

Energy Efficiency—A Path We All Must Follow



Nothing builds and sustains credibility like someone who leads by example. To paraphrase Mohandas Gandhi, “if you want to make a change, be the best example of that change and others will follow.”

During the last few months, my conversations with you and the content of *Alabama Living* have focused on what you—the member—can do when it comes to energy issues. Whether it’s in the political or environmental realm or through any of our energy conservation programs, many options have been presented. This month, however, I want to focus on some of the actions Central Alabama Electric Cooperative (CAEC) is taking to do our part in energy matters.

Foremost, CAEC and your employees continuously look for innovative ways to use energy wisely. By doing so, we can have a positive effect on the rates you pay for electricity, while also playing an integral part on the world-energy stage. As we explore these new opportunities, we actively take part in what is available now.

For example, we utilize the Green Power Choice Program we promote to you by operating our own facilities with this environmentally friendly electricity. By operating on the power of 100-kilowatt-hour blocks through Green Power Choice, the cooperative uses 7,050 blocks annually to power all of our offices and service centers served by CAEC.

Along with this commitment, we conduct a unique energy-saving procedure with our facility generators. During peak-time periods, the gen-

erators used for backup power at our offices are operated, taking our facilities “off the grid.” This helps reduce our system’s peak load and allows us to fulfill our generator maintenance and testing requirements. By scheduling this maintenance during peak usage times, we benefit every member by helping to keep our demand down during the most expensive periods — it’s a type of peak-shaving method (learn more about peak shaving at www.caec.coop).

Just like you, we also feel the pinch of rising gasoline costs, and we work on ways to keep our fuel and field operation costs down. We try to balance the efficient routing of vehicles with timely service. Advances in technology assist our need to keep fuel costs low. For example, through our Automated Meter Reading (AMR) system, the need for meter reader personnel to drive to member homes has drastically decreased. Once the AMR system is fully deployed by the end of this year, we will eliminate nearly 12,000 miles of monthly driving.

As all of us continue down the path of energy awareness and education, your Co-op employees continue to make energy efficiency a priority. Whether it’s leading as an example to our children, coworkers and neighbors or replacing an incandescent light bulb with a compact fluorescent lamp or keeping air filters clean, we hope others will join us in the journey. ☺

Tom Stackhouse, CAEC President and CEO



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Energy Efficiency Measures YOU Can Do!

Making a few small changes around your home can lead to big reductions of wasted electricity and save you money. Explore our list of nine simple steps you can take to help reduce energy costs in your home:

1. Change Five Lights: Replace the conventional bulbs in your five most frequently used light fixtures with Compact Florescent Lamps — these energy-efficient light bulbs can save you \$30 or more in energy costs during each bulb's lifetime.

2. Look for the STAR: Always look for ENERGY STAR appliances. These great appliances offer high performance and lower energy use. ENERGY STAR has products in 50 categories, including lighting, appliances, windows and heating and cooling equipment.

3. Heating and Cooling: Simple steps like changing air filters regularly and having your heating and cooling equipment tuned annually by a licensed contractor can save you money by making your unit more efficient.

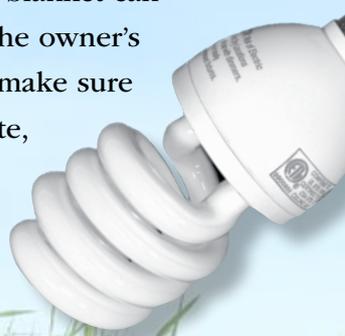
4. Seal and Insulate: Sealing air leaks and adding more insulation to your home is a great do-it-yourself project and helps to keep your heating and cooling dollars inside your home. Common air leaks are found in attics, basements and around windows, doors and ductwork.

5. Watch the Hot Water: Lower your hot water heater temperature to 120°F and install a 2.5-gallon-per-minute showerhead to reduce the amount of hot water used.

6. Look in the Fridge: Clean your refrigerator's condenser coils once a year, making your continuously-running fridge more efficient.

7. Program It: Install a programmable thermostat to control the temperatures in your house when there's no one home or when you're asleep; this uses less energy for heating and cooling, saving you money.

8. Plant a Tree: It's a long-term investment, but plant a tree (away from power lines) so it will shade your largest west window in summer, helping to block the hot sun.

9. Use a Blanket: Most water heaters lose as much heat through their top and sides as they put into the water. This causes the element to run longer and use more electricity. Wrapping the hot water heater in an insulating blanket can cut this heat loss in half. Check the owner's manual for your water heater to make sure the use of a blanket is appropriate, or ask your local home improvement store professional. 

