



Roanoke Electric **FLASHES**

We're Different. We're Looking Out for You

By Curtis Wynn
President and CEO

Cooperatives are different from other businesses you deal with. To tell you the truth, I like being different. And the fact that you're reading this article shows you like that difference too.

We're different because we're Looking Out for You. Now, more than ever, that's important because we need to work together to keep your electric bills affordable.

Congress did not pass a comprehensive climate bill last year. In January the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency began regulating greenhouse gasses—an action made possible by a 2007 Supreme Court decision, followed by rulings allowing the EPA to use the Clean Air Act to curb carbon emissions. Policies dealing with coal ash, even more stringent controls on other power plant emissions, and state renewable energy requirements could also lead to higher costs. It's hard to predict the future, but one thing seems certain: government regulations are going to increase the cost of doing business.

New regulations won't be the only culprit. Prices for fuel, materials, and equipment will continue to rise. Although the recent economic slump and corresponding drop in electricity use provided some much-needed breathing room, soon we will need to build new power plants, requiring a significant, long-term investment of time and money.

We're committed to keeping you informed about policy changes that

will impact your electric bill through channels like "Carolina Country." We're going to do everything we can to keep your electric bills affordable.

To accomplish that, we're controlling costs through innovation. Our energy efficiency programs like Renovations and Repairs and Community Energy Campaigns help you manage your energy use.

Please visit www.roanokeelectric.com/TogetherWeSave on our website to see how little changes like sealing your air ducts, replacing old appliances, or improving your home's insulation can add up to big savings on your electric bill. We also offer home energy audits to make sure you're getting the best value out of the energy you use every month. This year, we started a series of Together We Save Community Awareness Forums to further convey the current state of the industry, ways that you can save, and programs that we offer. Be on the lookout for the forum coming near you.

Deploying state-of-the-art solutions like our automated meter infrastructure system helps us control operating costs and improve service reliability 12013102. Nationally, co-ops are meeting members' power needs with a diverse fuel mix, including renewable energy.

While we're affordable and innovative, above all else we're member focused. No matter what comes our way we'll continue to put you, our members, first. Roanoke Electric Cooperative is member controlled and locally operated. As a member, you have a voice in how

your co-op operates. At our annual meeting each year you have the opportunity to elect fellow members to our



Curtis Wynn

board of directors to represent your best interests. Don't miss our next meeting on August 27, 2011, at Hertford County High School in Ahoskie!

Member control means we are accountable to those we serve, and are dedicated to assisting our communities—your money stays at work close to home. Costs are rising for all of us, but when it comes to your electric bill our rates are set simply to cover the cost of doing business, not to generate profits for distant stockholders.

In fact, as a not-for-profit organization, we give money back to you when our revenues exceed costs. I'm proud to report that in 2010 we returned more than \$629,840 to our members in the form of capital credits

The bottom line? We exist only to serve you and meet your needs for safe, reliable, and affordable power.

As you can see, we're different. We're working together to keep your electric bills affordable. We're controlling costs through innovation. And we're continuing to put you, our members, first. No matter what the future brings, one thing is certain. We're Looking Out for You.

Bright Ideas: The power to change lives

Teachers can win grants for innovative projects

April kicks off the Bright Ideas grants program in North Carolina. This grant affords teachers the opportunity to bring into the classroom innovative ideas that change the lives of children. Area teachers in grades K-12 are eligible to begin submitting grant applications for the 2011–2012 school year.

The Bright Ideas grant program helps teachers fund creative classroom projects that may otherwise be left out of their curriculum due to insufficient resources. Each year, Roanoke Electric gives a total of \$8,000 to area schools. We average giving grants to six area teachers each year. If you are a K-12 teacher and are interested in this program, you can visit www.roanokeelectric.com/brightideas to learn more or to submit your application online.

If you apply by August 15, your name will be submitted into an Early Bird drawing for a chance to



Area teachers who won 2010-2011 Bright Ideas grants.

win a \$500 Visa gift card. The deadline for all applications will be September 23.

If you have any questions, please contact Robin Phillips at (252) 209-2259 or email her at rphillips@roanokeelectric.com.

**WANT TO
IMPROVE
THE ENERGY
EFFICIENCY
OF YOUR
HOME?**

NCUA
Federally Insured by NCUA

HOW ABOUT AN ENERGY SMART LOAN FROM ELECTEL?

Heat pumps, windows,
water heaters, appliances
Fixed rates as low as 6% apr*

Up to 100% financing

Residential dwelling
property owners only

Maximum term 60 months
up to \$20,000**



COOPERATIVE FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Your Co-op, Your Credit Union

www.electelccu.org

Main Office: 3400 Sumner Blvd.,
Raleigh, NC 27616 800-849-5600

PEMC Hillsborough Branch: 2500 Hwy. 86 South,
Hillsborough, NC 27278 877-469-0255

PEMC Roxboro Branch: 1125 Oxford Road,
Roxboro, NC 27572 336-503-6700

*apr=annual percentage rate **maximum amount for mobile homes \$5,000

Electricity Theft: Not worth the risk

Lean times understandably motivate people to explore money-saving options. At what cost, however, might that pursuit of savings come?

