

MEMBER

*From Cedar Island to Cedar Point
and many places in between*

News

A newsletter for members of Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative

July 2005



PowerPay 24

Co-op members enjoy ease, security of online bill paying

Even if you get the post office to hold your mail while you're on vacation, on a business trip or away from home for some other reason, there's still a stack to sort through when you return.

You can reduce the pile by signing up for online bill paying services offered by many companies, including Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative.

"I'd pay every bill online if I could," said Mark Farlow, a CCEC member who anxiously awaited the arrival of the co-op's PowerPay 24 program. "It's easy, you don't have use a stamp, and you don't have to remember to put the envelope in the outgoing mail."

That's just one reason more than 2,415 cooperative members have signed up for PowerPay 24. Others access the service to check their monthly electricity

usage. Others find security in knowing their account is credited immediately.

Paying a bill through online banking services 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. Eliminating that third party through PowerPay 24 will guarantee your payment is received on time, and you will immediately see confirmation of your payment.

"Thank you so much for sending a response to my payment. It is so comforting to know you got the money. Wish all companies did that," wrote Brian and Sandra Marine in an e-mail to the cooperative.

Also comforting is the knowledge that online payments are secured through VeriSign, a company that enables businesses and individuals worldwide to find, connect, secure, and transact across the Internet.

We protect your online inquiries and transactions in other ways as well. When you sign in, you create your own password, and it is not stored on the PowerPay site. Neither is your CCEC account number or any credit card number you might use to pay your power bill. And, we don't disseminate your e-mail address or mailing address to any third parties.

If you travel frequently or are going to be away on vacation, you can access the features of PowerPay 24 from any computer connected to the Internet. All you need is a valid e-mail account.

To get started, go to Website at www.carteretcravenelectric.coop. When you log on, you will be guided through the signup process. You then will be notified by e-mail when your bill has been posted. You will continue to receive your bills by mail.

on the web

Hurricane season is here. Learn how the co-op plans for these storm and how you can prepare.

To find out more go to: www.carteretcravenelectric.coop

Click on "Helpful Tips"



Keeping rates stable in unstable times...

Fueling your car is like a playing a game of chance. There's no telling what the price will be from week to week, even day to day. Gas prices vary as well from town to town, with differences as much as 15-cents a gallon.

Those same fluctuations in fuel costs impact the price of producing electricity and the cost of wholesale power, but the focus at Carteret-Craven is to stabilize the cost to you, our member-owners. In fact, the



Craig Conrad
CEO & GM

cost of power to you is lower today than it was in 1996, and it has been extremely stable since that time.

"Some businesses adjust rates month by month to make up for shortfalls," said CEO and General Manager Craig Conrad. "We try to forecast and get ahead of the market. By doing that, we are able to stabilize costs, and our rates don't fluctuate wildly."

The electricity business has changed dramatically in recent years. Today, wholesale electricity is a commodity much like wheat and pork bellies. Market pressures, including supply, demand, weather, and most recently, the price and availability of fuel, influence the wholesale electric price. In recent months, the price of wholesale power has gone up because of the higher prices of fuels that power generating plants, including a 150 percent increase in the cost of coal as well as the increase in price for petroleum products. We purchase power that is generated from a number of different fuels, including coal, natural gas, nuclear and hydro plants

Still, we are charged with providing reliable service at a competitive rate, without sacrificing one for the other. In a volatile

energy market, that may seem impossible. Yet, we closely watch the budget and plan ahead, keeping a finger on the erratic pulse of the global energy market.

That strategy has worked well through the years in keeping our rates relatively stable. In contrast, Progress Energy has asked the N.C.

Utilities Commission for a 9.3 percent rate hike for its residential accounts, which would translate into an increase of \$7.70 per month for the average residential customer.

Carteret-Craven obtains its electricity from N.C. Electric Membership Corporation (NCEMC), which, in turn, obtains electricity through a variety of resources including partial ownership of the Catawba nuclear plant and long and short-term contract purchases from other energy suppliers.

"The bulk purchase of power and cooperative's own future-based calculations have served us well" Conrad said. "But from time to time, we have to implement a wholesale power cost adjustment, shown as the WPCA on your utility bill. If that decision is made, our members can rest assured that any increase will last only as long as necessary to meet our wholesale fuel costs."

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Even with erratic fuel prices, the cooperative works diligently to stabilize rates for its member-owners.

Co-op, community reach out to blind student

In many ways, Jeffrey Shockley is like most middle school boys - teasing his teachers and running through the halls. But there's one big difference. Jeffrey is blind.

