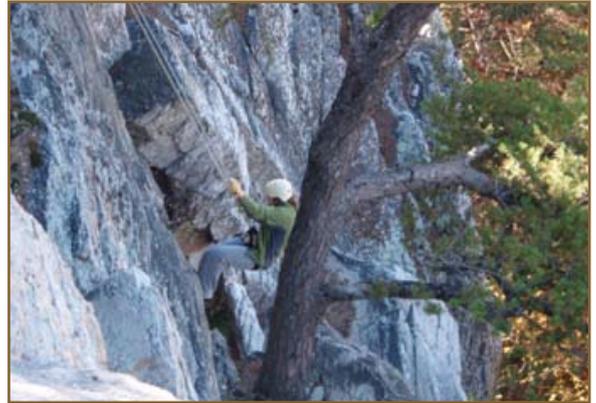


Trusting the Rope...



Late in October I spent a Saturday rappelling at Cheaha Mountain with a newly formed Venturing Crew. Venturing is a division of Boy Scouts of America for youth 14 to 21 years old. Our Boy Scout son Isaac is now at college in Kentucky, and I was looking to find opportunities for our daughters, Becca and Tori, to participate in some outdoor adventure. We got involved in helping form this new co-ed crew, known as the AWF Outdoor Club and chartered by the Alabama Wildlife Federation (AWF), headquartered in Millbrook. Jimmy Harris with AWF has been introducing Scouts to rappelling for years. He led us on this trip on a brisk autumn Saturday to see if we could overcome our fear of stepping over a cliff to drop down on a 100 foot rock face. We all had a blast and at the end of the day, Jimmy asked the crew members what they had learned. Of the many responses they gave, one answer resonated with me, "Trust the rope!"

Interestingly, I also had the CAEC 2009 budget projections on my mind that day. As you know our largest expense, the power we purchase and deliver to you, is increasing significantly and we see this as an ongoing trend. In 2009, it will be nearly 72 percent of the \$91.2 million we will



Tori makes her way down the side of the mountain. The 100-foot rock face provided the opportunity to experience her first rappelling descent.

spend to deliver the electricity our members use. Just 10 years ago it was 62 percent of our cost. On top of that another \$14 million will be spent for new and upgraded facilities.

There are two parts to the operating cost. The first is primarily made of employees needed to answer calls, work on the lines, do the accounting as well as the cost to operate vehicles, pay for utilities, keep computer software updated, pay taxes, etc. This will be roughly \$16.5 million and another \$9.3 million is projected for depreciation of the growing plant and interest on the dollars borrowed to build the plant. *(Continued...)*

YOUR BOARD

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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

I have reported in the past that we have managed to keep the growth of operating expenses at or below the increase in sales as the membership grew, in both residential and industrial and commercial accounts. In the past two years we have seen sales growth slow due to mild weather, conservation and the loss of our largest commercial consumer. This challenge presented a dilemma, and we as a staff had to decide whether to recommend to the Board that we cut operating expenses to the extreme, which would compensate for the rising cost of doing business but would also risk service quality, or keep service at the forefront even if it added to the charges.

“Trust the rope” is all I could think about. We know that members need lights to stay on and blinks kept to a minimum, and your cost to live – as with us all – is going up at every front. So what is the rope that I trust in? The employees of this cooperative! They have done a tremendous job—especially over the past 10 years. During that time the employee count has decreased 10 percent while the number of services has increased 21 percent. They have im-

plemented technology, developed innovative programs and updated work processes to streamline their efforts and improve service — all the while receiving very high scores every quarter on our member satisfaction surveys.

We have projected as tightly as we can to cover our cost while anticipating minimal growth in sales. If drastic changes in operation cost occur, we will have to react and the staff will monitor and project these changes as far ahead as possible. My rope you can depend on; it is made of some of the finest employees you will find anywhere. 🌿



Tom Stackhouse, CAEC President and CEO



Becca kayaks down the Coosa River on a previous outing.