Every year, electric cooperatives across the country cope with thieves—members who deliberately tamper with their electric meter to steal power. Not only is this practice extremely dangerous, it's a serious crime that includes hefty fines and even jail time.

In 2010, Roanoke Electric Cooperative investigated more than 25 cases of meter tampering. The investigations involved cases in which members interfered with the operation of a meter or altered power to lower or avoid paying electric bills.

"We've seen people do some dangerous things—using knives, forks, magnets, jumper cables, bricks, rotten potatoes and any number of other objects to get around paying for the power they use," explains Charles Bryant, a serviceman in the Halifax County area. "However, not only are these persons stealing from their fellow co-op members, they're also risking their lives and those of our workers."

"We seal the meters for two reasons," Bryant explained. "First, the seal protects the consumer by making the meter off limits. Secondary voltage of 120/240 kills more people than any other voltage. Only a trained, authorized service technician can cut the seal on the meter or remove it. Even an experienced electrician must get permission from the cooperative before removing the meter seal. The second reason the meter is sealed to

prevent anyone from stealing electricity. If the meter is tampered with, the member will face legal actions, a bad credit rating, and the chance of losing electric service completely."

According to the Cooperative Research Network, a division of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, power surging through a compromised meter can cause an electrical catastrophe 870101. A short circuit could produce an arc flash bright enough to cause blindness and powerful enough to launch fragments of shrapnel-like, red-hot debris. Serious injury or death from electrocution, explosion, or fire often results from meter tampering. Only trained co-op personnel wearing protective clothing should work on meters.

"Anytime you get into a meter base, you run a risk," comments Bryant. "With an arc flash, somebody could get killed or seriously maimed."

Electricity theft is not a victimless crime. Your not-for-profit co-op loses revenue and expends resources to investigate tampering. These costs are then passed on to the entire membership. National estimates vary, but The Washington Post cited revenue protection officials who claim between \$1 billion and \$10 billion worth of electricity is stolen from utilities annually.

Since everyone pays for lost power, please let us know if you suspect meter tampering. Call Roanoke Electric Cooperative at (252) 209-2236 to report possible theft of service. All information can be given anonymously.



People try dangerous things like putting potatoes and blocks on meter bases to get around paying for power. These foolhardy methods risk lives.

Sources: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and Roanoke Electric Cooperative

 **Energy Efficiency**
Tip of the Month
Change the air filter every time you pay your electric bill. The unit doesn't have to work as hard to push air through a clean filter as it does through a dirty one.



Find your account number in this newsletter, contact us and win \$25 Roanoke Bucks!

Utility poles aren't for posting!

April is the time of year for spring cleaning. As you clean old items from closets and attics, you may begin to consider a yard sale. One of the first things to think about when planning a yard sale is advertising the event's location, and you might be tempted to post signs on utility poles around the neighborhood. Although this strategy is innocent, putting signs on utility poles creates serious safety hazards.

Staples, nails and tacks used to hang signs, as well as the actual signs, pose dangers to your electric cooperative's line workers. These workers regularly climb poles to restore power following storms or to perform routine maintenance to ensure system reliability.

Objects such as birdhouses, balloons, flags and posters can interfere with accessibility and the nails and tacks used to hang signs can snag utility workers' boots or puncture safety clothing and other protective equipment. A hole in protective clothing puts line workers at risk for electrocution.

Furthermore, tampering with utility poles is illegal and can result in costly fines. According to North Carolina law, this misdemeanor could lead to a fine, community service or jail time.

Although poles may seem like a convenient place to advertise your upcoming yard sale, it's important to remember that poles aren't for posting. Instead, consider stand-up yard signs that can easily be placed in your yard and around the neighborhood.

Also consider posting flyers on bulletin boards or leaving flyers with local retailers who may be willing to hand them out to customers. Your electric cooperative appreciates your help in keeping utility poles clear and line workers safe.

Staples, nails and tacks used to hang signs, as well as the actual signs, pose dangers to your electric cooperative's line workers. These objects could hinder power restoration efforts as well.



Roanoke Electric FLASHES

Published monthly

for the member-consumers of
Roanoke Electric Cooperative

P.O. Drawer 1326,

Ahoskie, NC 27910

Office: (252) 209-2236

or 1-800-433-2236

For outages call: 1-800-358-9437

For electronic bill payment:

www.roanokeelectric.com

We accept VISA, MasterCard

& E-check.

Editor: Robin Phillips

President and CEO

Curtis Wynn

Board of Directors

Allen Speller, *chairman*

Robert "Nat" Riddick, *vice chairman*

Delores Amason, *secretary-treasurer*

Millard Lee, *asst. secretary-treasurer*

Carolyn Bradley

Chester Deloatch

Columbus Jeffers

Kenneth Jernigan

Damell Lee

Visit our web site at:

www.roanokeelectric.com

Holiday closing

Roanoke Electric Cooperative offices
will be closed on Friday, April 22,
for Easter.