

Sent to you by Gibson EMC – your Touchstone Energy Cooperative

The Tennessee Magazine

May 2010

Best of Tennessee Returns

Spring Festivals and Events

Home Improvement Guide

History for Kids: *Edward Carmack*

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Super Slaw Recipes



Protecting affordable costs

Co-ops take your voice to Capitol Hill

On March 2, key staff members and board members from Tennessee's 23 electric cooperatives arrived in Nashville for the annual Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association (TECA) Legislative Conference to meet with state legislators in an effort to protect the interests of Tennessee's co-ops and their member-owners.

Representing Gibson Electric Membership Corporation were President and CEO Dan Rodamaker, Board Secretary-Treasurer Don Leathers, Board Member Joan Mouser and Board Chairman Mack Goode.

"We maintain a presence at the state Capitol to ensure that our legislators remember that they represent some two million rural electric member-owners," said Tom Purkey, general manager of TECA, the statewide organization that formulates legislative, public relations and safety programs for its member systems.

"These board members, general managers and staff members visit not only as spokespeople for their cooperatives, but also as constituents — folks from back home who helped elect these legislators. It's our job as representatives of rural electric cooperative member-owners to be sure your interests are protected in the General Assembly."

This year, co-op delegations concentrated on one main concern: pole-attachment fees, an issue cooperatives have been battling for years. It's a topic that has a long history of debate in the legislature as cable television companies seek to lower the rates cooperatives can charge them to attach lines to their electric poles.

Tennessee's electric cooperatives support HB 1743 by Rep. Craig Fitzhugh of Ripley that would create a working group to meet regularly to discuss pole-attachment rate issues and provide an appeals process, first with co-op boards and then local chancery courts. Besides opposing pole-attachment rates outlined by the Federal Communications Commission (which recognizes the difference between not-for-profit co-ops and for-profit utilities with a specific exemption for electric cooperatives), co-ops also are against regulation by the Tennessee Regulatory Authority, which would increase electric rates.



Gibson EMC President and CEO Dan Rodamaker, standing, and other cooperative leaders meet with Sen. Mark Norris, seated far right, to discuss issues important to Gibson EMC member-owners.

"Simply put, co-op members should not have to pay higher electric rates so that cable television companies can have more revenue," said David Callis, TECA director of government relations. "Lower attachment rates mean greater profits for cable television companies from the pockets of rural Tennesseans, many of whom do not even have access to cable television."

In a report released in January 2007, the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR) found that Tennessee electric cooperative pole-attachment rates are "not necessarily out of line" with those charged in other states. Cooperatives have maintained that the rates they charge — a fraction of the cost of owning and maintaining poles — are fair, while cable TV has lobbied for government regulation to set the amount co-ops can charge.

During their visits with state House and Senate members, co-op representatives distributed information on the compromise attachment-rate bill and the

TACIR report on its pole-attachment study. They also made sure their legislators understand cooperatives, thanked them for past support and answered questions, stressing that the co-op board members and staff are available at any time should they need more information.

"It may not be our most visible or well-known responsibility, but our legislative visits are very important to ensuring the stability of our electric cooperatives," said Purkey. "We make sure that our elected officials remember rural Tennesseans when making laws that affect the outstanding electric service provided by co-ops across the state."



Rep. Judy Barker, second from left, meets with, from left, Gibson EMC President and CEO Dan Rodamaker, Board Secretary-Treasurer Don Leathers, Board Member Joan Mouser and Board Chairman Mack Goode in Nashville.

for energy in the future

Act now to minimize increases in your electric bill

Your electric bill may increase considerably unless you act now! We are now facing what Glenn English, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, calls "the greatest challenge to the electric co-op power movement in a generation — operating in a carbon-constrained future, subject to regulation under the Clean Air Act."

"Things are not going to be as they have been," English warned Gibson Electric Membership Corporation's Board of Trustees and others from the nation's rural electric cooperatives in Biloxi, Miss., on March 22. "Government is going to play a bigger role."

English explained that a U.S. Supreme Court decision affirming the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate carbon as a public health concern places consumers at risk of being caught up in a "glorious mess" that could touch every aspect of the nation's economy.

