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Guest Column

Safety is a Core Value

We work in an industry where safety is one of our core values. We utilize safety procedures, practices, regulations, personal protection equipment and technology to achieve the goal of returning everyone home at the end of the workday just as they arrived.

CAEC offers extensive safety training to all employees, including formal education through industry organizations such as our state-wide association, the Alabama Rural Electric Association (AREA). Equally as important as it is that we focus on working safely with electricity, we also must be aware of other hazards in our industry so we can guard against complacency. Each year our employees participate in required safety training classes to keep their skill sets at a level of expertise.

For example, our line clearing specialists (formerly referred to as right-of-way crews) and other Alabama cooperative employees recently participated in a three-day certification program at Auburn University involving forest application training. This is the first time this particular class was offered at this location. The curriculum was made available by AREA, and consisted of classroom and in the field training on the different techniques of safely utilizing a chain saw (*see photo*) to cut down a tree when located near power lines.

The chain saw is the most dangerous hand tool that can be purchased and each year, approximately 40,000 people are treated in emergency rooms for the improper use of chain saws. In our field, the risk of injury increases after hurricanes and other natural disasters, when chain saws are widely used to remove fallen or partially-fallen trees and branches.

Additionally, standard hands-on training was provided for CAEC's field employees to learn the proper and safe procedure to follow if an employee does become injured while working in a tree. And while a tree-top rescue is thankfully a rare occurrence, we must know how to respond if one were needed.

In an effort to stay abreast of new safety developments and as part of continual training, in November of last year, I had the opportunity to achieve the designation of Certified Utility Safety Professional (CUSP) offered by the Utility Safety and Ops Leadership Network. This organization serves as an advocate for safe, secure and productive utility work environments and as a catalyst for the prevention of incidents

CAEC is committed to providing its employees with proper training and an awareness of safety procedures and processes, so that they may continue to provide you with quality customer service performed in a safe manner to protect the employee, our members and the general public. ■



Darren Maddox,
Training & Safety
Coordinator





Youth Tour 2013

Leadership Up Close and Personal

Establishing close and personal relationships with leaders is just one of the beneficial aspects of Youth Tour. The 2013 attendees were able to hear prominent speakers such as Senator Bryan Taylor, Representative Kurt Wallace and President of the Alabama Public Service Commission, Twinkle Cavanaugh, during the Montgomery Youth Tour, held March 5-7.

Eight extraordinary high school juniors, sponsored by CAEC, participated in this year's Alabama Rural Electric Association's (AREA) Montgomery Youth Tour. Participants were Samuel Gasson, Thorsby High School; Jared Hunter, Saint James School; Blaire Landry, Marbury High School; Brooke Landry, Marbury High School; Joel Levins, Wetumpka High School; Ellen Mims, Autauga Academy; Neal Ousley, Maplesville High School; and Grayson Webster, Prattville High School.

The students were in agreement that this program gave them the opportunity to develop team building, social and leadership skills while interacting with area students sharing similar goals.

"The activities are fun even though they are designed to help you excel in leadership and problem-solving," said Gasson.

Montgomery Youth Tour/Alabama Cooperative Youth Leadership Conference

Joined by more than 140 other students from across the state, the participants toured the State Capitol, the State House, the Civil Rights Memorial, the First White House of the Confederacy and the Martin Luther King Parsonage.

All students will be invited to participate in the Alabama Cooperative Youth Conference held at the 4-H Youth Development Center in Columbiana, Ala., July 10-12, where they and students from across the state will learn about different kinds of cooperatives and the unique role they play in our everyday lives. They will also take advantage of leadership development exercises and activities.

Washington D.C. Youth Tour

Another part of the Youth Tour Program is the Washington D.C. Youth Tour, scheduled for June 14-20. After interviewing with a panel of CAEC Trustees, Gasson, Brooke Landry, Levins and Ousley were selected to attend this upcoming conference and Blaire Landry was named as first alternate. These representatives will join approximately 1,500 high-school juniors from other electric co-ops across the country.

This tour provides young leaders a life-impacting opportunity to increase their understanding of the value of rural electrification and become more familiar with the historical and political

environment of the nation's capital with visits to monuments, government buildings and cooperative organizations. They will also be able to visit with elected officials and increase their knowledge of how the federal government works.

Congratulations to all of our students who participated in this valuable and unique process.