**Read more about the rappelling trip in an upcoming edition of AWF's magazine. If you know someone 14 to 21 interested in outdoor adventures, the AWF Outdoor Club meets at the Alabama Nature Center the first and third Thursday nights of most months. For more information, call AWF or ask me.*

Energy Efficiency—a timeless gift!

If you're thinking of making a large appliance or electronics purchase this holiday season, don't forget to keep energy efficiency in mind! Consider the tips below to help you use less energy and save money:

Refrigerators:

- Refrigerators with freezers on top use 10 to 15 percent less energy than a side-by-side model of equivalent size.
- Generally, the larger the refrigerator, the greater the energy consumption; but one large refrigerator will use less energy than two smaller ones with the same total volume or a smaller fridge plus a separate freezer.

Clothes Washers:

- Choose the right size washer. A smaller washer may be more efficient for small households. But if you have a large family and have to do multiple loads in a washer that's too small for your needs, you could lose any possible energy savings.

- Look for a washer with adjustable water levels. This gives you the option of using less water to wash small loads.
- Choose a washer with a faster spin speed. This allows more water to be removed after the wash, reducing the drying time and your dryer's energy use.

Dishwashers:

- Choose a dishwasher with a "light wash" or "energy-saving" wash cycle. It uses less water and operates for a shorter period of time for dishes that are just slightly soiled.
- Look for dishwashers that have an energy-saving cycle that allows dishes to be air-dried with circulation fans, rather than heat-dried with energy-wasting heating coils.

Home Electronics:

- Ink jet printers tend to be more energy efficient than lasers.
- LCD televisions and monitors draw less power than traditional cathode ray tube televisions or plasma screens.
- Small, lightweight power supplies tend to be more energy efficient than large, heavy transformer-based power supplies.

It's also a good rule of thumb to look for the Energy Star logo, which indicates that an appliance, such as a TV or dishwasher, meets federal efficiency standards. The EPA's Energy Star website (www.energystar.gov) has information on appliance models that carry the Energy Star label and where you can buy them.

Making energy efficient purchases today mean energy dollar savings tomorrow. Remember to keep efficiency on your shopping list, no matter the season! 



Keep Your Furry Family Members Safe Around Electricity

The holidays are a great time to gather with friends and family, and it's also important to keep family pets in mind during this busy season.

Help your animal companion during the holidays by following these simple tips to ensure a safe environment for the furry member of your family:

- Electric window displays and lights are very inviting, not only to you and your neighborhood, but to your curious pets as well. Make sure that all of your electrical connections and outlets are secured and concealed.
- If a portion of cords have to remain in sight, block access to them by wrapping flexible safety cable (from hardware stores) around them or encasing them in plastic tubing (PVC pipe) if possible.

- Ideally, unplug all accessible electrical cords if you have to leave an animal prone to chewing unsupervised.

- Check wiring and cords for fraying and replace immediately.

- Make sure plugs are fully inserted into the socket – a partially exposed prong can be dangerous to a curious paw or nose.

Remember, the holidays should be a fun filled time for all members of the family, including the furry ones, so make sure you put safety first for everyone this year! 🐾



Christmas Tree Recycling Available for the 16th Year

Every year, many of us are faced with the same problem — what to do with your live Christmas tree after the holidays?

This year, why not put that tree to good use by having it recycled?

CAEC and Winn Dixie grocery stores will sponsor the 16th 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. 🐾

Participating Winn Dixie Locations:

Prattville Millbrook Clanton
Alexander City Wetumpka

Dates/Times:

Dec. 26 through Jan. 3
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

CAEC offices will be closed Thursday, December 25 and Friday, December 26 in observance of Christmas and on Thursday, Jan. 1 for New Year's Day.

Celebrating 70 Years



As we conclude our look at CAEC's last 70 years, it is plain to see that our history is a rich one with many milestones.

