

MEMBER

From Cedar Island to Cedar Point
and many places in between

News

A newsletter for members of Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative

SEPTEMBER 2004



PowerPay 24 offers online bill paying

Don't have a stamp? Don't want to drive? Got a question about your electric bill? CCEC's new **PowerPay 24** program offers online account payment and information services for members with Internet access and an e-mail account. You can sign on, check your account and pay your bill online anytime.

"Many of our members already pay other bills online, and we wanted to make doing business with us just as convenient," said Cheryl Slater, CCEC manager of customer service. "The program offers at-your-fingertip convenience."

You don't have to have a computer with Internet access at home. You can sign up for **PowerPay 24** from any computer connected to the Internet, such as the local library or community college. All you need is a valid e-mail account. To get started, go to our Website. When you log on, you will be guided through the signup process.

When you sign up for **PowerPay 24** you will be notified by e-mail when your bill has been posted. You will continue to receive your billing statements by mail. Our online account enhancements offer a secure environment, whether you are

paying a bill, checking your account or requesting other services. **PowerPay 24** is more convenient, too, for our members who pay by credit card each month. If you call in to make a payment with your credit card, you may be delayed because there are many others doing the same as you. By going online, you can key in your credit card information and pay right away.

"For our members already using online banking services, we recommend you use our Website directly to pay your electric bill," says Slater. "Eliminating a third party will guarantee your payment is received on time, and you will immediately see confirmation of your payment."

Paying a bill through online banking means your bank writes the cooperative a check and sends it through the mail. Several days may pass between the time you authorize payment and when we receive and process the check.

No matter how you choose to pay your bill, you can use **PowerPay 24** to view your account, including bill history, usage and payments, or sign up for other cooperative programs. Many of the online offerings are available as well to those who don't have computer access, such as Automatic Bank Draft or Bank Card Payment programs. Either of these will free you from having to write a check to pay your power bill each month. You will still get a monthly statement, but your account will be drafted automatically on a specified date. It's a great idea for our members who have hectic lives or spend time away from home, and don't want to worry about paying bills.

Signing up for online bill paying is voluntary. If it's not for you, we're still here at our offices in Morehead City and Havelock to take your payment in person or by mail.

on the web

Sign up for PowerPay 24 for online bill paying and account maintenance.

Go to:

www.carteretcravenelectric.coop



Foundation nears \$1 million mark in few short years

As it nears the \$1 million mark in donations, scholarships and grants, the Carteret-Craven Electric Foundation is continuing to help improve the lives of individuals in our area.

The cooperative raises money for the foundation through its Operation RoundUP® program, which began in February 1999.

Cooperative members volunteer to have their electric bills rounded up to the nearest dollar amount each month, and those funds are deposited with the nonprofit foundation.

Members can opt out of Operation RoundUP®; however, the amount rounded up per member is very small (an average of only \$6 a year and

no more than \$11.88), and the collective power of cooperative members' donations is meaningful to those less fortunate.

This year, the volunteer foundation board developed a strategic plan and updated its mission

to make the best use of the cooperative members' donations.

The goal of the foundation is to "assist and empower individuals with resources provided through the generosity of the Cooperative's members."

"One thing we talk about at our meetings is the importance of trying to connect member donations to the needs of individuals in the community," said Foundation President Ben Ball. "We put an emphasis on that direct connection, whether it's through groups that impact individual lives or on individuals we can help directly. We end each meeting feeling that we have helped the members do what we know they would want us to do."

The directors also encourage recipients to seek matching funds, such as was the case with Otway Volunteer Fire Department, which received funding this year from the foundation and other sources to purchase a thermal-imaging camera that helps firefighters locate people trapped in burning or smoke-filled structures.

RoundUP® dollars helped send some 30 Hispanic, school-age children to Morehead City Parks & Recreation Department's enrichment camp. For the third year in a row, the founda-

tion has funded the project, sending about 30 kids each summer to the eight-week camp program where they are involved in a variety of

activities with English-speaking children and counselors. School officials have found that Hispanic children tend to lose their English skills over the summer when school is not in session. Testing has shown that the youngsters' English improves or stays the same when they return to school in the fall.

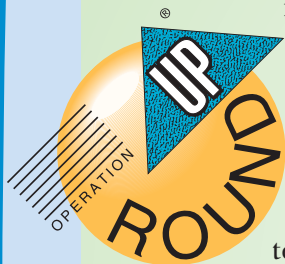


Ben Ball
Foundation president

The Havelock-Cherry Point Ministerial Association was able to help more individuals in need with a significant donation from the foundation. Other projects sponsored by the foundation and your Operation RoundUP® funds this year include: the Broad Street Clinic, for necessary expansion of the free medical clinic; the Hope Mission Soup Kitchen; the Children's Miracle Network; the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life; the March of Dimes; Bright Ideas grant funding for innovative teaching ideas in our public schools; five, 4-year \$4,000 college scholarships; Carteret County Domestic Violence program; the Carteret County Department of Social Services for individuals' emergency heating and cooling needs; and much more.



Daniel Lopez and Jessica Geronimo get art help from Sara Toothman, instructor at the Morehead City Parks & Recreation summer program.



