

# Piedmont Electric CONNECTION

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



Hillsborough, N.C.

www.pemc.org

September 2009



## How Much Energy Did You Use Yesterday?

The weatherman can tell you how high the temperature rose yesterday, and now Piedmont Electric can tell you how much energy you used to try to keep cool.

All you have to do is sign up for [MyUsage.com](http://MyUsage.com), using your account number and meter number, and you can check to see how much electricity you used through midnight the previous day.

We can even email the information to you daily on request.

This free service from Piedmont Electric can help you be more aware of the energy you use, so you can take steps to use electricity more efficiently.

## By the Numbers...

- 226 members have signed up for the use monitoring portion of [www.MyUsage.com](http://www.MyUsage.com)
- 121 members are participating in the Pre-Pay Program
- 214 members have turned in receipts for 2,226 CFLs, representing a total of 763,518 kWhs saved toward our Senate Bill 3 Mandate
- 1,010 people have sent cards for "Our Energy, Our Future" which are being forwarded to the elected officials in Piedmont's service area

## Water Heater Kits Available to Members

With water heating the second largest user of electricity in the home—second only to heating and cooling systems—Piedmont Electric is offering members a way to help reduce water heating costs.

The Cooperative has efficient water heater insulation blanket wrap kits for electric water heaters for \$15 plus tax to members.

The kit includes not only the blanket insulation, but also an earth massage shower head, kitchen faucet aerator and two bathroom faucet aerators.

The wrap is 48 by 87 inches of three-inch insulation, and will fit

tanks up to 27 inches across the top. There is also six feet of pipe insulation included, as well as a free water conservation kit.

The kit also comes with tape and easy installation instructions.

The water heater wrap kit can save up to 940 kWhs per year, and could pay for itself in just a few months. *(Please see inset)*

A water heater blanket can reduce standby energy loss by 25% to 45%, reducing water heating costs by 4% to 9%, according to



the U.S. Department of Energy.

An installed kit can lower water heating costs \$100 annually, which allows the kit to pay for itself in three to six months.

The actual savings will depend on the age, efficiency, condition and location of existing water heater.

The energy savings of up to 940 kWhs per year will continue for as long as the wrap kit is on your electric water heater. A water heater kit can pay

for itself in less than two months ( $\$16.05 \div \$8.56 = 1.88$  months).

For every kit sold, Piedmont Electric will be able to count 940 kWhs/year toward our state Senate Bill 3 mandate.

The kits are available at all Piedmont Electric offices.

*(Energy savings information source is from GreenCo Solutions.)*

### Water Heater Wrap Cost-Benefit

**Cost of Wrap** **\$16.05**  
*(taxed at 7% in Person County)*

**Savings:** **10.93¢/kWh**  
*(1<sup>st</sup> 800 kWh on Residential Rate Schedule)*

**940 kWhs/year savings X \$.1093= \$102.74**

**\$102.74 ÷ 12 months= \$8.56/savings/month**



From Your President...

## Co-op Adds Tools to Help Manage Use

**R. G. Brecheisen**  
Chief Executive Officer & President

If your electricity bill is higher than normal, please take a minute to consider that August is traditionally the hottest month of the year, and with the heat comes even more energy use.

Piedmont Electric is committed to helping you make the most efficient use of the energy you buy. For this reason, we are continually searching for additional ways to help our member-consumers keep down their use.

In recent months we have been talking about new programs that are geared to helping you manage your energy use, such as "smart grid" technology and the additional benefits of the Co-operative's loan program.

Through the smart grid technology, Piedmont Electric offers an in-

teractive website, [MyUsage.com](http://MyUsage.com), a free service that allows members access to their daily electricity use.

By monitoring your daily use, you can see the direct impact of your activities and/or other factors such as weather conditions.

We have also updated the Co-operative's Energy Efficiency & Renewable Loan Program, increasing the amount available for loans, including loans for efficient air conditioners, heat pumps and solar purchases.

In addition, Piedmont Electric is offering efficient water heater wrap kits at a competitive price to help members reduce the energy required to heat water, and a rebate program for the installation of compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs).

These are just some of the new tools the Cooperative is making available to you so you can better manage your energy use. In addition, Piedmont Electric still offers free home energy audits and HVAC checks by experienced advisors.

• • •

It seems every where we turn, we are being asked to contact legislators to let them know our feelings about certain issues—whether it's health care reform or energy issues.

As the U.S. Congress works out details for a new energy policy, it remains critical that we all continue to let our elected officials know our concern the impact this legislation could have on consumers.

Piedmont Electric is working hard to keep its rates as affordable as possible without affecting the quality of the service you receive.

You can help by letting your congressional representatives know your concerns about the effect proposed energy policy may have on your cost of electricity.

Please complete the post card on the cover of this magazine or go to [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop) or [www.findabalancedsolution.org](http://www.findabalancedsolution.org) to find out how you can help keep energy costs affordable.



### 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).

### Please, Do Not Post Signs on Poles

Although seemingly innocent enough, putting signs or other items on utility poles creates serious safety hazards.

