

Tideland Topics

REAL PEOPLE. REAL POWER.

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

REAL MONEY: \$1.15 million returned to members through WPCA credits

During the first eight months of 2013, Tideland EMC credited back to members \$1,158,557 through wholesale power cost adjustments (WPCA). Based on electricity sales through August 31, 2013, members have received an average monthly credit of half a cent per kilowatt hour (kWh).



For the month of September 2013, the WPCA news got even better with a credit of -0.697¢ per kWh which translates into a

$\$6.97$ credit for every 1,000 kWh billed during September. That applies to all accounts, both residential and commercial. That's the highest the monthly credit has been since January 2013 when it was -0.743¢ per kWh.

While the WPCA has continued to be much more favorable than early year forecasts projected, we do expect national market trends to eventually impact our own power cost calculations. Natural gas prices, which sharply declined in 2012 due to high inventories, are now rebounding after production was slowed to narrow the gap between supply and demand. A robust coal export market has likewise increased prices of coal for domestic use. A milder summer than predicted minimized the impact on regional power costs but they are likely to trickle down in the next six to twelve months.

Beware fraudulent collection calls

In early September, several members of another eastern NC electric co-op received scam phone calls demanding payment of their electric bill to avoid service interruption. The account holders were told they had to purchase prepaid debit cards in order to make the supposedly past due payment.

While Tideland EMC does place an automated courtesy call to members prior to disconnection of electric service, our calls include the actual amount of your past due bill. You are given the option to pay your bill over the phone using our integrated voice response system but you must have your account number to do so.

If you are in doubt about the validity of any phone call received that claims to be from Tideland please hang up and call us at 1-800-637-1079 or 252-943-3046 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Monday-Friday. We do not disconnect accounts for non-payment on Saturdays and Sundays so do not let a scam artist pressure you with the threat of week-end service termination.



Message to our Member-Owners: The downside of underground lines

Right-of-Way Maintenance Update

Tideland's contract tree trimming crews have concluded their scheduled work for 2013 earlier than anticipated thanks to favorable weather conditions and the absence of any major storms year to date. No additional tree trimming will take place this year with the exception of danger trees as they are identified. Tideland currently operates on a 5-year trimming cycle with 20 percent of the electric system trimmed annually.

Mowing crews will be working south of the Pamlico River in October along Flat Swamp, Tuten and Core Point roads and in the Bonnerton area.

By Paul Spruill
General Manager & CEO

Last month a member posed an online question to the cooperative via our Facebook page. He wanted to know why we don't bury all our electric lines.

It's a question that is frequently asked especially after major storms and numerous studies have been conducted over the years to determine the feasibility of burying more lines underground. In 2003, the North Carolina Utilities Commission arrived at a cost estimate to bury the state's power distribution lines following severe ice storms in the western part of the state in December 2002. They concluded that electric rates would increase more than 125%. That means an average monthly electric bill of \$150 would jump to \$337 for at least a decade to pay for line relocation. It

would be even more cost prohibitive for consumers in rural areas where there are fewer meters and thus less revenue per mile of line to absorb construction costs.

So it's fairly obvious that an economic case can't be made for burying lines systemwide. But the reliability of underground power cable is also often misunderstood. While the frequency of problems with underground lines is generally less than that of exposed overhead lines, when problems do arise it can be much more difficult to identify the section of underground line that has been compromised. Once identified, repair times are more lengthy since digging is required made all the more difficult when other underground utilities like water and sewer lines are in close proximity. In low lying areas like the Tideland service territory, high water tables and

flooding also contribute to underground line deterioration and premature failure.

Underground lines also have their own share of animal related problems namely squirrels that like to chew on the line insulation and fire ants can overtake a pad mount transformer in a matter of days. The ant problem has taken such a toll on Texas utilities that the Lone Star state is now importing fire ant eating flies from South America to try and solve the problem.

Until an economically feasible alternative exists, Tideland will continue to focus its efforts on:

- building more resilient overhead lines
- reducing the length of overhead lines to minimize exposure

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Great things happen when people collaborate. Sharing ideas, resources and capital, helps individuals accomplish more together than they can on their own. Cooperatives are member-owned and -controlled businesses based on collaboration—people working together.

When people join together to form a cooperative, the business is founded on their values and needs: democratic principles; community commitment

and interaction; cooperative buying power and economic advantage; people helping people. Communication—aimed at keeping members informed, educated and involved—is a key component of thriving cooperative businesses.

While investor-owned businesses have a structure that pushes them to deliver profits to shareholders, cooperatives have a structure that pushes them to meet their customers' needs. Cooperatives put people ahead of profits. Cooperative earnings are returned to members through improved services, lower prices or refunds.

In the United States, there are 29,000 cooperatives with more than 100 million members. Cooperatives operate in every industry including agriculture, energy, financial services, food retailing and distribution, health care, child care, insurance, housing, purchasing and shared services, telecommunications and others.

Cooperatives work to the benefit of their members and their communities, so join forces! Join a cooperative.