CAEC History Fact: CAEC's President/CEO Tom Stackhouse served on the original Touchstone Energy branding committee, which formed in 1998. Touchstone Energy is a national alliance made up of more than 640 local, consumer-owned electric cooperatives in 46 states that helps promote energy efficiency through advocacy measures.

Touchstone Energy: Celebrating 10 years of "Looking Out For You."

CAEC Participates in the NRECA Legislative Conference

With various energy issues on the table in Washington, CAEC continues a long-term tradition of speaking to Congress “face to face”

Three CAEC trustees and representative staff members spent May 7 in Washington, D.C., attending meetings with Alabama’s senators and representatives to discuss pending legislation that will affect cooperative members.

Each year, cooperatives from across the country send representatives to the nation’s capital to meet with their congressional delegations to address issues of interest or concern. Traditionally, more than 3,000 national co-op representatives make the trip. This long-standing practice of doing business “face to face” reminds elected leaders of the co-op members back home who are affected by their decisions.

Two of this year’s topics of discussion focused on clean coal technology and the cost of reducing emission levels.

Clean coal technology: Alabama’s electric cooperatives will need to add 15,000 megawatts (MW) of generating capacity in the next decade — a one-third increase over current capacity — to keep up with rising electricity demand. State-of-the-art coal-fired power plants that optimize environmental performance are a critical part of a resource mix needed to provide adequate electricity and achieve aggressive carbon reductions. In order to push forward on clean coal technologies, government and industry both must make a significant commitment. Incentives are needed to mitigate dramatically rising construction costs, the price of diverting power for environmental performance, and the risk and maintenance issues involved in deploying new technologies.

Reducing emissions while keeping power reliable and affordable: America’s 930 rural electric cooperatives have two major responsibilities as consumer-owned, not-for-profit utilities: keeping the lights on and the rates affordable while complying with all of the nation’s energy and environmental laws. Electric cooperatives

will work with members of Congress to craft legislation that helps keep the lights on, maintains affordable electricity and achieves significant greenhouse gas emission reductions. However, three provisions need to be considered for electric cooperatives: 1) a full allocation

of allowances that would be passed on to co-op members; 2) timelines to reduce CO2 emissions from power plants that are consistent with the availability of technology; and 3) an “economic safety valve” that caps allowance prices and provides a limit for how much cost cooperative consumers will have to bear.

For more information on these legislative issues and other energy concerns, log on to our Web site www.caec.coop and click on the “Legislative Conference” link under Member Education. You can also join the national discussion and let your voice be heard by visiting www.ourenergy.coop.



Trustees Mitchell, Johnson and Harrison meet with Congressman Mike Rogers.

Want to make your voice heard? Join ACRE today! Find out more about this grass roots movement on www.caec.coop.

Our Energy, Our Future, Your Voice

How would you react if you experienced regularly scheduled blackouts, while paying twice as much for electricity? Does this sound like paying more for less?

This scenario could be reality for all of us if certain proposals in Congress are successful. With energy concerns topping all the headlines, it's important to begin a productive conversation with those who hold the future of energy costs in their hands — our elected officials. Such a conversation begins by asking tough questions and requiring straight answers.

At its 2008 Annual Meeting, the National Rural Electric Association (NRECA) introduced a public campaign to give cooperatives and their members a voice in the debate over energy legislation occurring now in Congress as well as state legislatures.

There are three simple questions you can ask your elected officials to answer:

- 1. Experts say that our nation's growing electricity needs will soon go well beyond what renewables, conservation and efficiency can provide. What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future?*
- 2. What are you doing to fully fund the research required to make emissions-free electric plants an affordable reality?*
- 3. Balancing electricity needs and environmental goals will be difficult. How much is all this going to increase my electric bill, and what will you do to make it affordable?*

You don't need to be an energy expert to ask questions, but asking questions can help find the solution to the problem of balancing climate change goals with keeping your lights on and your electric bills affordable.

To make things easy, there is a Web site that will allow you to send an e-mail to your representatives in Washington, D.C. Visit www.ourenergy.coop to start the conversation with your officials. You can also call CAEC at (800) 545-5735 to request a wallet card with these questions.

Begin this important conversation today! 



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What are you doing to fully fund the research required to make emissions free electric plants an affordable reality?

Balancing electricity needs and environmental goals will be difficult. How much is all this going to increase my electric bill and what will you do to make it affordable?

Start the conversation with your elected officials now @ www.ourenergy.coop

The three questions that are the basis of Our Energy, Our Future are included on a handy wallet card, available from CAEC.

