

# Tideland Topics

*Real People. Real Power.*

## Leaves are falling *and so are rates*

Tideland residential members billed under rate schedules 1 and 3 will see nearly a penny per kilowatt hour (kWh) rate decrease starting November 1. Between May and October of each year, members in those rate classes are billed 12.48¢ per kWh. Between November and April, the winter rate per kWh is 11.49¢.

All energy sales, regardless of rate class, are subject to any wholesale power cost adjustments (WPCA) which can either be a charge or credit depending on market conditions and co-op finances. For the past twelve months, the WPCA has been a credit averaging \$2.41 per 1,000 kWh.



## Southern Living *home tour in Oriental*

Tidelanders, you have until December 18 to schedule a tour of the 2022 Southern Living Ideas House at River Dunes. If you toured it earlier this year, you may want to book a return visit as the design team preps the house for the holiday season.

For tickets go to [riverdunesideahouse.com](http://riverdunesideahouse.com)

Read more beginning on page F.

Photo Credit: Chris Edwards/Southern Living





## Remembering Betty Buck

Beloved Tideland retiree Betty Buck passed away on Sunday, September 4, at the age of 93.

Betty worked for Pamlico-Beaufort EMC in Grantsboro and helped navigate the merger with Woodstock EMC to form Tideland EMC on January 1, 1972. She gave 31 years of dedicated service to the co-op and remained our advocate, cheerleader and mentor long after her retirement.

Current employee Patrick Best remarked, "Mrs Betty was one of the first people I met when I started with Tideland 35 years ago. She introduced me to the world of work order accounting. To this day I try to continue doing the work order accounting just the way she did it. She wanted it right! I grew to love her and our friendship continued right on after her retirement."

Our thoughts and prayers are with Betty's husband of 74 years, Freddie Buck, as well as surviving children Phyllis, Joe and Tim, five grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

**POWER UP YOUR PIGGY BANK.**

Move your security deposit to our FlexPay program, and start saving 7-12% annually\* on your energy bill!!

**FLEXPAY**  
A Prepaid Energy Solution From Tideland EMC

Join more than 20 million consumers worldwide who have embraced pre-paid electric service. Service activation doesn't require a security deposit. All that's required to participate in FlexPay is a starting prepaid balance of \$25 and either a cell phone or email that can receive FlexPay notifications.

If you have an existing security deposit with Tideland, you can use it to help establish a starting FlexPay balance. While not required, we also recommend that FlexPay participants have a way to make a payment after normal business hours via phone, web or mobile app.

FlexPay participants are exempt from late payment penalties as well as non-payment disconnect and reconnect fees. Over time, those fees can add to the challenge of trying to catch up on household bills.

FlexPay participants do not receive an electric bill. Instead we send routine text or email alerts and reminders about how much energy you've used and when it is time to "recharge" your account. Minimum payment transactions are set at \$10. We don't initiate FlexPay service disconnects on weekends or holidays.

Call 252.943.3046 for more info.

**Every 6 minutes**  
an underground utility line is damaged  
because someone decided to dig  
without first calling 811.

**Don't be that 'someone.'**  
**Call 811 BEFORE you dig.**

# Message to members

## Utility scams are on the rise.

## Don't fall victim. Hang up. Call us.

by **PAUL SPRUILL**  
GENERAL MANAGER &  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

In August, we took the unusual step of sending a mass text message to members warning of a telephone scammers actively targeting areas served by Tideland.

These types of scams typically increase in frequency during the holiday season, and for that reason, November 16 has been designated as Utility Scam Awareness Day.

eastern North Carolina. That should send up a huge red flag in and of itself but the scammers are horribly crafty. They successfully convinced an elderly Tideland member that Dominion handled the co-op's payment processing.

Utility scammers are also expanding their operations online. They send suspicious emails that appear to be a bill sent by your utility even featuring the company's logo. Do not click on

**KNOW THE SIGNS.**  
#StopScams

**Slow down**  
Take your time. Scammers pressure customers to act fast.

**Verify**  
Scammers often pose as the utility. Always verify the info being provided to you matches your latest bill.

**Stop**  
Utilities never demand immediate payment and do not accept bitcoin, prepaid cards, or third-party payment apps.

**UTILITIES UNITED**  
AGAINST SCAMS

The most common scam is disconnection deception. Scammers call threatening disconnection of your utility service, demanding immediate payment by prepaid cards purchased at a local retail store or by credit card, debit card, bank draft, or wire and insisting you call them back with the card information to make payment.

