



Roanoke Electric **FLASHES**

Roanoke Electric asks members to help prevent costly copper theft

North Carolina, like many states across the nation, is experiencing a surge in copper theft because of rising metal prices.

Copper wire is a primary component of electrical distribution lines and substations, like those owned and maintained by Roanoke Electric Cooperative. Removing copper wire from electrical systems causes power outages, creates the need for additional maintenance, increases expenses and diminishes service reliability.

Although copper prices have increased drastically in the last 10 years, most thieves are only able to steal less than \$100 worth of the metal—a petty amount considering these thieves are risking their lives.

Copper is used to ground electrical equipment, protecting it from electrical surges and lightning by giving electricity a safe path to the ground. It is frequently used in electrical substations where high-voltage electricity traveling through the lines from power plants is stepped down before it travels to neighborhoods. Thieves often climb utility poles, 111778-001 scale fences and break into buildings to steal the metal, which they then sell for scrap.

Recently, thieves have been stealing wire used to ground Roanoke's poles. The poles are out

in the open and unprotected, making them easy targets. However, this is a dangerous practice and can lead to injury.

We are asking our members to report any activity they see around utility poles in their area so that thieves can be caught. Although we are taking measures to stop thieves and to protect your assets, your help is very much needed! Remember, these are thieves, and they may not stop at just stealing from REC when they are near your property.

The new law in effect since October 1 takes into account not only the value of the stolen metal, but also the cost of repairs, when determining the type of felony that has been committed.

"To a thief, stealing copper may seem like a quick way to make some cash," said Billy Yates, Manager of Operations. "But it's illegal, it's costly, and it's not worth anyone's life. The new law bans cash payments for the purchase of copper. This makes it more difficult for copper thieves to sell copper and should help reduce copper theft. There are more requirements that recyclers are going to have to meet and it is going to be such a benefit for all electric cooperatives," said Yates.

In 2010, metal theft-related deaths occurred in North Carolina, West Virginia, Illinois



and Ohio. A co-op in Oklahoma is facing an estimated \$1 million repair bill because copper thieves wrecked a substation for approximately \$100 worth of the metal last year. In North Carolina, it is illegal for any person to transport or have in his/her possession more than 25 pounds of copper in any vehicle other than a vehicle used in the ordinary course of business, unless specifically permitted or registered.

To protect the public, Roanoke Electric's substations are secured with high fences, and warning signs are posted around the substations. Please help us prevent these thefts. If you notice anything unusual, like an open substation gate, open equipment or hanging wire, please call Roanoke Electric immediately at (252) 209-2236 or (800) 433-2236.

If you see anyone other than utility personnel near substations or other electrical facilities, please call the police.

Convenient, easy and free

Automated Customer Service – An easier way to pay your bill

Want to pay your bill? There are times when your cooperative has a high call volume and can't answer your call promptly. Try the automated system to get your call answered more promptly and improve your customer experience. Members may pay their utility bills 24/7 through an Automated Customer Service System using a Visa or MasterCard.

To access your account, have your account number accessible before calling the office. From the main menu, Select Option #2 and you will be prompted to provide your account number. Follow the prompts to pay your bill, get account payment information (i.e. amount due, past due amount, last payment) or update your telephone number. Remember the system will only accept Visa and MasterCard.

As always, thank you for allowing us to serve you!



Keep your home warm and safe

Staying warm is important during the coldest days of winter, and many people use portable heaters for extra warmth. Portable heaters are sure to keep you cozy, but safety precautions should be heeded when using these items.

Portable heaters can efficiently heat one room at a time, but they need to be used with care. These tips should be followed in order to heat your home safely using a portable heater:

- Always read and follow the operator's manual.
- Never use portable heaters near water, like in a bathroom or a damp basement.
- Never touch a portable heater if you are wet or if your hands are wet. This can result in electric shock.
- Always unplug portable heaters when they are not in use and allow for your portable heater to have its own electrical outlet so electrical overload does not occur.

- Never allow children or pets near a portable heater because they can have very hot surfaces that could cause burning.

- Always place portable heaters at least three feet away from objects in your home such as furniture, beds or drapes.

Also, as an added precaution, make sure that you have a fire extinguisher in an easily accessible place and teach all residents of your home how to use it. Remember to keep safety in mind while using your portable heater to stay warm this winter.



