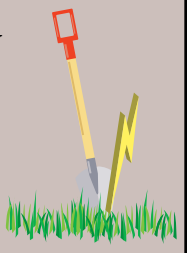
Jan. 2010 *Serving 12,000 members of Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation*

Dial Before Digging



You never really know what's below the surface when you dig. You may chop right into underground power lines. In addition to causing outages, this is very dangerous. Before digging in your yard, have the underground electric lines located. Please give us three days notice before you dig. Call us at (252) 426-5735.

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P.O. Box 69
Hertford, NC 27944
(252) 426-5735

Brad Furr
Executive Vice President and General Manager

Chris Powell
Editor

Visit our Web site at:
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Operations Manager Retires

After a career spanning four decades, Operations Manager Jimmie Keeter will retire on Jan. 4th.

He will be replaced by Glenn Parks, who for a year has served as assistant operations manager under Keeter.

Keeter started with Albemarle EMC in 1969 as an apprentice lineman and was later promoted to 1st class lineman, then serviceman. Then, he became an operations aid and, finally, manager of operations when former Operations Manager Bob Brooks retired.

Working with a power company often involves dangerous work, and Keeter spent his career promoting safe work habits. He worked diligently to ensure linemen had the best safety training and equipment that could be provided. To watch out for personnel at night, he kept a radio scanner at his house that let him listen in on linemen and servicemen who were dispatched after hours. "That was always one of the biggest things that bothered me at night was hearing them on the scanner," Keeter said. "Are they going to get home safe?" Keeter was also known for using creative methods to monitor line crews' safety procedures. Sometimes he would park his truck in a hidden location and use binoculars to watch over them.

Keeter said he was most proud of a recent score on a safety accreditation. Albemarle EMC scored the highest among cooperatives in the eastern part of the state. In addition, because of his extensive knowledge in the electrical field, he is well respected among co-ops throughout the state.

"Jimmie's legacy will be a culture of safety that will continue on," said Brad Furr, general manager of Albemarle EMC. "That is something to be proud of."

Web Site Receives Overhaul

The new year will mean a fresh look for Albemarle EMC's Web site.

Starting in January, the Albemarle EMC Web site will look like the picture (shown below). The new site will feature "Quick Links" that will enable members to more quickly reach pages to pay a bill online, learn about energy efficiency, browse frequently asked questions and other items. Other quick links enable visitors to report an outage, contact Albemarle EMC employees and obtain hours of operation.

The new "Community" page enables new arrivals to learn about what each county in our service area has to offer. In addition, we have included new pages about company bylaws, annual meetings, key statistics and our service territory.

Bright Ideas Grants Awarded

Thirteen grants totaling $10,449.21 were recently awarded to educators throughout the Albemarle EMC service area. The teachers received grant checks and apple trophies at an awards dinner recently held in Greenville.

Glenna Markham, a teacher at Grandy Primary School, received a $377.86 grant to fund her project "Busy Brains." She plans to use the funds to purchase educational software.

Sheila Winslow, a teacher at Central Elementary School, received $890 for her project "And the Winner Is...". Her project involves exposing students to books nominated for the N.C. Book Award.

Julie Gregory, a teacher at J.C. Sawyer Elementary School, received $770.22 for her project "Students Taking Education Everywhere With Pedometers." Students will use pedometers to measure the steps they take in physical education classes in an attempt to travel around a world map to visit Spanish speaking countries.

Marie Jenkins, a teacher at Northeastern High School, received a $500 grant to purchase two sets of probes to capture information on soil, water and air samples.

Nava Coppin, a teacher at River Road Middle School, received $599.40 for her project "Bill Nye the Science Guy." Coppin plans to purchase DVDs of the popular PBS show "Bill Nye the Science Guy." The show teaches science to a pree-teen audience.

Lisa Byrum, a teacher at Perquimans Central, received an $800 grant for her project "Climbing the Learning Mountain." She will use her grant to purchase math and reading instructional guides.

Bright Ideas winners first row from left are: Julie Gregory, Pat Mouton, Perry Pinto (team member), Lisa Byrum, Cindy Phthisic, Jenny Wells, and Glenna Markham. Second row from left are: Tami Harsh, Marie Jenkins, Michelle White, O'Neal Pullie, Shelia Winslow and Nava Coppin.

Michelle White, a teacher at Perquimans Central School, received a $598 grant for her project "Technologic Turtles." Students with disabilities will use mini laptop computers to develop projects they will display at a Technology Expo.

Jenny Wells, a teacher at Chowan Middle School, received a $924.94 grant to fund her project "Dream Catcher." Wells plans to purchase reading materials that helps students learn about potential careers.

Cindy Phthisic, a teacher at White Oak Elementary School, received a $980 grant to fund her project "The World at My Fingertips." Phthisic plans to use technologies such as Skype, a webcam and a data projector to connect students with classes and experts in other geographic locations.

Tami Harsh, a teacher at Shawboro Elementary School, received a grant for $1,009.80 for her project "Keep Me Balanced." She will use her funds to purchase educational materials that help students to begin solving algebraic equations as early as third grade.

O'Neal Pullie, a teacher at River Road Middle School, received a $1,000 grant to fund his project "The Artistic Display." Pullie plans to use his grant to purchase art supplies so that students can put on an art show and sale as well as display creations around the community.