He's just completed eighth-grade as an honor student at Broad Creek Middle School, but just doing the required work has been tough. Thanks to several special people, both at the school and in the community, Jeffrey was given the latest in Braille computer equipment that can link him to any computer anywhere to access the Web, do homework, take tests or just have fun.

Laura Corrado, technology facilitator at the middle school, went to bat for Jeffrey and she hit a homer. She began working with Jeffrey when he was preparing for the N.C. Test of Computer Skills.

"His positive attitude and aptitude inspired me to find ways to make learning easier," Corrado said. "To watch him use his loud Braillewriter and to listen to classmates complain about not being able to hear, I knew something had to be done."

She researched new technologies for the blind and began raising funds. With only a \$200



Jeffrey Shockley, at the keyboard, demonstrates the Braille function of his new computer system. With him are, from left, Broad Creek Middle School Principal Cathy Tomon, CCEC CEO and General manager Craig Conrad and other contributors, John Egan, Ted Haigler and Tommy Morrow.

start, Corrado finally reached the right people to get Jeffrey's new system. The school raised another \$400. The Sunshine Lady Foundation put up a \$2,500 matching grant, and the Carteret-Craven Electric Foundation gave \$4,704 to complete the computer purchase.

When Corrado realized the system would need maintenance and long-term technical support, she reached out again for help. Craig Conrad, executive vice president and general

manager of the electric cooperative, was so moved by Jeffrey's needs and Ms. Corrado's efforts that he put out a call to friends and acquaintances to chip in. Two banks, several civic organizations and local businesses eagerly contributed the remaining funds.

Within a few weeks, Jeffrey got his hands on the new system and took to it like a natural. The program, uses voice synthesizing software and has a Braille display, so Jeffrey can either hear or read with his fingers the information he is receiving or sending. He can scan documents, and can listen with headphones and not disturb his fellow students.

"This is not going to interrupt my classes anymore," Jeffrey excitedly told Broad Creek Principal Cathy Tomon.

The system is Jeffrey's to take with him when he goes to high school in the fall and to college after that, another opportunity he wasn't sure would ever be open to him.

The tale of good deeds didn't end there. With a few more phone calls, Jeffrey's new fans were able to secure a scholarship for Jeffrey's mother, Cheryl Jones, so she can continue her pursuit of a degree in nursing from Carteret Community College.



Jeffrey Shockley's new Braille-fitted keyboard, shows off his new system, which makes the honor student's work much easier.



Signs tacked to utility poles create hazards

With the yard sale season in full swing and political races just around the corner, the cooperative wants to remind you that attaching signs or other objects to utility poles without the electric utility's consent is against the law and can be dangerous for our linemen and motorists.

Signs and other illegal attachments to power poles make the poles extremely hazardous, and sometimes impossible, for line workers to climb and make repairs. It only takes a nail partially driven into a pole to cause serious injury to a line worker.

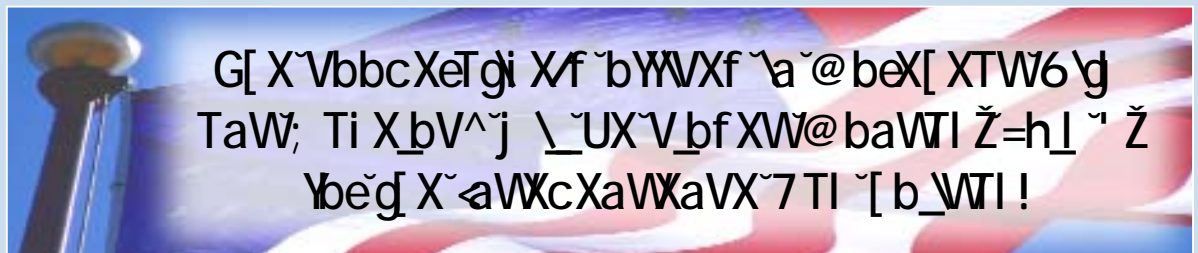
Nail holes also allow moisture to enter wooden poles, causing premature decay and the expense of early replacement.

Attachments to poles also pose a safety hazard for motorists, particularly if they block a driver's view of oncoming traffic, pedestrians or bicyclists.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

Carteret-Craven Electric Membership Corporation is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and the rules of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is the CEO and General Manager. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination, may file a written complaint with this organization; or the Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250; or the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Washington, D.C. 20250. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discriminatory action or by such later date to which the Secretary of Agriculture or the Administrator of RUS extends the time for filing. Identity of complainants will be kept confidential except to the extent necessary to carry out the purposes of the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



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