



# Tideland Topics

REAL PEOPLE. REAL POWER.

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

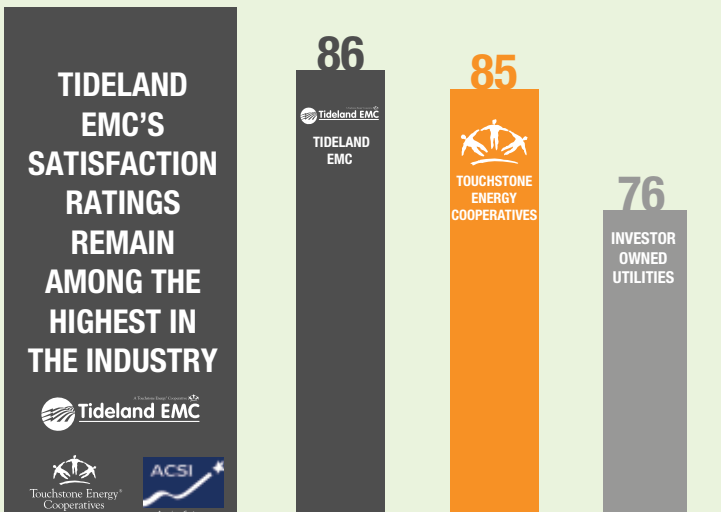
## HIGH MARKS: Tideland outperforms nation's top rated investor owned utility

In the last quarter of 2012, an independent polling firm conducted telephone interviews with 250 Tideland EMC members to gauge member satisfaction. This is an endeavor we have undertaken annually since 2004. This year we received our third-highest member satisfaction score. Our score of 86 was higher than that for all electric utility sectors including municipal and investor-owned utilities. We also scored better than the nation's top-rated, investor-owned power company.

The survey is an important tool for the co-op. It helps us identify strengths and weaknesses, challenges and op-

portunities. In 2012 we performed best in the area of service reliability which is the most important measure for any electric utility. Our outage restoration scores improved, which we largely attribute to our efforts to keep members better informed about repairs via Facebook, our new TextPower text messaging service and the online real time outage map.

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## First quarter credits exceed \$455,000

For the first quarter ending March 31, 2013, Tideland EMC issued wholesale power cost adjustment (WPCA) credits exceeding \$455,000. The amount credited for March was \$83,359.25.

The WPCA credit has been declining since January when it was nearly three-fourths of a penny per kilowatt hour. The cooperative's rate consultant previously indicated that the WPCA would likely zero out by May. However, favorable market conditions and strong kWh sales will likely add several more months to the lifespan of the WPCA credit. That means the billed cost per kWh will remain lower than published rates.

Keep in mind that summer residential rates are effective with all bills rendered May through October.

## Masthead photo credit:

The photo at the top of the page of the Hyde County fishing boat Charcoal was taken by Tideland EMC member Tiffany Randalls.



# Message to our Member-Owners: Power cost forecast improves

## Right-of-Way Maintenance Update

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

Swan Quarter bypass to Swindell Fork; Oyster Creek and Fairfield

This includes adjoining small roads and lanes in the area.

Mowing crews will be working in the Engelhard area along North Lake Road, Hwy 264 West and Middleton. Mowing crews will also be working in and around Ocracoke Village and Hwy 12 North.

**By Paul Spruill**  
General Manager & CEO

The co-op's power cost forecast was recently updated and it appears that a per kilowatt-hour credit will remain in affect for the foreseeable future.

Last month I reported to you that the wholesale power cost adjustment (WPCA) credit would likely end with May 2013 bills and remain at zero through the end of the year. Our rate consultant has advised us that regional market conditions remain more favorable than anticipated and, as a result, we will issue another WPCA credit on May bills. The impact of the May WPCA credit for residential members may be somewhat muted by the fact that we switch to our summer residential rate schedule on May 1.

The chart below compares the actual rate we billed per residential kWh sold during the first four months of 2013 with the same period in 2012. We are pleased to report that the rates for 2013 have thus far lagged behind 2012 rates.

higher than first quarter 2012. Those increased sales along with more favorable market conditions than previously anticipated are why the co-op was able to issue nearly half a million dollars in credits through the WPCA.

RESIDENTIAL kWh CHARGE COMPARISON

per kWh	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
2012	10.933¢	10.722¢	10.703¢	10.661¢
2013	10.284¢	10.52¢	10.599¢	10.643¢

That was particularly helpful to members who rely on electricity to heat their homes when you consider the longer and much colder winter we experienced in 2013 compared to the milder winter of 2012.

In March 2013, we sold 14% more kWh than we did in March 2012. For the first quarter of 2013 kWh sales were 11%

Forecasters are predicting a cooler 2013 summer season, which could further keep generating expenses in check.

Now that we are into the cooling season I encourage you to track your daily and hourly usage via Tideland's secure online member service portal. To get started click on the Ebill link found at [www.tidelandemc.com](http://www.tidelandemc.com).

## HIGH MARKS

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These new services are also improving member satisfaction scores among younger members who are more attuned to Internet and smart phone technologies. In fact, 50% of our members ages 18 to 34 no longer have a landline phone and rely exclusively on their cell phone.

The two areas that Tideland scored lowest on were "communicates about rising costs" and "helps you manage your energy costs." Those of you that regularly read Tideland Topics know we have continuously talked about

rising costs, but we will continue to emphasize this messaging through other communication vehicles. Fortunately, the survey results showed that members believe the co-op works very hard to keep rates low.