Application information for the 2014 Youth Tour will be available in the September 2013 issue of *Alabama Living Magazine* and at our website, www.caec.coop. ■



*(first row l. to r.) Brooke Landry, Ellen Mims, Blaire Landry
(second row l. to r.) Jared Hunter, Grayson Webster
(third row l. to r.) Samuel Gasson, Neal Ousley, Joel Levins*

Elmore County

History buffs will enjoy reenactments of the French and Indian War Encampment at Fort Toulouse/Jackson Park; flower lovers will appreciate the beautiful plant life at Jasmine Hill Gardens; geologists will be fascinated by the meteor crater that impacted Alabama approximately 83 million years ago; and trailblazers will get to explore the Alabama trail of French Explorer Jean Baptiste Le Moyne Bienville—all this and more can be found in Elmore County.



Reenactment of the French and Indian War Encampment at Fort Toulouse/Fort Jackson
Photo: Courtesy of Ft. Toulouse/Ft. Jackson Park

The county was established by an act of the Alabama State Legislature on Feb. 15, 1866, from portions of Coosa, Autauga and Montgomery counties. It was named in honor of General John Archer Elmore, who was one of the first settlers in Alabama and a hero of the American Revolution. There are 622 square miles and 398,080 acres of land in the county which are home to many unique communities.

One of these communities is the town of Coosada, which was named for the Alabamos Indian Tribe that settled in the area and their village was called “Koasati” meaning “white cane.” The town was home to several of Alabama’s early leaders when President James Monroe appointed William Wyatt Bibb, who resided in Coosada, as the first governor of the newly formed Alabama territory (1817-1820). Coosada was also residence to Governor Benjamin Fitzpatrick (1841-1845).

Perhaps one of the most widely-discussed events that occurred in Elmore County happened 83 million years ago, when a five-mile-wide meteor landed

in what is now Wetumpka, leaving a massive crater and attracting geologists and curious souls from all over the world to visit this natural phenomenon. Wetumpka itself was incorporated in 1834, with its name having derived from the Indian words “we-wau” (water) “tum-cau” (rumbling), due to its location at a prominent point on the Coosa River where rapids roll and tumble over rocks in the riverbed. Other points of historical interest in the Wetumpka area include Fort Toulouse/Fort Jackson, with thousands of years of history involving Indian mound-builders, Spanish explorers, French soldiers, English and Scottish traders and American settlers. Another heavily visited attraction is Jasmine Hill Gardens, one of the oldest gardens in Alabama, with lovely plantings on 20 acres of land featuring replicas of Greek and Roman sculptures. The city is also credited for being home of the Graefenberg Medical Institute – the first full-fledged medical school in Alabama which began in 1852 and graduated approximately 50 doctors before the school closed in 1861.

One of the main industrial cities in this county, Tallassee, is located in eastern Elmore County. The city was named in the early 1820s by Thomas M. Barnett, the local cotton mill owner who comes from an old Indian town, Talase, which means “town taken.”

Incorporated in 1908, the city has the most extensive cotton factory not only in the state, but also in the Gulf States. It also features one of the finest bridges in the country – the Ben Fitzpatrick Bridge, connecting the east and west sides of town and is claimed to be the longest curved bridge in the world. The bridge stands over the Thurlow Dam, one of the three dams along the Tallapoosa River. The other two dams are Yates Dam, and the first dam built in Elmore County, Martin Dam. The dams form three beautiful lakes: Lakes Tallassee, Yates and Martin. The original purpose of developing these massive dams was three fold – to generate electricity (hydro-electric plants), provide flood control and improve navigation.

The western side of the county is home to a quiet, small farming community, dating back to 1840 –Deatsville. Founded by Washington S. Deats, a native of New England, who built a saw mill in the area, the community was in Autauga County until 1866

when Elmore County was formed and Deatsville was annexed into the new county. In 1871, the South and North Alabama Railroad (now L&N Railroad) was built through Deatsville and the community became prosperous during that era.

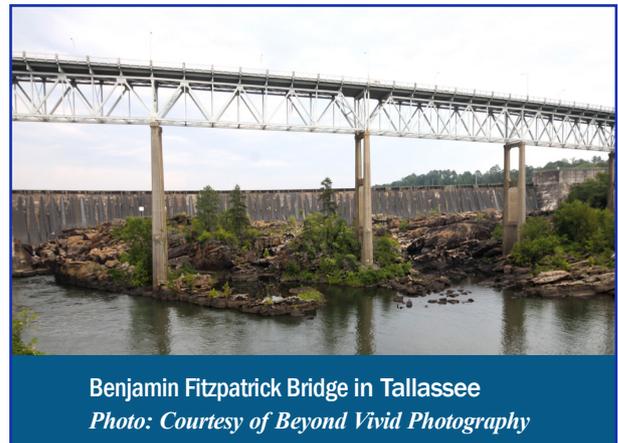
Founded by General John Archer Elmore, the town of Elmore became a major player in 1878 when the Louisville and Nashville Railroad (L&N) connected the town to nearby river port city Wetumpka, and became a shipping center for the surrounding farmers. Another landmark of the Elmore community is its railway station built in 1900. The L&N Railway line from Mobile to Birmingham passed through the middle of the community, and the station served until 1969 as a major passenger interchange for all of northern Elmore County during the years of rail travel.

