

# Piedmont Electric CONNECTION

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



Hillsborough, N.C.

www.pemc.org

August 2009

## New Additions

### Energy Efficiency & Renewable Loan Program Updated

There are changes in Piedmont Electric's Energy Conservation Loan Program. The first change is the name, which is now the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Loan Program.

The biggest changes, however, are in the program's new benefits.

Qualified members may now borrow up to \$10,000 for up to 7 years at 5% interest. Payments are added to the power bill as before.

Qualified members may also borrow money for the installation of solar water heater systems, solar panels and central air conditioning systems.

Loans may also be used for the replacement of existing heating

equipment with heat pump systems; adding insulation, installing storm doors and energy-saving windows, as well as the purchase of electric water heaters.

*Members may now borrow up to \$10,000 for up to 7 years at 5% interest.*

One new requirement with the loan program is that all new air conditioning and heat pump systems must now have an energy rating of **14 SEER** or higher, to qualify.

This small increase in efficiency rating over the old requirements can pay off in substantial energy savings.

Loans for new air conditioning systems are totally new to Piedmont Electric's old loan program. In addition, the Cooperative already has a rebate program for heat pumps in place.

Another new addition to the

loan program is solar water heater systems. Members who install a new solar water heater system can borrow up to \$10,000 to cover the installation cost.

And, with the present rebate from Piedmont Electric on solar water heater systems, members may also qualify for an additional \$500 rebate.

The Energy Efficiency and Renewable Loan Program is only for "existing" homes. New construction does not qualify.

Please contact the Piedmont Electric Marketing Department Representatives at 919.732.2123 or toll-free at 800.222.3107 for additional information.



## Here's Help to Manage Summer Electric Bills

Summer brings many things to mind—days at the local swimming spot, cook-outs, children playing outside and vacation time. But it also brings the fact that electricity use is on the rise, and so are summer electric bills.

Piedmont Electric has several ways to help members manage their summer electric bills, including payment options and services.

Pre-Pay billing is the newest option for members who prefer to stay ahead of their electric bills.

This option keeps members aware of their electricity use by al-

lowing them to monitor it daily through MyUsage.com website. The member also receives notification when their use nears preset levels.

Members may also choose to have their bills set up on budget billing. This averages out electricity use over a 12-month period which balances out the high use months from the lower use months.

For those who are able to shift their electricity use to off-peak times, Time-of-Day billing may be an option to lowering their bills.

In addition to billing/payment op-

*(Continued on page 24)*



*From Your President...*

## *Climate Change Policy Can Affect Power Costs*

*R. G. Brecheisen*

*Chief Executive Officer & President*

For some time we have been focusing on energy policy and the effect certain legislation may have on you and your electric cooperative.

Congress and the federal government are working to prioritize climate change policy.

Given the long list of environmental impacts and expensive solutions, any action taken to address the issue will certainly increase the cost of electricity we use everyday.

Climate change proposals are geared to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide.

In the southeastern United States, many of our power plants burn fossil fuels such as coal for generation.

Nationwide that works out to about 2.4 billion tons of carbon dioxide every year—with a high

concentration of that output coming from our part of the country.

Electric cooperatives are involved in cutting edge work to develop new technologies to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants, but those options are not available yet.

Also, these options are limited, largely untested and expensive. Yet potential legislation would rely on them to make significant carbon dioxide cuts nationwide.

Under consideration is a proposal to impose a cap-and-trade tax to limit carbon emissions.

(Cap-and-trade systems work by setting a specific limit on airborne pollutants from sources like power plants, factories and refineries, and require those sources to account for all emissions with issued allowances.)

Allowances would be auctioned off at undetermined prices, leading to huge cost burdens for any source of carbon dioxide emissions.

In the case of power plants,

those costs would ultimately be passed on to the consumers who use the power.

We need to help Congress draft an energy solution that accomplishes environmental goals while taking affordability into account.

Electric cooperatives want to work with Congress to address climate change in an affordable and environmentally responsible fashion.

We're ready to provide insight into how various policy proposals will impact consumers—and urge lawmakers to reach the right answers.

National energy and climate change policy must focus on reducing emissions, not on revenue enhancement for the federal government.

