

Powerlines

Parke County REMC
Your Touchtone Energy Cooperative



April 2007

119 West High Street, Rockville, IN 47872 PH: (765) 569-3133 or (800) 537-3913 Hours: M-F 7:30-4:30



Inside this
issue...



*Insulate for
Savings*



Weather Monitors



Safety Tips

Surge Protection

*Tax Credits for
Home
Improvements*

*Nominating
Committee*

REAP Program

New Access 24 Phone System

Parke County REMC members can now use our interactive phone service to make inquiries about their Electric Bill, or make a payment with Credit Card or Electronic Check 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This easy and convenient voice response system allows you to speak your responses or simply enter information using your touch tone telephone.

To pay your bill with a credit card by phone, you will need to have your account number and credit card information. To pay your bill with an Electronic Check you must first have a check profile set up with Parke County REMC. You may create this profile by contacting one of our Customer Service Associates during normal business hours. Once the profile has been created you will only need to enter your Parke County REMC account number and the amount you wish to pay.

Members may also make telephone number updates using the Access 24 system. As always, a live representative will be available to take calls in unfortunate outage situations.

Access 24 is a comprehensive automated Customer Service system that uses "Interactive Voice Response" technology to give members access to the utility 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Here are some of the options available with Access 24:

- Members can use speech or phone buttons to select from a menu of service options.
- Outage calls can be transferred to a live operator.
- Account inquiry allows members to check on their account and provides account balance, amount due and last payment information.
- Credit/Debit Card Payment allows members to pay their utility bill using a credit/debit card.
- Customer Information Service allows members to select from a menu of pre-recorded messages providing a variety of utility information, such as office hours and location, available products and services.
- The telephone number update function permits members to quickly and automatically update their telephone numbers. Keeping phone numbers current speeds utility call handling.

- During normal business hours Access 24 provides for quick connection to a Customer Service Representative.

When making a call to Parke County REMC during normal business hours you may be asked to be transferred to Access 24. After hours and on weekends, you will automatically be connected to the Access 24 system. Press 1 to report an outage and speak to a live operator or press 2 to make a payment and get information about your account. We hope you find this new service convenient and efficient.

Use this service between
April 12 and May 22, and
you could win
one of four
Wal-Mart Gift Cards



Power Surge Protection



Security For Your Lifestyle

Homes today have far more electronic devices and electrical appliances than in the past. Items like computers, stereos and home theater equipment can represent a tremendous investment. Every day, there is a risk of damaging or even destroying those items unless you protect them from power surges.

Your REMC can help you protect your valuable investments from damage with reliable, effective surge protection. Parke County REMC offers Home Guard Defender Plus surge protectors. These high quality units are designed to permit only very low levels of electricity to pass through before interrupting the circuit. Other units on the market have high “let through” voltage levels, offering little protection. REMC products also carry comprehensive warranties to cover the repair or replacement of an appliance if damage occurs.

The Home Guard Defender Plus kit includes a whole-house surge protection system that supplies both primary and secondary lines of defense. The kit contains one service entrance (meter base) unit, which is the primary point of protection. The kit also includes an array of plug-in products to protect your sensitive electronics within the home, including: one eight-receptacle plug strip with built-in cable and telephone protection, one single outlet unit, one single outlet unit with built-in coaxial cable protection and one three-blade receptacle circuit tester. If you are interested in more information on how to protect your electronic equipment and appliances, please call one of your energy advisors at Parke County REMC.

Once you’ve sealed, it’s time to insulate!

If you read our article last month on home sealing, you’ve probably already put your caulking gun to good use – congratulations! Sealing is the first step in a three-step process for weatherizing your home. Now, on to insulating.

One of the areas where you can make the fastest and most effective improvement with insulation is in your attic. During cooler months, insulation prevents heat from escaping, and in warmer months, it blocks heat from entering the home. Sounds simple, but without proper sealing and insulation, a home can become uncomfortably hot or cold.

How much is enough? If you can stick your head up into your attic and see the top of your attic joists, you need more insulation! Carolyn Kilby, your local Energy Advisor at the REMC, recommends blown-in cellulose, which you can add yourself or have done professionally.

