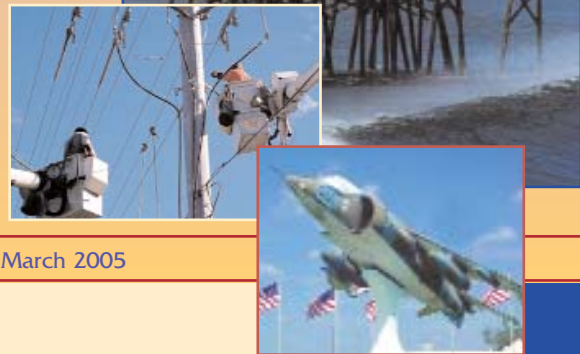


MEMBER

From Cedar Island to Cedar Point
and many places in between

News



A newsletter for members of Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative

March 2005

'Blinks,' help keep system healthy

Have you ever come home to find your digital clocks flashing "12:00"? Was this from a momentary blink or an hour-long power outage?

It is much like the tree falling in the forest -- does it make a sound if no one is there to hear it? If you are not at home or are asleep, does a blinking clock indicate a power outage? Most often, those blinking clocks represent a blink or short duration outage. But the impact to you is likely the same -- you have to reset your clocks.

Blinks occur when an obstruction, like a tree limb, comes into con-

tact with a power line or when lightning strikes a transformer. To minimize the possibility of damage to the utility system or your home, a circuit breaker interrupts the flow of electricity for a fraction of a second. If the limb remains on the line, the breaker opens and tries to re-close again.

If the obstruction is still on the line after the third try, the breaker opens and does not re-close automatically. At this point, a utility worker must be dispatched to remove the obstruction and manually reset the breaker.

Most problems on the utility system don't last long and are usually eliminated with the "re-closing" feature. Without this feature designed into the system, every brief interruption would result in an outage lasting an hour or longer.

Ultimately, power blinks improve the overall system reliability by reducing measurable power outages, protecting the cooperative's equipment and actually reducing the total time you would be without power if the technology were not in place. Does this help you? Indirectly, yes, because a healthy system with safeguards helps keep costs down.

Power blinks rarely cause damage to home electronic equipment. Older digital clocks and other devices are the most vulnerable to blinks; newer models are designed to ride out these small voltage fluctuations.

Did you know?

Power blinks have always been a part of electric service. They just weren't as noticeable until sensitive electronics began filling our homes.

on the web

Got a question about payment options or other services? Check out the "customer service" page on our Website at:
www.carteretcravenelectric.coop



Community Calendar

The co-op's Website has a special community calendar page, with information about coming events, clubs and other items of interest.

To submit information, send an e-mail to: calendar@ccemc.com or mail to: Community Calendar, Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative, PO Box 1499, Morehead City, NC 28557. Include a phone number in case we have questions.

Power lines

What you should know about overhead and underground service

Members frequently ask why we don't have more power lines underground. In fact, the cooperative is building lines in new construction at a rate of 75 miles underground to one mile overhead.

Underground lines make up 44 percent of the more than 2,000 miles of distribution line the cooperative maintains.

But, when much of the cooperative's system was constructed, underground technology was not available, and conversion to underground lines in existing development is costly to the property owner and the cooperative. Additional right-of-way or easements must be acquired to provide direct connection to homes.



Lonnie Moore
VP Engineering
& Operations

Another factor that increases costs is the need to install lines in a way that minimizes disruption to residents and businesses, as well as to the environment. Installing underground lines in developed areas can cause accidental damage to other utility lines such as cable, phone or water. Conversely, underground lines can be accidentally damaged by crews working on other underground utilities.

Benefits of underground lines are that they are generally better protected from damage caused by falling trees, branches or wind, and they limit visual clutter. In fact, aesthetics, not increased reliability, is the primary reason underground lines are installed in new subdivisions.

"Even with underground lines, there hasn't been a system devised that is immune to outages," said Lonnie Moore, vice president of engineering and operations at the cooperative. "Underground

lines are not weatherproof. There have been incidents of underground cable failure from water seepage into the conduit after heavy rains. And, underground lines are not immune from failures or power blinks up the line at feeder lines, substations and transmission lines."

Underground systems do suffer fewer outages, about half as many as overhead lines, but when outages do occur, they are typically much longer.