You can help by letting your legislators know your opinion on proposed energy policy. Go to [www.findabalancedsolution.com](http://www.findabalancedsolution.com) or [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop).



### Member Speak-Out

Do you have a question or comment about Piedmont EMC? If so, we want to hear from you. Questions about specific accounts will be answered personally instead of appearing in the newsletter.

Because of space limitations, Piedmont EMC reserves the right to publish any comments and to edit comments at its discretion.

Send your comments and questions to: Todd Pope, "Member Speak-Out," Piedmont EMC, P.O. Drawer 1179, Hillsborough, N.C. 27278-1179. You may also include it with your monthly payment, or send an email to:

[todd.pope@pemc.org](mailto:todd.pope@pemc.org)

## *Neighbors Helping Neighbors...*

Neighbor helping neighbor is part of the co-op tradition. Project Helping Hand is a program Piedmont Electric began to give members an opportunity to help less fortunate members during crisis situations.

There are several ways you can voluntarily contribute to Project Helping Hand:

- You can make a one-time donation to the fund.
- You can donate a specified amount to be added to your monthly

bill for Project Helping Hand.

- You can request that Piedmont Electric round up your monthly electric bill to the next dollar.

# PROJECT Helping Hand

The money collected will be distributed to so-

cial services departments in our service area to aid less fortunate Piedmont members with their electric bills

To volunteer, complete a sign-up card which is available from Piedmont Electric.

# Is a Solar Water Heater in Your Future?

Piedmont Electric is offering a special rebate to residential members who install a solar water heating system.

We have developed a program to assist those interested in installing a solar water heating system. Piedmont Electric is offering a \$500 rebate for those who install a solar water heating system.

Solar water heating systems average around \$7,000 installed, depending on the type of system and the installation.

In addition to Piedmont Electric's rebate, state and federal tax credits can reduce your purchase costs.

A 30% federal and a 35% North Carolina tax credit (up to \$1,400) is available. The effect of the rebate and tax credits can come close to reducing your out-of-pocket expense by 50%. (Please see inset)

Other than rebates, there are other reasons solar water heaters make sense: solar is economical, reliable and sustainable.

It increases the value of your home immediately and offers a competitive advantage down the road when it is time to sell.

- Solar can lower your monthly

utility bills and decrease electricity costs by \$3,489 over 10 years (based on current energy prices)

- It insulates your family from increasing energy costs

■ North Carolina has abundant sunshine which fuels solar applications.

■ Solar is a clean, renewable energy that does not contribute to greenhouse gases.

- It reduces

your family's energy purchases, and solar energy applications reduces your family's environmental impact.

If you are interested in learning more about Piedmont Electric's Solar Water Heater Rebate Program, please call 919.732.2123.

\* *Assuming a 28% tax bracket. Consult your tax professional for applicability.*

\*\* *Piedmont Electric also offers an Energy Efficiency Loan Program where qualified members can borrow up to \$10,000 for seven years at 5% interest.*

\*\*\* *Member must sign a Renewable Energy Certificate Agreement that assigns any renewable energy credits generated by your solar water heating system to Piedmont Electric in order to receive the Cooperative's rebate.*

## Solar Water Heating System Cost Example\*\*

System Cost	\$7,000.00
Rebate***	- 500.00
State Tax Credit	- \$1,400.00
Federal Tax Credit	- \$2,100.00
Taxes on State Credit*	\$ 392.00
<b>Net Cost</b>	<b>\$3,392.00</b>

## Start Saving Today with CFLs

When you buy compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) you can earn a credit of 50 cents per bulb on your electric bill—up to \$15 annually.

- ◆ Buy CFLs and send in the original receipt to:

**Piedmont EMC, CFL Rebate**

**P. O. Drawer 1179, Hillsborough, NC 27278**

*If your receipt\* does not clearly show the CFL or light purchase, also send in proof of purchase from the packaging (name of manufacturer & product)*

- ◆ Include the full name of the member with an active account, the account number & the complete mailing address & daytime phone number on the receipt.

\*Receipts must be dated within 6 months of the date it is submitted for credit.



