

# Our cooperative's To-Do list

Spring brings an emotion of appreciation for little things that remind us of new beginnings. The weather is warming up and the seasons are changing.

I hope you will take advantage of the mild weather and do some energy conservation check-ups around your home.

✓ *Inspect your air conditioning and heating unit to make sure it is running correctly.*

✓ *Look for holes or tears in your duct work and repair them as soon as possible.*

Your time and effort can result in savings and add up to keep your electric bill down.

While you are doing home improvements this season and your "honey-do" list grows longer, we at Clarke-Washington EMC are continuing to complete tasks that are part of our own maintenance program.

The maintenance program serves many purposes but basically it sustains our ability as a cooperative to supply our members with electricity at an affordable price while reducing outages, and it keeps our employees and member's safe, ultimately saving the cooperative money.

Right-of-way crews work to eliminate the debris and brush that grows underneath our power lines. They also cut trees and dead limbs that could cause an outage during a storm. Dead pine trees are a leading source of outages for our members.

Osmose crews recently treated and inspected over 5,000 power poles in Millry, Red Creek, Copeland and surrounding areas for decay and damage. Their reports showed only a three percent rate of poles that needed replacing. This treatment maintains the life of a pole. We change out those poles that cannot be saved.



**Stan Wilson**  
is the General Manager/CEO of Clarke-Washington Electric Membership Corporation



Maintenance: Clarke-Washington EMC linemen Dwight Pugh and James Koen anchor a guy wire from a powerline on Club Wiley Road in Jackson in March. Replacing and securing guy wires to the ground ensures the strength of the power pole and line, while the yellow guy guards notify people of the existing line, watching out for their safety.

Upgrades and improvements of power lines are currently being completed in the communities served by our substation in the Four Points area of

Washington County. About 6 miles of power line will be upgraded to improve the electric service and reliability to those communities, and improve the phase balance. Currently we are working on making upgrades in the Escatawpa and Vinegar Bend communities. We expect these upgrades to cost about \$420,000. Areas in this maintenance work plan include Vinegar Bend, Four Points, Escatawpa, Fruitdale and Deer Park, for a total cost of some \$584,000.

This job is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year through a contract with Diversified Services out of Hartselle.

Each month our employees participate in safety meetings held at our office that are instructed by safety specialists from Alabama Rural Electric Association. Impressive safety hours are a goal that we and AREA reward annually. Clarke-Washington EMC has received honors for many, many years for the standard of safety we set for all of our employees and the general public.

So as you add to your to-do list and get some of those tasks accomplished this spring, please remember that Clarke-Washington EMC is doing the same thing. Our on-going, year round maintenance program is made with our customers in mind and it will continue to keep electricity a good value for your family and business.

Thank you.



## Clarke-Washington EMC

1307 College Avenue  
P.O. Box 398  
Jackson, AL 36545  
251-246-9081 (local)  
1-800-323-9081 (toll free)

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**To report  
a power  
outage, call  
1-800-323-9081.**

Cooperatives



Local Pages Editor,  
**Anna Wright**

# Big Screen TVs

TV energy use is fast on its way to becoming the fourth largest energy user in the American home, eclipsing the refrigerator. Heating, cooling and water heating still hold the premier ranks even with all the improvements in efficiency over the years, but TV energy use is rising so quickly with the advent of big screen TVs and their recent decline in price.

"The price of these big screen TVs is coming down," said Bobby Farish, Clarke-Washington EMC manager of member services. "People do need to realize these big screen TVs are using twice the amount of electricity as regular TVs. Not only is this increasing their power bill but it is reducing the life of the projection lamps for these TVs.

Today there are about 266 million TVs, and that number is growing. By 2009, when half of all new TV sales are expected to be extended- or high-definition digital sets with big screens, TV energy use will reach about 70 billion kilowatt-hours per year nationwide - about 50 percent higher than at present.

Bigger screens aren't the only culprits for TV's growing energy draw. The nation's move to high definition TV, or HDTV, requires sets to deliver more picture clarity, which draws more power. Also, Americans are watching some 16 percent more TV than in the 1980s-if DVD and video-game viewing is included.

Count up the number in your home, and then count up the number that are on in each room. And how many others that are just monitors for those video games?

## TV power consumption

Average plasma: .....	328 watts	Xbox360: .....	187 watts
Average rear-projection: .....	208 watts	Average PC: .....	78 watts
Average LCD: .....	193 watts	DirecTV HR20 DVR: .....	33 watts
Average CRT: .....	146 watts	Wii: .....	19 watts
Other A/V gear:		Slingbox: .....	.9 watt
PlayStation 3: .....	197 watts	Wireless router: .....	7 watts

## TV power-saving tips

### Turn the TV off when not in use:

Sure, this one's obvious, but it's easy to get into the habit of leaving the TV on as "background" when you're not really watching it. And while TVs still consume power in standby mode, it's a tiny fraction of what they draw when they're actually on.

