

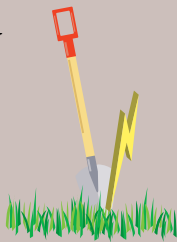


March 2011

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.



Youth Tour Competition Begins



Area 11th- and 12th-grade students have the chance to compete for the opportunity of a lifetime.

Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation will sponsor a seven-day, all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., June 11-17, for two students who win an essay-writing competition. Students who enter will prepare a short essay on one of five topics related to electrical co-ops and electricity use.

In addition, the students chosen will also have the opportunity to compete for the \$2,500 Gwyn B. Price Youth Tour Scholarship and the \$2,000 Katie Bunch Memorial Scholarship. The third scholarship, worth \$2,000, will be awarded to the student selected for the

Youth Leadership Council, which is a national advisory committee to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Students attending any of the schools in Chowan, Currituck, Camden, Pasquotank and Perquimans counties can apply. Essay and application forms can be found by visiting www.albemarle-emc.com and clicking on the "Washington Youth Tour" link found under the "Youth" drop-down menu on the home page. Completed essays are due by March 28 and should be mailed to Chris Powell, Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation, P.O. Box 69, Hertford, NC 27944-0069. For more information, call (252) 426-2586 and ask for Chris Powell, or e-mail Chris Powell at chris.powell@aemc.coop.

The Washington Youth Tour provides the winning students the opportunity to see Washington, D.C. in a way that most never will be able to. During their stay, students from across North Carolina will tour historic sites, visit with North Carolina representatives and form friendships with students representing other electric cooperatives.

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Visit our Web site at:

www.aemc.coop

For outages, call
1-800-274-2072

CFL Bulbs to Be Given Away

Beginning this month, Albemarle EMC again will mail compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) to its members. The bulbs will be mailed out four times a year for the next two years until all members have received them. Each box of bulbs will contain two 13-watt bulbs, which are equivalent to 60-watt incandescent bulbs.

This is the co-op's third bulb giveaway, which is part of Albemarle EMC's initiative to comply with North Carolina renewable energy law. Power providers are required to purchase a certain percentage of renewable electricity or enact energy efficiency measures. CFL bulbs use about 75 percent less electricity than standard incandescents.

Cut Off Heating and Cooling Systems During Outages



Whether it's an outage due to an ice storm or a hurricane, Albemarle EMC advises members to turn off their heating and air conditioning systems while power is out. When power is restored, members are advised to wait about 15 minutes before turning on their heating and air systems.

An extremely large peak demand is created when power is restored to a large number of residences at one time. Known in the industry as 'cold load pickup,' the sudden spike in demand can trip breakers on power lines, often causing outages for members whose power

has already been restored. Albemarle EMC advises members to turn off power to their heating and air systems because they are the largest consumers of electricity in a residence.

"By turning off your heating and air conditioning systems, members can potentially reduce the length of their outage," said Gary Ray, manager of engineering for Albemarle EMC.

Small household appliances such as televisions and refrigerators should not be harmed when electricity is restored to the residence. However, to be on the safe side, Ray said it doesn't hurt to turn those appliances off as well.

Deadline for Basketball Camp Approaching

Albemarle EMC will again provide all-expense paid basketball camp scholarships for one girl and one boy.

The girl will attend the Kellie Harper Basketball Camp, at NC State University, in Raleigh, July 3-6. The boy will attend the Roy Williams Basketball Camp, at UNC in Chapel Hill, June 18-22.

Rising sixth through eighth graders are eligible to apply, and the cooperative will begin accepting applications on Jan. 3, 2011. The deadline to apply is March 31, 2011. Applicants will be judged on their academics, extra-curricular activities and accompanying essays. Students can download an application at www.ncelectriccooperatives.com.

The Touchstone Energy Sports Camps program provides a unique educational and athletic opportunity for outstanding students across our state. It is yet another way the cooperatives demonstrate their commitment to North Carolina communities.

New Building Taking Shape



The drive through window (shown above) will be able to accommodate two members simultaneously.

Construction of Albemarle EMC's new office building is on schedule. Barring any unforeseen setbacks, the building should be finished by early June. Co-op personnel plan to begin moving in by late June.

The new building will be located on the corner of Creek Drive and Highway 17, in Perquimans County. The entrance road to the new building will be Cooperative Way, located off of Creek Drive.

Receive Bills Through E-mail

Members have a way to reduce the amount of mail they receive at home.

Albemarle EMC is offering members the option to have their power bills sent to them through e-mail.

Bills received through e-mail reduce the amount of trash entering the waste stream. The e-mail option also helps to save your cooperative money because a hard copy of the bill doesn't have to be generated, and envelopes and postage don't have to be paid for.

