



OCTOBER ■ 2008



REAL PEOPLE. REAL POWER.

Tideland Topics

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE MEMBER-OWNERS OF TIDELAND ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION

EMPOWERMENT: Hitting the road with energy education

First Energy Workshop Scheduled

**Thursday
October 22, 2008
Fairfield Harbour
Community Center
Start Time: 7:00 p.m.**

There is no cost to attend.

Additional dates and locations across the cooperative's territory will be announced as scheduling continues.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

With energy prices expected to rise into 2009, Tideland EMC will embark on a series of energy education workshops. Participants will learn how to efficiently manage energy use and avoid common energy mistakes.

"The average Tideland member uses 1,040 kilowatt hours a month," says workshop leader Heidi Smith. "If you routinely have electric bills over \$150 to \$200 a month you should plan to attend one of our workshops."

Participants will learn how to conduct their own energy audit. Each session will be packed with inexpensive and no cost tips along with a discussion of how and when to upgrade your heating and cooling system. The first two sessions have been scheduled for October and January in New Bern and Ocracoke respectively.

We hope to see you there.

REAL VALUE:



Cooperatives lead the way

Sustainability...empowerment... concern for community. These are among today's most popular business values.

But these values are nothing new to the nation's 20,000-plus cooperatives. To co-ops, the big-business focus on "corporate social responsibility" is the sincerest form of flattery. It's what co-ops have been doing for 150 years.

For cooperatives, concepts like sustainability, community involvement, and democratic control are more than buzzwords. They are essential to how we conduct

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

business, and how we will always do business. Cooperatives have multiple bottom lines, with social as well as economic goals.

Cooperatives also exemplify the Ownership Society. Co-ops are not owned by Wall Street investors, but by rank-and-file Americans—the people and small businesses that buy our products and use our services. Surplus revenue is distributed to our member-owners, not outside investors. And, while stock company governance is closed to all but the largest shareholders, cooperative governance is open and democratic.

This month we salute the tried and true cooperative business model.

Message to Our Member-Owners: Plain talk about rising power costs

Like each of our members, Tideland EMC receives a monthly power bill for the electricity we purchase on your behalf. In years past we could forecast with relative certainty what the co-op would pay per kilowatt hour (kWh). Today that's simply not the case.

Quite frankly, no one predicted that coal and natural gas, primary fuels used in generating much of the co-op's power, would skyrocket in price. In the past year the price of Appalachian coal has increased more than 200%. The cost of natural gas reached a high of \$13 per million BTUs in June 2008. Six years ago the price was \$3 per million BTUs.

Through the summer, high temperatures

ruled and in June 2008 Tideland sold 1 million more kWh than June 2007. In July we sold 3 million more kWh than the period last year. Other utilities across the southeast were similarly pressed for power, which drove wholesale prices up.

If there are significant cash reserves, the cooperative can absorb moderate month to month fluctuations. However, when every kWh we buy is more expensive than forecasted for multiple months at a time we have no choice but to collect the additional expenses through our own billings.

On September 1, 2008, the cooperative increased the wholesale power cost adjustment, also known as the generation fuel expense,



Jeff Ahearn
Interim CEO

for the first time since August 2007. Passing along price increases always come as a last resort.

While rates are rising, let's not forget that other all important billing component: the amount of energy used. That you can control.

Beginning October 22, Tideland will host a series of energy education workshops to help members identify ways to reduce utility bills through increased efficiency and conservation. I strongly urge you to attend one of the workshops as they are scheduled throughout our six-county service area.

Will you be ready for the switch to digital television?

Midnight, February 17, 2009, television viewing in America is scheduled to change. All full-power television stations in the United States are converting their broadcasting from analogue to 100% digital.

Individual households will be required to have a conversion box if their television sets are not controlled through cable, satellite or

fiber optics. From now until March 2009, consumers may apply for up to two \$40 coupons per household provided by the U.S. Government. The converter box is a one-time purchase and prices are expected to range between \$50 and \$70 without the coupon. Coupons expire within 90 days of the date they are mailed out to consumers. Local retailers will carry the boxes for purchase.

For coupon applications:

www.dtv2009.gov

For information on where to purchase converter boxes:

www.ntiadtvtv.org

For information on how to install a converter box:

www.DigitalTips.org

To learn more about options:
www.DTVTransition.org

REAL MEMBERSHIP ADVANTAGE:

TIDELAND EMC TEAMS UP WITH APPLIANCE STORE TO OFFER REBATES

In support of the NC Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday, Tideland EMC has teamed up with Tideland Appliance Sales and Service in New Bern to offer incredible savings **exclusively** for Tideland EMC members.

