



Roanoke Electric **FLASHES**

Let's get real about energy: N.C senators front and center in energy debate

By Curtis Wynn
Executive Vice President and CEO

The debate on energy legislation, including climate change, has moved to the United States Senate. As with most major legislation in the Senate, the result could come down to a close vote. Both Senators from North Carolina, Richard Burr and Kay Hagan, will play important roles in the debate. It is up to consumers to communicate with our state's Senators and let them know that cost matters.

Due to complex Senate rules, controversial legislation generally requires support of 60 out of 100 Senators. The Democrats currently hold 60 seats, but the majority does not guarantee the party will pass any legislation it wants. On energy issues, Senators must take a bi-partisan approach or bring together a majority that represent a wide range of regional interests. North Carolina is one of only 12 states represented in the

U.S. Senate by one Democrat and one Republican.

Richard Burr is completing his first term in the Senate and will stand for election in 2010. Burr has extensive experience on energy, serving on the key energy committee when he was in the U.S. House, and now in the Senate. Burr has been vocal in his support for nuclear power, criticizing the House's energy bill as too costly and lacking in support for base load generation. Burr has opposed a cap and trade program for combating climate change. Burr sits on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

Kay Hagan is in her first year as a U.S. Senator. Hagan is new to many of the energy issues for electric cooperatives. It is up to consumers to communicate with Senator Hagan so she can have a full understanding of energy legislation's impact. Hagan has shown in her initial actions that she is open to a balanced

approach on energy legislation. When the Senate's energy bill reaches the Senate floor, Hagan will be a key vote.



Curtis Wynn

A poorly written energy bill could raise electric rates in the Southeast in relation to states that have greater renewable energy resources. Electric cooperatives are urging both Burr and Hagan to consider the regional impacts of any energy bill that moves through the Senate. Cooperatives in North Carolina have asked their Senators to support energy legislation only if it creates real environmental benefits and protects consumers from burdensome cost increases. North Carolina's electric cooperatives support strong incentives for nuclear power, energy efficiency which benefits residential and small business consumers and the development of cost-effective renewable resources.

You can contact your Senate offices directly to tell them your concerns on energy by calling (877) 40BALANCE or by visiting the Web site

www.findabalancedsolution.com.

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Roanoke Electric Cooperative moves to new location

Roanoke Electric Cooperative has officially moved its day-to-day operation from the Rich Square site to its new 38,000 square foot state-of-the-art headquarters in Ahoskie. The new facility is located a mile west of intersection NC 11 and NC 561 highways.

The new one-story building sits 100 yards off the road, and features improved parking for members, open space, large tinted windows, high ceilings, several meeting and conference rooms, electronic security, the latest technologies, and a fitness area.

REC plans to apply for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification, an accreditation that recognizes

high standards for environmentally sustainable construction. The facility was built with the environment in mind. Non-toxic VOC paints, sufficient insulation, and energy efficient lighting are a few of the environmentally-friendly materials used at the site during construction.

Bill payments can still be processed at the former Rich Square facility, which houses the cooperative's non-profit affiliate, the Roanoke Center.



The new REC headquarters is a state-of-the-art, environmentally friendly facility constructed by local businesses in REC's service territories.

Our new address:
Roanoke Electric Cooperative, Inc.
518 NC 561 West
P.O. Drawer 1326
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Lessening energy usage flows both ways

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Lessening the blow of market-driven electric utility rate hikes means members have to lower energy consumption together. By monitoring your energy usage and taking corrective measures to lower power bills, you help your electric cooperative save you money. Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, the nationwide alliance of nearly 700 electric cooperatives, announced the unveiling of a national energy-efficiency initiative across 46 states, including North Carolina, designed to assist consumers in saving energy and money.

"Together We Save" is the first-ever energy efficiency campaign launched by electric cooperatives on a national scale. The Web site, togetherwesave.com, includes

interactive web applications that link to a virtual home tour. It gives residential and commercial customers energy-saving techniques and shows immediate cost-savings. Downloadable energy-efficiency videos are also available. "It's encumbered upon us to help our members use electricity the most economical way possible," said Marshall Cherry, REC Vice President of Member Services and Marketing.

In addition to these online resources, REC has an energy conservation program to help members reduce their monthly bills. REC offers energy audits wherein a technician comes out to your home or business to assess energy-wasters, such as antiquated light bulbs, poor insulation,

cracked windows, and dirty air filters. REC also provides compact fluorescent light bulbs and other energy-saving resources and tools to its members. "Our goal is to get as many members on board as possible," said Cherry. "If we all save together, we are all more environmentally responsible."

"There's a strong possibility rates will go up dramatically, so we have to continue to be proactive," said Curtis Wynn, Executive Vice President and CEO.

To learn more about how you can reduce your electricity bills through REC's energy conservation program, contact the Member Services Department at (252) 539-2236. You may also log in to the Together We Save Web site at www.togetherwesave.com.