Tideland will never call and demand payment by phone. It is interesting to note that often when members receive these types of calls, the scammer will actually say they are from Duke Energy or Dominion since those two utilities have such a large presence in

any links or attachments in any email unless you have verified the sender. You may be directed to a scam website designed to steal your personal information or you might install malicious software onto your computer without ever knowing it.

Among the ways you can protect yourself is to sign up for Tideland's past due and payment confirmation alerts. You can also enroll in bank or credit card draft so you have the peace of mind knowing that payments are always made on time. And by all means, when in doubt, hang up and call the co-op to verify the status of your account.

# Rights-of-way maintenance schedule

During the month of November, our tree trimming contractor, Lucas Tree Experts, will be working on the Blounts Creek and Bonnerton circuits out of our Edward substation.

Lee Construction crews will be working on the Rose Bay circuit out of our Ponzer substation.

Metered service safety inspections continue. At press time, inspections were underway on the Blounts Creek circuit with work to follow on the remaining Edward substation circuits: Bonnerton, Lowland and Craven County.

Please give our crews and contractors wide berth as you should encounter them along roadways.

# Holiday Closing

Tideland offices will be closed Thursday November 24, and Friday, November 25, for the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Our 24-hour call center will remain open and on-call crews remain on standby for outages and service emergencies. To report a power outage call 800.882.1001 or text OUT to short code 85700. Member service is available at 252.943.3046.





## Gift Giving made easy

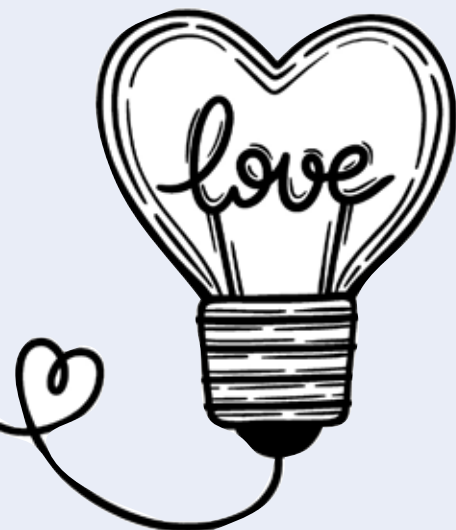
Want to brighten the upcoming holiday season for someone special?

Give a H.U.G.  
A home utility gift!

We'll be glad to credit any Tideland EMC member's account in the gift amount of your choice. Gifts must be paid in full with cash, check or credit card.

We'll also provide you with a special holiday greeting card to notify the recipient of your gift.

Call 252.943.3046 for details or visit any Tideland office.

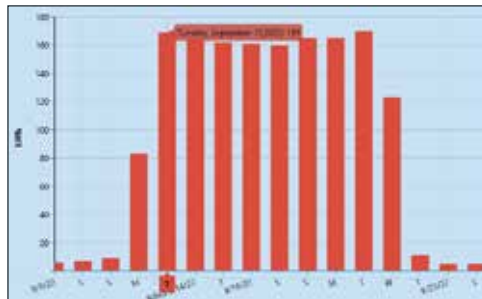


## Two cautionary tales...

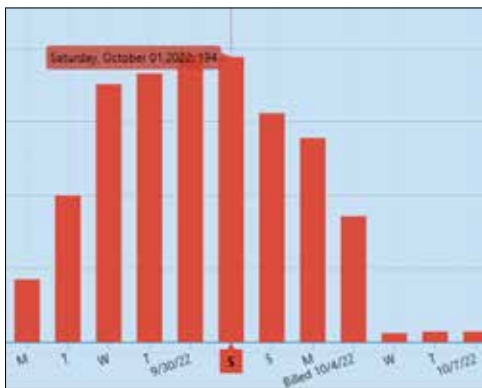
### High bills and a potential house fire averted thanks to new report

Two recent member service interactions point to the importance of residential members creating a high energy use alert.

On September 20, Grantsboro service representative Jennifer Franklin reached out to a member in Wilson County about a prolonged spike in energy use at a seasonal residence in Hyde County. The typical daily energy consumption for the residence was 9 kilowatt hours (kWh) per day. It suddenly jumped to 169 kWh per



Energy use graph for the Hyde County account



Energy use graph for the Beaufort County account

day. To put that in dollars and cents that's an increase from \$1.08 to about \$20.28 per day. Had Jennifer not made that phone call the member's next electric bill would have been over \$600.

But it turns out that an exorbitant electric bill wasn't the greatest peril the member faced. The member's husband traveled to Hyde County on September 21 and found a malfunctioning HVAC switch in the attic that had melted and posed a

serious fire hazard. The member subsequently enrolled in our high energy use alert program and will be notified anytime they use over 15 kWh in a 24-hour period.