We believe the member service portal's new energy usage tools will go a long way towards improving our scores in the area of "helps you manage your energy costs." If you have not used these new tools go to [www.tidelandemc.com](http://www.tidelandemc.com) and click on the Ebill link. If it is your first time to the portal you should find an activation password on your electric bill. Once logged on, go to MY USAGE and then select USAGE HISTORY. You

can view both your daily and hourly meter readings. From there you can select any number of variables, like temperature, humidity, heating and cooling degree days, heat index, wind chill and even cloud cover, to overlay on your kWh consumption data.

While surveys are useful tools to help measure performance they are no substitute for daily feedback from members. You don't have to wait for a polling firm to call you to express your opinion about co-op service. We're glad to hear from members year round. So feel free to let us know what we're doing right and what we need to do better.



TRANSPLANTING KNOWLEDGE:

# Co-op distributes 1,275 loblolly pine seedlings

In celebration of North Carolina Arbor Day, Tideland EMC distributed 1,275 loblolly pine seedlings to all fourth graders in our six-county service area during the month of March. This is the third year that the co-op has promoted the Fourth Grade Foresters program at area schools.

The goal of Tideland's annual seedling program is to promote responsible tree planting and care among the next generation of utility consumers. Each seedling was packaged with proper planting instructions which included a discussion about utility right-of-ways and overhead power line safety.

Trees are an integral part of our ecosystem. Trees also support various forestry products industries vital to eastern North Carolina's economy.

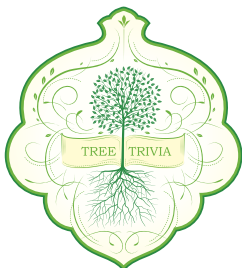
Trees are also the No. 1 cause of power outages. Tideland EMC spends well over \$1 million annually to trim and when necessary remove trees that encroach on the utility right-of-way. The co-op hopes that by instructing children early on about the importance of maintaining proper utility clearances they will in turn help us minimize those maintenance costs in the future.



Fourth graders at Aurora's Snowden Elementary School proudly display their loblolly pine seedlings



Susan Knox's fourth grade class at Pungo Christian Academy was eager to get a jump start on the school's annual Earth Day activities by planting their seedlings



**Did You Know?** The famous "Eisenhower Tree" on the 17th hole of Augusta National Golf Club is a loblolly pine. U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, an Augusta National member, hit the tree so many times that, at a 1956 club meeting, he proposed that it be cut down. Not wanting to offend the President, the club's chairman, Clifford Roberts, immediately adjourned the meeting rather than reject the request outright.



1.

GRAPE MYRTLE

2.

DOGWOOD

3.

EASTERN REDBUD

4.

JAPANESE MAPLE

5.

PURPLELEAF PLUM

6.

STAR MAGNOLIA

5.

YAUPON

**REMEMBER:** NO TREE SHOULD EVER BE PLANTED IN THE UTILITY RIGHT OF WAY. TALLER SPECIES SHOULD BE PLANTED EVEN FARTHER AWAY FROM POWER LINES. KNOW YOUR FALL ZONE BEFORE YOU PLANT.

# Allocation of 2012 member margins

REAL PEOPLE.  
REAL POWER.

As a not-for-profit, member-owned cooperative, Tideland EMC's year end margins are allocated to each member-owner for future refund. This is in keeping with our mandate to deliver electric service at cost. Margins represent those dollars remaining after all our expenses have been paid. In 2012, the cooperative had net operating margins of \$1,163,381.

The total amount allocated to your member account is based on the amount of energy you purchased from the cooperative during 2012. For 2012 margins, the allocation factor is 2.7525¢ per \$1 of revenue received. The following table illustrates allocations based on typical residential energy use:

2012 Member Margins Allocated to Members			
If you paid this much for power in 2012:	\$1200	\$1800	\$2400
Your share of 2012 member margins is:	\$33.03	\$49.55	\$66.06

Allocated margins appear as an entry on Tideland's permanent financial records and reflect your ownership equity in Tideland. Margins represent an interest-free loan of operating capital by the membership to the cooperative. This helps the cooperative keep electric rates low for everyone. As member equity builds we incrementally retire previous years' margins. When margins are retired, a check or electric bill credit is issued and your equity in Tideland is reduced.

The timing of margin retirements is dictated by the cooperative's overall financial picture and capital requirements and is subject to the approval of the federal government's Rural Utilities Service. In 2012, Tideland EMC returned capital credits in excess of \$800,000. To date Tideland EMC has refunded over \$10.5 million to members and former members of the cooperative. Early retirements are made to the estates of deceased members and should be requested by the clerk of court or executor upon a member's passing.

## Tideland Topics

[www.tidelandemc.com](http://www.tidelandemc.com)

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REMINDER TO RESIDENTIAL MEMBERS: SUMMER KILOWATT HOUR RATES  
ARE EFFECTIVE FOR ALL BILLS RENDERED MAY - OCTOBER

## Rebate reminders

Heat pump rebates up to \$300

Visit [www.tidelandemc.com](http://www.tidelandemc.com) for details

Heat pump water heater  
rebate of \$300

or call program manager Heidi Smith @ 252.944.2410

Energy Star manufactured home  
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