Staples, nails and tacks used to hang signs—as well as the signs themselves—pose dangers to Piedmont Electric lineworkers who must climb poles when either restoring power following storms or while performing routine maintenance to ensure system reliability.

Posters or other objects (birdhouses, balloons, flags and even basketball nets) can create dangerous obstacles. Also, the nails and tacks left behind

from signs can snag utility workers' boots or puncture safety clothing, making line workers vulnerable to slipping or even electrocution.

In addition to being hazardous, tampering with utility poles can be costly.

Piedmont Electric encourages its members to contact local zoning officers to inquire about where signage can be posted legally.



# TAKE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AFTER STORMS, FLOODS

Late summer and early fall may bring hurricanes, tornadoes and floods to this area. As a result, take precautions with your home's electrical system.

Keep in mind that debris from storms can easily ignite if it comes into contact with downed power lines, especially when electrical wires are severed.

Also, standing water and even appliances can become electrically charged.

These tips should help keep you safe following storms this season:

- Never touch a downed power line. Call your electric cooperative to report it immediately. Avoid contact with overhead lines during cleanup and other activities. Assume all wires on the ground are electrically charged.

- Be sure all electric and gas services are turned off before entering buildings for the first time.

- If water has risen above the electrical outlets in your home, contact a licensed electrician before turning on your main circuit breaker. Outlets and wiring that have come in contact with water could present a fire and shock hazard.



Severe storms can bring down trees and power lines. Always assume the power lines are "live"—and keep away!

- Allow all electrical appliances and electronic equipment, once submerged, to dry thoroughly. Have them checked by a qualified repair person before turning them on.

- Look for and replace damaged extension and appliance cords, loose prongs or plugs.

- Portable electric generators are often put into use for temporary power. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions for installation and operation.

- Use generators or other fuel-powered machines outside the home. Carbon monoxide fumes are odorless and can quickly poison you indoors.

- Take special care not to over-

load the generator. Use appropriately sized extension cords to carry the electric load. Make sure the cords have a grounded, three-pronged plug and are in good condition.

- Never run cords under rugs or carpets.

- Never connect generators to another power source such as power lines. The reverse flow of electricity can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker.

## Pre-Pay Plan Offers Even More Benefits

Members who shift their Piedmont Electric accounts to the new Pre-Pay Plan have another reason to make the change: no deposit.

This plan, which offers you the opportunity to pay when you want and in the amounts you want, does not require a deposit because there is never a balance owed on the account.

Members who have a deposit on their accounts may apply the deposit toward the purchase of electricity on their Pre-Pay Plan.

If you're interested, contact Piedmont Electric today!

## Get a \$15 Credit on Your Electric Bill

By sending in your original receipt showing the purchase of compact fluorescent lights (CFLs), Piedmont Electric will credit your electric bill 50 cents for every CFL you buy—up to 30 bulbs.



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MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LENDER





## Pass It On...

**Shirley J. Doby**

of Mebane contributed this month's recipe for "Lemon Ice Box Pie."

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.**

### Lemon Ice Box Pie

1-1/4 cups graham cracker crumbs  
3/4 stick margarine, melted  
1 can sweetened condensed milk  
2 eggs, separated  
Juice of 2 lemons

Combine graham cracker crumbs with melted margarine and press into pie plate. Set aside.

Mix beaten egg yolks with sweetened condensed milk. Then add juice of two lemons (3 lemons, if small). Mix well and pour into crust.

Beat egg whites with 4 teaspoons of sugar until soft peaks form. Add to top of pie. Put in 350-degree oven until lightly browned. Cool, then refrigerate three (3) hours until completely cooled.



## RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR SEPTEMBER

### Orange County

Dimmocks Mill Road  
Grady Brown School Road  
Orange Grove Road  
Dodsons Crossroads  
Ben Johnson Road  
(and surrounding area)

## DON'T GET BURNED BY ENERGY SCAMS

The devices could not be simpler—a small gray box that plugs into an electrical outlet in the home. The accompanying advertising insisted these products, which cost up to \$300, could shrink electric bills by 10% and reduce energy use by 25%.

In times of rising energy prices, who wouldn't want to try them?

Consumers need to beware of such claims. If something seems to be too good to be true, it usually is.

When energy prices go up, people get flooded with ads about gadgets and gizmos that claim to save money.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) also warns consumers to be careful about marketers or home improvement contractors aggressively trying to sell energy-saving products.

According to the FTC, consumers should look carefully and check independent information, such as from state or local consumer

protection offices like the Better Business Bureau—about companies selling such items.

Don't fall for high-pressure sales pitches from contractors or door-to-door sales people.

Before Piedmont Electric recommends any type of energy-saving device, we carefully check out the products to make sure they live up to the claims.

If you have questions about a product or service you see advertised, please contact the Cooperative.

We are here to help you make sense of energy-savings claims and also help you find real ways to save on your electric bill, such as our free energy audits.

Remember, Piedmont Electric offers water heater insulation kits at a competitive price—AND we offer incentives for members who replace their regular light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs).



## 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