A second energy use spike case was identified and solved on October 4. The Beaufort County member was traveling out of town when Franklin called to alert them to energy use that had reached 194 kWh in a single day. Franklin reached out to energy services manager Heidi Smith who after

looking at the member's hourly meter readings knew the source they were looking for was rated at 5,000 watts and suspected a malfunctioning heat strip on the heat pump. A neighbor met Smith at the house and as soon as the heat pump breaker was shut off the energy use came to all but a screeching halt.

While the heat pump was actually set in the cooling mode with a thermostat setting of 85 degrees, the home was extremely warm on a cold weather day. While the compressor and blower were off, the heat from the malfunctioning heat strip was drifting constantly from the air registers. Had it gone undetected the member's next electric bill would have easily exceeded \$620. The

following day, the home used 6 kWh.

"From an energy auditor's perspective, this is an ideal situation to find the culprit in real time," said Smith. "After a high bill is rendered we're trying to go back in time after so many conditions may have changed. A high energy use alert is the most important tool members have to prevent high bills and everyone should embrace it."

# Deal yourself an electric bill decrease

## Five ways to save energy during the heating season

We all have our favorite season. Some people love crisp, cool weather and bundling up under a favorite blanket, while others prefer the warm temperatures summer brings and all fun outdoor activities that go with it. But there's one thing we can all agree on: high winter bills are never fun.



Here are five tips to help increase your home's energy efficiency this winter:

### 1. Mind the thermostat

This is one of the easiest ways to manage home energy use. We recommend setting your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower) when you're home. If you have a heat pump, we recommend that you "set it and forget it," unless you are away for an extended period of time and can then bring the thermostat back up in two degree increments to avoid unnecessary use of the supplemental heat strips. If you have an electric furnace or baseboard heat, thermostat setback is recommended overnight while you sleep or when you are away for hours at a time.

### 2. Button up your home

The Department of Energy estimates that air leaks account for 24% to 40% of the energy used for heating and cooling a home. We

have found that much of that air leak can be attributed to poorly sealed HVAC ducts. While that may sound daunting, it is a much less expensive fix than replacing your HVAC system or utilizing supplemental heating sources.

At a minimum, please take a moment to look at every air register in your house to see if it has a good air seal with your sub-floor or ceiling. All you need is a flashlight and perhaps a screwdriver to remove the air register grill.

If you have a doublewide mobile home you should annually check the home's crossover duct which was likely originally joined with duct tape which loses its adhesiveness over time. Any leaky air register boots or crossover ducts should be sealed with a mastic paste or mastic tape.

Caulking and weather stripping around windows and doors is another simple, cost-effective way to increase comfort and save energy. If you can feel drafts while standing near a window or door, it likely needs to be sealed.

Remember to close fireplace dampers whenever the fireplace is not in use. There are even products called chimney balloons to help seal those drafts.

### 3. Use window coverings wisely

Open blinds, drapes or other window coverings during the day to allow natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night. If

you feel cold air around windows, consider purchasing a plastic storm window kit that shrinks to form a remarkably airtight seal once you heat the surface up with a hair dryer. You can insulate 5 windows for about \$10. Our energy auditors love these kits!

### 4. Use electric space heaters sparingly

They may be cheap to purchase but the cost of using electric space heaters for prolonged periods can be shockingly high. They can also damage household wiring which increases fire risks. We are very concerned about the number of members who rely on electric space heaters as their primary heating source. The only way a space heater can provide savings is by boosting the temperature of a limited space for a limited period of time so you can avoid raising the thermostat of your central HVAC system. So utilizing one in your bathroom for a brief period of time in the morning makes sense. But please use it safely.

### 5. Sign up for a high energy use alert

Honestly, if you haven't signed up for this free service yet you are playing Russian roulette with your energy use. Home equipment can fail at any time but it may not present itself outwardly until you receive a high electric bill. To enroll in our high

energy use alert program log into your account online or call us at 252.943.3046. Remember to set a PER DAY amount not a monthly figure.





## Night light

### OUTDOOR LIGHTING

All new Tideland EMC yard lights are dark sky friendly LED fixtures that aim light where you need it (on the ground) and not into the windows of neighboring homes.

**48 Watt "Caretaker"**  
**\$10.06**

**54 Watt "Cobra"**  
**\$10.06**

**106 Watt "GE Evolve"**  
**(400-watt equivalent)**  
**\$14.10**

Monthly price assumes the light can be attached to an existing electric utility pole. Tideland EMC is responsible for the energy used by the light and normal maintenance.

If the outdoor light cannot be attached to an existing pole, a pole charge of \$2.10 per pole per month will be added to the monthly bill. An additional one time installation fee may apply for underground service. Interested? Give us a call at 252.943.3046.

