

Tideland Topics

REAL PEOPLE. REAL POWER.

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

A BIG THUMB UP: Co-op's campaign to boost social media reach pays off

On June 20, Tideland reached its goal to become the "Most Liked" electric cooperative Facebook page in North Carolina when it got its 2,099th "Like" on the social media site. That kicked off a series of activities to mark the achievement, including a contest to find the co-op's oldest Facebook fan (93 years young!) and celebratory banners at each of the co-op's offices.

The co-op's Facebook page is proving increasingly valuable during outage events as yet another tool to keep members, the public and media outlets up to date on restoration activities.

Even non-Facebook users can access the co-op's Facebook posts via a ticker on the co-op's website found at www.tidelandemc.com.

The grapevine effect of Facebook allows word to spread quickly yet accurately whenever users share Tideland service updates with their own network of online friends. In fact, the co-op has noticed a decline in incoming phone traffic when posting outage updates to Facebook. It's just another way for Tideland to connect with members and deliver the information you need in a timely and convenient fashion.

Tidelanders know how to save

Since we ran our article about Tideland member John Alison's purchase of two GE Geospring hybrid heat pump water heaters (June 2013), our rebate requests have picked up quite a bit.

A Beaufort County member informed us about Lowe's 10% Military Discount program and that between the Lowe's sale price and military discount, the Tideland rebate and the federal tax credit, the purchase price came down to less than \$300.

Another member found last year's Geospring model clearance priced at a Jacksonville home store for just \$450, so after the Tideland rebate and federal tax credit, the member actually made money on the purchase.

On top of that, each Geospring owner is saving at least 62% in annual water heating costs thanks to the hybrid heat pump technology. Like Benjamin Franklin said, "A penny saved is a penny earned."





Message to our Member-Owners: Plug into cooperative communications

Right-of-Way Maintenance Update

Tideland has hired Lewis Tree Service to trim trees in our rights-of-way. In August they will be working in the Engelhard District:

Boundary Canal: from Hwy 94 to Rock Road to 5th Avenue to Highway 264

Carter Canal: from Boundary Canal to pumps on the ICW

This includes adjoining small roads and lanes in the area.

Mowing crews will be working along Hwy 264 east of Engelhard to Stumpy Point and Manns Harbor.

By Paul Spruill
General Manager & CEO

Reliable access to information about your electric service is important year round. However, it becomes even more crucial as we enter peak hurricane season. Here's what you need to know to make co-op communications work for you.

Accurate records
When you call Tideland at 1-800-882-1001 to report an outage our system can promptly locate your account if we have an accurate phone number on file. For your convenience, you will find at the bottom of your electric bill the phone number we have associated with your account. If that number is incorrect or is not the number you are likely to call from during an outage please take a moment to notify us of your up to date number. Having

a good phone number on file also allows us to call you about planned outages or the possibility of a pending disconnect notice.

Be a good listener
The truth is there will never be enough live operators to handle all the incoming calls associated with a major storm. That's why we have an automated outage reporting system. We've built a great deal of functionality into the system. Therefore, it is important to listen carefully to all the prompts to make sure your service issue is properly logged into our system. You can even request a call back once electric service has been restored.

Outage text messaging
Text the letters TEMC to short code 85700 to receive outage-related text messages from Tideland. While we cannot

yet target messages by circuit or individual meter, we can now deliver messages based on the substation that serves your home or business. Give it a try. It's a great service and if you ever want to discontinue the notifications simply text STOP to 85700.

Internet options
It wasn't so long ago that members got really upset when we talked about service updates being made available on the Internet because they didn't have access to the Internet when power was off. Now thanks to smart phones, air cards and battery packs, many members can access www.tidelandemc.com even when power is off. On our website you'll find a link to our outage viewer as well as our Facebook feed. During a major storm press releases are also posted to the website.

ENERGY PRICING REMAINS FAVORABLE: Weather biggest factor in June bills

The co-op issued another fuel adjustment credit for July 2013 in the amount of 0.498¢ per kilowatt hour (kWh). That brought down the billed residential cost per kWh to 11.47¢. The billed cost per residential kWh in July 2012 was 12.19¢. That means any member billed for 700+ kilowatt hours in July 2013 paid less than they did last year for the same amount of usage.

However the lower per kWh charge may have gone unnoticed as electricity sales increased due to above average temperatures during the month of June when

we registered 401 cooling degree days. We only had 294 cooling degree days in June 2012. As a result, June 2013 required a great deal more air conditioning.

The precipitation comparisons were even more extreme. In June 2012 the Tideland area averaged 2.5 inches of rainfall while this year the area average was 8.22 inches of rainfall. More rainfall usually means more time spent indoors, which typically translates into higher energy use.