From our beginnings as a grassroots movement of area residents to our current service of more than 40,000 members, your cooperative has seen many changes throughout the years.

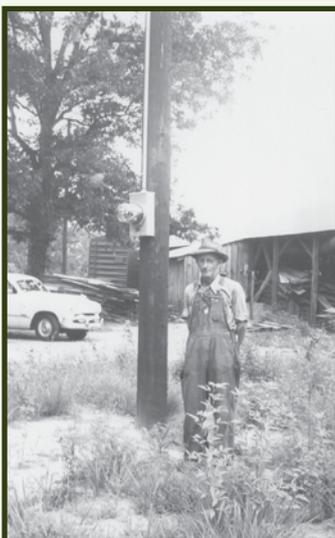
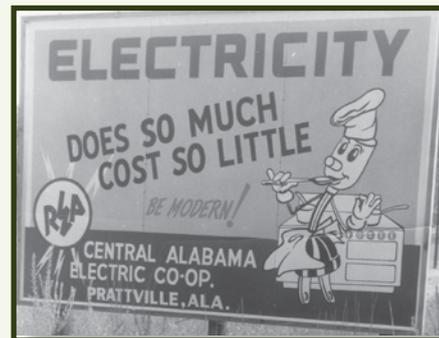
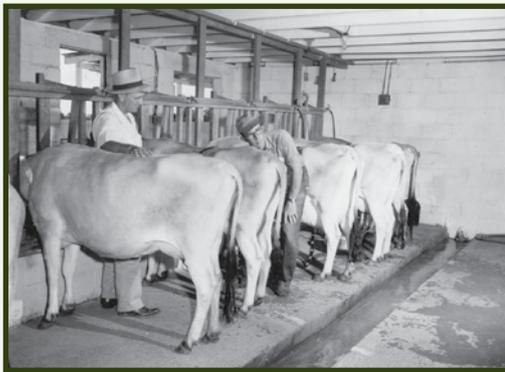
And while many things may be different than they were 70 years ago, our foundational ideals remain the same: voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; members' economic participation, autonomy and independence; education, training and information; cooperation among cooperatives; and concern for community.

As we turn our attention toward the next 70 years and beyond, we want to thank you for celebrating our anniversary year with us.



Clarence Hall, one of CAEC's first Board Members who served from 1938 to 1971, takes the stage at Annual Meeting.

Electricity helped to make daily farming tasks, such as milking cows, easier for local farmers.



Conveniences we now take for granted, such as cooking on an electric range, were new to many of CAEC's first members.

We're working to keep rates stable...

Will you join us?

CAEC's wholesale power costs are determined by our members' highest electricity usage and can affect your rates for the whole year if that usage is extremely high.... but there's something you can do through CAEC's peak shaving program.



This effort targets water heaters, which can use approximately 14 percent of your home's annual electricity. A peak shaving device for your electric water heater will be installed AT NO COST to you. While you still have hot water when you need it, the reheating process is delayed to off-peak times.

Sign the form below or give us a call at (800) 545-5735. Join us and do your part to help keep rates down.

Mail form to: Central Alabama Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 681570, Prattville, AL 36068

Yes, I agree to do my part to help keep rates down with a peak shaving device for my electric water heater.

Name: _____ Phone #(s): _____

Address: _____ City: _____ St: _____ Zip: _____

Account #: _____

Email: _____

Number & Size(s) of Water Heater(s): _____

Signature: _____

A licensed electrician will install a peak shaving device for your water heater at no cost to you.



Central Alabama
Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

www.caec.coop

Stay Safe All Year Long



Power strips and extension cords are commonly used during the holidays. Make sure cords are in good condition (not frayed) and never put cords underneath rugs or in high traffic areas. Power strips are intended for indoor use only and should never be “chained” or linked together. Use only the designated amount of outlets per strip.

fact:

78 percent of Americans improperly use extension cords as a permanent power supply, and not for their intended use as a safe, temporary supply.



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