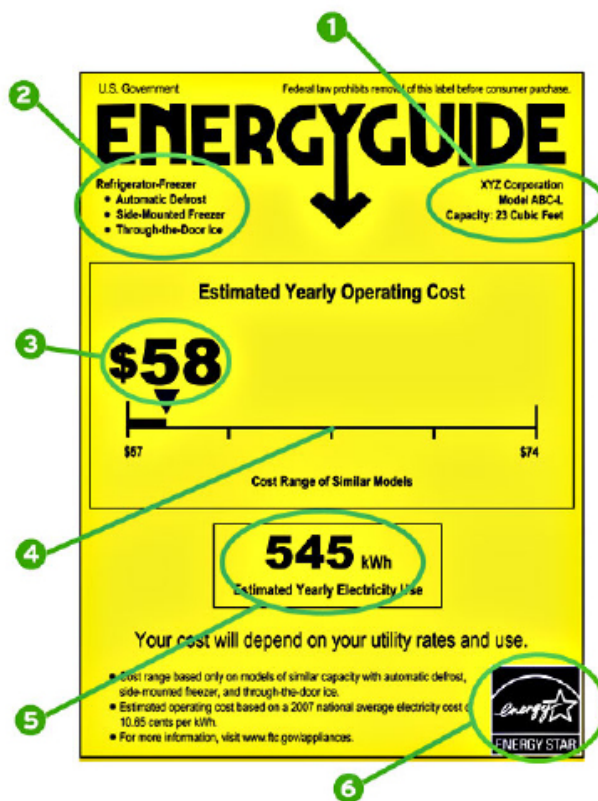
pliances have been identified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy as being energy-efficient products. They usually exceed minimum federal standards by a substantial amount because they use at least 10 to 25 percent less energy than most nonqualified models.

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).