Read the newsletter to learn more about your cooperative. Watch out for two account numbers in this issue. Find yours and contact us and win \$25 Roanoke Bucks!

Follow Roanoke EC on Facebook and Twitter:

www.facebook.com/roanokeelectric

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Members get discounts through Co-op Connections Card program

While our number one priority is keeping the lights on, it's also very important that we offer additional value to our members and the communities we serve. Roanoke Electric works with its members and community partners to make things better for all citizens. And the Co-op Connections Card program is just another way to meet that goal on a daily basis.

Hundreds of national discounts are already available and we're working on bringing you deals from local businesses. There is no signup and no annual fees for members. You simply present your card or key fob at participating businesses to receive valuable discounts.



Connections program provides businesses free PR, more foot traffic

Businesses! The Co-op Connections program is a rapidly growing program that gives you free promotion and additional foot traffic.

When your business becomes a participating retailer in REC's Co-op Connections program, you have a direct link not only to REC's local customers, but also to the millions of customers served by Touchstone Energy cooperatives across the country.

So join forces with thousands of other businesses and enjoy the value of being a Co-op Connections participant. It's the cooperative difference!

For more information or to sign up, call (252) 539-4601 or contact dmitchell@roanokeelectric.com.

New business participant

Welcome, Calvin Baldwin of Consumer Financial Services and Internal Links, LLC, to the Co-op Connections program!



Left to right: Calvin Baldwin, CEO; Mary E. Brown, Executive Assistant; and Purnell Vaughan, EPV & Associate, Owner.

With a vast amount of experience in retirement, individual planning, insurances, financial lending and credit; Mr. Baldwin helps clients maintain a healthy physical and financial balance 107044-001. He has a full-service menu of financial solutions customized to meet your specific needs.

Discount: ½ off his initial evaluation fee for Consumer Financial Services and \$10 off the initial evaluation for Internal Links, LLC.

Stop by his office at 701 East Main Street, Murfreesboro or give him a call at (252) 396-0035 to schedule an appointment to review your financial goals. Mr. Baldwin's office hours are Monday through Friday from 9 to 5 p.m.

A celebration in the making

Roanoke Electric Cooperative will be celebrating its 75th Anniversary in 2013. Plans are in the making for this momentous occasion. Please follow us on Facebook and Twitter for up-to-date information, so you won't miss the celebration!

Visit www.facebook.com/roanokeelectric and www.twitter.com/roanoke_ec.



Be prepared this spring for possible tornado threats

Tornadoes are a column of violently rotating air spawned by a thunderstorm. They can develop quickly, and have ripped through our state, killing people, injuring others and damaging homes and businesses. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, tornado occurrences peak in the southeast between March and May, so it's important that we all know what to look for and how to prepare as we enter this season of uncertainty.

Tornadoes, known as nature's most dangerous storms, can be more than a mile wide and create winds that reach up to 300 miles per hour. Look for these signs that a tornado may form.

Signs a tornado may be coming

Tornadoes typically occur in the late afternoon and evening.

Often there is calm before the storm, and it is not uncommon for a tornado to take place under sunny skies, however, they generally occur at the trailing edge of a thunderstorm.

Watch for a dark, often greenish sky, large hail and a loud roar that sounds similar to a freight train.

A tornado WATCH means that a tornado is possible and to stay tuned as storm conditions develop.

A tornado WARNING means that a tornado has been spotted or indicated on weather radar and you should take shelter immediately.



Things to do before a storm

Develop a plan and determine the safest place to take shelter in your home. The safest rooms are those in the middle of a house, with no windows, such as a lower-level bathroom or basement.

Prior to peak tornado season, make sure to trim any tree limbs and branches that could be a hazard to your home. Do not trim trees close to overhead power lines; call your electric cooperative instead.

Remove any debris from around your lawn. Be sure all lawn tools and yard ornaments, especially hanging objects, are put away and secure patio furniture; checking for these hazards may help keep you and your home safe in the event of a tornado.

Energy efficiency tip

DO A LITTLE. SAVE A LOT. Everything you do, from flipping a switch to upgrading to CFLs, can add up to big savings for you and your neighbors. So take your pick, and save your money.

Find out how the little changes add up at www.togetherwesave.com.



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