Nestled in the middle of the best farming lands in northeast Elmore County is the quaint town of Eclectic. The town was incorporated in 1907 and was named by Dr. M.L. Fielder, a local physician, who chose the name from the method of medicine he had just studied in Philadelphia, called the “Eclectic.” The town experienced explosive growth in 1913 as the Birmingham and Southeast Railroad completed a 14-mile stretch of railroad track from Tallassee to Eclectic. This town was also on route for the famous Spanish explorer Hernando De Soto.

Then there’s the town with two names - Holtville/Slapout. According to the local residents, Holtville was named after two Holt sisters, Nancy and Samantha, who ran a post office out of their home in the late 1800s until the area received a rural mail route from the Deatsville Post Office. In 1917, Oscar Peoples moved to Holtville and opened a store in 1918. When he told customers he was “slap out” of what they wanted, he never dreamed he was giving the community a new name.

Holtville High School (HHS) has a history of its own. When the school building was completed in 1929, there was only one other known school like it in the United States – the stucco Spanish structure was patterned after a school located in a western town in California. At the start, HHS offered a very wide selection of vocational training and its program was the best in the state. The school taught job skills that were

much in demand at the time. Vocational programs included farm machinery, auto mechanics, crop planting and plowing, plumbing, chicken hatchery operations, running a slaughter house and refrigeration plant, cannery, feed mill and print shop. The students also conducted a local barbershop and ran a weekly movie theatre. In addition, there was a monthly dental clinic with a county health doctor who checked the students at the beginning of each school year. Holtville High continues to provide vocational programs at the technical school located in Wetumpka for today’s needs.



Benjamin Fitzpatrick Bridge in Tallassee
Photo: Courtesy of Beyond Vivid Photography

Once only a vacation destination, Millbrook’s heritage dates back to the 1700’s when the area included the communities of Robinson Springs, Coosada, Deatsville and Elmore. During the 1920s and 1930s, it became a place to retreat from the busy atmosphere of Montgomery, with seasonal homes and cabins offering families fresh air and seclusion. With the introduction of Interstate 65 in the mid-1970s, Millbrook’s growth led to formal incorporation as a city in 1977 and is now the largest city in Elmore County.

As the third fastest growing county in Alabama, Elmore County is a blend of larger cities, small towns and distinctive communities with some of the most historic events in the Southeast. The small town ambiance combined with the convenience of easy access to several large cities such as Montgomery, Birmingham and Atlanta, and home to several of the most navigable and recreational waterways in the state, makes it a desirable location to visit or put down roots. ■

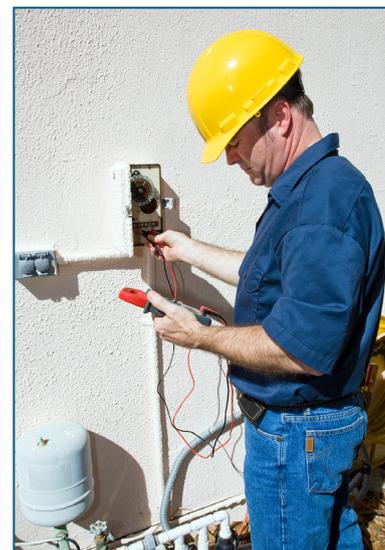
Sources: *The Heritage of Elmore County/Alabama*, *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, *Wikipedia*, *Wetumpka Chamber of Commerce*



Electrical Safety Quiz

May is National Electrical Safety Month - think you know everything there is to know about the electricity flowing through your home? Take this short quiz and test your electrical safety knowledge.

