

OKEFENOKE

RURAL ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION

OKEFENOKE REMC • VOLUME 56, NUMBER 6 • MARCH 2003

OREMC Working to Respond to Power Outages More Efficiently

In the coming weeks, OREMC will be in the process of installing an automated outage reporting system (PORCHE) that assists our cooperative by processing the flood of telephone calls we receive during widespread outages. The PORCHE system, with its added capabilities, will enable OREMC's service center personnel to more accurately pinpoint outage locations - a crucial step in initial diagnostic and final restoration efforts.



Why go to an automated system?

Maybe you wonder how a machine could be preferable to a live operator in any circumstance. Well, when consumers experience an isolated outage - that is, they have lost power but their neighbors haven't - they probably will report the situation to an OREMC employee. But when widespread outages like thunderstorms interrupt electric service for tens, hundreds, or even thousands of OREMC members, and all of these member/consumers are trying to call simultaneously, the cooperative's phone system can become "overwhelmed" despite the efforts of extremely efficient customer service representatives. During such widespread outages, the PORCHE automated system will enable personnel in our service department to accurately decipher this overwhelming amount of outage specific information and will greatly reduce the frustrating busy signals members often get when attempting to report an outage. This, in turn, will provide you with faster outage response and restoration times, which is our ultimate goal.

How Can I Expect the System to Work?

If you've provided OREMC with up-to-date information regarding your account (namely an accurate phone number), the PORCHE system can automatically identify you when you call during an outage. The easy-to-use PORCHE system will guide you through the outage reporting process, allowing you to enter information using your touch-tone phone or by speaking answers to system prompts. Then the system can provide the dispatcher with your location, as well as information about the feeder, substation, circuit and other pertinent devices involved in providing you with electrical service. With PORCHE handling the high volume of calls during outages (even as much as 12 times the current volume), the dispatcher is then free to identify the outage cause and call out crews for service restoration.

What Information Will I Need to Provide?

Before calling to report an outage, be ready to provide the phone number and account number for the location where the outage has occurred. If you have more than one account number, be sure to furnish the correct one for the outage location. Also, if you have seen or heard anything out of the ordinary that you feel may be related to your specific outage (a downed power line, etc.), be prepared to describe any visible signs of damage or unusual sounds that might indicate the outage cause.

At OREMC, our goal is to provide quality, reliable electric service at the lowest possible cost for our members. Upgrading our outage response process with the automated PORCHE system helps us to better accomplish that objective.

OREMC Employees Give the Gift of Life

OREMC and the American Red Cross recently hosted a community blood drive at the co-op's headquarters office in Nahunta.

The co-op's community meeting room bustled with activity as Red Cross technicians set up equipment and conducted the blood drive. Donors, OREMC employees and community members, streamed in throughout the afternoon to give the gift of life. A single donation is split into platelets, plasma and red blood cells, and may be used to save the lives of up to three people.

Hosting a blood drive is one more part of OREMC's ongoing commitment to the health, safety and education of the communities we serve.

OREMC employees Ken Clark (L) and Dewayne Johns were among the donors who rolled up their sleeves and gave the gift of life when the Bloodmobile came to Nabunta recently. American Red Cross technicians conducted the event at OREMC's headquarters office.



Deadline Nears for Washington Youth Tour Applications

Applications are now being accepted for this year's Washington Youth Tour, which will be held June 12-19, 2003. The competition is open to all high school juniors who live in one of the eight counties in OREMC's service territory. All expenses will be paid for the four lucky winners selected to represent OREMC on the week-long trip to Washington, D.C. Participants will tour the nation's capitol, visit historic monuments and museums, meet U.S. Senators and Representatives, and mingle with young people representing cooperatives from all across the United States.

Applications must be received no later than Monday March 31, 2003 at 5:00 p.m. in order to be considered by our judges in their selection. Completed applications can be returned by mail or dropped off at any of OREMC's offices in Nabunta, GA, Kingsland, GA, or Hilliard, FL. Contact Linda Harris at 800-262-5131, ext. 151 or linda.barris@oremc.com for more information or for an application form.

A Powerful Commitment

From all over the South, from the four corners of the nation, thousands of newcomers arrive in Georgia and Florida every day. They have discovered that this is a great place to live and a favorable environment in which to operate a business.

