

Electricity — Still a Good Value



Like so many others, my wife Amy and I are learning to cope with the rising costs of our family's living expenses. Our son Isaac, in his third year of college, and our two daughters, Becca and Tori, who will be completing high school soon, have taught us to shop for products and services with good value.

Considering the rising costs of many consumer goods over the past 10 years, such as college tuition and fees—up by 6 percent; childcare—up by 5 percent; prescription drugs—up by 4 percent; and gasoline—up by 7 percent, I believe electricity continues to be a good value. In fact, the national cost of electricity today, when adjusted for inflation, is lower than what it was in 1980. Now that's a value that is true of very few commodities.


Although the cost of fuel to generate power is volatile and it makes up nearly 70 percent of your electric bill, we work diligently here at CAEC to control operational expenses and to deliver reliable service at the lowest cost possible. After all, having a relatively low cost service without good reliability doesn't really provide you much value.

As a cooperative we're able to offer additional services that we believe bring more value to your lives. Our Co-op Connections Card allows you to save money every time you buy goods and services from any of the local and national participating businesses. As an added value, this card gives you

savings on prescriptions. Visit our website (www.caec.coop) to see the list of participants.

Another beneficial cooperative service allows you to join a national grassroots discussion with your elected officials about the energy expectations and outlook facing all of us. The Our Energy, Our Future campaign is a website (www.ourenegy.coop) that gives you access to your legislators so you can voice your opinion on pending legislation that could raise your utility bills. I urge you to take a few minutes, look at the website and join the 534,000 Americans who have already voiced their opinions.

A valuable tool we use here at CAEC to help us understand what's important to you is the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) survey, which is conducted quarterly through telephone calls by TSE services. The feedback we receive from this survey reflects what your needs are and as a result, it offers ways for us to respond and improve performance. We appreciate your participation in this assessment.

As your local electric utility, we value you, our members, and we'll continue to do what we started 72 years ago—delivering quality electric energy at the most affordable cost and in the most reliable manner. 

Tom Stackhouse, CAEC President/CEO

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Rockford Office
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Wetumpka Office
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2010 Annual Meeting Highlights

CAEC's 2010 Annual Meeting was held on Friday, Aug. 13, at the co-op's Prattville headquarters. A total of 2,939 members registered by mail and 430 members in person. It was estimated that 2,000 were in attendance at this family-friendly event.

Members were presented with several activities including health screenings, healthy lifestyle information and energy-efficiency products and tips.

And for the children, a new hands-on activity that involved small wildlife incorporated education about the care given to utility rights-of-way.


During the business meeting, Wayne Gruenloh, CPA and Owner of Gruenloh and Associates of Robertsdale, Ala., presented CAEC's audit and gave the Cooperative an unqualified opinion, which is the highest rating that can be given.

In the Board of Trustees election, Board members David Kelley, Sr., Rockford, District 5; Ruby Neeley, Jemison, District 9; and Charles Byrd, Deatsville, At-Large, were re-elected and Board member Mark Presnell, Sr., Wetumpka, District 2, was elected to his first term.

CAEC President and CEO Tom Stackhouse briefed members about the process of planning for our energy future, which he said needs to include nuclear energy. He also discussed how the retail cost had been reduced twice since the last Annual Meeting.

Stackhouse recognized four of the co-op's Journeyman Linemen (Lamar Daugherty, Keith Hay, Kevin Powell and Heath Smith) who returned from Guastatoya, Guatemala, the first group from CAEC participating in an international assistance trip sponsored by the NRECA International Program. The linemen gave up the comforts of home and took their own tools and equipment with them as they spent two labor-intensive weeks building a three-phase line. To read more about their volunteer effort, see pages 12 and 13 or go online at www.caec.coop.

The meeting concluded with the grand prize of \$500, won by Alabama PFB Holiness Camp, Evelyn Tubbs.

Next year's Annual Meeting is scheduled for Friday, Aug. 12, 2011. 



registration



health screening



fellowship



enjoyable music



energy efficiency



wildlife



good food



face painting



ice cream



inflatables

CAEC Employee Spotlight: **Field Service Representative**

When you move to a new location, one of the very first things on your to-do list before moving your personal belongings is to have the power turned on. Our Field Service Reps (FSRs) are responsible for making that happen.