In urging support for congressional action to stop EPA from regulating greenhouse gas emissions from stationary sources under the

Clean Air Act, English noted that Rep. John Dingell, D-Mich., a co-author of the act, has said repeatedly that the legislation was not intended to regulate carbon dioxide. Dingell has also said it is Congress' job to craft this important piece of public policy.

The Clean Air Act, originally passed in 1970 and amended in 1977 and 1990, has not been used to regulate greenhouse gases. Instead, it has regulated common pollutants, including carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, lead and particulate soot to address smog and acid rain.

"This act was not designed to do this job," said English, noting that the uncertainty of EPA's approach could lead to higher costs, inconsistent policies and complicated litigation. Regulations will change over time, making it difficult to plan for future generation needs, he said.

Gibson EMC is working to do its part by:

- Helping you save money by giving you information about energy efficiency and conservation.
- Educating you, our members, about

affordability, reliability and energy policy.

- Working to manage costs and ensure reliability.
- Working with government to develop technology to meet climate-change goals.

Still, we need your help! Please make three copies of the coupon, below, fill them out and mail them to your congressman and senators.



We need your help ...

Please help us protect your energy future by making three copies of the coupon, below, filling them out and mailing them to your legislators.

Our Energy, Our Future™
A Dialogue With America

1) The Honorable Bob Corker
United States Senate
185 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510-4205

2) The Honorable Lamar Alexander
United States Senate
455 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510-4204

3) The Honorable John Tanner
United States House of Representatives
1226 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515-4208

Dear Congressman _____ :

As you make decisions regarding climate-change legislation, please make sure that it is ...

Fair. Climate-change legislation needs to recognize regional differences in how electricity is produced.

Affordable. Any climate-change plan must keep electricity affordable for all Americans.

Achievable. Climate-change legislation must be realistic to ensure long-term success.

We're counting on you to help protect our energy future.

Sincerely, _____ City: _____ Tenn.



Small changes in your home add up to **BIG** savings

Sometimes the little things in life mean a lot. Simple steps such as turning off lights when you leave a room, unplugging appliances when not in use and raising the temperature on your thermostat a bit as our weather warms up can help your family rack up big energy savings.

At Gibson Electric Membership Corporation, we're always looking for ways to help you, our member. With energy costs rising due to a growing demand for electricity, higher power plant costs and federal regulations, energy efficiency remains a key part of our efforts to keep rates affordable. Best of all, energy efficiency — simply making the electricity you use do more — saves you money.

Because we're part of the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives network, you have access to a valuable resource that not only identifies simple energy-saving measures, but also illustrates the real-dollar savings they produce, specific to your home.

TogetherWeSave.com uses real savings calculations — based on our co-op's rates and climate zone — to motivate and inspire small changes in behavior. When you go to the Web site, you'll be asked for your ZIP code; this helps us provide accurate electricity rates for your home.

The Virtual Home Tour provides a good starting point. As you move through each of the six rooms, you'll be



prompted to take various interactive energy-saving measures and see how these changes translate into savings on your electric bill.

A visit to the attic, for example, recommends adding insulation. Slide the arrow up the scale to add extra inches of insulation

and watch the exciting end result. Adding nine inches saves up to \$143 a year. Add 15 inches, and that figure jumps to \$241.

Now head downstairs to the living room. Most folks enjoy watching television and playing Wii or Xbox games, but you don't need these gadgets on 24 hours a day. By unplugging entertainment center devices when they're not in use, you could save up to \$174 every year. This all seems simple enough — and every small step adds up to big savings. In fact, just raising your thermostat one degree in summer could save \$82.

The Web site uses calculations targeted for our co-op's kWh electric rate and geographic location. In short, it gives you an accurate reflection of what your potential savings could be if you implement suggested steps.

TogetherWeSave.com also has a library of short videos on various topics.

Finding ways to help you save energy dollars during tough times is important to us. To learn about other ways to make your home more energy-efficient or to schedule a free home energy audit, call your local customer service center or visit www.gibsonemc.com.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Properly hooking up your clothes dryer can help save on energy costs. The outdoor dryer exhaust door should close when the dryer is off. Check to make sure the dryer vent hose is tightly connected to the dryer and to the inside wall fitting. The vent hose should not be kinked or clogged.

Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives



Celebrating Arbor Day

Gibson Electric Membership Corporation observed Arbor Day by donating and planting trees at South Gibson County High School in Medina. Gibson EMC's vegetation management program is administered according to standards set by the International Society of Arborists and the National Arbor Day Foundation. In March, Gibson EMC was certified as a Tree Line USA utility by the Arbor Day Foundation.

Pictured, from left, are Gibson EMC Forester Matt Prater, Lena Derry, Nursery Owner Sammy Milligan, Leah Stovall, Blake Mooney, Gibson EMC Vice President of Operations Barry Smith, Amy Young, Levi Stewart, South Gibson County High School Principal Phil Rogers, Gibson EMC Forestry Supervisor Mark Greene, Agriculture Teacher Ryan Inman, Keasha Whitehead, Jacob Smith, Tennessee Department of Agriculture Regional Urban Forester Shawn Posey, Melody Lemonds, Jeremiah Kilburn and Katelyn Finn.

Gibson Electric Membership Corporation will be closed Monday, May 31, in observance of Memorial Day.



An amazing story about staying safe around electricity

I heard a pretty amazing story the other day. It involved two Indiana teens, Lee Whittaker and Ashley Taylor, who were driving with some friends when their car started to fishtail. Lee did his best to keep the vehicle on the road. But before he knew it, he was sliding straight into a utility pole — and that pole came down, lines and all, right on top of his overturned car.

Now, most folks faced with this situation would do what comes naturally: get out of the car. But Lee and Ashley knew better. Not a week earlier they had attended a safety demonstration at their school sponsored by their local electric co-op. One of the key messages relayed was, “If it ever hits a power pole, stay in your car where you’ll be safe from any electrical current.”

The two did just that and kept their friends in the car and family members at a safe distance once they arrived. As a result, the entire group walked away with just a few minor injuries. However, without a basic knowledge of electrical safety, the outcome that night could have been much different.

The electricity Gibson Electric Membership Corporation provides day in and day out is a phenomenal resource, pow-



Dan Rodamaker,
Gibson EMC
President and CEO

ering our modern lifestyles in a safe, reliable and affordable way. But electricity must be respected: If safety isn’t made a priority, what changes our lives for the better could change them for the worse in an instant.

Lee and Ashley know this from experience, and we’re striving to keep you informed of electrical safety so you don’t have to learn a similar lesson the hard way.

Safety has been a fundamental part of the culture at Gibson EMC since day one. Being an electric lineworker is ranked by the U.S. Department of Labor as one of the 10 most dangerous jobs, on the same list as fishermen, loggers and military servicemen. We demand that not only those out in the field, but employees at all levels, make safety a top priority.

As part of our safety commitment, please take time to learn how you can be safe around electricity at home. Spending just a few minutes with some helpful resources can make all the difference when you’re faced with a possible unsafe situation. For more information on electrical safety, visit www.touchstoneenergykids.com, SafeElectricity.org and Electrical-Safety.org.

I hope there won’t be any stories about Gibson EMC members getting into sticky situations like Lee and Ashley. But if there are, a few minutes spent studying safety today could ensure a happy ending.

Levelized Billing gives you equal monthly electric bills

If you want to take the guesswork out of your monthly electric bill, Gibson Electric Membership Corporation offers a solution.

Gibson EMC’s Levelized Billing Plan is a great option for anyone, especially for those on a budget. We average your current month’s electricity use with your previous 11 months’ use to arrive at approximately equal monthly payments.

To get started, give us a call or fill out and mail in the accompanying coupon.

If you qualify* for this plan, we’ll set up your account so that each month’s electricity use will be averaged with your previous 11 months’ use. (*Qualified participants are Gibson EMC customer-owners with no outstanding balances.)

You’ll enjoy the benefit of this rolling 12-month average — electric bills that are approximately equal each month. While you may see slight fluctuations from month to month with

Levelized Billing, the variance is usually no more than \$20.