Georgia's population grew by a phenomenal 26.4 percent rate, and Florida's increased by 23.5 percent, in the decade of the 1990s. With that pace continuing into the new century, quite a few folks are asking where we will find the electricity to meet the needs of these new citizens.

Demand for electricity is projected to increase by an average of 2.3 percent annually through 2020, according to estimates made by the Energy Information Administration. Computers, high-tech equipment and appliances for our homes and businesses account for a large portion of that increased demand. Our electronic "necessities" have a voracious appetite that must be fed.

To satisfy the enormous increase in demand projected over the next 20 years, utilities face the challenge of building many more new generating plants. In Georgia alone, three hundred new plants will be needed to meet the demand.

Our member/customers expect the lights to turn on when they flip the switch. To meet their expectations, we have no choice but to add more generating capacity and secure new sources of electricity supply. They expect us to take the necessary steps today to meet tomorrow's demand, and we will not disappoint them.

For the future, clean burning and

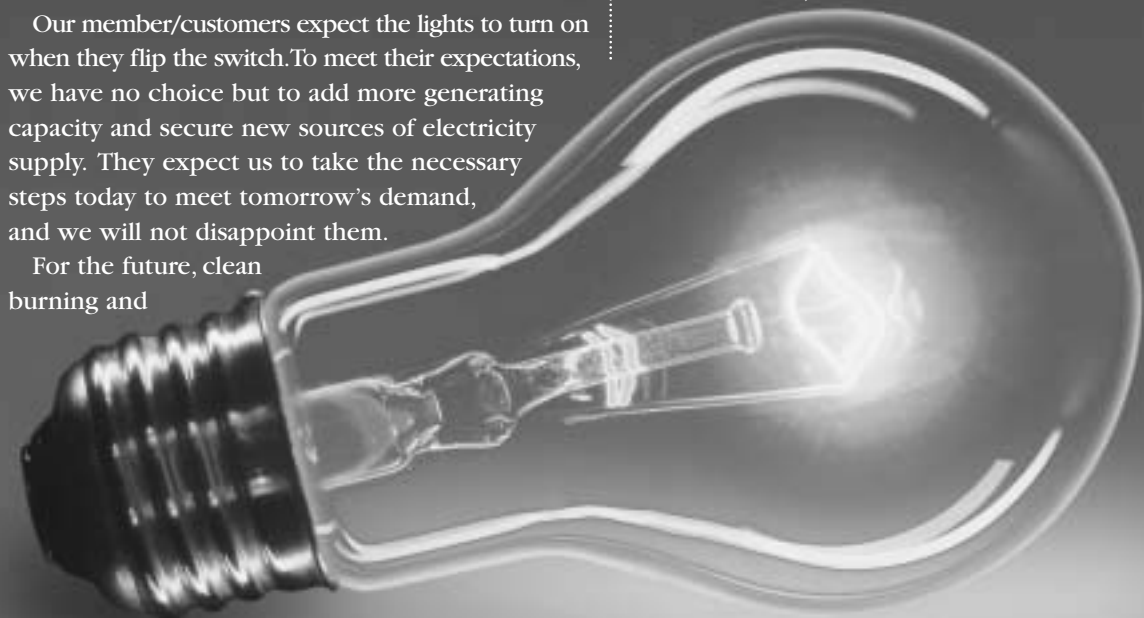
efficient natural gas is likely to fuel an increasing number of electric generating plants.

In Georgia, four combustion turbine units capable of generating 492 megawatts were recently added at Sewell Creek near Cedartown.

The first of six simple cycle units is now under construction in Talbot County near the Harris-Muscogee County line in Georgia. The last two units, when brought on line in 2003, will be capable of burning very low sulfur fuel oil for a limited number of hours each year. These units, however, will meet or exceed clean air standards established by the Environmental Protection Agency and Georgia's Environmental Protection Division.

Oglethorpe Power Corporation is currently building a new combined cycle facility at the Wansley plant near Carrollton, Georgia. The combined cycle facility will capture its own waste heat and use it to generate still more electricity.

Our member/owners trust us to build the most efficient, state of the art, and environmentally responsible plants. OREMC and the electric membership cooperatives across the nation do not intend to betray that trust. Not now, not ever.



Supporting the growth without protecting the air we breathe and the water we drink would be a shortsighted policy. And it would break the trust we have earned over the years with our customers. Clearly, if we are to meet tomorrow's demand for electricity, we must pay as much attention to protecting the air and water around our plants as the generation of electricity that flows from them.