The FSR position was created in 1999 to streamline the efficiency of the daily field operations of the co-op. This specialized group of employees predominantly carries out light service-order work.

"We understand how important it is that customers have power at their disposal, and one of the key roles of the FSRs is to perform connects of meters," said Terry Ward, employed 29 years with the co-op.



Another aspect of the FSRs job is advising customers of high energy use areas when they express a concern regarding high consumption.

"When a member's electric bill increases because of extreme temperatures, a request can be made for an FSR to come out to the home and help find the problem," said FSR Steve Baker, employed 19 years with the co-op. "We will inspect for things such as making sure the hot water heater is functioning properly, an air conditioner filter that needs to be changed, thermostat settings – making sure the unit is functioning in the most effective manner; and we'll offer suggestions on correcting those issues."

And there are times when the FSR's job involves the disconnection of meters due to a change of occupancy, the home is vacant or non-payment.

"FSRs wear many hats and each day is different," said FSR Supervisor Kirk Green with 18 years of service.

When there is a major outage, FSRs will go out before the line crews and assess the damage and report back to the operations manager

with information on what repairs are needed, as well as assist the line crews with the restoration of power. This procedure expedites the process because the crews know ahead of time what equipment they need before proceeding to the affected areas.

In addition, FSRs are responsible for installing meter base lightning protection to prevent lightning from damaging "white" appliances in the home (i.e. stoves, refrigerators, air conditioners, washers, dryers, etc.)*

FSRs are key players when it comes to preventative measures for service reliability. They perform routine maintenance on tree orders, such as trimming limbs and spraying kudzu vines during the growing seasons.

"Kudzu vines are a problem species for electric utilities and if left unmanaged, they will grow tall enough to interfere with the distribution lines and cause power outages," said FSR Jimmy Sims, a 21-year veteran with the co-op.



From energy use advice to assisting with power restoration after a storm, the FSRs are a vital part of the co-op's day to day operations. Working as a team and with so many duties to perform, the main goal of the FSRs is to provide high-quality service to our members on a daily basis. ☞

* For more details about CAEC's Power Quality Plus program, visit www.caec.coop and click the Products/Services tab or call 800-545-5735.

Defining the Cooperative Difference

Many Americans do business with a cooperative every day and don't even know it. Co-ops exist in almost every industry from energy, agricultural (such as Ocean Spray and Sunkist), dairy operations, credit unions, housing, healthcare, marketing (such as Best Western and ACE Hardware) and much more. With more than 29,000 across the nation, co-ops are a huge part of the economy here in the United States and serve some 120 million members, or 4 in 10 Americans.

Cooperatives are different from other business models because of the seven principles that guide them - defining their unique structure and expressing their direct accountability to their member-owners.

The seven principles upon which co-ops were founded - voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; members' economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; cooperation among cooperatives and concern for community - are as meaningful today as they were in the past.

One of the most unique co-op aspects is that we are not driven by profit. For-profit companies aim to return as much money as possible to their shareholders. Co-ops aren't under pressure to generate excessive profits; instead, we try to keep prices as low as possible while providing high-quality service. At CAEC, we invest money in excess of operating costs back into the business locally and return the margins to our members in the form of capital credits.

Another quality that sets co-ops apart from other businesses is our concern for community. We have a special responsibility to support the areas in which our members live and work. As a matter of fact, CAEC invests in everything from leadership programs for our youth to promoting new jobs and industry through our economic development efforts; we stand as a driving force in our community.



Overall, co-ops are committed to providing the best quality at the lowest possible cost, and recognizing that our members make us who we are.

That's the cooperative difference.

Cooperative's Economic Impact in the U.S.

- 29,284 co-ops in the U.S.
- \$75 billion in wages
- Nearly 1 million Americans employed by cooperatives
- Cooperatives represent roughly 1% of U.S. GDP (\$154 billion of \$14 trillion)

Resource: National Cooperative Business Association

Electrical Safety in the Home — Preparing for Fall

Although it's not chilly outside just yet, and the time has not changed – it's all just around the corner. As the season changes, use these safety tips to keep your home protected from electrical hazards.

