

# Roanoke Electric FLASHES

## INSIDE

Serving 14,400 Members

"Owned by those we serve"

Safely performing spring chores 22 Teachers: Apply for Bright Ideas grant 23  
Shade saves energy and money 22 Know your generator safety 24

## Members encouraged to ask lawmakers about keeping electricity affordable

By Curtis Wynn

*Executive Vice President and CEO*

Dear Members:

Pressure is mounting in Congress to do something about climate change. And while political debates in Washington, D.C., may seem far away, the outcome will have a direct impact on Roanoke Electric, our cooperative members and other electric consumers.



**Our Energy, Our Future**  
A Dialogue With America

Already our nation faces a looming energy crisis, with demand for electricity ready to outstrip supply. Unless significantly more power plants are placed into service soon, consumers could experience brownouts and even rolling blackouts in the not-too-distant future.

But building this generation will be the most expensive in

history, coming at a time when prices for fossil fuels and construction materials like steel, copper, and concrete are shooting upward.

Additional costs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions— notably carbon dioxide, blamed for contributing to global climate change—will only strain the pocketbooks of consumers even further.

Unfortunately, many members of Congress, as well as local and state legislators, mistakenly believe we can solve all of these problems through efficiency measures and by adding renewable energy sources.

While we certainly need more energy efficiency programs and “green power,” they will not be enough to ensure that you continue to receive a safe, reliable, and affordable supply of electricity.

To avert an energy crisis, the federal government must exercise true leadership, the same leadership that got Americans to the moon in the 1960s. Without that leadership—without a sound, responsible plan—

government risks not only the reliability of our electric system, but literally the ability of many



Curtis Wynn

Americans to be able to afford to pay their electric bill.

We, as electric co-op members and constituents, must call on elected officials to provide this leadership. You don't need to be an energy expert to ask questions. Asking questions will help lawmakers find the answers that will solve the problem of balancing climate change goals while keeping your lights on and your electric bills affordable.

To make things easy, we have a Web site that will write a letter for you. Go to

[www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop) and plug in your address. There you'll be able to ask a series of questions to your representatives in Washington.

Far too often, policymakers don't ask questions until plans go wrong. You can help your elected officials “get it right” by having this conversation. The electric bill you save will be your own.

# Learn the ABCs of outdoor chore safety

Most folks love to get outside in spring, even if it's just to do chores. However, outdoor chores can bring electrical hazards. Follow these simple safety tips:

## General

- Teach children to stay away from electric transformers and substations and explain what posted warning signs mean.
- Avoid damp conditions when using electricity. Keep all electrical devices and cords away from water.
- Place waterproof covers on all outdoor outlets.
- Install ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) in outlets

where water may be present.

- Only use extension cords marked for outdoor use; match power needs of an electric tool or appliance to the cord's label information.
- Dial 8-1-1, the national "Call Before You Dig" number, at least 72 hours before engaging in any excavation work. Local utilities will be notified to mark the approximate location of any underground lines

## Power Tools

- Inspect power tools and appliances for frayed cords, broken plugs, and cracked or broken

housing, and repair or replace damaged items.

- Store power tools indoors.
- Unplug outdoor tools when not in use.
- Do not carry power tools by the cord.

## Ladders

- Use only a fiberglass or wooden ladder if you must work near overhead wires.
- Never touch a person or an object that has made contact with a power line.

Source: *Electrical Safety Foundation International*; CPSC

# Shade can help lower air-conditioning costs

Solar heat absorbed through windows and roofs makes your air conditioner work harder and gobble up more electricity. But incorporating shading concepts into your landscape design can help reduce this solar heat gain—and your cooling costs.

Shading from trees can reduce surrounding air temperatures as much as 9° F. Because cool air settles near the ground, air temperatures directly under trees can be as much as 25° F cooler than air temperatures above nearby blacktop roofs.

Trees can be selected with appropriate sizes, densities, and shapes for almost any shading application. To block solar heat in the summer but allow much of it in during winter, plant deciduous trees. To provide continuous shade or block heavy winds, use dense evergreen trees or shrubs.

