

Smart Solutions for Our Energy Future



**MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER
BUDDY
BANKHEAD**

We have new leadership in Washington, D.C., and with it, a new focus on energy policy. Barack Obama took office as the 44th president of the United States last month, and during his first months in the White House, the economic crisis will remain a major focus. But the new administration also promises increased attention to energy matters. As all of us paying electric bills every month can agree, the two go hand in hand. It is crucial that any energy policy discussed in Washington comes with a price tag that won't leave consumers in the dark.

Through the nationwide grassroots awareness campaign called "Our Energy, Our Future," co-op consumers have contacted their elected federal officials with three crucial energy policy questions focused on capacity, technology and affordability. With a new president and a new Congress, electric cooperatives will need to continue pressing for answers.

These answers won't be clear-cut.

Although demand for electricity is steadily climbing across the United States, relatively high costs for construction materials and uncertainty about climate-change goals have stalled the development of new base-load generation: the large, efficient stations that provide dependable and affordable electric power year-round.

So here's the important question: How can we keep power flowing and electric bills affordable? There's simply no single answer, and electric co-ops know from experience that it will take a variety of new generation resources and technologies, not to mention conservation efforts on the part of electricity users, to ensure reliable and affordable power in the coming years. We must invest in renewable energy, clean-coal technology, nuclear power, an updated transmission grid and improvements in energy efficiency across the board. You can help curb the growth in demand by making efficient use of electricity and conserving it when you can.

Of course, the investment in infrastructure on a large scale will require a massive investment of resources and leadership—similar to putting a person on the moon. As consumer advocates and industry leaders, electric co-ops can provide lawmakers with expertise on what programs are affordable, sustainable and technologically feasible.

All of this must be grounded in goals and public policy that put consumers first. This is no time for policymakers to ignore our needs with a wink and a nod to special interest groups. Now, more than ever, Main Street must come before Wall Street.

You can help in this effort and make a real difference by telling members of Congress your story—why affordable electricity is important to you and your family. Tens of thousands of electric co-op members have done so already, and as a result we've sent more than 1.5 million messages to Congress, calling attention to our nation's impending electricity crisis.

CONSERVATION CORNER

BY RICKI KEELING
MANAGER OF MEMBER SERVICES

Your Electrical Performance May Vary

It's February, and surely more cold weather is in store before spring. It's still a good time to tighten up the house around doors and windows with caulk and weatherstripping. Controlling the airflow or air changes that occur in your home are important in both winter and summer.

Your home electrical costs may range as much as your fuel consumption in your car when comparing gas mileage. Everything from tire pressure, passengers or weight, headwind, traffic, tune-ups, jackrabbit starts and stops all vary your miles per gallon. In your home, the same variables could affect your electric cost: things like how many times you open the refrigerator or freezer, open the door, watch television, dry clothes, use electronic devices, etc.

What can we do? The best solution is to simply be conscious of your daily process and how much energy is being consumed around you. Your lifestyle and pleasures may be totally different from someone else or your equipment may be less efficient. Just conserve when you can and enjoy the comforts of life that electricity brings to you every day.

Please visit WWW.ourenergy.coop today. Make your voice heard and help guide policymakers toward a smart, affordable energy future.



They're Powering Up

Congratulations to the first group of students to complete the newly minted Kilgore College Electric Power Technology Program. The graduates are, clockwise from top left, Derek Lewis, Edward Peterson, Chris Collins and Scott Langston.

BYLAWS OF RUSK COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP

Article 1, Section 11: Nomination of Directors

It shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to appoint, not less than thirty days nor more than sixty days before the date of a meeting of members at which Directors are to be elected, a committee on nominations consisting of not more than eleven members, at least one of whom shall be selected from each of the districts of the project so as to ensure equitable representation. No member of the Board of Directors may serve on such committee. The committee shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative at least twenty days before the meeting a list of nominations for Directors. Any fifteen or more members acting together may make other nominations by petition not less than fifteen days prior to the meeting and the Secretary shall cause to be posted such nominations at the same place where the list of nominations made by the committee is

posted. The Secretary shall cause to be mailed with the notice of the meeting or separately, but at least seven days before the date of the meeting, a statement of the number of Directors and nominees to be arranged by districts, and shall specify separately the nominations made by the committee on nominations and also the nominations made by petition, if any. The members may, at any meeting at which a Director or Directors shall be removed as herein provided, elect a successor or successors thereto without compliance with the foregoing provisions with respect to nominations, except that the new Director must reside in the same district as the Director in respect of whom the vacancy occurs. Notwithstanding anything contained in this section, failure to comply with any of the provisions of this section shall not affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any election of Directors.



MARK IT DOWN!

Plans for your 2009 annual meeting, scheduled for April 9, 2009, already have begun. Make plans to join your cooperative employees for a great family evening.

GENERATOR SAFETY

Portable generators are a god-send during a prolonged electrical outage. Your cooperative urges its members to exercise extreme caution when operating portable generators.

Avoid 'Backfeeding'

- Never try to power the house wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet, a dangerous practice known as "backfeeding." This reverses the electricity flow and sends it out of your house. It can endanger electric workers and your neighbors. If you must connect the generator to the house wiring, have a qualified electrician do it.

- Plug appliances directly into the generator, or use a heavy duty, outdoor-rated extension cord that is rated (in watts or amps) at least equal to the sum of the connected appliance loads. Check that the entire cord is free of cuts or tears and that the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin.

- Always keep the generator dry and do not use in rainy or wet conditions.