

Lumbee River

Electric Membership Corporation

 MAY 2009 MEMBER NEWSLETTER

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Renewable Energy Law

What We Are Doing To Meet Mandates

In August 2007 the North Carolina Legislature enacted a law requiring that electric cooperatives like Lumbee River EMC deliver 10 percent of our electricity from renewable sources such as solar, wind and biomass by 2018.

We will comply with the REPS requirement in a number of ways, including the implementation of energy efficiency measures, the use of renewable fuels in existing electric generating facilities, the generation of power at new renewable energy facilities, the purchase of power from renewable energy facilities and the purchase of renewable energy certificates.

While we will continue to look for affordable sources of these generation types, our primary focus at the moment is on energy efficiency gains. This is currently the cheapest way for us to meet the mandates in this law. Helping you save energy not only works toward meeting

the REPS mandate, it saves money. Here are some ways we are achieving our REPS goals:

- Selling energy-saving compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) at a cost savings over what you can purchase them at retail stores
- Offering rebates for the purchase of ENERGY STAR® rated clothes washers, refrigerator/freezers and dishwashers
- Offering information on no-cost and low cost energy efficiency measures in our monthly newsletters and on the Web
- Working with businesses in our service area to help them find energy efficiency solutions for their operations
- Partnering with the U.S. Department of Energy's ENERGY STAR® program to enhance our energy efficiency and conservation programs to help residential and business members conserve energy, save money, and improve comfort
- Conducting energy efficiency presentations and demonstrations at schools and for community groups
- Joining GreenCo Solutions, a not-for-profit company formed by a majority of cooperatives across the state to focus on energy efficiency initiatives and renewable resources
- Continue to keep an eye on this newsletter for many new programs that will help you use electricity more efficiently



Recouping the cost to meet state mandates

To offset the money Lumbee River EMC is required to spend to meet these mandates, Lumbee River EMC members will see a new line on their bill. The charge will appear as "NC Renewable Energy Charge" on your bill within the next two months. The mandate requires the standards to be met, but only if that can be achieved under maximum spending caps. The cap is set at \$10 for residential members from 2008–2010. For commercial and industrial members the cap for this same period is set at \$50.

The REPS charge applies to all cooperative members on a per meter basis for the recovery of costs associated with meeting the REPS standard, up to the cap. This charge will only be adjusted on an annual basis. It is important to remember that renewable energy resources are more expensive than traditional generation facilities. Lumbee River continues to work to meet these legislative mandates while keeping your cost of energy as low as possible.

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Lumberton Junior High Wins at State Competition

Teachers Can Apply Now

For 2009–10 Bright Ideas Education Grants

North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives have earmarked at least \$500,000 for classroom-based projects through their funding of the Bright Ideas education grant program for the 2009–2010 school year. Teachers can learn about the program and apply online at www.ncbrightideas.com.

Grants of up to \$2,000 are available through Lumbee River EMC. The deadline for teachers to submit a Bright Ideas grant application is September 25, but teachers who submit their application by the early-bird deadline on August 17 will be entered in a drawing for a \$500 Visa gift card.

Certified K–12 teachers in North Carolina are eligible to apply for a Bright Ideas grant. The Bright Ideas education grant program is currently the only program in the state exclusively for classroom educators.

"North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives are in their 16th year of the Bright Ideas education grant program and are excited to award more than \$500,000 in grants again this year," said Ruby Clark, Bright Ideas coordinator for Lumbee River EMC. Last year, the state's electric cooperatives distributed more than \$587,000 in Bright Ideas grants, benefiting more than 116,000 students.

Bright Ideas grants finance innovative classroom projects that would otherwise go unfunded. Over the years, North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives have sponsored a variety of hands-on projects, including activities in music, art, history, language, reading, science, career-planning and information technology.

Since its inception in 1994, the Bright Ideas grant program has awarded more than \$6.5 million in grant money to North Carolina's teachers to sponsor more than 5,900 projects benefiting more than 1 million students.



By Phyllis King

I want to take this opportunity to share with you what an outstanding job our middle school students are doing in Robeson County and to let you know that Lumberton Junior High Technology Club recently won a state contest. Eight students from Lumberton Junior High participated in the Regional Engineer's Future City Competition and they won 3rd place. They also received an award for the Best Physical Model of their city. The competition allows students to better understand practical applications of math, science, social studies, language arts, team work and computer skills as they plan their own city.

These students started working on the competition in early September during after school hours. The competition consists of five phases:

1. Students build a simulated city using SimCity 4 Deluxe™ software;
2. Students write a 300-500 word essay to describe their city;
3. Students research an Engineering challenge and write a 500–700 word essay. This year's topic was "Creating a self-sufficient system within the home which conserves, recycles and reuses all existing water sources.";



4. Students built a physical model of an area of their city using recycled material;
5. Student prepared and presented orally their research and physical model to judges at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, held on January 10, 2009.

The award-winning model was named "Eurekabundans" which means, roughly, "I have found abundant life, health, jobs, education, and wealth." Team members are Emily Scott, Rachel Jhala, Jonathan Mauldin, Mihir Patel, Andrew Yarborough, Soham Amin, Drequan Boddie, Sajan Amin, and Jeremy Parnell. I served as advisor and teacher and other students that helped were Roderick Ford, Kristina Johnson, and Lorenzo Canalas.

