

# *Season's Greetings*

We're together in all seasons, and we'll especially be thinking of our customers during the holiday season ... to make sure you have reliable electric service to enjoy the baked ham, the Christmas lights and the holiday music. The employees of Pickwick Electric Cooperative have worked hard all year long to make sure you have the power you need to enjoy all that the holiday season brings.

We will be on the job during the holiday season, too, because it's important to us that our customers have the best of everything, including electric service. When you light the tree, turn up the stereo for a few holiday songs or flip on the porch light to watch the snowflakes fall, take a moment to remember that we're working for you in all seasons ... that our thoughts go out to you during these special holidays.

In case of emergency, please call (731) 645-3411.



## 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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P.O. Box 49

Selmer, TN 38375

Phone Numbers:

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(731) 632-3333

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Web site:

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

These five pages contain local

news and information

for members of Pickwick

Electric Cooperative.

*Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year  
from P.E.C. board of directors,  
attorney, president  
and employees*

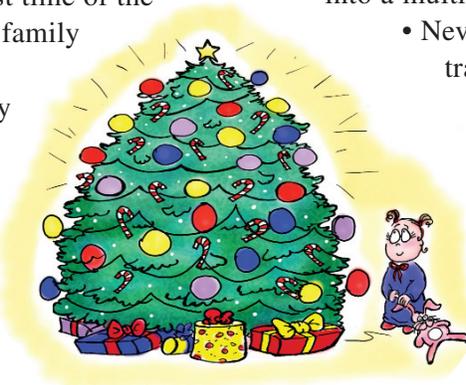
# Make the holidays merry — and fire-free

The winter holidays can be the best time of the year — as long as you and your family stay safe.

Be extra vigilant about fire safety as you celebrate the holidays. Amid the guests, the cooking, the decorations and the busyness of the season, a third of all residential fires occur during the winter, according to the National Fire Protection Agency.

Protect your family and your home by following these electrical safety tips:

- Don't overload outlets or electrical cords. Instead of plugging the extra lights, appliances and decorations



into a multi-sided plug, invest in a power strip.

- Never run cords under rugs or in high-traffic areas. People can trip over them, and the rug can cause wear on a cord. That can make it vulnerable to overheating and starting a fire.
- After the holidays are over, pack up your extension cords and store them with your decorations. Extension cords are not designed for permanent use.
- If you find a crack or frayed wire on a cord, throw it away.
- Keep your smoke detector batteries fresh and your detector up to date.

## Can't program your thermostat? Try a new one

Are you getting all of the energy savings you can from your programmable thermostat? Most people aren't.

That's because few people understand how to program their thermostats to raise and lower the temperature when the house is going to be empty or while everyone will be asleep.

The thermostat itself won't save you any energy or money on your electric bill. To see a savings, you have to program the thermostat to turn the heat down during times of the day when nobody's home.

If your thermostat is too complicated, consider investing in a new one.

Manufacturers are introducing programmable thermostats that are easier to use and understand. New models have touch screens and digital reminders. One even "talks" to you to help you do the programming.

Proper use of a programmable thermostat can save you up to \$150 a year in energy costs, according to Energy Star, a federal government program.

To get the most savings from programmable thermostats:

- Program the thermostat to turn down the heat and keep the temperature low for at least eight hours at a stretch. For example, the thermostat can lower the temperature right after everyone leaves for school and work, bring it back up just before the family is due to return home and then set it back again at bedtime.
- Override the preprogrammed settings and put in your own. That way, you can set the thermostat back for longer periods of time if you know you'll be gone a while.
- Use the hold or vacation setting when you're planning to be out of the house for a few days. Set this feature to keep the house several degrees cooler in the winter or several degrees warmer in the summer, even if you'll be away just for the weekend.
- Change the batteries in your thermostat each year to keep it functioning properly.



# Out of the woods

For Craig Howell, whittling started as a pastime in his back yard and escalated into a money-making hobby. About eight years ago, Howell began to whittle on a piece of walnut wood with nothing particular in mind. His first creation turned into a walking cane. From that moment on, his imagination flourished with various ideas.