Restoring your power after a major outage

Hurricanes, ice storms, tornadoes or nor'easters. Our cooperative members have seen them all, and the inevitable power outages that come with them.

Restoring power after a major outage is a big job that involves much more than simply throwing a switch or removing a tree from a line, and it doesn't happen for everyone at the same time. With major outages, the cooperative has all hands on deck, not just its own employees, but crews from other cooperatives in the state and elsewhere as well. These additional crews, as well as equipment and supplies, are coordinated through the cooperatives' national network.

After a major storm event, report your outage to our office. We have our employees on site 24 hours a day to respond to your outage. We do request in the early stages of a major outage that you call only when lines are down or you see other threatening situations. Once you see the power come on in your neighborhood, and if you still don't have power, give us a call.

"Some people's power is restored quicker than others, but the damage might be more severe in one area than another," said John Talbert, director of engineering services at the cooperative. "We just ask that people be patient and know that we are trying to get their power back on as soon as possible."

"People can rest assured that we are working 24/7," said Talbert, "We have crews all over trying to get as many people back online as safely and quickly as possible. That's the main goal during a major outage, but it can be frustrating to the member whose power might not be restored as quickly as a neighbor."

When a major outage occurs, the cooperative makes repairs in the following order:

- **Transmission lines** supply power to one or more distribution substations. These lines seldom fall, but they can be damaged by a hurricane or tornado. Thousands of people might be served by one high-voltage transmission line, so if there is damage here it gets attention first.

- Carteret-Craven has **15 distribution substations**, each serving thousands of members.

When a major outage occurs, the substations are checked next. If the problem can be corrected at the substation level, power may be restored to a large number of people.

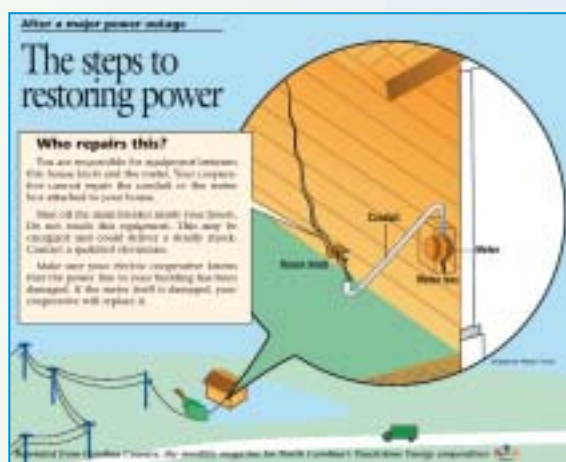
- **Main distribution supply lines** near the highway are checked next if the problem cannot be isolated at the substation. These supply lines carry electricity away from the substation to a group of members, such as a town or housing development. When power is restored at this stage, all members served by this supply line could see the lights come on, as long as there is no problem on the "tap" lines going into individual neighborhoods.

- **Tap lines**, which carry power to the utility poles or underground transformers outside houses or other buildings, are repaired next. Line crews fix these based on restoring service to the greatest number of members.

- Sometimes, damage will occur on the **service line** between your house and the transformer on the nearby pole. This can explain why you have no power when your neighbor does. The cooperative needs to know you have an outage so a service crew can repair it. Our crews can't however, fix problems with customer-owned equipment such as the weather head, meter base and electrical panel. If that equipment is damaged, you should call a licensed electrician. Typically, you will need an inspection before we will be able reconnect your service.

'We have crews all over trying to get as many people back online as safely and quickly as possible.'

~ John Talbert
Director of engineering services



Dove season brings power line damage

Doves regularly use power lines as perching sites, and each year, as dove hunting season opens in early

September, our service crews are called to repair lines or insulators damaged by hunters who used the lines as shooting sites.

Shooting at power line insulators, utility poles, transmission towers or any electrical facility are acts of vandalism, and those who cause willful damage to cooperative lines, facilities or property can be prosecuted. Despite laws that prohibit shooting and damaging utility equipment, the activity is common among some hunters.

“We have places where we have had to replace a whole tap because it was damaged so badly,” said Al Hill, CCEC line superintendent. “Some people shoot at the birds on the lines or they’ll shoot at the insulators.”

Shooting and damaging power lines or insulators can cause major outages, and repairs are costly.

“It’s very unsportsmanlike to shoot doves on power lines, and it’s illegal to shoot and damage the lines,” Hill said.

Additionally, the practice is a safety issue. An insulator string hit by gunfire could pull apart and let the conductor fall to the ground, creating a serious hazard for anyone close by.

There’s also the danger of stray shots, and power outages may cause injury or death to anyone who depends on electricity for health care or life support systems. Think before you shoot. Someone’s life may depend on it.

CCEC soars

Satisfaction survey puts co-op at top

Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative (CCEC) soared in the recently released customer satisfaction report for the second quarter of 2004. Compared to 25 other cooperatives participating in the survey, the cooperative received the highest composite score at 9.23 out of 10.

“This recognition results from tremendous efforts on every employee’s part,” said CEO and General Manager Craig Conrad. “These scores are impacted every time an employee has contact with a customer -- from greeting someone at the office while mowing grass to seeing someone at a store or while reading meters or building a service.”

Additionally, CCEC’s call center received the highest score ever recorded for call centers at any co-op – a 9.65.



carteret-craven electric cooperative

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