Be Prepared in Case of *Bad* Weather

June is the beginning of hurricane season; do you have supplies for your family in case storms roll through? While CAEC makes every effort to keep your power on at all times, storms and other uncontrollable events can sometimes spoil our efforts.

That's why a storm preparedness kit is so important. Make sure you have the following items (listed in the blue circle) in your kit.

In addition to your essential items, be sure you know how to open the garage door manually if you have an automatic garage door. Use hot water sparingly and only leave a few lights switched on in your home

Essential Severe Weather Kit Items

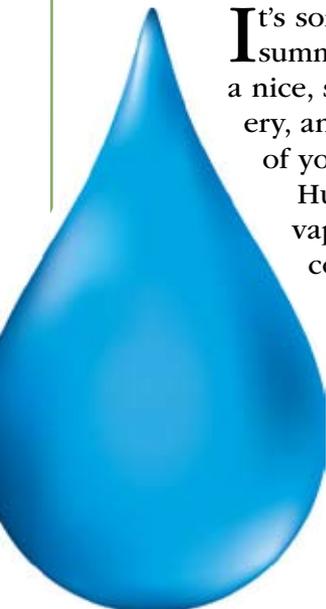
Flashlights and batteries
Glow-in-the-dark sticks
A lantern
Matches/lighters
Non-perishable food
Water
Manual can opener
Wind-up clock
Portable radio
First aid kit

to notify you when power is restored.

If power is out, a common concern is how long food in the refrigerator/freezer will be safe. As a common rule of thumb, a refrigerator should keep food safely cold for approximately four hours, if the door is not opened. A full freezer will hold the temperature for about 48 hours (or 24 hours if the freezer is half full) as long as the door remains closed. Food may be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 40 degrees or below.

Preparing now can keep your family safe and comfortable when storms hit. 

Humidity—Turning Water Vapor into Wasted Energy Dollars



It's something Alabamians face every summer—humidity. Humidity can turn a nice, summer day into a sweltering misery, and it can do the same to the inside of your home.

Humidity is the amount of water vapor in the air, and the vapor can come from many sources within your house. Cooking, showering and doing laundry can all introduce water vapor into the air, making it more humid and raising the heat index inside your home.

With this vapor introduced, your heat pump, or air conditioner, has to work harder day in and day out to keep you comfortable. When the relative humidity level

is above 50 percent, the air seems warmer than it is and raises your summer cooling costs by making your unit run longer.

To help combat energy-robbing moisture during the summer, place vented exhaust fans in bathrooms, kitchens and laundry rooms. These fans can remove the extra water vapor caused by activities in these rooms.

If you're not sure of your home's humidity level, install an inexpensive hygrometer to measure and record the relative humidity. Remember, having some dampness isn't a bad thing. If the level is less than 30 percent, it's too dry, and may cause damage to drywall. A relative humidity level of 45 percent is ideal.

Humidity can do more than just raise your summer cooling bills; it can lead to mold and rot in your home. If you have any questions, contact your local heating and cooling professional. 

*CAEC Offices Will Be Closed Friday, July 4
in Observance of the Independence Day Holiday*

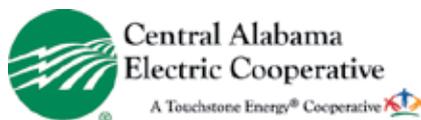


Sheesh, Kabobs Are Easier Than Ever!



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





Pay Your Bill with Any of CAEC's Bill Payment Options!

Automatic Deduction: You'll receive a bill as you normally would, but the amount due is deducted from your checking account or credit/debit card on the due date shown on your bill. This ensures you're never late on a payment.

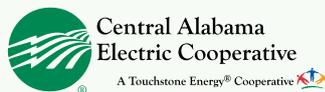
E-Bill: Through this program, CAEC sends your bill by e-mail at the same time of the month as you presently receive your paper bill. You can then click a link on the E-bill to pay online.

Pay by Phone: CAEC has introduced a new automated phone payment option for credit/debit card payments. Simply dial (800) 545-5735 or (334) 365-6762 and press option 2 to get started.

Pay Online: Make a secure payment with a credit/debit card or e-check at www.caec.coop. Have a copy of your bill, which contains all the information you need, including an initial password. Look for the Pay/View Bill tab on our home page.

Levelized Billing: This program prevents drastic changes in your bill each month.

Have your account number(s) handy when making a payment.
Call (800) 545-5735 or visit www.caec.coop to get started.



www.caec.coop