

Sent to you by Gibson EMC – your Touchstone Energy cooperative

# The Tennessee Magazine

April 2009

*History for kids:*  
**Andrew Johnson**

**Summer Vacation  
Close to Home**

*Energy Policy:*  
**How Will it Affect  
Your Bill?**

**Cookie Creations**

**50<sup>th</sup>**  
1958 • ANNIVERSARY • 2008

# Make sure your home and electronics are protected — when lightning strikes

Some say lightning never strikes twice in the same place, but Jonathan and Rhonda Carpenter know that is incorrect. Their home, located between Medina and Milan, has been struck three times.

After paying to replace two televisions, a computer monitor, a down draft/vent-hood and a garage door opener, the Carpenters turned to Gibson Electric Membership Corporation for a solution.

They now lease surge suppression equipment through Gibson EMC's Surge Alert program. "The installation was simple and easy," says Jonathan Carpenter. "I just wish we had done it sooner."

Surge Alert's effectiveness is based on a

two-stage protection network made up of a low-profile, meter-base arrester and one or more high-quality, plug-in surge protectors. The meter-base arrester helps protect motors and compressors of large appliances, while the plug-in units provide the extra protection needed by sensitive electronic equipment.

Electronic equipment most vulnerable to surges includes stereo equipment, televisions, VCRs, DVD players, video games, telephones, answering machines, microwave ovens, garage door openers, security system controllers, computers, modems and printers.

Surges can come from outside or inside your home. Though lightning is an obvious cause, other sources are birds and animals

coming into contact with power lines, road accidents involving utility poles or even a neighbor using power equipment. Most surges, however, are caused by equipment inside your home such as heating and cooling units, refrigerators or vacuum cleaners.

Surges occur over television cable and phone and power lines; any equipment connected to an outside source is susceptible.

Dianne and Joey Reed of Brazil learned that the hard way. "Lightning struck the meter and came in through the power line, blowing everything in the living room," says Joey Reed. "It also came in through the phone line and blew our answering machine and computer modem."

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## Surge protection: As easy as 1, 2, 3

- 1 Drop this completed form by a Gibson EMC customer service center or mail it to: Gibson EMC, Surge Alert, P.O. Box 47, Trenton, TN 38382.
- 2 We will schedule a visit to your home to conduct a grounding inspection and to help you choose the **Surge Alert** components that will best meet your needs.
- 3 A Gibson EMC employee will install the **Surge Alert** two-stage protection network — a meter-base suppressor to help protect the motors and compressors on your large appliances from surge damage, plus one plug-in unit of your choice to protect your sensitive electronic equipment. Best of all, your cost is only \$5.99 per month, plus a one-time installation fee of \$29.99. (Additional surge suppressors may be purchased, if desired.) And, with our lease plan, if the surge suppression equipment is damaged while protecting your home, it will be replaced at no cost.



**Meter-base suppressor, left, and plug-in unit**



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Gibson EMC Account No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Best time to call is between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

# Customers to see savings in electric bills

## TVA reduces wholesale rate 7%; Gibson EMC raises distribution rate 3%

**G**ibson Electric Membership Corporation customer-owners will see a net savings in their electric bills beginning April 1.

The Tennessee Valley Authority is decreasing the amount of its quarterly fuel cost adjustment by 40 percent, which translates into a 7-percent reduction in its wholesale rate. The net savings to Gibson EMC's customers will result from a blend of the 7-percent decrease in TVA's wholesale power rate and a 3-percent increase in Gibson EMC's distribution rate.

The dollars saved will depend on the amount of energy used. For example, a residential customer using 1,500 kilowatt-hours will save about \$3.70 per month, whereas a customer using 2,000 kilowatt-hours will save about \$6 per month.

Gibson EMC has not raised its distribution rate since 2005. President and CEO Dan Rodamaker says, "For some time, we've known a distribution rate increase was imminent,



**Dan Rodamaker**  
President and CEO  
Gibson EMC

but we have been taking steps to put it off for as long as possible. Our board of trustees and our entire staff have worked diligently to cut costs and control spending, but considerable increases in operation and maintenance expenses, depreciation and taxes as well as the impact of damage from the 2006 F3 tornadoes, Hurricane Ike and January's ice storms now necessitate an increase."

