

Keeping Our Team Running Strong



In March of this year, my family and I traveled to Alaska so we could witness a unique sporting event—the Iditarod Sled Dog Race. The Iditarod is unlike any other sporting event in the world and is often called “the last great race on Earth.” The race covers

more than 1,150 miles, testing dogsled teams of men, women and canines through some of the most extreme and beautiful terrain on Earth.

Each team starts with 16 dogs and one driver, all facing sub-zero temperatures, blinding wind and snow through frozen rivers, mountain ranges, forests and tundra—it really is an amazing experience and something my whole family has wanted to see for a long time.

While watching the teams face nature, we began to comprehend the days, weeks, months, even years of training necessary for the Iditarod. Since the teams are surrounded by extreme conditions, the number one concern for all racers is safety. For each team member, human or beast, reaching the goal safely guides his or her every move of preparation.

As CAEC employees reflect on our second year with no loss-time accidents, I cannot help but think how this impeccable drive for the safety of the dogsled teams can also be seen in the operation and goals of our organization. As a result of making safety a priority, we have kept our team running strong. Two years with no-loss time accidents is a major feat, and a first for your co-op.

We may not face arctic tundra and blinding snow, but our business can still be a dangerous one. Combined with the obvious danger of dealing with electricity, driving on roads and

everyday office encounters can put an employee’s wellbeing in danger. We continuously investigate ways to keep all our teammates safe by discussing with all employees “near miss” incidents and accidents at other utilities. We also work with our state and national associations and other cooperatives to look at related developments and include them in our regular discussions.

Through constant training, our work force has become more aware of everyday risks, allowing them to be proactive in watching out for the welfare of themselves and of others.

There is nothing more important than the safety of our employees, and while the benefits of sending them home the same way they arrived at work are tremendous, there are other advantages as well. A good safety record improves our workers compensation modifier. A modifier of 1.00 or lower is desirable, so our current rate of .89 not only helps us keep costs down by having lower insurance rates, but our productivity and efficiency levels are higher as well.

As the halfway mark of 2008 approaches, I am proud of what the employees have accomplished in the past two plus years, especially for the no loss-time milestone they have reached. However, when it comes to team endeavors, whether it’s rushing across Alaska or replacing and repairing power lines, safety is the key to keeping your team running strong.

Tom Stackhouse, CAEC President and CEO

Side note: During the Iditarod, we were able to volunteer at the Yentna Station Roadhouse and assisted as the 95 teams passed through their first checkpoint. Our adventure is chronicled at www.iustack.com/dnn.

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Youth LEADERS TOUR ALABAMA'S CAPITAL

CAEC's 2008 Montgomery Youth Tour winners had the experience of a lifetime during the Alabama Rural Electric Association's Montgomery Youth Tour.

Nine local high school juniors, sponsored by CAEC, joined more than 120 other students from across the state March 4-6 at the state's capital. There they participated in a three-day conference that offered an in-depth look at their state's government and judicial system, and history.

Rachel Alexander, Autauga Academy; Carly Evans, East Memorial Christian Academy; Michael Forst, Prattville High School; John D. Johnson, Prattville High School; Josh Otstot, East Memorial Christian Academy; Joshua Powell, Prattville Christian Academy; Thomas Price, East Memorial Christian Academy; Amber Shook, Billingsley School; Camdyn Williamson, Prattville High School; and Ashlee Lassiter, Prattville High School, were all selected to attend the AREA Montgomery Youth Tour during a judging ceremony held at CAEC's Prattville office on Jan. 17.



Students ended the tour with a "meet and greet" with area representatives and CAEC Board members.

The students had many exclusive opportunities, including meeting and talking with Supreme Court Justice Harold See, Jr., State Senator Scott Beason, State Senator Arthur Orr, State Senator Wendell Mitchell, House Representative H. Mac Gipson and House Representative James Fields. They visited the Capitol, the State House, the Alabama Supreme Court building, the Rosa Parks Museum and State Archives.

"Even though I do not live far from Montgomery, it was amazing to have the opportunity to see many historic places, and people, up close," said Williamson. "Being able to stand on the Alabama Senate floor one day, then trace the footsteps of Rosa Parks the next, was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience," concluded Williamson.

If you are interested in participating in next year's Youth Tour, look for announcements in the September issue of *Alabama Living* or e-mail communications@coop.caec.com. 

"Being able to stand on the Alabama Senate floor one day, then trace the footsteps of Rosa Parks the next, was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

How Safe Is Your Home?

Each year, thousands of electrical accidents happen in homes across the country. Inspect your home for these common hazards.



Home offices make doing work in the comfort of our own home easier than ever. But with all the electronic equipment needed, it can also be dangerous. It's estimated that 5,000 house fires a year are started by overloaded outlets. Don't plug in too many small, personal, household electronics with high wattage into an outlet or power strip. Also, never attach a power strip to another power strip.



Any ungrounded faulty appliance can be a hazard because you could become the path for the electrical current to travel. For example, handling an ungrounded iron while touching an operating washing machine could make you the path to ground for the current to flow.



If you ever have young children in your home, make sure all outlets have protective covers. Also, keep loose cords out of the way so children cannot pull them out of the socket, or drag the electronic device at the other end onto themselves.





Family and entertainment rooms offer a sanctuary for families and friends, but they also house many electronics.