### Turn down the LCD's backlight:

Many LCDs give you the ability to control the intensity of the backlight in the TV. By turning down the backlight, you'll lower power consumption but also make the TV less bright. You can often get the best image quality when you turn down the backlight significantly.

### Turn on the power-saver mode:

Many TVs these days come with a powersaver mode that's designed to cut down the power consumption. Performance of this mode varies from model to model, with the effect sometimes being drastic and other times providing only a slight savings.

# Turtle Meter reading system provides **speedy** service

Several years ago Clarke-Washington EMC began installing the Hunt Technologies Turtle System, or Turtle Meters, to many of our members' homes and businesses. This was the first step in a system-wide conversion plan to have all our meters on our lines installed with the Turtle Meter system. These are being installed to improve customer service and decrease costs.

"As of Feb. 26 of this year, out of our 20,040 meters, 16,345 or 82 percent are Turtle Meters and we hope to be near 100 percent by the end of this year," said David Anderson, Clarke-Washington EMC system engineer.

A Turtle Meter system is a type of automated meter reading or AMR. A small Turtle transmitter fits under the cover of a regular meter. With its patented, ultra-narrow bandwidth technology, a Turtle Meter will read the meters automatically and send the information back over the power lines to a receiver inside our substations. The readings are then downloaded to a computer at Clarke-Washington EMC through the telephone line.

The Turtle Metering system received its unique name because of the way it transmits the information through the power line. It takes, on average, 14 to 27 hours for the meter to send the data containing the meter reading to the receiver. This allows Clarke-Washington EMC to get a reading on every meter once a day regardless of weather, weekends or holidays.

One of the biggest ways Turtle Meters help the co-op is by allowing us to read the meters closer to the billing date. Currently it takes 10 to 12 days to physically read all of our meters each month. In order for us to have all the meters read in time to bill at the end of the month we begin reading on the 10th. With Turtle Meters all

of our meters can be read in a matter of minutes, just before we bill.

The Turtle Meters have no effect on a member's energy consumption. The mechanical operation of the meter remains unchanged. Its only function is the passive act of reading the meter. The tiny amount of energy

needed to operate the Turtle Meter is drawn before the current flows through the meter.

Clarke-Washington EMC's meter readers still physically read the meters periodically. This will verify the Turtle Meter reading the unit is sending back to us and to check our electrical equipment for any conditions that require our attention.

To see if you already have a Turtle Meter look for a red light glowing on your meter. This red light lets us know the Turtle transmitter is activated.

It also saves the co-op money in the future, which helps keep our customers' rates down. By allowing us to read the meters from the office we will reduce our vehicle expense.

The plan to install Turtle Meters to all of our meters is near completion. Turtle Meters have made Clarke-Washington EMC employees' jobs faster and more efficient. A more productive staff of em-

ployees keeps your electricity reliable. It also reduces the time it takes to physically read meters and makes our billing cycle more efficient.

This new meter-reading system is just one of the many methods that Clarke-Washington EMC uses to provide you with safe, dependable and reliable electricity at an affordable rate.



# Options **offer** Convenience

Clarke-Washington EMC offers several convenient options to pay your electric bill without stepping foot into one of our offices or walking to the mailbox.

▷ **Local Bank**-Members can pay their electrical bill at the following banks: First United Security Bank in Coffeerville, Thomasville, Fulton and Grove Hill; Southwest Bank in McIntosh; and Merchants Bank in Grove Hill and Thomasville. Bills must be paid by the 10th of the month with an electric bill stub and bill payment.

▷ **Automatic Bank Draft**-Your payment is withdrawn directly from your bank account on the 10th of each month. Stop by on of our offices to fill out a form to have this option.

▷ **Credit Card Draft**-The total amount of your electric bill is charged to your credit card on the 10th of each month. This option will need to be set up by stopping by one of our offices.

▷ **Phone call**-With one call to our offices, customer service representatives can accept credit card, debit card or e-check payments during our business hours. We only accept Mastercard and Visa debit or credit cards.

