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The Tennessee Magazine

June 2010

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Getting the most out of portable generators

Gibson Electric Membership Corporation works hard to deliver reliable service, but there are still times when outages will occur. During an outage, a generator can ease the inconvenience, but you should do your homework before buying a generator. Equally important is having your generator installed properly so it can operate safely.

First, you should determine the size you will need. Start by making a list of the appliances you want to run in the event of an outage. Find both starting and running wattage requirements on appliance nameplates or in owner's manuals, then add them up to determine the total wattage. Although the starting wattage will last for only a few seconds, the generator must be able to meet it to run safely. Once you have a total, scale the generator up a size or two to ensure safe, efficient operation.

Fuel is another consideration. Generators typically use gasoline, diesel, propane or natural gas as fuel.

- Gasoline remains the most common fuel source for residential portable generators. However, gasoline is highly flammable, has a short shelf life and doesn't burn as efficiently as diesel.

- Diesel has several advantages over gasoline: It is less flammable, has a longer shelf life and generally can be obtained in an emergency. Diesel engine noise, however, can be louder.

- Propane boasts a long shelf life, is clean-burning and obtainable during power outages, has a quieter engine noise and is more emissions-compliant. Disadvantages include more complicated fuel systems with larger tanks. Propane-fired generators are usually less expensive to buy and to operate, but they don't last as long as diesel or gasoline models.

- Natural gas can be supplied to a home through a larger distribution system, making it a virtually limitless source of fuel. However, natural gas-burning generators deliver lower power outputs (Btu per unit) than gasoline engines, have higher installation costs, require three times the fuel compared to diesel and can be dangerous if gas lines are broken.

Before using your generator, call Gibson EMC to make sure the generator is properly installed. Portable generators can prove fatal to you and lineworkers when improperly used. See story, at right.

And once your generator is installed, invest in annual maintenance inspections by a qualified generator contractor so your generator will work when you most need it.



Generator safety: Lives on the line

When storms hit our area, Gibson Electric Membership Corporation rushes to your aid as soon as weather conditions allow our lineworkers to travel and make repairs safely.

Our line crews take necessary precautions before they work on power lines. Even so, our workers' lives remain in your hands. Portable generators, while helpful in times of power outages, can seriously injure you or our lineworkers if improperly installed and operated.

We urge you to follow these safety guidelines when using a portable generator ...

- Never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring without an appropriate transfer switch installed. This can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with the lines, including line workers making repairs.
- Hire a qualified, licensed electrician to connect the generator to your home's circuits and wiring.
- Always plug appliances directly into generators.
- Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords.
- Make sure extension cords are free of cuts or tears and their plugs have three prongs. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage.
- Ensure your generator is properly grounded.
- Never overload a generator. A portable generator should only be used when necessary to power essential equipment or appliances.
- Turn off all equipment powered by the generator before shutting it down.
- Keep the generator dry. Operate it on a dry surface under an open structure.
- Always have a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby.
- Never fuel a generator while it is operating.
- Read and adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation.
- Never cut corners when it comes to safety.

Gibson EMC annual meeting Aug. 7

Make your plans to attend Gibson Electric Membership Corporation's annual meeting on Saturday, Aug. 7, at Crockett County High School, 2014 Highway 88, in Alamo. We'll have entertainment, food, door prizes, a health fair, energy exhibits, activities for children, a business meeting and much more.



Members who register at Gibson EMC's annual meeting receive a goody bag and are eligible to win valuable door prizes awarded throughout the morning.

AMI meter technology improves service

“Gibson Electric Membership Corporation is continually looking for ways we can improve service to you, our customer-owner,” says Gibson EMC President and CEO Dan Rodamaker.

“We embrace technology when it is cost-effective and enables us to deliver better service. In fact, you may be surprised to know that your cooperative is a leader in using advanced meter infrastructure (AMI). Only 20 percent of meters within the Tennessee Valley have this state-of-the-art technology.”