Check out all electrical cords. It's advisable to check the condition of cords, plugs and insulation for signs of fraying or other damage.

Never place electrical cords (including extension cords) under rugs (this can wear away the insulated covering). Always keep cords out of pathways that may cause someone to trip or fall.

Appliances used near a kitchen sink can increase your chance of electric shock. Do not handle or operate appliances when your hands are wet or when the appliances are on wet surfaces, such as a counter top that has water on it. All sockets around sinks should have Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) installed. These outlets trip when electrical current flows through you or to ground. If the outlets near your kitchen sink are not labeled GFCI, you should strongly consider hiring a licensed electrician to convert them.



Never touch electrical equipment while in the bathtub. Keep all electrical appliances far enough away from water in tubs, showers and sinks so you don't accidentally touch them, and the appliance does not fall in and transmit electricity through the water—and through you. Outlets in bathrooms should also be GFCI enabled; this protects you, as well as your house.



Expanding Your 24-Hour Bill Payment Options

A new bill payment choice has been added to the list of 24-hour options for CAEC members. The automated telephone payment system gives you easy, step-by-step directions for paying your electric bill anytime – without the assistance of customer service.

When you call the Cooperative's toll-free number (1-800-545-5735) or if you dial in locally (334-365-6762), simply press "2" when the greeting message begins. This will connect you to the bill payment system.



You will need to have your account number (or numbers) available as well as your debit/credit card information.

Members have several methods of payment when it comes to efficient, 24/7 options, including automatic bank draft, automatic debit/credit card draft and online payments at www.caec.coop using an e-check or debit/credit card. All these convenient payment choices give you freedom from worry when it comes to paying your bill.

Don't wait; try one of these easy payment systems today!

Clean Your Lint Traps...

...and other ways to reduce your risk of a dryer fire

More than 81.5 million homes have clothes dryers, but many people do not know the danger of dryer fires. Annually, 15,500 fires are associated with clothes dryers and cause more than \$84 million in property damage.

What's the culprit? Lack of maintenance is a contributing factor. Lint traps aren't cleaned as often as they should be, and vent systems aren't being checked on a periodic basis.

It is the lint in your trap, vent system and other areas of your dryer that reduces airflow and can cause the dryer to perform poorly, operate at elevated temperatures and possibly overheat—conditions that can potentially start a fire.

Problems can also occur if improper items are placed in dryers (such as foam-backed rugs or athletic shoes) or if the appliance is vented with plastic or vinyl exhaust materials.



There are several ways to reduce the risk of fire. Use rigid or flexible metal venting and ducting materials to help lower drying temperatures. These materials can help sustain airflow, reduce operating costs and extend the life of the dryer and clothing. Also, the interior of the dryer and venting system should be cleaned periodically by qualified service personnel.

The easiest way for you to help keep your dryer in safe running condition is by cleaning out your lint trap after each load. And even though the lint has been removed and the filter appears to be clean, certain fabric sheets used in the drying cycle can cause a thin clear film to develop on the filter, forming a barrier that acts as if lint were left in the trap.

Try this test to see if film exists on your lint trap: take your filter to a sink and run water into it. If the water is unable to pass through, a thorough filter cleaning is required. Use a soft nylon brush and warm soapy water to scrub the mesh until water flows freely through the trap.

If you ever have any concerns, call the manufacturer of your clothes dryer. 

CAEC Offices Will be Closed May 26 in Observance of Memorial Day





Too Much of a Good Thing

Electricity can operate many things simultaneously, but overloaded outlets can quickly become dangerous. Overloaded outlets are a major cause of residential fires and can be a potential hazard to you and your family. Be safe: never overload any outlet.

Safety tip:

If an appliance has a three-prong plug, use it only in a three-slot outlet. Never force it to fit into a two-slot outlet or extension cord.



Central Alabama
Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

www.caec.coop

We're a *Fan* of Helping Others.....

...and you can help, too!



For some Alabama residents, small fans are all they will have to keep them cool during high summer temperatures.

Through Project SHARE, though, you can join us in helping those less fortunate stay cool despite the heat.

Project SHARE began Dec. 15, 1982, providing emergency assistance to the elderly and disabled who need help with their energy bills. A joint effort between the American Red Cross and energy providers, such as CAEC, the program helps keep people warm during the winter months and cool during the summer months.

For as little as \$1 a month, CAEC members can support the Project SHARE program and make a difference in someone's life.

To participate in Project SHARE and become a part of the network of neighbors helping neighbors, you can pledge to contribute \$1, \$2, \$5 or any other whole-dollar amount you choose. The amount you select will be automatically added to your utility bill each month.

Contact (800) 545-5735, ext. 2118, for more information, fill out the Project SHARE information on your next bill or complete the form below and return it to CAEC.

Mail form to: Central Alabama Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 681570, Prattville, AL 36067

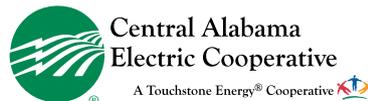
Yes, I agree to help those in need through Project SHARE.

Name: _____ Phone #(s): _____

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

Account #: _____

Email: _____



www.caec.coop

Amount I wish to donate to Project SHARE each month: ___\$1 ___\$2 ___\$5 ___Other (please specify)

Signature: _____