Pat Mouton, a teacher at River Road Middle School, received a $999.52 grant to fund her project "Shake, Rattle and Roll." Mouton plans to use the grant to purchase teaching devices that help students study earthquakes, volcanoes, land formations, the solar system and ocean waves.

Norma Jeffcoat, a teacher at River Road Middle School, received a $999.47 grant to fund her project "Rockets Enjoying Audio Discs." Her project involves the creation of listening centers. Students will listen to recordings on audio discs and read along with the accompanying unabridged books.

Field Collections Discontinued

Effective Jan. 1, 2010, Albemarle EMC personnel will no longer accept bill payments in the field.

Once a disconnect order is generated, no further time will be given and the meter will be disconnected. The members can then pay online, phone the payment in using a credit or debit card, or go to the office and pay using cash, check or money order. When a member has paid the arrears bill, plus disconnection and reconnection fees, the service representative will return to reconnect the meter.

Members are encouraged to closely view the dates on their bills, If they have an arrears portion, that amount and their disconnect date will be shown in green ink, in three different places on that page. Members can save a large amount of money in fees by paying before that disconnect date.

Financial Services Manager Hired

Ron Baxa has been hired as manager of financial services for Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation.

Baxa, who is a certified public accountant, comes to Albemarle EMC after having served as manager of finance and administration for Kaw Valley Electric Cooperative, located in Topeka, Kan. Baxa also worked 15 years for Tri-County Electric Cooperative, in Rushford, Minn., where he also served as manager of finance and administration.

"I enjoy being able to provide accounting services to fellow employees and the cooperative as a whole," he said. "Two of my goals are to ensure that co-workers and board members receive complete, accurate financial information and that the financial health and well being of the cooperative is preserved."

Baxa is married to wife, Janet, and has two grown sons. His hobbies include hunting, fishing, bowling, reading and doing volunteer work.

Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

At Your Service

How Albemarle EMC works to provide its members with the highest-quality service possible.

No Two Houses Are the Same

by Chris Powell

As a person who does energy audits, one of the more frequent complaints I receive from members is that their neighbor's bill is significantly less than their own bill. This statement is often followed up with an observation that their neighbor lives in a larger house, has more kids and often leaves their lights on. Then the member will usually conclude that somehow they are being over billed.

I will investigate the situation and inevitably discover why one bill is higher than the other. All homes are not created equal. I have seen older 1,000-square-foot trailer homes or uninsulated farm houses that are heated with an electric furnace consume more than $500 worth of electricity in a month's time. During that same month, I have seen substantially larger 2,000-square-foot stick-frame homes that are heated with a heat pump consume less than $200 worth of electricity in a month. The reasons for this phenomenon are simple. The

older residences often have less than desirable or no insulation in the attics and the walls. Often these homes also have ductwork that leaks. Those problems are often exacerbated by the fact that many of the high-use residences are heated with an electric furnace, one of the most expensive ways to heat using electricity.

To contrast, the newer home is built to code. It has ample attic insulation, the ductwork is sealed, the plumbing and electrical penetrations are sealed and the exterior envelope of the home is close to airtight. And moreover, the home usually is heated with a heat pump. Because of the efficient heating and the built-to-code construction, it would not be unusual for a large house to consume less than $200 worth of electricity during the coldest winter months.

Also, over half of the electricity a home used in a month is due to heating or cooling. Electricity for heating and cooling is going to be used regardless of how many people live in the house. So the number of family members living in the home and the number of lights they leave burning don't have nearly the affect on a power bill that people think.

If you live in a high-use home, there are steps you can take to trim that power bill. First, you need to fix leaky ductwork. We do not recommend using adhesive tape, even if it is made for sealing ductwork. Instead, seal ductwork with fiberglass-mesh tape and duct mastic. Mastic is a type of glue that is made for heating and air systems. Once in place it does not come unstuck like tape will. All gaps in metal or flex ductwork must be sealed.

Next, go into the attic and caulk or foam seal all electric and plumbing penetrations leading from the attic into the interior of the house. These holes act like miniature chimneys allowing warm air to rise from inside the living space into the attic. To fill the void left in the living area when warm air rises into the attic, cooler outside air is drawn through penetrations in the subfloor. It's wise to also seal all of the electrical and plumbing penetrations in the subfloor as well as any openings around windows.

Next, the attic should be insulated either with batts or blown-in insulation. Blown insulation is believed to work better because it evenly coats between the ceiling joists and does not leave voids. Whether the insulation is fiberglass batts or blown cellulose, it should be applied evenly and over the top of the ceiling joists.

Once the house is well-sealed and insulated, then it is time to consider a heat pump. Heat pumps are essentially air conditioners that can work in reverse supplying heat to the house. They are efficient because they use "free" warmth from the outside air. Or, in the case of geothermal units, the heat pumps use heat from the earth to supply heat to the house. Because they are able to use this naturally occurring warmth, they are a much cheaper source of heat. A heat pump can be from 50 to 100 percent more efficient than the standard electric furnace.

When hiring a contractor to install a heat pump, make sure both the heat pump and the air handler are properly sized. The contractor should show you the results of a load calculation done either on computer or in written form, called a Manual J. If the contractor cannot produce a load calculation, you should pass on that company.

Indeed, all houses are not created equal, when it comes to power bills. It may not seem fair that a larger, newer home has a lower power bill than a smaller older home, but the fact is houses continue to be built more and more energy efficient.