Best of all, you’ll enjoy the peace of mind of knowing the approximate amount of your electric bill so that you can plan ahead for that monthly expenditure.

For more information, contact your local Gibson EMC customer service center or visit www.gibsonemc.com.



Yes, sign me up for Levelized Billing:

Customer Name: _____

Address: _____

Gibson EMC Account #: _____ Daytime Phone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

To sign up, complete the coupon and mail it to ...
Levelized Billing, Gibson EMC, P.O. Box 47, Trenton, TN 38382.



**Make a note! Gibson EMC’s annual meeting will be
Saturday, Aug. 7, at Crockett County High School in Alamo.**



From left, Gibson EMC Communications Specialist Jenni Lynn Crossnoe and students Katie Utter and Beau Jackson visit with State Sen. Lowe Finney in front of the Capitol.

Youths attend Leadership Summit

Katie Utter of Gibson County High School and Beau Jackson of Peabody High School were among 44 high school juniors from 22 electric cooperatives who attended the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association's annual Youth Leadership Summit in Nashville. Both students live in the Gibson Electric Membership Cooperative service area.

"The annual summit teaches the importance of electric cooperatives to Tennessee's rural communities and gives students an opportunity to see the legislative process in the Tennessee Capitol," said Joe Jackson, TECA director of youth and member relations. Students are chosen by their local cooperatives for their interest in government and leadership abilities.

"The Magic of Leadership" was the theme of the 2010 summit hosted by TECA and funded in part by the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation.

"It is encouraging to see such motivated students in our service area," said Gibson EMC Communications Specialist Jenni Lynn Crossnoe. "These young people will one day be the leaders of our communities, and Gibson EMC is privileged to provide them with this opportunity to join their peers from across Tennessee to learn about state government and rural electric co-ops."

Activities during the three-day summit included get-acquainted activities, a visit to Legislative Plaza to meet state legislators and sit in on House and Senate committee meetings, a tour of the State Capitol, a question-and-answer session with State Rep. Phillip Johnson of Pegram, a discussion of current bills affecting cooperatives by TECA Director of Government Affairs David Callis, a tour of Nashville, a Nashville Predators hockey game and leadership activities and interactive games where students learned more about electric cooperatives.

"We offer these educational experiences because we want the students to understand what makes a cooperative special," said Gibson EMC President and CEO Dan Rodamaker. "We want them to appreciate all their electric cooperative provides for their communities and understand why it was so important to form electric co-ops in the first place."

New IT Specialist hired

Darbin Ousley has joined Gibson Electric Membership Corporation's workforce as an Information Technology Specialist.

Ousley graduated from Obion County Central High School in Troy and received a bachelor of science degree in electrical engineering technology from the University of Tennessee at Martin. Before coming to work for Gibson EMC, he spent 16 years working for the Obion County Board of Education.



Darbin Ousley

"I am excited about joining the Gibson EMC family," Ousley said. "I look forward to working with a corporation that is focused on providing the best service possible to its customer-owners as well as improving the communities that it serves."

His wife, Trina, is a Pathways social worker in Union City.

Customer wins energy credit

Royce Spencer of Kenton won a \$100 electric bill credit simply by giving Gibson Electric Membership Corporation his phone number.

Customer-owners who called Gibson EMC in February to confirm their telephone numbers were entered into a drawing for a \$100 electric bill credit. "We had a record-setting number of entries," says Gibson EMC Vice President of Customer Care Kerry Watson. "A total of 614 members called and left updated telephone numbers."

Having up-to-date customer phone numbers helps Gibson EMC during power outages. Our voice-recognition systems use caller-identification technology to link customers' telephone numbers to their addresses.

This means that when a customer calls Gibson EMC to



Customer-owner Royce Spencer receives a \$100 electric bill credit from Customer Service Representative Angie Dean at the Troy Customer Service Center.

report a power outage, the system can pinpoint the customer's location based on his or her caller ID and associated phone and location information in the Gibson EMC customer data file. Also, when

multiple calls come in from the same area, our automated systems help us gauge the extent of the outage, which helps us determine the manpower and equipment to be dispatched.

We continue to encourage you to update your phone numbers with us by calling your local customer service center.