

# Facing up to high energy costs

**H**ow much are consumers willing to pay for renewable energy, energy efficiency and climate change? That question is emerging in national discussions, particularly as Congress considers legislation aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

New technologies to reduce the greenhouse gases, specifically carbon dioxide, will cost billions of dollars, according to a recent article in *The Wall Street Journal*. It is an “unpleasant and inescapable truth,” noted *The New York Times*, “... that any serious effort to fight global warming will require everyone to pay more for energy.”

Those in the electric utility industry agree. “I think power prices could go up 50 percent, maybe more,” an investor-owned utility CEO warned in the *Journal* article.

That means a \$150 monthly electric bill could go up to \$225; a \$400 electric bill could climb to \$600. And that does not include the predicted 10-percent-per-year increase many of us can expect to pay to finance new power plants needed to meet the increasing demand for electricity.

We are talking about significant increases in what we pay for electricity.

The *Times* editorial called these increases beneficial. Energy is currently underpriced and therefore overconsumed, it said. “As long as today’s energy is relatively cheap, there is little incentive for private firms to develop new fuels and technologies,” the editorial stated. Higher prices will force consumers to use less electricity and make it profitable for others to invest in alternate, and higher-priced, resources.

These skyrocketing electric bills will be painful for thousands of electric co-op consumer-members. But your electric cooperative already knows this. That is why representatives at your co-op ques-

tion each proposal brought forward by Congress.

Changes in the electric industry are coming, but each change needs to have a real, measurable payoff. Additional dollars paid through rate increases need to fund programs that result in significant changes

worthy of the sacrifice consumers will have to make.

We need more research in most areas to effect real, measurable change. More research is needed to find ways to improve the efficiency of renewable resources such as wind and solar. We need to develop ways to store this intermittent energy so that it can become a more stable part of the system.

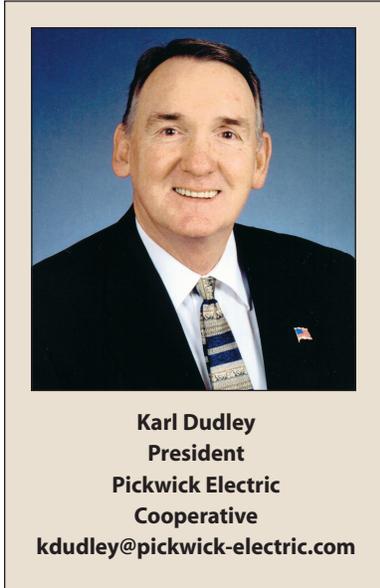
Nationally, electric co-ops are leading the

push for more investments in research and development for carbon capture and storage and clean-coal technology. At the same time, individual co-ops are working to find new, economically feasible projects that will move us toward changes in the industry.

To promote energy efficiency, many cooperatives give away compact fluorescent light bulbs as door prizes at their annual meetings. They also offer the purchase of green power to their members as well as rebates on energy-efficient water heaters and heat pump financing for more efficient heating and cooling systems.

Collectively, co-ops are looking at creating a national renewable energy cooperative. Co-ops are doing a lot to help cut emissions, improve efficiency and meet the needs of their members. They strive to do it while remembering that electricity is a necessity, not a luxury.

As we balance what needs to be done with what it will cost and who will pay that cost, our members can rest assured that their electric cooperative will be looking out for them.



## Pickwick Electric Cooperative

**Serving members in all of  
McNairy County and  
portions of Chester,  
Hardeman and Hardin  
counties in Tennessee and  
Alcorn and Tishomingo  
counties in Mississippi**



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**[www.pickwick-electric.com](http://www.pickwick-electric.com)**

**These five pages contain local**

**news and information**

**for members of Pickwick**

**Electric Cooperative.**



## Maynard Smith retires

**M**aynard Smith, who began his employment at Pickwick Electric Cooperative on May 6, 1994, as night radio dispatcher, has retired from the co-op. Smith was honored with a retirement luncheon on Friday, Jan. 11, by fellow employees, friends and family.

Smith was born in Chester County and moved to McNairy County in 1965. He served in the Army Reserve for six years. Prior to PEC, he was employed by General Electric.

Smith says, "In my 13 years at PEC, the change that affected me most was the automated phone system, but you're never too old to learn."

Smith, like many other PEC employees, has worked through some difficult times. He has spent many nights at



the office due to power outages, making sure each outage was reported to the on-call supervisor. "It's all part of the job," says Smith.

Smith and his wife, Shirley, have been married for 43 years and live in Bethel Springs. They have two children, Vickie Taylor and Felix Smith, and two grandchildren, Macayla and Charles. The Smiths attend Lakeview Baptist Church in Selmer.

Smith's retirement plans include some deer hunting and fishing, and someday he would like to visit Alaska.

PEC President Karl Dudley says, "We'd like to thank Maynard for his dedicated service to the cooperative and wish for him many years of good health and happiness."