# Bright Ideas shine



## The Southern Living design team sails into Grace Harbor



Southern Living's Idea House program began in the 1980s. This year, the iconic magazine has rolled out its welcome mat at the Tideland-served subdivision River Dunes in Oriental.

Centered on the concept of "The Great Escape," their River Dunes build is a clean, current take on a timeless Southern home with extensive wraparound porch living. The home has 5 bedrooms, 5 full baths, and 1 half bath across a spacious 4,125 square feet. The layout was expertly designed to create opportunities for family connectivity and flexibility, providing space for gatherings

as well as spaces to work or read. The design of this year's home pays homage to River Dunes' coastal surroundings with cohesive indoor and outdoor spaces that are prime for relaxing and entertaining.

The 2022 Idea House was created by a talented team of experts from across the Carolinas: architect William Court of Court Atkins Group, builder Jordan Maroules of SLD Custom Homes, interior designer Charlotte Lucas of Charlotte Lucas Interior Design, developer Ed Mitchell of River Dunes, and landscape architect Daniel Keefer of Witmer Jones Keefer, Ltd.

# at River Dunes

Chris Edwards/Southern Living



Chris Edwards/Southern Living

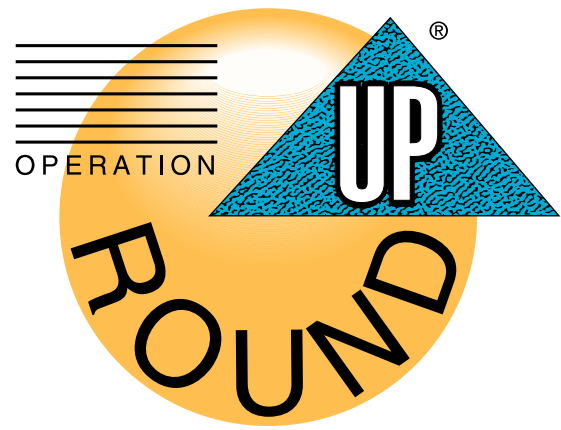
in Newport, NC. Harbourside Garden Company in Bayboro did much of the landscaping.

Tour tickets are \$20 and available now through December 18. Visit [riverdunesideahouse.com](http://riverdunesideahouse.com) to make your purchase.

Ticket proceeds go to three local charities: Heartworks, Hope Clinic, and the Pamlico Partnership for Children.



Chris Edwards/Southern Living



## Do Unto Others

For more than 30 years, Tideland members have self-funded Operation Roundup, which provides energy assistance grants to members in need. Donations are voluntary and can be provided any number of ways:

- Members can opt to have their monthly electric bill rounded up to the next whole dollar amount (Example: actual bill of \$98.45 is rounded up to \$99.00)
- Members ask that a specific dollar amount be added to their monthly bill. We refer to this as Operation RoundUp Plus
- Members make a one-time donation payable to "Tideland Electric Care Trust"

We are committed to being good stewards of member donated funds. Here are some of our giving stats.

Average Individual Grant Amount
2021: \$85.09
2020: \$83.15

Average Number of Grants Provided Monthly
2021: 31
2020: 39

To become an Operation RoundUp contributor check the sign up box on the return stub of your electric bill when making payment, call us at 252.943.3046, complete our account update form found at [tidelandemc.com](http://tidelandemc.com) or enroll via the member portal.

# What is a generator transfer switch?

Real People.  
Real Power.

A transfer or throw switch, sometimes called a double throw switch, is an essential mechanism that shuts off power to the grid before backup power is used.

## The transfer switch has an important job

The switch is typically used for generators rated at 5,000 watts or more. It connects the generator to your home's main circuits to provide backup power during an outage. In other words, the transfer switch changes or transfers the power load from one source to another. It prevents power from backfeeding into the power grid and endangering utility workers and others.

## The type of switch depends on the type of generator

A permanent standby generator has an internal switch that automatically transfers the source of power. Standby generators must be installed by licensed contractors, usually at the side of a home. Standby generators are called just that because they automatically turn on when the power goes out.

Not all permanently installed generators are standby versions. Some have manual transfer switches. Make sure



your permanent generator and switch are installed to code and working properly.

Portable generators can also be connected to your home's electrical service panel that is properly wired through a transfer switch. If you use a portable generator, never plug it into a wall outlet as this can cause back-feed.

## Always use a generator safely

If you own a generator of any type, it is critically important that you have a working carbon monoxide detector. Generators are the single largest cause of serious injury and death following a major disaster that involves a prolonged loss of power.

## Tideland Topics

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

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