Rodamaker says that Gibson EMC expects to receive federal assistance to help recover much of the cost associated with returning the electric system to its pre-ice storm condition. But, with an estimated \$7.2 million in damage, he says, there will be a significant outlay of cooperative dollars, too.

"We regret that it is necessary to implement a rate increase at this time, but it is the only financially responsible thing for us to do," Rodamaker says. "A small distribution rate increase will enable Gibson EMC to maintain its financial stability and ensure service reliability to our customer-owners."

Rate schedules, along with information on ways customers can hold down their energy costs, are available in Gibson EMC's customer service centers or on our Web site at [gibsonemc.com](http://gibsonemc.com).

## Cooperative pays ad valorem taxes

**G**ibson Electric Membership Corporation paid \$917,467 in 2008 ad valorem taxes to the towns and counties in which the cooperative has facilities or infrastructure. The amount of taxes paid was based on the assessed value of the infrastructure, including buildings, substations, transformers, poles and lines.

"This is just one way we bring value to the areas that Gibson EMC serves," says Gibson EMC President and CEO Dan Rodamaker. "Our board of trustees and employees work hard to provide exceptional electric service, but we know that our job is much broader than that. Being a good corporate citizen is fundamental to Gibson EMC's way of doing business."

The 2008 ad valorem taxes paid to counties were ...

Crockett	.....	\$206,158
Dyer	.....	\$25,414
Gibson	.....	\$374,175
Haywood	.....	\$918
Lake	.....	\$86,010
Lauderdale	.....	\$37
Madison	.....	\$24,984
Obion	.....	\$199,771
<b>TOTAL</b>	.....	<b>\$917,467</b>

## Perry promoted

**G**ibson Electric Membership Corporation employee Mark Perry has been promoted to line crewleader. Perry, who works out of the Tiptonville customer service center, came to work for Gibson EMC in October 2004 as a first class lineworker.

"I'm looking forward to taking on the additional responsibility of leading the crew," Perry says. "They are a well-trained, hard-working team. I'll just do what I can to keep us moving in the right direction."

Perry and his wife, Melissa, have three children: Twins Kelsey and Bronson are in the ninth grade at Millington High School, and Morgan is a freshman at Middle Tennessee State University.

"Mark has done a great job for us in the past," says Vice President of Operations Barry Smith. "We are confident that he will be even more of an asset in this leadership role."



**Mark Perry**  
Line Crewleader



# Fine-tune energy use with the right television

Streamlining your home's energy use can make a big impact on monthly electric bills. One energy-waster to consider is your television.

When combined with DVD players and video game consoles, television use makes up about 10 percent of an average household's annual electric bill, says Energy Star, a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy.

Depending on your television's technology, your monthly-related energy costs can vary dramatically. Standard sets use a cathode ray tube, with those smaller than 40 inches drawing roughly 73 watts when on — close to what a 75-watt incandescent lightbulb uses. An average flat-screen LCD television of the same size also requires 70 watts, while a similar flat-screen plasma TV consumes an average 246 watts when on.

With more families opting for flat screen TVs these days, the choice between LCD and plasma can make an impact, to almost startling levels on a national scale. More than 275 million TVs are in use across the country, with the average household tuning in 4.7 hours a day. It takes more than 50 billion kwh a year to keep those sets on, says the EPA, meaning it costs Americans \$5.2 billion to watch all of that TV.

The good news is that energy-efficient TVs — LCD, plasma and otherwise — are becoming available. As of Novem-



## Energy Efficiency

### Tip of the Month

In the market for a new television? Choose an Energy Star model for energy savings. Qualified Energy Star TVs use about 30 percent less energy than standard units. For a complete listing of qualified models, go to [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).

— Source: U.S. Department of Energy

ber 2008, models having the blue Energy Star labels are those that use less energy in both active and standby modes. Energy Star designation before this date indicated energy efficiency only when switched off, in standby mode.