Deciduous trees with high, spreading crowns (leaves and branches) should be planted on the south side of your home to provide maximum summertime roof shading. Trees with crowns lower to the ground are more appropriate to the west, where shade is needed from lower afternoon sun angles. Trees should not be planted on the southern sides of solar-heated

homes in cold climates because branches will block some winter sun.

Although a slow-growing tree may take many years before it shades your roof, it will generally live longer than a fast-growing tree. Also, because slow-growing trees often have deeper roots and stronger branches, they are less prone to breakage by windstorms or heavy snow loads. Slow-growing trees can also be more drought resistant than fast-growing trees.

A 6-foot to 8-foot deciduous tree planted near your home will begin shading windows the first year. Depending on the species, the tree will shade the roof in five to 10 years. If you have an air conditioner, shading the unit can increase its efficiency by as much as 10 percent.

Trees, shrubs and groundcover plants can also shade the ground and pavement around the home. This reduces heat radiation and cools the air before it reaches your home's walls and windows. Use a large bush or row of shrubs to shade a patio or driveway. Plant a hedge to shade a sidewalk. Build a trellis for climbing vines to shade a patio area.



Vines can also shade walls during their first growing season. A lattice or trellis with climbing vines, or a planter box with trailing vines, shades a home's perimeter while admitting cooling breezes to the shaded area.

Shrubs planted close to the house will fill in rapidly and begin shading walls and windows within a few years. However, avoid allowing dense foliage to grow immediately next to a home, since the resulting humidity will create maintenance-related problems. Well-landscaped homes in wet areas allow winds to flow around the home, keeping surrounding soil reasonably dry.

Source: *U.S. Dept. of Energy Office*

# Roanoke Electric begins accepting 2008-2009 Bright Ideas applications

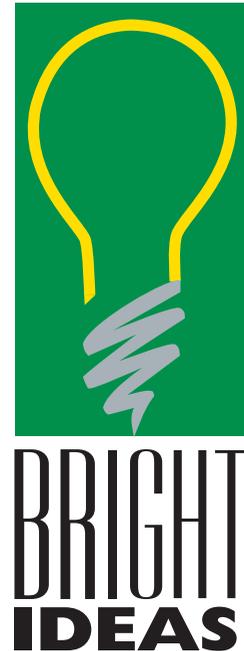
Starting May 1, Roanoke Electric starts accepting Bright Ideas applications for the 2008-2009 school year. The grants will be given to K-12 teachers for funding of innovative and imaginative classroom projects. Teachers can apply for a Bright Ideas education grant at [www.ncbrightideas.com](http://www.ncbrightideas.com).

All certified K-12 North Carolina teachers are eligible for a Bright Ideas grant. Since the program began 15 years ago, North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives have financed a variety of hands-on projects, including adventures in music, art, history, language, reading, science, career-planning and information technologies.

In 2007, the co-ops awarded more than \$500,000 to teachers for classroom projects and winning teachers have reported exciting stories about the inspiration their projects have generated among their students.

Since 1994, the Bright Ideas program has awarded more than \$5.3 million in grant money to North Carolina's teachers, has sponsored 5,000 projects and taught more than 800,000 students.

We look forward to another record-breaking Bright Ideas year to further demonstrate North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives' commitment to community.



## Maintaining appliances saves energy

Whether you have the newest, most efficient electric appliances or you're hanging onto some that practically qualify as antiques, you can use them smarter so they waste less energy.

Here are some free and easy ways to cut waste—and your energy bill:

- Move your refrigerator away from the stove, dishwasher and heating vents. The heat from those devices makes the refrigerator work harder to stay cold, so it runs less efficiently.

- If your refrigerator's coils are exposed, vacuum them every three months.

When dirt builds up on the coils, the appliance has to use more energy to keep your food cold.



- Repair the gaskets on your refrigerator's door if they come loose. Damaged gaskets let cold air leak out of the refrigerator.

- If your old freezer doesn't self-defrost, do it yourself—as soon as a quarter-inch of ice builds up. An ice-laden freezer is inefficient.

- Stop rinsing dishes by hand before you load them into the dishwasher, especially if yours has a pre-rinse or rinse/hold cycle. Simply scrape leftover food from the plates and let the dishwasher do the rest.

- Set your dishwasher to its "energy-saver" feature and leave it there so it saves energy every time you use it.