## Keep the cold air outside this winter

**D**on't let your hard-earned money blow away through drafty doors and windows as well as uninsulated attics, walls, floors and basements. As we stay indoors to stay warm this winter, save your money and reduce your utility bills by following these energy efficiency tips:

- Find air leaks inside and around the exterior of the home. Check around fixtures such as exhaust fans and electrical outlets that penetrate walls. Look for unfilled gaps and cracks near dryer vents, chimneys and faucet pipes.
- Seal leaks between moving parts such as between a door and its frame with weatherstripping. Caulk cracks between windows and walls as well as around door frames.
- Replace your screens with storm windows and doors. If you have older or leaky windows that you can't replace, consider doing temporary fixes such as plastic film kits that create the effect of an interior storm window.
- If you are shopping for new windows, doors or skylights, look for ones with the Energy Star label.
- Make sure attics and flooring above unheated areas such as crawl spaces and the garage are properly insulated.
- Have your furnace checked by a professional to make sure it's operating safely and at its optimal level. In addition, change your furnace filters monthly.
- Have a programmable thermostat installed to automatically raise and lower home temperatures for energy savings by day and night.



Photo courtesy Werner Ladder Co.

# Cooperative appreciates cards

**Pickwick Electric Cooperative would like to express sincere appreciation for the beautiful Christmas cards received from these cooperative members and friends.**

James Edward Wright  
 Mary Frances Wright  
 John and Frances Wright  
 Jimmy Ray and Patricia Ann Hill  
 Tri-County Electric Membership Corporation  
 Alvine Boyd  
 Bobby and Teresa Stanford  
 The youth and staff at Youth Town  
 Tennessee Valley Authority  
 City of Michie officials and employees  
 McNairy County Adult Education Center staff  
 Carl and Virginia Crabb  
 Employer Services, Health Partners, Work Partners  
 Tony and Peggy Davis  
 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association  
 Patterson and Dewar Engineers Inc.  
 4-Way Electric Inc.  
 Pat and Helen Montgomery  
 McWhorter and Franklin Engineers  
 MidSouth Utility Consultants LLC  
 Volunteer Energy Cooperative  
 Baldwin Pole and Piling Co. Inc.  
 Hattie Baker  
 Service Electric Company  
 Lee Inspection and Consulting Service Inc.  
 Betty Rickman  
 Lexington Electric System  
 Liberty Bail Bonds — Frankie Smith  
 Tina and Skyler Reeves  
 Tennessee Technology Center at Crump  
 Neill Sandler Buick Pontiac GMC Briggs Inc.  
 Ellen Rowland  
 Doug, Andrea, Madeline and Abigail Fiero  
 Tennessee Valley Electric Cooperative  
 Caney Fork Electric Cooperative Inc  
 Stuart C. Irby  
 Smith Metals Co. Inc.  
 Nashville Electric Service  
 Lorena Browder  
 Fayetteville Public Utilities  
 Pennyrile Electric  
 The Southwood Inn  
 Billy and Frances Hill

Inman Bros. Wrecker Service  
 Alcorn County Electric Power Association  
 AT&T  
 Williams, Jerrolds, Godwin & Nichols PLLC  
 R.A. Phillips  
 Leon and Eyvonne Maness  
 Paris Board of Public Utilities  
 Better Source Supply Company  
 IBEW, Local 474  
 Torco Testing Services Inc.  
 AQ2 Technologies  
 PowerTech Engineering LLC  
 Owen and Jeanell Qualls  
 Junell Moore  
 Howard and Donna McDonnell  
 Johnny Hayes  
 Middle Tennessee Electric Membership Corporation  
 Hopkinsville Electric System  
 Jeanie Sloan  
 Maudene Dancer  
 Pickwick Drag Strip  
 Jerry and Belle Jarrett  
 Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation  
 Fort Loudoun Electric Cooperative  
 HD Supply Utilities  
 Mr. and Mrs. Ray Milford  
 Cooperative Response Center Inc.  
 Appalachian Electric Cooperative  
 Zona McAfee  
 Frankie Henry and family  
 Central Service Association  
 New Jerusalem Hope House  
 United Utility Supply  
 Electric Power Board  
 Employees of Cellnet + Hunt  
 Gov. Phil Bredesen and the Governor's Books from Birth Foundation  
 Barbara Martin  
 Mountain Electric Cooperative  
 Elizabeth Clark  
 Southern Wood Preserving  
 Terry and Charlotte Stackens  
 Utility Equipment Service  
 Teen Challenge Memphis  
 Richard and Melvina Babiec  
 Rite Aid Pharmacy  
 Meriwether Lewis Electric Cooperative

Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association  
 Southwestern Limited  
 David Hatch  
 Powell Valley Electric Cooperative  
 Holston Electric Cooperative Inc.  
 Duck River Electric Membership Corporation  
 The Selcat office and staff  
 Carolina Pole Inc.  
 North South Wood Preserving  
 Cox Wood of Alabama  
 Don and Novella Smith  
 Lee and Brenda Horton  
 Utilicor  
 Dynamic Lighting Inc.  
 Lambert Used Cars  
 Bobby and Shirley Johnson  
 TVA — Jackson Transmission Service Center  
 Sungard  
 Tennessee Valley Public Power Association Inc.  
 Ruffin and Associates  
 Plateau Electric Cooperative  
 American Cancer Society  
 Estel and Mary R. Mills  
 Humboldt Utilities  
 Almae Chappell and family  
 Verbie Nixon  
 Donald and Donnie Forsythe  
 Kevin and Dena McDonald  
 Gibson Electric Membership Corporation  
 Shawn and Sabrina Smith  
 Upper Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation  
 Harold and Frankie Finley  
 Robert and Jane Taylor  
 BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee  
 Doug and Judy Raines  
 Town of Milledgeville  
 T.C. Kennedy  
 Younger Associates  
 Dave Clark  
 Ruby Pounds  
 Pam Williams  
 Allen & Hoshall  
 Louise Burns  
 Jerry Burns  
 Miller & Martin PLLC Attorneys at Law



# Keep our linemen safe

## Do not install objects on cooperative poles

An electric utility pole is the last place to mount an object such as a satellite dish, sign or basketball goal. You might think it is harmless, but for Pickwick Electric Cooperative employees, it creates a very dangerous situation. Part of a lineman's job is to climb these poles and perform a number of tasks like installing a security light, changing a bulb, replacing a transformer or hooking up a new service.

Linemen's jobs become even more difficult when they have to contend with objects that are attached to the poles they work on during inclement weather and at night. So when you consider mounting an object on a utility pole, remember the tasks of a lineman.

Tennessee state law states that it is illegal for any person to place or attach any type of



show-card, poster or advertising material — including election campaign literature — or device on any kind of poles, towers or fixtures of any public utility company, whether privately or publicly owned, unless authorized to do so.

Finding another location to mount objects around your home is one way you can help protect a lineman from injury or possibly save his life.

The management and staff of PEC work hard to provide a safe working environment for all of its employees. This is quite an accomplishment, given their daily work routines.

So please consider the safety of those who serve you before you attach anything to an electric utility pole.

# View and pay your electric bill

## at [www.pickwick-electric.com](http://www.pickwick-electric.com)

Sometimes our members find it necessary to know how much their electric bills are in advance of receiving a bill. Today, this information can be viewed in your home by going to our Web site, [www.pickwick-electric.com](http://www.pickwick-electric.com). In addition, a host of valuable information about your electric cooperative is at your fingertips.

PEC's Web site contains information for our members and potential customers concerning the cooperative's history, organization structure, billing and special services.

By using the Web site, members can access billing information that will allow them to see the amount of their electric bill, meter reading, date the meter was read and number of kilowatts used. Members wishing to access their account online will

need a user name and password. This can be obtained by filling out the information on the back of your electric bill, calling the office or by e-mail.

You also have the option of paying your bill online using your debit or credit card. Simply press the "See & Pay Bill Online" button on our homepage and follow the prompts or call toll free 1-866-843-9535. There will be an additional convenience fee added for this payment option. (You do not have to set up a user name and password to pay your bill online.)

We encourage you to use our Web site and would appreciate your input on areas where we can improve.

You can make comments by filling out the survey under the "Race for Quality" topic.



# Standby generators pose danger

During extended power outages such as those caused by ice storms or tornadoes, many Pickwick Electric Cooperative members have considered installing standby generators as a backup source of electricity. Although a generator does offer a steady supply of electricity, safety precautions should be taken before energizing one. The generator should be in accordance with the manufacturer's and PEC's recommendations. By taking these precautions, the member not only ensures his own safety but that of PEC employees as well.

If you are connecting the generator to your house wiring system, the connection must be made through a double-throw switch. Once the switch is installed, an inspection by the state electrical inspector is required. This switch will disconnect your electric system from PEC lines and switch it to the generator. The switch is

required by the National Electrical Code, which applies to all residential, commercial and farm wiring.



Portable generators must not be plugged into the house wiring system. If installed in this manner, the generator will backfeed through the service panel and energize the incoming service wires. This jeopardizes the safety of utility line crews who may be working on the lines.

The safest way to use a portable standby generator is to plug your appliances directly into it. To avoid serious injury, keep family members and pets away from the generator.

We at PEC encourage our members to follow these safety precautions when installing property or equipment. Whatever the reason for buying an emergency generator, please remember the vital importance of installing a transfer switch.

## Lower your energy bill

### *Ten no-cost steps you can do this winter*

- Turn down your heating system's thermostat to 68 degrees Fahrenheit. Turn it down even lower if no one is home for several days.
- Lower your water heater temperature to 120 degrees Fahrenheit and reduce hot water use by taking shorter showers and using cold water for laundry whenever possible.
- Turn off lights, televisions and computers when not in use.
- Remove and recycle your second refrigerator.
- Keep curtains open on the south side of the house and closed on the north side during the day.
- Clean refrigerator coils and set the temperature to 36 degrees to 30 degrees Fahrenheit and the freezer to zero to 5 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Make sure the fireplace damper is closed when not in use. Don't send warm air up the chimney.
- Match the size of your pot or pan to the size of stove burner and cover them with lids when cooking.
- Once a year, drain about one gallon of water from your water heater to remove sediment.
- Air-dry dishes instead of using the dishwasher's heat-drying option.