“Energy Star's new specifications for televisions are turning the channel on energy-guzzling sets, making them go the way of rabbit-ears and black-and-white broadcasts,” says EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson.

Energy Star estimates that if all of

the TVs sold in the United States meet the new requirements, energy savings could grow to \$1 billion a year. Related greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced by the equivalent of taking about 1 million cars off the road.

If you're not in the market for a new TV, you can still cut back on the electricity your old set uses by adjusting the picture settings. The brighter the screen, the more energy it needs. Also, the small stream of electricity a TV draws while in standby mode can be eliminated by unplugging it or by plugging it into a power strip that can be switched off.

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Energy Information Administration, Natural Resources Defense Council, EPA and National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



## When lightning strikes ...

*Continued, from page 16*

“I had heard about Gibson EMC's meter-based surge protection equipment,” he says. “After getting hit, I stopped in their office to talk about it. A few days later, Bud Cole (Gibson EMC Residential Energy Services Specialist) came out, explained how it worked and installed it. I added a plug-in unit for my entertainment center for extra protection.”

For Tiptonville resident Jeannette Cates, whose home was severely damaged by lightning a year ago, the Surge Alert equipment she leases from Gibson EMC is worth the cost. “The lightning burned everything,” says Cates. “It even hit my security system, knocking the alarm off the wall. When Gibson EMC told me about the surge protection equipment, they did not have to tell me twice. I don't even know it is there, but I am glad it is when it storms.”

To obtain surge protection for your home, fill out the form on page 16 and mail it to Gibson EMC or drop it by your local Gibson EMC customer service center. Visit [www.gibsonemc.com](http://www.gibsonemc.com) or call us for more information.

## Board of trustees nomination, election procedure

The board of trustees of Gibson Electric Membership Corporation has the duty of appointing a nominations committee at least 90 days before the proposed date of the first district meeting at which co-op members are to elect trustees. The nominations committee consists of three to 11 members from the cooperative's service area.

The nominations committee prepares and posts a list of nominations for trustees at Gibson EMC's corporate office at least 40 days before each district meeting. Other nominations, signed by 50 or more cooperative members, also can be made. These are due 30 days before each district meeting. All nominations are then posted.

Elected trustees serve three-year terms on a rotational basis. A trustee whose term expires will be elected by secret written ballot by members present at the district meeting. A plurality of votes cast determines the winner; drawing by lots resolves any tie.

If you have questions about the election process, call your local customer service center and ask for extension 1411.

**Make a note! Gibson EMC's annual meeting will be Saturday, Aug. 8, at Obion Co. Central High School.**



## Union City company repairs machinery across the country

If a company's metal stamping equipment breaks down, Southern Machinery Repair Inc. is prepared to fix it. The Union City company has a successful niche in the world of industrial manufacturing: It is one of the main companies in the country that repairs metal stamping presses and forming equipment, the equipment that is used to make the metal parts for a variety of consumer products. These parts are used in everything from cars and appliances to air conditioners and farming equipment.

"We repair the equipment that actually makes the parts for many products," says Mike Forchione, the company's sales manager. "We repair the machines that make parts for air conditioners, that make the rotary cutter blades for bush hogs or that make fluorescent light fixtures."

Founded in 1982, Southern Machinery Repair specializes in the rebuilding and repair of presses, press brakes, shears and forming equipment. It started out in a 4,000-square-foot tractor garage and now operates out of a 56,000-square-foot building, Forchione says.

As the company has grown, Gibson Electric Membership Corporation has worked with it to meet its electric needs, says Gibson EMC Vice President of Customer Care Kerry Watson.

"With years of experience in the repair, rebuild and maintenance of metal stamping and forming equipment, we feel that our modern facility and qualified technicians offer companies a variety of services with minimum down time," says Ronald T. Cooper, who owns the company. He and his brother, Don, learned the trade from their late father, Jim Cooper.