- Electric blankets, while comforting in cold weather, can be dangerous if left unattended. Inspect the blanket for any damage, exposed wires or cracks. An electric blanket can become overheated by placing additional covers on top of it or by forgetting to turn it off. Electric blankets older than 10 years are the main culprits for most fires due to frayed and bent wires that disrupt the flow of electricity. Newer electric blankets are considered safer, as they deliver less heat than their predecessors, and the wires are less likely to be bent or broken.
- As it gets darker earlier, the need for more lighting means more cords. Keep electrical cords from lights and electrical fixtures away from high traffic areas. Place lamps closer to outlets and keep extension cords near the wall to prevent tripping hazards. Check to see that cords are not covered by rugs or other materials. Covered cords can overheat and start a fire. Examine cords for cracks and exposed wires, and replace them if necessary. Attaching them to a wall with staples

or nails can also cause damage and raise the risk of shock.

- Many individuals rely on electric space heaters to warm their homes or to take the chill out of a cold morning or evening. Even though the heaters don't have an open flame, the heating elements of some types of electric heaters are hot enough to ignite nearby combustibles like draperies, paper, clothing, furniture and flammable liquids. Space heaters should be placed at least three feet from combustible materials and should set on a level, hard, nonflammable flooring surface. More importantly, make sure the heater has been tested to the latest standards and is certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL). Additionally, to prevent electrocutions, always keep portable electric heaters away from water; never use them in a bathroom or near a sink.

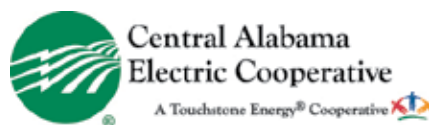
These are just a few tips to help you make your home hazard free – for more safety information, visit www.caec.coop.



SAVING ENERGY IS EASY

Heating systems can account for up to 50 percent of monthly electric usage. Thermostats should be set at 68-70 degrees. Each degree above that adds five to eight percent to monthly heating costs.

Conserving today means saving tomorrow.



Visit myconserve101.com for more energy-saving ideas.



Recipe for *Efficiency* from CAEC

Quick Do-It-Yourself Home Energy Audit

Did you know there are several key areas in your home that you can check for efficiency by conducting a Do-It-Yourself Home Energy Audit? This quick and easy audit is suitable for most dwelling types and can help you gauge your home's efficiency.

Utensils (tools):

Screwdriver

Digital Thermometer

Detergent/Cleaner

Water Hose

Ingredients (supplies):

Air Filter (if needed)

Electric Water Heater Setting

1. Turn off the circuit (at the breaker box) to your electric hot water heater.

2. Check the temperature setting on the tank. The top element should be set at 120 degrees and the bottom element at 130 degrees for peak efficiency.

3. If the temperature setting needs to be adjusted, turn the thermostat to the desired temperature with a screwdriver. After you have made any adjustments, restore power to your water heater.



Check Water Temperature

1. To also ensure efficiency, use a digital thermometer to check the temperature of the hot water. Turn a faucet on hot and after maximum heating has taken place, take a reading.



2. If the temperature is not within 10-20 degrees of the water heating setting, this could mean your hot water heater is not functioning properly (or efficiently) and should be checked by a trained professional.

Checking and Changing Air Filters

You should check your heating and air filters monthly and replace with new filters as needed. Dust and debris can reduce the efficiency of your heating and air unit.



1. Locate your air filter(s). Inspect for debris, dust, hair, etc.

2. If a filter needs to be replaced, do so with the appropriate filter for your heating and air unit model.

Check Outside Air Unit

If you have an outside air unit, debris can affect its efficiency.

1. Turn off power to the outside unit.

2. Remove the fan motor cover.

3. Spray the inside with water from a hose. Use a detergent-like substance if the area is especially dirty.

4. Return fan cover back to unit and restore power.



By checking these four simple areas during your own audit, you can help make your home more efficient. For more energy tips, visit us at www.caec.coop.