So while we've been able to keep kWh costs lower than anticipated, Mother Nature often has the last word when it comes to energy consumption. To learn more about the effects of weather on your own electric bill visit our member portal (instructions on page 28).

\$27 MILLION FOUR YEAR WORK PLAN:

Projects protect member investment while raising the bar on reliability

Editor's Note: This is the first installment in a series of articles featuring major projects included in the cooperative's four year work plan.

Providing reliable electric service to increasingly plugged-in consumers requires considerable capital investments. Between 1990 and 2012, Tideland EMC's net electric plant assets increased from \$25 million to just over \$89 million. Therefore, one of our most important responsibilities is to safeguard your investment in electric system plant and judiciously invest in projects that will improve reliability at a reasonable cost.

Every four years Tideland prepares a new work plan to guide these efforts. The most recent plan, approved by your board of directors in January, will require a \$27 million investment between 2013 and 2017. Budgeted projects were justified on the basis of improving system reliability, voltage

stability and other long-term operational factors. For example, several projects south of the Pamlico River are focused on reallocating power delivery assets to better manage growth patterns in that region of our service territory. Plans call for construction of a new Craven County substation, relocating portions of the Merritt circuit and building a new Arapahoe circuit.

North of the Pamlico River we will address the recent addition of several new energy-intensive agri-business operations by upgrading the Ponzer substation's Dowry Creek circuit to expand capacity. We will replace and relocate the Engelhard substation and make improvements at our Washington substation. By the end of the year we hope to begin work to replace the Pantego Creek cable that serves members in the Sidney area now that construction of the new Belhaven bridge is complete.

Systemwide we will continue to replace copper wires with aluminum line. In fact, we hope to have the entire village of Ocracoke converted to aluminum by 2017.

In addition to the four-year work plan, we will continue to spend at least \$1.5 million annually to trim and mow our utility rights-of-way.

Sixty-three projects are included in the four-year work plan. Each carries its own price tag, ranging from \$25,000 to dismantle the old Stumpy Point substation to \$5.9 million to build a new substation to serve members in the Fairfield Harbour area. While we have chronological projections for each component of the work plan, new construction timelines are greatly influenced by our ability to obtain the right-of-way easements necessary to proceed.

As we make our way through the work plan we will provide in Tideland Topics a summary of major work as it gets underway. This month our featured project is actually part one of a two-part plan to improve service along the Merritt circuit in Pamlico County.

With over 2,554 miles of line on our system it is necessary to prioritize work efforts and financial investments. However, these 63 projects are projected to enhance service for more than 85 percent of our total membership. Keep in mind that the four-year work plan does not prevent the cooperative from proactively dealing with unexpected service issues or load growth when and if they occur.



4 STEPS TO SAVING

Use our online resources to optimize your power usage and save money!

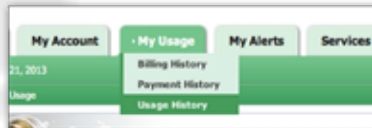
Step 1: Go to **tidelandemc.com**
Click on **ebill** at the top left to open the Member Portal.



Step 2: Click on **My Account** and submit your login info.
(If you are a new user, click "Create User ID" from the My Account drop-down menu.)



Step 3: At the top menu, select **My Usage** and then choose **Usage History**



Step 4: Select your search criteria, such as:

- **Date Range** (Day/Month/Year)
- **Weather Impacts on Usage**
 - Sunny vs. Cloudy
 - Hot vs. Cold
 - Humid vs. Dry
 - Windy vs. Calm



Compare your usage to past months and years to start saving energy and reduce your monthly bill!

Questions? Call us at 800.637.1079

Tideland Topics

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ATTENTION TEACHERS: SUBMIT YOUR BRIGHT IDEAS GRANT APPLICATION BY AUGUST 16 AND YOU'RE ELIGIBLE TO WIN A \$500 EARLY BIRD GIFT CARD

Sign up for free account alerts

Take advantage of another free co-op service to protect your account information and credit history. Tideland now offers alerts and reminders via text messaging and email. *(Please note this service is separate from the outage text messaging service and must be activated online or by notifying a member service representative).*

To activate the service online visit the member portal (instructions above) and select the "My Alerts" tab. Select the types of reminders you

wish to receive which include:

- Due Date Reminder
- Past Due Date Reminder
- Account Profile Change
- Returned Check Alert
- Payment Confirmation

Then select the method of notice delivery: text message and/or email. *(Push notification is not active at this time).*

For those not able to access online enrollment call 1-800-637-1079 to enroll.



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