“AMI technology allows Gibson EMC to remotely read power use information across our power lines on a daily basis,” Rodamaker explains. The information communicated from the meter includes the amount of electricity used by the customer-owner, instantaneous volt-



Dan Rodamaker,
Gibson EMC
President and CEO

Benefits of AMI

- Improves customer service by minimizing the need to physically access your property or manually read your meter
- Addresses billing concerns more quickly and accurately; at your request, it can remotely read your meter to ensure it is working properly
- Provides blink and outage information, helping us to pinpoint problems and resolve them in a timely manner
- Helps us allocate crews efficiently
- Reduces electricity theft
- Gives us the ability to develop new programs such as PAY-Go

age, blinks or momentary power interruptions and power outages occurring at the customer’s point of service.

“The information passes through our self-contained network,” Rodamaker says. “So don’t worry about the security of your data; it cannot be accessed by outside sources.”

A comprehensive analysis and pilot

project launched in 2005 showed that AMI would be a sound financial investment and improve service to Gibson EMC customer-owners. Since that time, automatic meters were installed at all of Gibson EMC’s residential and commercial customer-owners’ services.

AMI benefits customers in the short-term by providing more detailed information about electric use.

“The equipment even identifies specific customers affected by an outage and enables us to confirm power restoration before our personnel leave an area,” Rodamaker says. (Gibson EMC still urges customer-owners to call 1-800-977-4076 in the event of an outage to ensure the fastest possible power restoration.)

“And, because the meter is read remotely, there are fewer times when we must come onto a customer’s property,” Rodamaker adds. “In the long-term, AMI data will enable Gibson EMC to more accurately maintain, plan and engineer our electric system. This improved efficiency will help hold down future costs to you, our customer-owner.”

VP of Accounting, Finance hired

Richard BeDen joined Gibson Electric Membership Corporation in March as the Vice President of Accounting and Finance.

BeDen comes to Gibson EMC from Southwest Tennessee Electric Membership Corporation, where he served as Vice President of Accounting and Finance.

Altogether, BeDen has more than 25 years experience as a controller in various business environments. He is a certified public accountant and a graduate of Clemson University, where he earned a B.S. in accounting.

“We feel fortunate that Richard has joined our employee family and know that he will be an asset to the corporation,” says Gibson EMC President and CEO Dan Rodamaker.

“I look forward to serving in this position to efficiently manage the cooperative’s finances with the customer-owners in mind,” BeDen said.

BeDen and his wife, Kendra, have three children: Kelsey, Kaley and Kameron.



Richard BeDen



Upgrading the electric system:

Gibson EMC recently upgraded its system to 25 kV in the Polk, Rives, Crockett and Hop-In areas. The conversion required several outages, but it will help ensure future service reliability. At left, Lineworker Jason Mills climbs one of the 500-plus poles Gibson EMC lineworkers climbed to complete the conversion.



A contest winner: Electric Cooperatives —

Holly stepped out of her vehicle, followed by her good friend, James.

"I can't believe you dragged me out here just to film you. Do you think anyone even watches your channel? Besides your friends anyways," complained James.

"Oh, calm down. We won't be very long. This could be the story to push me over the edge, so show a little consideration, please. Anyways, do you think there could be a bigger crowd? This is insane," she whispered to James.

Holly had been planning this story for weeks now, ever since Lightning Strikes announced they would hold a press conference in her very own hometown. She had big dreams of being a great news reporter on a respectable news broadcast on a well-known channel one day, but for now all she had was a pathetic video channel along with millions of other people with dreams as big as hers. So it was definitely hard to get noticed, but she thought interviewing the band might be the story to earn her a little recognition.

"Well, this band is pretty big news. They have a great sound, and I'm sure people like their music, whether they understand it or not," answered James. They struggled as they made their way through the crowd to get to the front, being shoved and pressed into other people, blinding lights from cameras flashing on all sides, so they could get a few words in for a story. When they finally found a good spot, James prepared his camera. "Ready when you are, Holly. Make it quick. I've got plans."

A story by Micah Lanier

"Hello, this is Holly at the press conference where thousands of people have joined to ask questions and learn more about the meaning behind the superstar rock band Lightning Strikes' controversial lyrics," said Holly. "Surprisingly, their lyrics are not vulgar in the slightest way. They often discuss electric cooperatives and how they work, which has investor-owned utilities in an uproar. Few people know and understand the difference, so let's ask a few questions."

