



Please don't leave the porch light on

As I write this article, it is the week of Christmas 2009, and I am still in a child-like wonder at all the beautiful Christmas lights in our area. My thought for this month is, "Please don't leave the porch light on." Let me try to explain this thought.

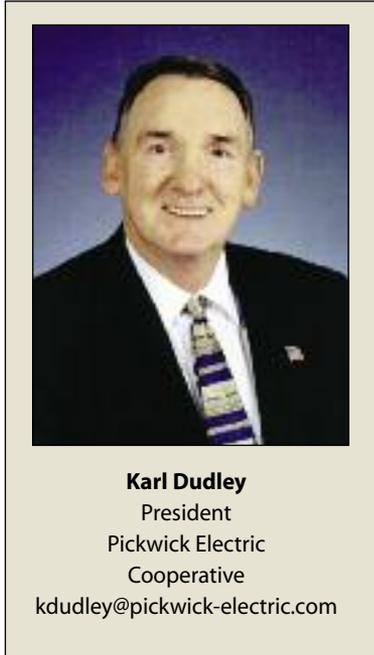
Some of the Christmas displays scream out that there is a reason for the season, and that doesn't include shopping at the mall. My wife and I made our annual trek to Opryland in Nashville to see the vast lighting displays on its grounds. She and a group of friends also traveled to Lebanon in December to see a home adorned with more than 1 million lights in that Christmas display. These proud homeowners most likely received an extremely high electric bill, estimated around \$4,000. That is not hard to believe!

As I travel about, taking note of the many light attractions, there is something else that catches my eye: the large number of porch lights that are burning day and night. My wife says, "Only an electric power person would notice that." But at a time when electricity is about 10 cents per kilowatt-hour, a 100-watt lightbulb burning 24 hours a day can add more than \$7 a month to your electric bill. For just a few more cents per month, we can install and maintain an outside light that will give you more peace of mind and illuminate a larger area than a porch light.

The porch light burning in the daytime is a symptom of a greater problem we have in America that will have to be addressed in the future. We have enjoyed

electricity at a low cost for many years, and that is quickly coming to a screeching halt.

This year, Pickwick Electric Cooperative will celebrate its 75th anniversary. This marks my 40th year at PEC, so I can remember when electricity was both plentiful and cheap in the Tennessee Valley, but that's not the case anymore. Throughout our history, we encouraged our members to use more and more electricity. We recommended that all thermostats be set and never changed. We may have even designed commercial and industrial lighting systems without a turnoff switch, and,



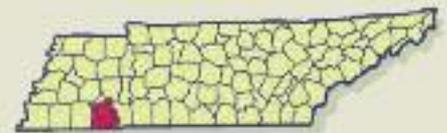
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yes, we probably told you to leave the porch light on because it cost so little. There was even discussion some 30 to 40 years ago about unmetered electricity for homes in the Tennessee Valley Authority region because it was so cheap, but that is no longer true. My, the changes we have seen in our industry.

Due to the many changes we face with rising prices for electricity and a lower power supply, we as a nation will be required to make important choices about the future of electric power in America. These choices will not only affect our pocketbook, they will also determine our standing as world leaders in technological advancement and industrial output. It will either create or eliminate jobs. I think we can all agree that wind, solar and biomass to generate electricity is a goal we strive to reach. The fact is we currently have an abundance of coal, natural gas and nuclear fuel available and can be self-sufficient

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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**These five pages contain local
news and information
for members of Pickwick
Electric Cooperative.**



if we will apply our collective technical wisdom to the task at hand and disprove the naysayers who claim coal and nuclear power are dirty and unsafe. There is no major construction of generation and, more alarmingly, no investment in transmission lines to carry the electricity because we can't decide as a country which way to move forward. One thing is certain, though: Our world competitors are not standing still — China is building a coal-fired electric generator every 10 days.

Let's return to the subject at hand, the porch light. You see, we can all help with the price and supply of electricity by turning down the heat when we aren't home, turning off the

bedroom lights when we leave the room and, yes, turning off the porch light in the daytime. In the last two years across the TVA region, the push for energy efficiency and conservation has saved a demand for electricity equal to the total output of Pickwick Dam. That unused energy saved our factories, schools and homes money and also saved the investment in more generators. You have the power over an electric generator by turning off that porch light and any other device that is not needed.