Members can benefit from receiving their bill a few days sooner because there will be no mail delay. Receiving bills through e-mail also helps to reduce their cooperative's operating expenses.

Water Heater Blanket Kits Still Available

To assist members with becoming more energy efficient, Albemarle EMC is selling water heater blanket kits.

Albemarle EMC sells the water heater blankets for \$12. In addition, members will receive a low-flow shower head, pipe insulation and two sink aerators at no extra charge, with each purchase of a water heater blanket. The blanket kits can be paid for and picked up at the Albemarle EMC office, located at 159 Creek Drive, in Hertford. Members can pay for the kits with either cash, check or credit card.

Members will be responsible for installing their own blankets. The blankets will be large enough to fit all sizes of water heaters and may need to be trimmed for smaller water heaters. A blanket will typically save between 4 and 9 percent in water heating costs. Water heater blankets should not be installed on gas water heaters due to the potential for fire hazard.

The sale of the water heater kits enables Albemarle EMC to comply with the North Carolina renewable energy law.



At Your Service

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

Size and Design of Homes Affect Energy Use

by Chris Powell

For the past several decades, home-purchasing decisions have been based on everything but the energy that would be needed to operate the homes.



Extremely large, cheaply built homes dubbed 'McMansions' have become the poster child of this phenomenon.

Many of the homes often exceed 4,000 square feet, creating unused rooms that still have to be conditioned (heated and cooled). Vaulted ceilings which make for spectacular grand rooms result in elevated areas where heated air in the winter rises well beyond the thermostat, causing the heating systems to run longer and harder.

Not that long ago, most rooms were lit with one light bulb. Now, however, modern homes have recessed lighting placed throughout the ceilings of the house. Not only do the lights add to the kilowatts used, they also create numerous holes in ceilings through which warm air rises and escapes from the room.

Often the prospective homeowners opt to upgrade appliances, counter tops and flooring as opposed to purchasing a high-efficiency geothermal heat pump and water heater, or having the walls insulated with spray-in foam.

Rather than sacrifice closet space and higher ceilings, ductwork and air handlers have been designed to run through either the attic or the crawl space. This inherently inefficient practice makes for better looking home interiors, but is extremely inefficient because

the ductwork has to push conditioned air through a space with a significant temperature difference.

Many home purchasers like the convenience of an attached garage. But with it comes the inevitable 'bonus' room, also referred to as a 'frog'. A bonus room is really more an attic than a room. It is located near the exterior roof, and hot or cold air travels down the exterior walls of the room then under floor, creating an Easy Bake oven in the summer and a refrigerator in the winter. Compounding the problem is the fact that it is hard to configure duct systems for bonus rooms. The rooms often have their own thermostats and sometimes even their own heating and cooling systems.

Not many folks think of higher electric bills when adding a swimming pool or hot tub, however, these aquatic luxuries can seriously run up a power bill. The pumps on swimming pools and hot tubs usually must continually run to keep the water clean. Also, hot tubs and heated pools add the cost of heating large volumes of water.

Then there is the positioning of the structure on the lot. This has traditionally been determined by the view offered out of certain windows as opposed to siting the house to allow for solar gain in the winter and shade in the summer.

Locations of homes have also affected energy use. In the past, people have purchased homes away from population centers because of cheaper land and larger yards. However, these homeowners often didn't factor in the costs of longer commutes and steadily rising gas prices. As fossil fuel reserves continue to diminish, those who live in long-commute neighborhoods will see

their once-affordable homes in the suburb become very expensive to own due to their vehicle's fuel consumption.

It didn't always used to be this way. In 1950, the average home was 983 square feet. That number grew to 2,349 square feet by 2004. However, due to the recent economic collapse and rising energy costs, our tastes for homes is changing both dramatically and quickly.

The trend is away from large houses and toward small, well-built homes located for shorter commutes. Many of those shopping for homes are starting to look at smaller homes (less than 2,000 square feet) as an important feature - less home to finance, clean, maintain and of course heat and cool.

These smaller homes are being constructed with thicker 2x6 walls that are either constructed of superefficient materials such as insulated concrete forms, or they are insulated with sprayed foam or dense pack blown insulation.

Rather than vaulted ceilings, the homes are built with standard, 8-foot ceilings that do not have can-lights dotted throughout.

The more efficient homes have geothermal heat pumps that provide for the most efficient heating and cooling possible. Instead of running the ductwork through the attic or crawl space, ducts are placed in soffits so the conditioned air travels through the conditioned part of the house. The air handler is placed in the interior of the house so that it can operate in a conditioned climate.

As interest rates and energy costs rise, the trend will be toward smaller, more efficient homes. Homeowners may someday pay off the mortgage. But the power bill will never be paid off.