Holly looked around, and without a news crew in sight, she felt confident she'd get the story first.

"Hello, Mr. Ray, can you tell us what your lyrics mean?"

"We're just trying to inform today's people about electric cooperatives and how they can change the world," commented Ray, the lead singer. Holly noticed that he was laid back and confident and definitely the leader of the pack. He had long, stringy black hair and had a rugged look to him. He looks just like a stereotypical lead singer of a rock band, she thought.

"Excuse me. What's the difference between electric cooperatives and investor-owned utilities?" asked a young man in the crowd.

"To answer your question, an electric cooperative is a nonprofit organization, which means all its revenue goes back into the cooperative for maintenance and repairs, and an investor-owned utility keeps the extra funds for a profit," replied Soren, the lead guitarist. She was calm and relaxed, surely the mellowed-out inspiration of the group that every goth-punk teenage girl dreamed about being.

"Exactly what do you mean by this? I mean, I know money is the difference, but what else is there?" asked Holly.

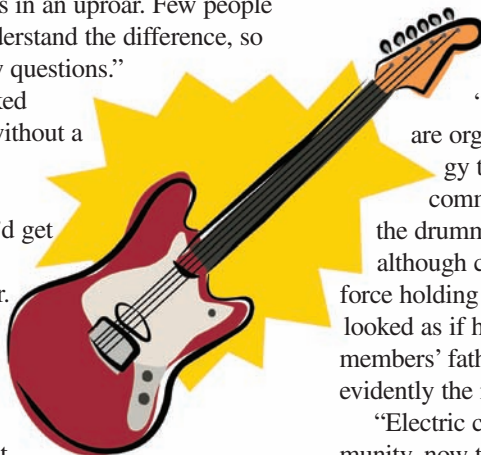
"Well, electric cooperatives are organizations that provide energy to rural areas and help the community," answered Thomas, the drummer. He was very clean-cut, although casual and undeniably the force holding the group together. He looked as if he could've been the other members' father in another life and was evidently the most mature.

"Electric companies helping the community, now that sounds insane. How does that work?" questioned Holly.

"Electric cooperatives provide reliable energy to communities, and the community members are the owners so they help make decisions about the cooperatives themselves," replied Soren.

"Well that helps, but what else do electric cooperatives do for the communities they serve?" asked a young woman.

"They provide information and resources to help members to be more energy-efficient such as a home evaluation to help reduce energy use. They also offer



Micah Lanier, Gibson EMC's overall winner and Lake County High School student, left, with her teacher, Sharlene Angleton



Crockett County High School winner Shanna Laman, left, and her teacher, Anita Pence



Dyer County High School winner Mary Medling, right, and her teacher, Becky Powell



Energizing Our Communities

the latest technology like geothermal heat pumps and heat pump water heaters and can help families afford them," corresponded Ray.

"They also arrange safety and environmental programs for young children at your local elementary and middle schools, too. Some electric cooperatives present students with school and college scholarships. They can also supply low-interest loans for members and can collect funds to aid needy families with their electricity bills," said Thomas.

Just keep asking questions, thought Holly. "All this sounds wonderful, and electric cooperatives sound very generous. Is there anything else you can tell us about them?"

"Yes. Cooperatives also bring jobs into an area, they can give grants for projects around their service area and, most impor-

tantly, they sponsor a writing program that offers winners from different districts an expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C.," answered Soren.

"Thanks for answering all our questions. You really helped us understand more about your lyrics and electric cooperatives," said Holly.

"Anything we can do to help," replied Ray.

"There you have it, Lightning Strikes discussing their lyrics and electric cooperatives. Leave a comment or video response telling me how you liked it," said Holly.

James cut off his camera, and they made their way back through the crowd.

"I actually learned something," said James.

"Me, too. Let's go home and upload this," said Holly as they got into her vehicle and drove home.

Local students write winning stories

More than 1,000 high school juniors in this area were given a chance to compete in Gibson Electric Membership Corporation's 2010 Washington Youth Tour Short Story Contest.

Gibson EMC's top winner, Micah Lanier of Lake County High School, won \$100 and an expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., on the Rural Electric Youth Tour in June. Her short story also will compete with other top stories in Tennessee for \$3,000, \$2,000 and \$1,000 college scholarships sponsored by the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association.