According to a N.C. Utilities Commission report issued in November 2003, the "gain in reliability, however, is offset by a 58 percent increase in repair time, as underground faults require specialized repair crews to locate the faults, dig up the area around the fault and repair the cable."

New developments are generally the most cost-efficient for underground service because right-of-way is more easily provided and there is little or no disruption of installation work or scheduling around existing residences or business operations. Additionally, we have teamed up with other utilities to bury their cable at the same time we run our lines to share the cost of trenching in new underground installations.

"It is our mission to provide reliable service to all our members at a reasonable cost, and that is something we must consider carefully when we talk about putting lines underground," said Moore. "Today, overhead lines are still more affordable to construct, repair and maintain. They're more accessible for maintenance and repair. Faults on the line can be visually inspected and repairs are usually made quickly. Underground line has about half the expected life of equivalent overhead line and it is much more expensive to replace."



Spike, a Jack Russell terrier, has found himself in a predicament. He and companion, Tigger, got a little carried away with their dog play beneath a computer desk. You should discourage your pets from playing around computer equipment, power cords, outlets, lamps and the like.

Pets & electricity:

Precautions to keep your dog or cat safe

Just like toddlers, pets can turn anything they find around the house into a play or chew toy.

A frisky dog or curious cat can cause an electrical hazard or fire in ways you may not have considered. Take these precautions to keep you and your pets safe:

Keep electrical cords away from dogs and cats so they don't chew on them and receive a severe shock.

Place contact paper, sticky side up, in the general area of electrical cords to discourage your pet from approaching them.

Have favorite toys available to distract your pet from the cords, and rotate toys every few days to prevent boredom.

If you have difficulty getting your pet to stop chewing on a power cord, apply unpleasant-tasting substances to exposed cords. These could include bitter apple spray, hot-pepper sauce, menthol, toothpaste, mouthwash or lemon juice. Try different flavors since pets' dislikes vary.

Make sure night lights and appliances are completely plugged into wall outlets. Partly exposed prongs are a hazard for curious pets AND young children.

Keep halogen lamps away from play areas for pets.

Some halogen bulbs get extremely hot, and if knocked over during play, could easily start a fire.

Keep appliances that are near sinks and bathtubs a safe distance away from the water source.

Playful pets can knock radios, curling irons, hair dryers and other small appliances into the water, creating a serious shock hazard.

Discourage cats and dogs from curling up for a nap behind warm computer equipment.

Pets need to be kept away from all electrical connections.

Source: <http://www.safeelectricity.org/>

Mark Your Calendar!

Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative's 65th Annual Meeting of the Membership

When: Thursday, May 5, 2005
Doors open at 5 p.m.

Where: Glad Tidings Church
Morehead City, N.C.

Look for details on the cover and inside next month's issue of *Carolina Country* magazine.



Kay Yow Camp scholarship is available

Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative and Touchstone Energy will select a deserving middle school girl to attend the 2005 Kay Yow Basketball Camp in Raleigh this summer.

The selection will be made from Broad Creek, Havelock, Morehead City, Newport or Tucker Creek middle school.

Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame Coach Kay Yow and

members of her N.C. State University women's basketball team will work closely with campers to develop fundamental skills that will help them excel both on and off the court.

The winner will be announced by May 1 and will attend the June 19-23 camp. Campers must have permission from a parent or guardian and must provide

their own transportation to and from Raleigh.

Applications must be turned in by April 20.

For more information about the scholarship, contact Bill Ward, CCEC director of community relations at (252) 727-2251.

For details on the camp, visit www.kayyowcamps.com.



Coach Kay Yow

E-mail anyone?

Using the Internet to conduct business and send personal communications is a way of life for many of us. We shop online. We check our bank accounts or investments. We send e-mails instead of letters.

The Internet is a valuable tool, and we want to make the best use of it.

A couple of years ago, many of you sent us your e-mail addresses. Late last year, we tried to communicate with those members for

whom we had e-mail addresses. But many of those had changed, and the e-mails were returned as invalid. We also learned a lot about just how to reach our members, while protecting individuals' privacy.

We would like to communicate occasional important messages via e-mail. It is a fast and cost efficient way to reach you.

Please e-mail us information@ccemc.com and let us know how you feel about receiving occasional e-mail messages of importance and value.



carteret-craven electric cooperative

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On the Web

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