That's a powerful commitment, but one we enthusiastically make to our customers every day.



Be Careful with Spring Planting and Landscaping

It's that time of year when people begin poking all kinds of holes in the ground. New trees, shrubs, fence posts, mailboxes; you name it.

If your home is served by underground electric cable, you may want to plant some flowers or shrubs nearby to disguise that transformer cabinet on your property. But don't do it! Plants, shrubs, and trees should not be planted any closer than six feet to any electrical equipment, transformers, junction boxes, etc. Line crews need easy access to perform maintenance and repairs. Shrubs and trees and even flowerbeds can block access, and after the work is done, you'll be unhappy about the state of your plants!

Also, it's dangerous to plant or work close to those transformer cabinets. They contain high-voltage lines that should be avoided at all times, except by our trained personnel. Chopping into a buried cable could result in an interruption in service or possible electrocution. So give those cabinets a wide berth - and teach your children to stay away, too. Warn them not to play around the cabinet. And never open it!

Trees touching lines are the primary cause of power interruptions, both prolonged and momentary. Cutting and trimming trees that threaten electric service is a major expense for OREMC each year.

Before you plant trees, consider what the tree's mature height will likely be. Some locally popular trees that have a maturity height of at least fifteen feet are: dogwood, crabapple, redbud, graybeard, Japanese maple and crepe myrtle. Some other popular trees with a mature height of at least thirty feet are: river birch, drake elm, red maple, Bradford pear, tulip poplar, and sycamore. Trees should be planted far enough away from the electric power line so that if a tree should fall after it reaches its mature height, it will miss the electric line.

Also, be careful when burning off lawns or fields. Power poles can catch fire and burn, causing hazardous situations.

Attractive landscaping and properly selected and placed trees can beautify your property and add to its value, as well as help conserve energy. But, plan before you plant!

In Memory of the Columbia Crew

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds - and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of - wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.
Up, up the long, delirious burning blue,
I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or even eagle flew.
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

—RCAF FLIGHT-LIEUTENANT JOHN GILLESPIE MAGEE JR.



Ms. Jacqueline Boyd of Hilliard, Florida, submitted this month's featured recipe. She has been given a \$25.00 credit on her electric energy account.

White Chocolate Cheese Cake

8 oz. cream cheese, softened
2 cups cold milk, divided
2 pkg. white chocolate instant pudding
1 8-oz. container Cool Whip
1 graham cracker pie crust

Beat cream cheese and 1/2 cup milk in large bowl until smooth. Add remaining milk and the pudding mix, beat one minute. Stir in Cool Whip until smooth and blended. Spoon into pie crust. Refrigerate 4 hours or until set.

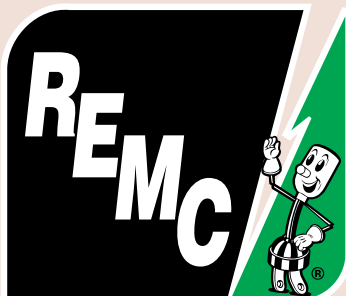
Submit your favorite recipe to Vicky Rehberg. Each month one recipe will be selected for publication and the person that submitted the recipe will receive a \$25.00 credit on their next month's bill.

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 40:26

Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.

(Cut Here) ✂



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WHEN CALLING, DURING BUSINESS HOURS ON A TOUCH TONE PHONE

PRESS 1 - TO REPORT AN OUTAGE
PRESS 2 - FOR HELP WITH YOUR BILL
PRESS 3 - FOR SERVICE RELATED BUSINESS
PRESS 0 - FOR OPERATOR ASSISTANCE

WHEN CALLING AFTER BUSINESS HOURS

PRESS 4 - TO REPORT AN OUTAGE

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A TOUCH TONE PHONE OR ARE
NOT SURE WHAT TO DO, PLEASE STAY ON THE LINE
AND AN OPERATOR WILL ASSIST YOU.

John Middleton
General Manager

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“OWNED BY THOSE WE SERVE”

To nominate your church, contact Linda Harris, Ext.151.