There is simply no better time to invest in energy efficient equipment. The member-only rebates will be offered on all qualifying sales made on **November 7 and 8**. With over 400 appliances on the showroom floor daily you'll find plenty of qualifying Energy Star products. You can also place custom orders and qualify

for the rebates as long as the order is placed and paid for during the sales tax holiday. Rebate totals are limited to \$375 per Tideland member. The cooperative is offering the rebates as part of its overall plan to meet energy efficiency mandates set by the North Carolina legislature.

For more information see the special cover wrap on this issue of Carolina Country magazine or call Tideland Appliance at 252.636.2080.

SAVE
DURING THE
SALES TAX
HOLIDAY

1.

AVOID NC SALES TAX WHEN YOU BUY QUALIFYING ENERGY STAR EQUIPMENT NOVEMBER 7-9

2.

ENJOY "MEMBER ONLY" APPLIANCE REBATES WHEN YOU SHOP TIDELAND APPLIANCE NOVEMBER 7-8

3.

REPLACE OLDER MODEL APPLIANCES WITH A NEW ENERGY STAR MODEL AND YOU'LL CONTINUE TO REAP THE SAVINGS FOR YEARS TO COME



NC Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday: A great time to buy heat pumps too

In addition to certain appliances, the N.C. sales tax holiday, November 7-9, applies to all Energy Star rated heat pumps, air conditioners, ceiling fans, dehumidifiers and programmable thermostats. Credit worthy Tideland members may utilize the cooperative's 5% Energy Resource Conservation Loan Program for approved purchases. For more information, contact Tideland EMC loan officer Karen Heffley at 800.637.1079, ext. 1141.

TROPICAL STORM HANNA GIVES OUTAGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM A TRIAL RUN

For the past year Tideland has been laying the ground work for a new outage management system. It's no small task when you consider more than 2,200 miles of power line data must be documented in a new mapping system and interfaced with our consumer accounting system. While the project is not scheduled for completion until January 2009, Tropical Storm Hanna allowed Tideland to conduct a rather extensive test run.

The results? Quite impressive.

Outages trickled in and by 5:30 the morning of September 6, fewer than 250 members were without power, a number very manageable using manual sorting. But between 7 and 9 a.m. outages rapidly increased to 7,852 members which represents one-third of Tideland's system. At that point the outage

management system started earning its keep. Operations personnel were able to pinpoint where interruptions in power had occurred and compare that data with field reports to test system accuracy. According to operations manager Robbie Rouse, "The system's ability to point us in the right direction is simply amazing. Obviously we expected this when we purchased the system but to see it in action for the first time is really a beautiful thing." By 5 p.m., fewer than 300 members remained without power.

When fully integrated the system will reduce employee overtime by eliminating much of the windshield time crews spend locating damaged lines. It will also allow for real time outage reporting and help the cooperative spot outage trends that may indicate the need for preventative maintenance and repairs.

REAL PEOPLE.
REAL POWER.

Tideland Topics

www.tidelandemc.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ray Hamilton, President
J. Douglas Brinson, Vice President
Clifton Paul, Secretary
Ed Duetsch, Treasurer
Leon Bryant, Jimmy Burbage,
Mark Carawan, Garry Jordan,
Rudy Austin, Paul Sasnett &
Wayne Sawyer

INTERIM CEO

Jeff Ahearn

EDITOR

Heidi Jernigan Smith

24-Hour Customer Service
252.943.3046
800.637.1079
Outage Reporting &
Automated Services
252.944.2400
800.882.1001

TIME OF USE PARTICIPANTS: REMEMBER TO OBSERVE WINTER DEMAND HOURS OF 6 A.M. TO 9 A.M., MONDAY - FRIDAY BEGINNING OCTOBER 16

Last call for "Change a Light" contest entries . . . hurry!

Simply mail in your receipt showing a compact fluorescent bulb purchase since May 25, 2008, and you're entered in our drawing for a \$300 credit on your electric bill. Remember to write your name, account number and daytime phone number on the receipt and mail it to Tideland EMC, PO Box 159, Pantego, NC 27860. The deadline to enter is October 10, 2008.



To accurately reflect the rising cost of banking transactions, Tideland's returned check fee has increased to \$35. Please make sure sufficient funds are available before paying by check.