Four other students wrote stories that

earned them \$50 and a spot on the Rural Electric Youth Tour. They are Beau Jackson, Peabody High School; Shanna Laman, Crockett County High School; Diana Whitmore, Obion County Central High School; and Mary Medling, Dyer County High School.

Jaclyn Parlow also won \$50 for being the school winner at Gibson County High School.

All students who competed in the contest will be eligible for one of five \$500 scholarships that will be given away in a drawing at Gibson EMC's annual meeting on Aug. 7.



Peabody High School winner Beau Jackson, left, and his teacher, Patricia Brown



Obion County High School winner Diana Whitmore, right, and her teacher, Jean Little



Our Energy, Our Future A Dialogue With America

**A message from Dan Rodamaker,
Gibson EMC President and CEO**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is considering proposals to regulate greenhouse gas emissions under the Clean Air Act. The author of the Clean Air Act stated this would result in a "glorious mess" as it was never intended nor designed to regulate these emissions. It is the responsibility of Congress to determine any climate-change legislation, not EPA.



**Dan Rodamaker,
Gibson EMC
President and CEO**

We urge you to take action now to tell legislators that they need to step in and prevent EPA from using the Clean Air Act as a tool for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It's the role of Congress to determine greenhouse gas policy that is fair and affordable for all Americans.

Go to www.ourenergy.coop and send your legislators this important message. If your U.S. representative or U.S. senators already support legislation to prevent EPA from regulating greenhouse gas emissions, "thank you" messages will be sent to them.

Medina Customer Service Center has new hours

The Medina Customer Service Center, located inside Medina City Hall, has new office hours.

It now will be open from 8 a.m. to noon and from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. on Fridays.



Gibson EMC Residential Energy Services Specialist Bud Cole, at left in both photos, and TVA Residential Trade Ally Manager Todd Thompson, at right in both photos, congratulate Kevin Clark, owner of Clark Family Homes of Medina, left photo, and John Flatt and Danny Carpenter, owners of Flatt Heating and Air of Newbern, right photo, for winning TVA's 2009 *energy right* awards.

Businesses rewarded for promoting energy efficiency

Gibson Electric Membership Corporation and the Tennessee Valley Authority recently presented *energy right*[®] volume awards to two area businesses for promoting energy-efficiency measures.

Clark Family Homes of Medina was recognized with the *energy right* New Homes Award for building the most qualifying, single-family residences in the West Tennessee region.

Flatt Heating and Air of Newbern earned the *energy right* Heat Pump Award for installing the most qualifying heat pumps in the West Tennessee region.

The *energy right* program, developed by TVA, Gibson EMC and other distribu-

tors, helps consumers save money through efficiency improvements in their home energy use. The program also pro-

vides support to builders and contractors who construct all-electric and highly energy-efficient homes and install electric heat pumps and water heaters.

"An *energy right* home provides customers with a comfortable home that will have low utility bills year-round," said Gibson EMC Residential Energy Specialist Bud Cole, who performs the inspections. "An electric heat pump also is a great option for the homeowner who wants lower utility bills."

Heat pump and water heater contractors and residential builders who want to participate in the *energy right* program can contact their local Gibson EMC customer service center.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

During summer months when air conditioners work hardest, do energy-intensive tasks such as laundry and dishwashing during off-peak energy demand hours, usually in the early morning or late evening.

Source: Alliance to Save Energy

Make life simple...
cook electric.



\$171
+ tax

For a limited time,
Gibson Electric
Membership Corporation
is offering a
Deluxe Cart Grill 9329W and
an H₂O Smoker 5030 to its
members at a special price.
Call or stop by your local
customer service center for
more details.



\$81
+ tax

Deluxe Cart Grill 9329W

H₂O Smoker 5030

State appliance program

The state of Tennessee's Recovery Act Energy Efficient Appliance Program has been delayed temporarily.

For information, call the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development's Policy Office at 615-741-2994 or 800-342-1340 or visit tnecd.gov/recovery/energystar.html.

Gibson Electric Membership
Corporation will be closed
Monday, July 5,
to observe Independence Day.
Have a safe holiday!