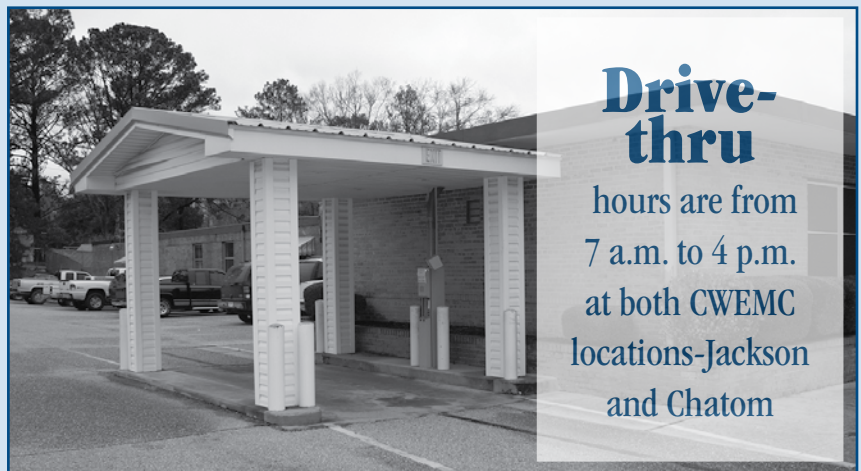
▷ **Drive thru** - Our drive-thru hours are from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. at both office locations. To make it easier and quicker, have your account number or electric bill stub with you at the drive-thru.

▷ **Mail**-Send your payments to us through the mail along with your electric bill stub. Make

sure to get it in the mail early enough that it will arrive before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month to avoid late charges.

▷ **In Person**-Customers who want to pay their bill in person, Clarke-Washington EMC has two locations: Jackson and Chatom and our business hours are Monday through Friday, from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

- Local Bank
- Bank Draft
- Credit Card Draft
- Phone Call
- Drive-thru
- Mail
- In Person



## Levelized Billing

Want to make your electric bill fit your monthly budget? We realize that the constant weather changes in Alabama often cause drastic fluctuations in power bills during heating and cooling seasons. Clarke-Washington Electric Membership Corporation has a program that is designed specifically to help our members' budget for these fluctuating bills.

There are no surprises with levelized billing. A levelized bill is based on the average billing for 12 months - and you are billed for that average amount, so you pay approximately the same amount every month.

In order to be placed on levelized billing, your account must have a zero balance. Complete the levelized billing enrollment form by picking up the form at one of our offices or downloading it from our Web site at [www.cwemc.com](http://www.cwemc.com) or give us a call at 1-800-323-9081.



“Magical Mystery Tour” of Montgomery was the theme for the 2008 Alabama Rural Electric Association’s Montgomery Youth Tour. This event was held Tuesday through Thursday, Mar. 4-6.

Clarke-Washington EMC sponsored four seniors from our service area to participate in this experience: Tyler Chastain and Jessica Givens of Leroy High School, Jordan Englert of Jackson High School and Katie Simon of Thomasville High School.

About 150 students and chaperones from rural electric cooperatives around Alabama met in Montgomery for the three day tour of Alabama’s State Capital.

Students toured the Alabama Supreme Court Justice Building, the highest court in Alabama, and visited with Harold F. See, Jr., Associate Justice. They also toured the Rosa Parks Museum, the Alabama State Capitol, and the Alabama Department of Archives and History, and walked on the Senate floor in the Alabama State House.

Cea Cohen Elliot, a motivational speaker from Ohio, challenged students to “stretch themselves” and reach past their potential to become the best that they can be and stressed to them the importance of getting their education.

Alabama Sen. Scott Beason of Jefferson County and Sen. James Fields of Cullman County informed the students on the workings of state legislation and encouraged them to be informed on lawmaking at the state and federal level.


The Alabama Rural Electric Association legislative luncheon was held on Thursday afternoon. There, Tyler, Katie, Jessica and Jordan met Alabama Rep. Marc Keahey and Alabama Sen. Pat Lindsey and visited with Clarke-Washington EMC manager Stan Wilson and Board of Trustee President, Jack Bailey of Wagarville.

The Montgomery Youth Tour is just one way Clarke-Washington EMC invests in the lives of our local students, by giving them an opportunity to learn and encouraging them in leadership and community involvement.



# Magical Mystery Tour Montgomery





# Look to the skies when planting trees this spring

With planting season upon us Clarke-Washington EMC would like to offer a few suggestions before you grab your shovel.

Trees can be a large source of outages if they are not maintained properly and planted in the right place. Limbs can brush against power lines during high winds and cause blinks or the larger limbs can break off and take out an entire span of wire leaving you without power.

Clarke-Washington EMC maintains an extensive right-of-way program with the trimming of trees and spraying of undergrowth. But you can do your part to cut down on tree related outages.

Before you even buy plants, shrubs

or trees you should inspect the area where you plan to plant. Many times we forget about power lines that could run above that area we've deemed perfect for a tree.

If you must plant around a power line, plant low growing trees. Small trees such as dogwoods and crab apples should be planted from the power lines up to 20 feet away.

Trees should never be planted directly under the power line as this may interfere with Clarke-Washington EMC employees being able to service the line in the future.

Another issue to consider when planting trees is how deep and wide the roots will grow. Roots

can damage sidewalks and foundations, and wreak havoc on septic tanks or field lines. That one small tree you planted 20 years ago, could one day cost you thousands of dollars.

With these planting tips in mind, grab that shovel and enjoy your springtime planting!