Pre-paid electricity empowers members to conserve

Like pre-paid cellular phones, a "pay-forward" electric utility solution can force customers to become better stewards of their hard-earned money, while educating them on how many kilowatt hours they're using daily. This relieves the anxiety of an unexpected electric bill.

Roanoke Electric Cooperative (REC) launched its pre-paid electric metering program in November 2008. For about a year now, the "Kilo-watchers" program has grown in popularity among residential customers. REC is one of a few electric cooperatives in North Carolina offering this program.

"We've always prided ourselves on providing affordable electricity. With a tough economy, this at least helps members make more informed decisions," said Marshall Cherry, REC Member Services and Marketing Vice President.

On average, REC installs one unit per day. More than 300 pre-paid meters have been installed since the Kilo-watcher program

began. "It's about choices," says Cherry. "If you go to Wal-Mart and you see an item you choose not to buy, you don't buy it. This gives members more control of their energy dollars."

The pre-paid electric metering configuration allows you to purchase electricity that is allocated to your account upon payment on the account. An in-home display is mounted on your home to record energy consumption, and your pre-payment balance is removed from the account, based on energy usage. The automated display is updated daily, with a report on energy usage and the remaining account balance every morning by 6 a.m. The unit also alerts you for several days of a pending disconnection.

Once the account is out of purchased electric service, a member can purchase more—otherwise power is terminated. Payments can be made at a conveniently located pay station, at the main office, over the telephone with a credit card, or online.

Pre-paid electric metering is a

viable option for members who experience difficulty in making payments on time, or experience frequent shut-offs. This technology eliminates high security deposits, and increases member satisfaction by returning control to electric utility customers. "Traditionally, when a member gets disconnected, there is a previous balance due, service charges are assessed, and the member's security deposit is reevaluated," said Travis Pickrell, who manages the units' installation. "It's a great energy conservation tool all the way around," says Pickrell.

While REC plans to expand its kilo-watchers program in the near future, pre-paid electric metering is not yet available to commercial customers. The next software deployment will enable members with Internet access the ability to receive account balances and power usage updates by email.

If you would like to learn more, contact REC Member Services at (252) 539-2236.

—Charles Martin

Roanoke EC Care Trust awards RoundUp funds to local organizations

The Roanoke Electric Care Trust Board met at the cooperative's headquarters on October 21 for the final quarterly meeting of the year.

Six area organizations received funding totaling \$9,750 at this quarterly meeting. They are:

Rheasville Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. of Roanoke Rapids, \$1,100 to purchase firefighter pagers.

Triple "C" Bible Institute and Camp, Inc. of Ahoskie, \$1,300 to buy new playground equipment.

Conway-Severn Rescue Squad, Inc. of Conway, \$1,500 for equipment to maintain its light rescue status throughout the state.

The Family Life Center at Branches Chapel, Inc. of Rich Square, \$750 to provide after-school homework help and skill building in reading, writing and math provided at the After School Academy.

Woodland Volunteer Fire Department of Woodland, \$2,700 to update mobile radios and base station to work on the county's narrowband repeaters.

Rich Square Volunteer Fire Department of Rich Square, \$2,400 to purchase portable radios and pagers to work on the county's narrowband repeaters.

The Operation RoundUp program is administered by the Roanoke Electric Care Trust, who grants funds quarterly to non-profit organizations that serve local communities. Members of Roanoke Electric round their electric bills to the next whole dollar to create a reliable source of funds that provides educational, charitable, or economic development services.

If your non-profit organization is located in Bertie, Hertford, Gates, Halifax, Northampton, Chowan or Perquimans counties, you are invited to submit grant applications to Roanoke Electric's Operation RoundUp program. Grant requests can be made for up to \$5,000 and are given out in January, April, July, and October. The next grant application deadline is 5 p.m. on January 8. For more information or to receive an application, visit www.roanokeelectric.com.



Saving energy together could minimize affects of rate increase

Affordability - The electric cooperative advantage. Profit-driven utilities typically raise rates in a sluggish economy to make money. Many utilities across the country had to recoup the rising cost of fuel expenses at power plants last year, and this year some Independently-Owned Utilities (IOUs) have asked regulators to increase base service rates for kilowatt hour usage.

That's why being a member of Roanoke Electric cooperative (REC) provides enormous benefit. REC is working to minimize costs to members, in the event of service rate increases.

As a member-owned utility, REC's business model has never been driven by profit, but maintaining the highest level of service members expect. Its objective is to deliver reliable, dependable electric service at the lowest possible rate, consistent with prudent business practices.

But for REC to minimize rate increases in this economic climate, members will have to become "conservation conscious" by reducing overall power consumption in their homes and businesses – not just a few members, all members.

REC Executive Vice President and CEO, Curtis Wynn, has been bracing for the unknown for quite some time, and shares growing concern about utility industry trends. "We've made a commitment to help our members cut back and stretch their budgets even further," said Wynn.

—Charles Martin

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Holiday closing

Roanoke Electric Cooperative offices will be closed on Thursday, December 24 and Friday, Dec. 25, and on Jan. 1, 2010. For emergencies, please call (800) 358-9437.