Note: Phyllis King is a teacher and a winner of a 2008 Bright Ideas grant.

Keep Electricity From Going Down the Drain

Water use and electricity go hand in hand. Heating water can account for 14 percent to 25 percent of the total energy consumed in a typical home. What's more, systems used to clean public water supplies and deliver it to homes require large amounts of electricity. If your home receives water from a well or spring, the pump also draws power. So when we use water, hot or cold, we're also using energy.

Techniques for trimming water use in your home are surprisingly simple. For one, you can significantly reduce hot water consumption by simply repairing leaks in fixtures—faucets and showerheads—or pipes. A leak of one drip per second can cost \$1 per month.

You can also reduce water-heating costs in a matter of seconds by lowering the

thermostat setting on your water heater. For each 10° F reduction in temperature, you can save between 3 percent and 5 percent in energy costs. Reducing the setting also slows mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.

Although some manufacturers set water heater thermostats at 140° F, most households usually only require them set at 120° F. However, if you have a dishwasher without a booster heater, you may require water temperature within a range of 130° F to 140° F for optimum cleaning.

Adding insulation to your water heater can save around 4 to 9 percent in costs. To determine if you need to insulate your water heater, touch it. A tank that's warm to the touch needs additional insulation.

Insulating your water heater tank is

fairly simple and inexpensive, and will pay for itself in about a year. You can find pre-cut jackets or blankets available from around \$10 to \$20. Choose one with an insulating value of at least R-8. In addition, don't set the thermostat above 130° F on an electric water heater with an insulating jacket or blanket—the wiring may overheat.

Installing insulation on gas- and oil-fired water heaters is more difficult. For these appliances, it's best to have a qualified plumbing and heating contractor perform the work.

For more tips on trimming water use in your home, including pipe and water heater insulation techniques, visit www.energysavers.gov.

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy and H2O Conserve.org

May is National Electrical Safety Month

Protect your family from fires, electrocution

Electrical problems in older homes account for nearly 55,000 fires every year. These blazes cause more than 500 deaths, injure more than 1,400, and rack up \$1.4 billion in property damage.

The risk of such fires is significant since half of all homes in the United States were constructed and wired prior to 1973, according to the U.S. Census Bureau—before the advent of garage door openers or home computers. Even more telling, one-third of U.S. homes were built before hair dryers or electric can openers were even invented!

“As each year goes by Americans consume more energy in their homes,” remarks Brett Brenner, president of Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI). “Many homes and electrical systems are simply being overburdened, which leads to fires, injuries, and deaths.”

ESFI has created a checklist that lets consumers identify electrical dangers commonly found in each room of their home. Owners of older homes can upgrade their electric systems with newer fire prevention technology, such as arc



fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs). These advanced electronic circuit breakers detect dangerous conditions in a home's wiring and cut off power before a fire develops.

Additionally, those living in older homes with children can install tamper-resistant receptacles. These devices look like normal electrical outlets, although they have a built-in shutter system that

prevents children from inserting foreign objects into the slots. Use of tamper-resistant receptacles would prevent most of the 2,400 burns suffered by children each year from outlets.

More information and resources relating to National Electrical Safety Month can be found at www.electrical-safety.org

Credits, incentives cut cost of efficiency improvements

The idea of owning a more efficient home—and paying lower utility bills—has widespread appeal, but finding ways to fund needed energy efficiency improvements can be difficult during hard economic times. Fortunately, there are several ways to recover some of your expenses when planning your next project.

Through the federal Energy Improvement and Extension Act of 2008, Uncle Sam offers a personal tax credit of up to \$500 for energy efficiency upgrades made to existing homes this year. You can recover up to 10 percent of the cost of adding insulation materials and exterior doors, windows, and roofs designed to help reduce your home's heat loss or gain.

Want to install a new central air conditioner or air-source heat pump?

Your credit could be as much as \$300.

The benefit covers up to 100 percent of the cost for qualifying heating and cooling units, with a maximum credit of \$500 for all improvements.

In addition, other federal incentives are available. While solar panels, solar water heaters, and geothermal heat pumps are expensive, you may qualify for a tax credit equal to 30 percent of the installation cost if the Solar Rating and Certification Corporation or ENERGY STAR, depending on the project's scope, approves your projects. Solar panels do not have a maximum limit for this benefit as of 2009; solar water heaters and geothermal heat pumps carry a \$2,000 limit. Check with your cooperative before proceeding with any type of solar project.

For a listing of state and local energy efficiency assistance available, visit the Database for State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency, a project funded by the U.S. Department of Energy,



at www.dsireusa.org. For details on how the right appliances can help you cut your electric bills, visit www.energystar.gov.

Source: Database for State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

When washing clothes, use less water by running full loads. In addition, approximately 80 percent of the energy used by washing machines heats water, so by using cold water and cold-water detergents you can cut a load's energy use in half.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy



LUMBEE RIVER EMC

P.O. Box 830, Red Springs, NC 28377
910-843-4131 | 1-800-683-5571

www.lumbeeriver.com

Business Hours: Mon.–Fri., 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

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