1. How often should the wiring in a home be inspected by a professional electrician?
 - A. Every year
 - B. Every 5 years
 - C. Every 10 years
 - D. Every 20 years
2. What is the correct wattage for a light fixture?
 - A. The wattage the fixture specifically requires, usually noted in the instructions or on the fixture.
 - B. The wattage the fixture specifically requires or 10 watts above or below what is recommended.
 - C. It does not matter. You should choose wattage depending on how bright you want the light to be.
3. What is the best way to store your television entertainment system and its components?
 - A. In an enclosed cabinet underneath the television
 - B. On a shelf that does not enclose the different devices
 - C. On the floor
4. True or False: It is a good idea to periodically turn circuit breakers off and on.



Answers:

1. *C: Every 10 years. This will ensure the wiring throughout your house, particularly wires located behind walls, are in good working order and comply with safety standards. If your home is more than 40 years old, an inspection is long overdue.*
2. *A: The wattage should always be that which the specific light fixture requires. A higher wattage bulb may overheat, possibly causing wires or a nearby combustible material to overheat and lead to a fire. If you are unsure, use a bulb that is 60 watts (or a 60 watt equivalent if using a CFL) or less and for unmarked ceiling fixtures that hold miniature bulbs, use 25 watts.*
3. *B: On a shelf that does not enclose the devices. It is important that your entertainment equipment has room since limited air flow can cause overheating. In general, avoid enclosing equipment in cabinets unless there are proper ventilation openings.*
4. *A: True. Circuit breakers need to be checked to make sure they have not become stuck, thereby keeping them in good working order. In addition, appliances with compressor motors can be exposed to repeat power interruptions if they aren't shut off. Flip each circuit breaker off and on three times at least once a year and be sure to unplug the freezer, refrigerator and air conditioner before doing this.*

**For more safety tips, visit www.caec.coop.*

Derek: The Energy Sleuth

It's Important to Air Seal Your Home

When you turn on your air conditioner or heat unit, you often make sure all windows or doors are also closed so your energy dollars don't go flying out the door. This same principle is also true when it comes to cracks and holes throughout the house. These air leaks cause your cooling/heating unit to run longer and harder and in some cases, there may be enough cracks around the house that if you added them all together, it would be about the size of an open window.



Air sealing your home, both inside and out, is one of the most cost-effective ways to improve energy efficiency and comfort. According to a report by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, homeowners can save 10-20 percent on their heating and cooling costs just by closing up those air leaks. Buy a tube of caulk and a can of sprayfoam and seal anywhere you see a crack or hole. When you seal your home, it stops air from moving freely between the outside and inside of your house. So how do you determine where to seal around your home?

A good strategy is to simply walk around the outside of your home and caulk or foam any openings you see, especially around pipes or

wire penetrations. Additional air leaks and drafts are easier to find because you can feel for them – such as those around windows and doors.

Inside your home, the main area for air leaks is where your wall meets the floor or ceiling. Typically there is molding in place and you can caulk around the molding. Other common places include air penetration points in the ceiling, such as near ceiling fans and lights and the attic access. Sealing these leaks with caulk, spray foam or weather stripping can have an impact on improving your comfort and aide in reducing your utility bills.

Leaks also allow moisture to come into your home. Your cooling unit regulates both temperature and humidity, but when moisture is added to your home, it can become very humid and uncomfortable, especially during the hot Alabama summers, causing your unit to run even more.

A tube of caulk and a can of spray foam are fairly inexpensive, and sealing your house is an easy way to lower your energy bills while gaining comfort. ■



Derek Blankenship is CAEC's Energy Service Representative and Residential Energy Auditor

Payment Options for Everyone

In today's fast-paced world, we all need a convenient way to pay our bills. That's why CAEC offers several payment options with your power bill, so find the option that works best for you.

Payment Options:

Mobile App

Keep track of your account, pay or view your bill and more with the CAEC App for Android and Apple devices.

By Phone

You can make a payment anytime via our automated phone system.

Bank Draft

The most convenient payment method we offer and you never have to worry about being late with a payment.

Online

Pay your bill any time of the day by taking advantage of our online payment system.



Other Billing Options:

Levelized Billing

Prevents drastic changes in your bill - based on the average usage for 12 months.

E-Bill

We will send your bill by e-mail at the same time of the month as you presently receive your bill.

Prepay

Prepay is just what it sounds like, paying for electricity prior to its consumption.

Service Centers

Payments can be made in person at any of our service centers located in Clanton, Prattville, Wetumpka and our upcoming new location in Rockford, Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays.

We also have three authorized payment centers located at both Whitney Bank locations in Prattville and the Maplesville Supermarket.

*To learn more about or to sign up for any of these payment options,
call us as 1-800-545-5735 or visit www.caec.coop*