Please let us know if we can assist you with any energy-saving tips, or visit our Web site at www.pickwickec.com for more information.

Fire extinguishers: *A little preparation can go a long way*

House fires can happen in seconds: In one instant, you could go from whipping up dinner to watching flames spring up from the stovetop.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, 410,500 fires — or 78 percent of all reported structure fires — occur in homes. In the right hands, a household fire extinguisher can save lives and protect property should a small fire start.

"Every home should have at least one fire extinguisher, and you need the right type and must know how and when to use it," says John Drengenberg, consumer affairs manager at Underwriters Laboratories (UL), the Chicago-based not-for-profit firm that tests and sets minimum standards for electric-consuming items.

Fire extinguishers should be placed in easily-accessible areas of the home, close to where they might be needed (such as in a kitchen, garage or bedroom). Some basic rules to keep in mind when using household fire extinguishers:

1. If the fire is not spreading and remains confined to a small area, use the appropriate type of extinguisher. Select a multipurpose extinguisher (rated A, B or C) with the UL mark that can be used on all types of fire sources such as wood, cloth, paper,

flammable liquids (gasoline, oil, grease, oil-based paint) and energized electrical equipment, including wiring, fuse boxes, circuit breakers and appliances.

2. Know both your limits and those of the fire extinguisher.
3. Periodically inspect your extinguishers to determine if they need to be recharged or replaced. Extinguishers need to be recharged or replaced after each use — even if you haven't used the entire extinguishing agent. Check the gauge on the fire extinguisher for this information.
4. When operating a fire extinguisher, stand at least 6 feet away from the fire and keep your back to a door so you can escape easily, if necessary. Remember the word PASS:

- **Pull** the pin, hold the extinguisher away from you and release the locking mechanism.
- **Aim** low, pointing the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
- **Squeeze** the lever slowly and evenly.
- **Sweep** the nozzle from side to side.

"Fire extinguishers for home use are not designed to fight large or spreading fires," stresses Drengenberg. "Rather than fighting the fire, your No. 1 priority should be getting out safely."



Be sure to have a fire extinguisher rated for the type of fire at hand: Class A fires are ordinary materials like burning paper, lumber, cardboard and plastics; Class B fires involve flammable or combustible liquids like gasoline and kerosene; Class C fires involve energized electrical equipment such as appliances, switches, panel boxes and power tools. Photograph courtesy of the Fire Safety Council

Online HomeEnergySuite helps consumers manage energy costs

Consumers looking to lower their home energy costs can now go to Pickwick Electric Cooperatives's Web site, www.pickwickec.com, for fast, informative answers. With just a few clicks of the mouse, PEC's new HomeEnergySuite will analyze the home's current energy use and allow the homeowner to simulate various energy-saving measures to see the corresponding dollar savings.

"We want to provide our customers with one more element of education and control over their home energy use," said Bobby Barnes, PEC director of member services. "This interactive calculator takes the mystery out of where their energy dollars are going, and it shows consumers what they really want to know: how they can reduce their energy costs and how much money they can save if they implement certain conservation measures."

PEC selected the HomeEnergySuite, provided by Apogee Interactive Inc., to supplement its consumer-education efforts because of its ease of use and how well it approximates savings for homes in the utility's service area. "Users can try changes like adjusting their thermostat settings, turning down their water heater temperature, adding storm windows or changing out their heating system to see how much that measure might save," Barnes explained. The calculator automatically factors in local weather and current electricity prices.

Web-based tools such as the energy calculator are becoming more integral to good, cost-effective customer service as consumers increasingly rely on the Internet to help manage their busy households. "This calculator, along with our

online bill pay program and other Web site content, greatly expands what our customers can accomplish at their convenience, after business hours," said Barnes. "These tools also offer cost savings to the cooperative through reduced customer calls and on-site visits, and that saves money for everyone."

According to Apogee President Susan Gilbert, the HomeEnergySuite is one of the firm's most popular applications. "PEC joins more than 200 utilities nationwide that have added this educational feature to their Web sites," she said. "Its ability to answer customers' questions 24/7 and reduce customer inquiries helps PEC in accomplishing its goal of increasing customer satisfaction while lowering operating costs."