- Match the size of your pots and pans to the size of the stovetop burner you're using. Placing a small pot on a large burner wastes a lot of heat.

- Cover pots and pans with lids so you can cook at a lower burner setting.



- Select the "small load" setting on your washing machine when you don't have enough laundry to fill the tub. At that setting, the washer will fill with less water.

- Clean your clothes dryer filters after each load. This not only keeps the appliance from overheating and working too hard, it can prevent a fire.

- Set your water heat to 120 degrees. That's hot enough, even though some manufacturers pre-set theirs to 140 degrees.

# Generators should be installed by licensed pro

If you're considering using a generator as a backup power source in case a storm knocks out your electricity, you'll need to know a few things first.

It's not safe to connect your generator directly into your home's wiring. If you do that, the generator can "back-feed" electricity onto the power lines that come to your home. That power can make its way into lines that your utility's crews think are "dead," and can shock or even kill someone who touches the wires as they try to restore power to your home.

Installing a generator is not a do-it-yourself job. Hire a licensed electrical contractor to install a switch that ensures your generator will not send electricity back onto a power line and injure someone on the other end.

Plug only a few can't-live-without-them appliances into your generator during a power outage. If you overload your generator by trying to draw more power than it is designed to produce, it can damage your valuable electronics and appliances.

Store your generator outside in a well-ventilated area—not in the home or in the garage. Like any



other gasoline-powered device, a generator produces carbon monoxide, which is not safe for your family to breathe. Keep the generator dry.

Use outdoor-rated, heavy-duty power cables with your generator. If you overload your cable, it can catch on fire.

Turn your generator off and let it cool down before refueling it. If you spill gasoline on hot parts of the generator, it can ignite.

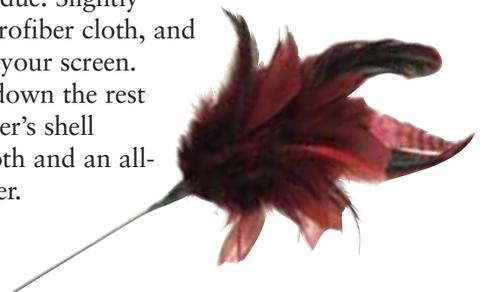
## Spring cleaning helps you see the light

Love it or hate it, spring cleaning is an annual ritual that does a house and its occupants good. This season, add these little chores to your spring-cleaning list:

- Do more than dust your blinds and drapes. Use the special attachments on your vacuum cleaner to give them a good once-over. A tip: Open your blinds and drapes to dust them. Close them to vacuum.

- Wash your windows, inside and out. The best time to do this is on a cloudy day because warm sunshine can cause your cleaner to streak. Start by washing your indoor windows with regular water and wiping them dry. Then spray the exterior panes with an outdoor window cleaner, which will work through screens and dry on its own without streaking. Clean windows let more sun in, which means you can turn off some lights during the day.

- Clean your computer. Turn off the machine, and then turn the keyboard upside down. Gently shake it to free loose dirt. Next, use a can of compressed air on the keyboard to blow out remaining residue. Slightly moisten a microfiber cloth, and use it to wipe your screen. Finally, wipe down the rest of the computer's shell with a soft cloth and an all-purpose cleaner.



### Roanoke Electric FLASHES

Published monthly for the member-consumers of Roanoke Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 440,  
Rich Square, NC 27869  
Office: (252) 539-2236  
or 1-800-433-2236

For outages call: 1-800-358-9437

For electronic bill payment:  
[www.roanokeelectric.com](http://www.roanokeelectric.com)

We accept VISA, MasterCard  
& E-check.

Visit our web sites at:  
[www.roanokeelectric.com](http://www.roanokeelectric.com)  
[www.roanokeenergy.com](http://www.roanokeenergy.com)

**Executive Vice President/CEO**  
Curtis Wynn

#### Board of Directors

Allen Speller, *president*

Robert "Nat" Riddick,

*vice president*

Delores Amason,

*secretary-treasurer*

Johnnie P. Garner,

*assistant secretary-treasurer*

Carolyn Bradley

Chester Deloatch

Kenneth Jemigan

Millard Lee

Damell Lee