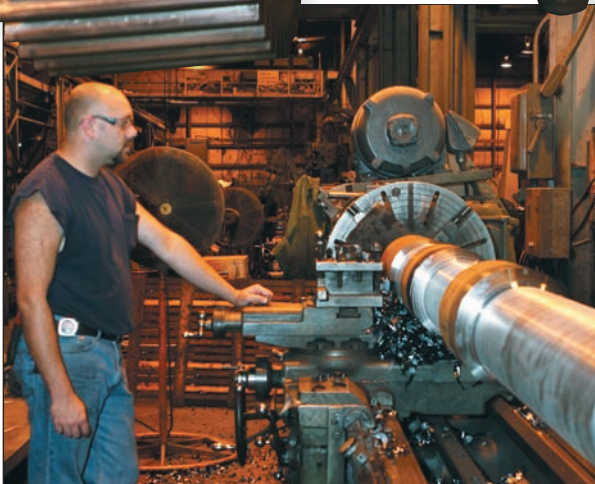
"We work for about 500 customers spread across the country and as far away as Mexico and Brazil," Forchione says. Many of their corporate customers have multiple plant sites.

Southern Machinery technicians can fix the equipment at the customer's site or bring the equipment to their Union City plant for repair. All projects are supported by qualified electrical and mechanical engineers, he says. Some repairs can be made in less than a week, but parts availability and project complexity can prolong the process, he explains.

Southern Machinery, which has 30 employees, has made an effort to reach standards of quality recognized by industry. For example, Forchione says, it is one of two press repair companies in the United States that is ISO 9001-2000 certified.

In 1992, Ron Cooper and Southern Machinery Repair were named a Tennessee Small Business of the Year.

"Companies come back to us for repairs," says Forchione, "because of the quality of our work, quick response time and on-time delivery."



Larry Bush, top, and Kent Forrester, above, work on machinery at Southern Machinery Repair in Union City.



## Lake County couple attend Young Leaders event

Joseph and Mallory Sumara of Tiptonville recently joined more than 200 others from across the state at the Young Leaders Conference Feb. 20-21 at the Doubletree Hotel in Jackson.

The Sumaras represented Gibson Electric Membership Corporation at the annual conference.

Designed to bring young leaders together, the conference focused on “Communicating Leadership Cooperatively” and offered a variety of topics affecting rural Tennesseans. The Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation’s Young Farmers and Ranchers, which co-sponsors the conference with the Tennessee Council of Cooperatives, is an organization within the Farm Bureau for men and women ages 18 to 35 with an interest in agriculture.

The Tennessee Council of Cooperatives is composed of a variety of cooperatives across the state, including electric cooperatives (like Gibson EMC), dairy cooperatives, farm credit banks, farm supply cooperatives and the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation.

“Young leaders are vital to our communities and the life-



Joseph and Mallory Sumara represented Gibson EMC at the recent Young Leaders Conference in Jackson.

line of our agricultural industry,” said Mark Klepper, a livestock producer from Greene County who serves as chairman of the Young Farmers and Ranchers. “If we don’t keep young people involved, we’ll all suffer in the long run. This Young Leaders Conference is meant to give us a renewed enthusiasm and confidence in our leadership abilities.”

Participants are selected and sponsored by cooperatives or the Young Farmers and Ranchers to attend the motivational, recreational and educational weekend.

The conference gave the Sumaras and other participants the opportunity to attend workshops that addressed areas of interest to young farmers and cooperative members. The program covered such topics as cooperative incentives, communications, estate planning, the future of agriculture and securing a financial future.

Tennessee State Reps. Jimmy Eldridge of Jackson and Barrett Rich of Somerville addressed concerns in today’s state Legislature. Senator Dolores Gresham of Somerville gave the keynote address during the conference’s final banquet.

## Staying up-to-date on electrical codes

More than 150 electricians from across West Tennessee attended recent classes sponsored by Gibson Electric Membership Corporation on 2008 updates to the National Electrical Code. The classes were taught by State Deputy Electrical Inspector Susan Searce.

“The sessions have been well-attended and should prove to be helpful,” says Gibson EMC Vice President for Customer



State Deputy Electrical Inspector Susan Searce teaches a class in Trenton on 2008 updates to the National Electrical Code.

Care Kerry Watson. “In the past, we sponsored just one class annually, but this year sessions were held in three locations — Troy, Alamo and Trenton — for the convenience of area electricians and contractors.”