Collaborate.
Communicate.
Cooperate.
October is Co-op Month.

UNLEASH THE POWER:

Enroll for mobile outage updates

In June 2012, Tideland EMC made history by becoming the first electric company in North Carolina to offer outage text messaging. When we first rolled the program out we were somewhat limited in our ability to target text notifications geographically. That capability is rapidly improving and right now we are able to isolate messages by delivery point substation. Within the next 12 months we hope to have it fully integrated with our outage reporting system so we can only send you text messages when your individual service is without power.

The system proved quite valuable on September 1 when the co-op had three unrelated outages. In Pantego, a pole fire along Highway 264 left nearly 900 members without power. After Pantego Volunteer Fire Department personnel put the fire out it took Tideland crews approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes to put a new pole

in place so power could be restored. The co-op was able to advise members of the outage cause, repair times and eventual power restoration via text messaging.



Less than three hours after the pole fire occurred, the Craven County circuit lost power when a tree fell through a line near the Silverhill substation. Members along the Lowland circuit also began to have power quality problems as well. Once again the co-op was

able to utilize its text messaging program to advise members of the situation.

Of course the co-op was simultaneously posting updates on Facebook and Twitter, and according to user statistics, a single Facebook post that day was viewed by nearly 1,300 people.

With all of these communication tools in action we saw call center volumes drop dramatically whenever we broadcast updates. We also immediately began to receive online forms from members requesting enrollment in our text messaging program. An enrollment link can be found on our home page: www.tidelandemc.com or you can simply text "TEMC" to short code 85700 to opt in via your cell phone. You will then receive a text message asking for your Tideland EMC account number. Once that is received you will automatically be enrolled in Text Power. To end enrollment at any time text "STOP" to short code 85700.



1.

ACT FAST BECAUSE THE LAST NORTH CAROLINA ENERGY STAR SALES TAX HOLIDAY IS NOVEMBER 1-3

2.

TIME OF USE MEMBERS: REMEMBER THAT THANKSGIVING, THE DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING, CHRISTMAS DAY AND NEW YEARS DAY ARE ALL OFF-PEAK

3.

LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT GIFT FOR SOMEONE? CONSIDER A H.U.G. THAT STANDS FOR HOME UTILITY GIFT. CONTACT ANY TIDELAND OFFICE TO PURCHASE AN ELECTRIC BILL GIFT CERTIFICATE FOR ANY TIDELAND MEMBER

4.

REMOVE WINDOW AIR CONDITIONING UNITS AS TEMPERATURES DROP SO YOU CAN PROPERLY AIR SEAL WINDOWS FOR WINTER

Wrap up in Savings
Save Energy, Save Water, Save Dollars

Buy this for only **\$14.99** plus tax



Electric Water Heater Blanket & Pipe Insulation

- 3-inch thick insulation w/cap
- Includes tape & instructions
- One size fits all up to 60-gallon tank
- 6 feet of pipe insulation



... and get all this FREE!

Earth Massage showerhead

- Adjustable 9-jet turbo massage
- As featured in Good Housekeeping magazine



Kitchen Faucet Aerator

- Easy fingertip on/off feature



Two Bathroom Faucet Aerators



Total Kit Value: **Over \$50!**

ELECTRICITY PUTS BREAD ON YOUR TABLE. AND KEEPS IT IN YOUR WALLET.

REAL PEOPLE.
REAL POWER.

Tideland Topics

LOAF OF BREAD

1936..... 8¢
2013..... \$1.41

INCREASE..... 18X

ELECTRICITY

1936..... 5¢
2013..... 11¢

INCREASE..... 2X
BASED ON AVERAGE COST PER KILOWATT HOUR



Affordable, reliable electricity. It's the best thing since...well, since we first supplied it over 75 years ago. We've been feeding you both ever since. Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at TogetherWeSave.com.

TOGETHERWESAVE.COM

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Weekday Member Service
252.943.3046
800.637.1079

24 Hour Outage Reporting
& Automated Services
252.944.2400
800.882.1001



**TIME OF USE PARTICIPANTS: THE WINTER ON PEAK HOURS OF 6 AM TO 9 AM
BEGIN WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16 SO REMEMBER TO RESET TIMERS**

NOVEMBER 1-3, 2013 :

Shop the last Energy Star sales tax holiday



North Carolina's last Energy Star sales tax holiday will take place November 1-3. Clothes washers, freezers, refrigerators, central air conditioners, room air conditioners, air source heat pumps, ceiling fans, dehumidifiers, and programmable thermostats will be exempt from state and local sales and use tax when purchased during the sales tax holiday period.

Retailers typically support the sales tax holiday with special deals on many of the qualifying products so be on the lookout for sales circulars as the holiday draws near.

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- relocating lines when possible to highway corridors
- proactive tree trimming schedules (we have gone from a 7- to 5-year rotation schedule) and,
- expanding the use of technologies that help detect equipment problems before an outage occurs.