Also available on the HomeEnergySuite is the residential energy library. This extensive library will provide you with tons of information about how energy is used in your home as well as basic electricity fundamentals. It explains how the electric utility industry generates and delivers power to its customers, covering basics, delivery, safety and generation.

Not only is the HomeEnergySuite full of information for the adults, it provides fun and games for the younger age group at KidsKorner. And for teachers, KidsKorner offers some basic lesson plans with activity sheets and experiment and craft ideas.

"PEC serves approximately 20,500 customers in a six-county area," Barnes said. "We are happy to offer this service to our customers and encourage them to visit our Web site and take advantage of these tools as we strive to conserve energy for the future."



Calculate All The Savings For Your Home Energy Use.



LEARN MORE AT
www.pickwickec.com

We appreciate your cards

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

Jeannie Watson
 Work & Greer, PC
 Larry and Teresa Grimes
 Carl and Virginia Crabb
 Zona McAfee
 Pennyrile Electric
 Health Partners Employer Services
 Work Partners
 Bobby and Teresa Stanford
 HD Supply Utilities
 Patterson & Dewar Engineers
 Smith Bail Bonds, Frankie Smith
 City of Michie officials and employees
 Mary Frances Wright
 James Edward Wright
 John Edward and Frances Wright
 Southwest Electric Company
 Fisher & Arnold Inc.
 Nashville Electric Service
 Youth Town of Tennessee
 The Middle Tennessee Electric Membership Corporation
 Verble Nixon
 Tommy and Connie Willcutt
 Mrs. Joe Whirley
 Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation
 Baldwin Pole & Piling Company
 McNairy County Adult Education Center staff
 Tri-County Electric Membership Corporation
 Alcorn County Electric Power Association
 Ron and Jimmie Sue Lambert
 Sue Nell Curtis
 Powell Valley Electric Cooperative
 Alvine Boyd
 Don and Novella Smith
 Jeanie Sloan
 EPB
 United Utility Supply
 Torco Testing Services Inc.

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 474
 Mary Finley
 Junell Moore
 David Hatch
 Martha Franks
 R.A. Phillips
 Owen and Jeanell Qualls
 Allen & Hoshall
 Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association
 Caney Fork Electric Cooperative
 Richard and Melvina Babiec
 Betty Rickman
 Fort Loudoun Electric Cooperative
 Central Service Association
 Hollingsworth Locksmith Service
 McWhorter & Franklin Engineers
 David and Carlean Gray
 Volunteer Energy Cooperative
 Ernest and Dianne Clark
 Holston Electric Cooperative
 Fischer & Arnold Inc.
 Younger Associates
 Plateau Electric Cooperative
 CSA Engineering Services
 Roger, Maudie and Roger Bedford III
 Appalachian Electric Cooperative
 Service Electric Company
 Tennessee Valley Electric Cooperative
 Willie and Sue Jones
 Patricia Ann Hill
 Southeastern Line Constructors
 Apprenticeship and Training office and staff
 Ezra Wilson
 Tammy Walker
 McNairy County Health Care
 John E. and Phyllis Ann Dunwoody
 MidSouth Utility Consultants LLC
 Southern Wood Preserving
 Jerry and Belle Jarrett
 Shirley Moore
 Maudine Dancer

Jimmy Harville
 CoBank
 Pat and Helen Montgomery
 Meriwether Lewis Electric Cooperative
 Estel and Mary Ruth Mills
 Coats Electric
 Pinnacle Data Systems
 Tennessee Valley Public Power Association
 Harold and Frankie Finley
 Doug Fiero and family
 Almae Chappell
 Sue Baker and family
 Frankie Henry
 Utility Equipment Service
 Upper Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation
 Duck River Electric Membership Corporation
 Robert and Jane Taylor
 Red River Specialties Inc.
 Barry and Evalee Shelton
 Betty Ashe and staff
 Shawn Smith
 Pam Williams
 Buddy and Jean Pickens
 Humboldt Utilities
 Peggy May
 Billy and Nancy Newcomb
 Gibson Electric Membership Corporation
 Southwood Inn Motel
 Amy Faucett
 Cooperative Response Center Inc.
 Robert and Dortha Williams
 Steve and Sherry Hunt
 The Mabrys
 Leon and Eyvonne Maness
 Ruffin & Associates
 Progressive Solutions
 Rufus and Nancy Burcham
 Paducah Power System
 Joel Gilbert and family