Howell's growing passion to whittle led him to search for different kinds of wood. In the swamp areas of West Tennessee, he found Tupelo gum trees, cypress knees (a structure in the root of a cypress tree) and sumac and sassafras trees. He would test all of these to make his creations. He was well on his way to enjoying the pleasures of whittling.

One of Howell's most time-consuming pieces is the snake cane, usually carved from sumac, a lightweight wood. When sumac is not available, he uses poplar or sassafras. Using a wood burner, he carefully burns each snake scale one at a time. Then he delicately carves an open mouth with fangs and a tongue into the handle of the snake cane. Howell sometimes applies stain and a coat of polyurethane to the finished product, or he'll leave it natural to age with time.



**Craig Howell's wooden creations come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Below left, the Santa ornaments are displayed on a handmade tree.**



Howell's canes vary in price, beginning at \$25. His most expensive cane was sold to a collector for \$160. It was unique in that it had three snakes carved into the twisted cane.

His Santa creations carved from cypress knees are among Howell's favorites. "Every cypress knee is different, which makes every Santa unique," he said.

The Santas come in a variety of shapes and sizes, each having a different facial expression. He colors them with the traditional Christmas colors of red, green and white. Howell takes pride in sharing his Santa creations with his family and friends, but they are also displayed and sold at L&L Emporium and Gifts in Corinth, Miss. As a result of his sales at L&L, his creations have been purchased by visitors from all over the U.S. as well as England and Switzerland.

When asked how long it takes to make a piece, Howell's reply was, "As long as you want to spend on it; detail takes time. In most cases I spend from eight to 15 hours based on the size and shape of the creation."

Howell also sculpts broom handles from a variety of woods. Ash, walnut and maple are used to make the heavier broom handles, while sumac and pawpaw are used for the lightweight ones. His twisted broom handles are made from trees that have been entwined with honeysuckle vine. When working on larger pieces of wood, Howell uses a draw horse and a draw knife to speed up the process.



Above left, Santa's likeness is first carved into the wood. Above center, a mobile "tree" of Santas. Above right, Howell uses a draw horse and a draw knife, along with small hand tools (inset) to carve his creations.

Howell supplies broommaker Jack Martin with his unique brand of broom handles. These are displayed and sold at the annual Broomcorn Festival each September in McNairy County, or they can be purchased directly from Martin by contacting him at 731-645-4823.

Howell says, "Although my creations require a lot of time, I receive much pleasure in knowing that others enjoy them as much as I enjoy making them."

Howell is just one of the many artists and crafts people who live in McNairy County. For more information, you can e-mail Howell at [craighowell@bellsouth.net](mailto:craighowell@bellsouth.net).

## School days past

This picture of the first-grade class at Selmer Elementary School in 1965 was submitted by Beverly Lambert. Edna Wagoner, seated at the rear of the classroom, was the teacher, and the principal was Ted Smith. If you can name either of the students listed as "unknown" in the cutline, or if you have old school pictures you want to submit, call Lambert at 731-646-3786. The pictures will be published as space becomes available.



Front to back, first row, are Gary Morton, Nina Hanna, Keith Moore, Joanie Hurst, Beverly Farris, Patty Casey, **unknown** and Tim Weatherford. Second row: Bill Lambert, Jim Gray, Jimmie Sue Wilson, Linda Jo Tucker, Robert Gray, Carol Bryan, Rhonda Dixon and Gretchen Goodrum. Third row: Ricky Dean, Ronnie Atkinson, Bobby Watson, Paul Robinson, Jeff Wood, Charlie Whitaker, Mark Hacker and David Sweeney. Fourth row: **unknown**, Billy Ward, Rebecca Ward, Roger Rickman, Rebecca Browder, Betty Crowe and Harold Moore.



## PEC employees receive service awards

Congratulations to nine PEC employees who received service awards during 2007.

They have a combined total of 155 years of service.



Jeremy Hurst  
10 years



Wes Harrison  
10 years



Katie McClain  
10 years



John Bowers  
15 years



Janet Browder  
15 years



Debbie Tennyson  
15 years



Donny Gibbs  
20 years



Beverly Lambert  
30 years



Randall Taylor  
30 years

## *Happy Holidays*

*The PEC office will be closed on:*

*Monday, Dec. 24, 2007*

*Tuesday, Dec. 25, 2007*

*Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2008*