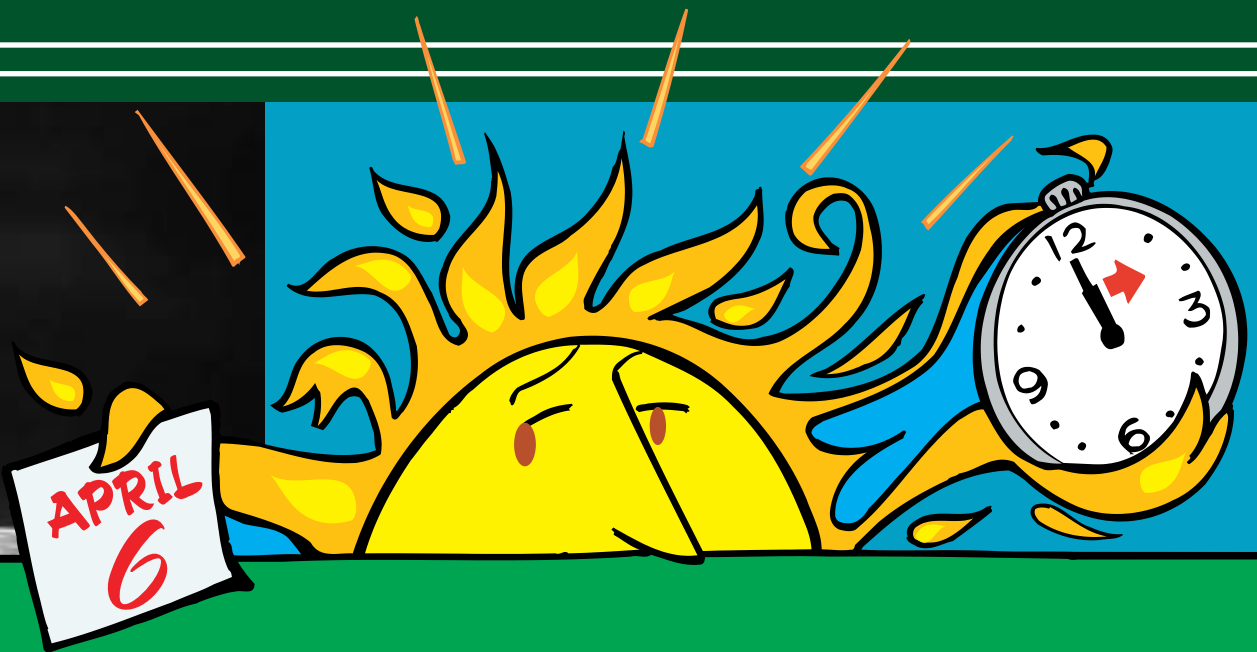
Church of the Month

Monticello Ridge—
The Church of God

Waynesville, GA
Pastor: Rev. Shelton Cox

| | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Sunday School | 10:00 a.m. |
| Morning Worship Service | 11:00 a.m. |
| Evening Worship Service | 5:30 p.m. |
| Thursday Bible Study | 7:30 p.m. |





Daylight Saving Time Saves Energy

When we change clocks to Daylight Savings Time, it could translate into energy savings.

The energy used on a daily basis and the demand for electricity used for lighting homes is directly related to when we go to bed and when we get up. By habit, most of us tend to go to bed in the late evening, and when doing so, we turn off our lights and TV.

In the average home, approximately 25 percent of all electricity is used for lighting homes and operating small appliances such

as TVs, VCRs and stereos. When we set our clocks ahead one hour, it can cut the amount of electricity we consume each day.

Because the sun sets one hour later during Daylight Savings Time, bedtime is an hour later; therefore, we use less electricity for appliances and lighting late in the day.

Less electricity is also used during the long days of spring and summer because most people are home fewer hours of the day.

Daylight Savings Time begins April 6, 2003.

Be sure to change the batteries in your smoke alarms when you change your clocks.

DON'T RECYCLE OREMC'S RETURN ENVELOPES



Although recycling is usually a good idea, covering OREMC's address and using the return envelope that you receive with your bill each month to forward payments to other addresses is not a good idea. The barcode that is preprinted on the bottom of the envelope is used by automated equipment at the Post Office to expedite the letter to the encoded destination - which is one of our offices. Sometimes we receive those envelopes with our members' payments that were intended to be delivered to their doctors, mortgage holders, etc. We, in turn, forward the letters to the correct address or return them to the sender. Sometimes, though, the delay could result in late delivery and delinquent charges for the well-intentioned sender.