## SURVEY COMING...

A survey of randomly selected members is being conducted by our statewide organization through TSE Services.

Only 1,000 Piedmont Electric members will be included in this survey about different appliances being used in the home.

Those chosen will have the option of completing and returning a paper survey, or logging on to a website to complete the survey.

The survey will provide timely information on energy use trends and energy conservation behaviors while fulfilling requirements from the Rural Utilities Service. The last survey was in 2005.

## Bright Ideas Grant Applications Due Soon

Bright Ideas Grants are once again being sponsored by Piedmont Electric for area teachers who submit innovative and imaginative programs not funded by traditional means.

Teachers for kindergarten through grade 12 are eligible to apply for Bright Ideas Grants. Grants of up to \$2,000 each are available from the Cooperative.

The deadline for teachers to submit applications is **September 18, 2009**, but teachers who submit their application by the early-bird deadline on **August 17** will be entered in a statewide drawing for a \$500 Visa gift card.

Information about the Bright Ideas grant program can be found on Piedmont Electric's website at:

[www.pemc.org](http://www.pemc.org), or  
[www.ncbrightideas.com](http://www.ncbrightideas.com)

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



*Replacing just four 100-W incandescent lightbulbs with four 23-W compact fluorescent equivalents will save almost \$200 over life of the bulbs.*

—Source: Alliance to Save Energy

## Pass It On...

**Marjorie N. Dodson** of Efland contributed this month's recipe for

"Oriental Salad." If you have a favorite recipe you want to share with other Piedmont EMC members, please send it to: Pass It On, c/o Piedmont Connection, P.O. Drawer 1179, Hillsborough, NC 27278, or you may include it with your monthly payment.

If it is printed in the newsletter, you will receive a copy of the Cooperative Council of North Carolina's *Sensational Sweets* cookbook. **Please remember to check all ingredients and instructions carefully.**

### Oriental Salad

- 1 16-ounce package shredded cabbage
- 1 package ramon beef flavor noodles, crushed
- 1/2 cup sunflower kernels
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds, toasted until golden brown
- 3 green onions, chopped

*Layer the above in order, then in a separate bowl mix:*

- 1 beef seasoning package from noodle mix
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup oil
- 1/3 cup white vinegar

Pour "dressing" over cabbage mixture when you are ready to serve it.

### RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR AUGUST

#### Orange County

- New Hope Church Road
- Borland Road
- Arthur Minnis Road
- Union Grove Church Road
- Highway 86
- Wild Wood Subdivision
- Joppa Oaks Subdivision

## Manage Your Summer Electric Bills • *(Continued from page 21)*

tions, Piedmont Electric offers services to help members use electricity more efficiently.

These include free HVAC check-ups and free home energy audits using an infrared camera.

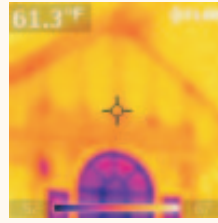
Experienced Energy Specialists can also advise members on the sizing of heating/cooling systems—and help qualified Piedmont Electric consumers apply for a Energy Efficiency & Renewables Loan.

And, the Cooperative offers products from the online Energy Efficiency Store at competitive pricing.

With all the things Piedmont Electric has available for members to help better manage their electricity bills, there are things members

can do to help themselves.

- Set air conditioner thermostats at 78° in the summer.
- Change HVAC filters monthly, and make sure the filter is facing in the correct direction.
- Run ceiling fans on medium, blowing down in the summer.
- Close shades and drapes during the day in the summer to keep out heat.
- Do not close off unused rooms that are conditioned by forced-air systems.
- Make sure return air vents are not blocked by furniture or drapes.
- Have your HVAC system serviced by a professional once a year.



*Piedmont Electric & ElecTel CCU will be closed Monday, September 7, in observance of Labor Day. Employees will be on call. Please have a safe, happy Labor Day.*



## Piedmont Electric CONNECTION

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*To report an outage 24 hours a day: 800.449.2667\**

*To access account information 24 hours a day: 800.548.2105\**

*\*Voice instructions will direct you through the system.*

*Call BEFORE You Dig: 800.632.4949 or 811*

**A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative**

*Cathy J. Johnson, CCC, Editor*