Most people have heard about R-value, and many of us know that the higher the value, the less amount of heat that passes through it. But R-Value is only part of the story. Air that passes through insulation due to leaks in your attic will reduce the R-value. Another factor to consider is that different products have naturally different R-values. Foam has a much higher R-value than does fiberglass and cellulose falls somewhere in between.

While not as flashy, insulation has a much better payback than you’ll get with those beautiful granite counter tops. So when you’re building or remodeling, don’t skimp! The proper



choice and amount of insulation will affect both your energy bills and your family’s comfort for years to come.

High energy and maintenance costs can result from poor sealing and insulation. Beyond your monthly energy bill, leaks tire out appliances, which shortens their life-span and causes frequent repairs.

Be sure to contact Carolyn Kilby, for more information about your home insulation needs. She is there to provide advice when you need it, and help when you want it.

Tax Credits Available for Energy Saving Home Improvements

Consumers who improve the energy efficiency of their homes during 2006 and 2007 may qualify for special tax breaks that were included in the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The Act includes tax credits for a number of energy-saving improvements, including new windows, insulation, doors, roofs and heating and cooling equipment.

"Taxpayers can qualify for a one-time credit of up to \$500," explains Carolyn Kilby, energy advisor for Parke County REMC. "The amount is an actual credit that can be applied to the taxes the home owner will owe, rather than a deduction.

The \$500 amount represents the maximum credit taxpayers can take during the two years," she added. "How the credit breaks down depends on the type of improvements made. For example, 10 percent of the cost of new windows up to \$200 could be claimed for the credit. A new high efficiency air conditioner, water heater or heat pump can bring a

credit up to \$300."

Other items that can qualify for the energy efficiency credit include new exterior doors, new storm doors and insulation.

To qualify, the materials and equipment used must meet stringent energy efficiency guidelines. "The guidelines are so strict that even some Energy Star products won't qualify for the credit," Kilby said. "Air conditioners must have a SEER rating of at least 15 and EER ratings of at least 12.5 to qualify. Closed loop geothermal systems must achieve a 14.1 EER and a coefficient of 3.3. Detailed specifications are available on the Energy Star web site, www.energystar.gov Consumers can go to the web site and do a site search on "tax credits" to find several articles and detailed charts. Information is also available at the Alliance to Save Energy Web site, www.ase.org/content/article/detail/2654



*Weather is unpredictable-
Get an early warning with a*

Weather Radio

\$29.95
plus tax

- Weather/All Hazards alert radio
- S.A.M.E. localized reception
- 7 N.O.A.A. channels
- Digital front panel display
- 25 programmable counties
- User selectable warning system
- Choice of voice, siren, or tone alert.
- Time & alarm clock with full display
- Emergency power back-up, uses 3 AA Batteries (not included)
- AC wall adapter Included
- **Public Alert Certified**

**Now available at
Parke County REMC**

**Call 569-3133
for more information.**



Attention Parke County REMC Members:

We have refunds pending and checks are being held for the following REMC members:

Bruce Hamilton
David McCleery
Hezzie A Cohen
Dale & Lisa Kalweit
Dustin Myers
Kevin Bartley
Virgil McKeehan
Herbert Fischer
Donna Walker
Stan Lesniak
Steve & Carolyn Crose
Joshua Parsons
Robey G James
Patsy Bragg
Clara Martin
Ronald Rivers
Ronald Shane Vandivier
Montel Woodard
A W Crawford
Robert Fulk

At this time, we are unable to contact these members, due to insufficient forwarding address information. If you have any information regarding these REMC members, please contact the REMC office at 1-800-537-3913.

Nominating Committee to Meet

The Parke County REMC Nominating Committee will meet June 5 at 6:30 p.m. to consider candidates to be elected to the REMC board of directors at the 2007 annual meeting. The deadline to submit names is May 18.

Director districts up for re-election are District 2 and District 6. District 2 includes part of Scott, part of Union, part of Brown and part of Ripley Townships in Montgomery County. This district is currently represented by Keith Blaydes. District 6 includes part of Russell Township and all of Clinton Township in Putnam County. This district is currently represented by Philip Carrington.

Do you know what to do?

If your vehicle became involved in an accident with a downed power line would you know how to stay safe?

Instincts tell us to flee danger. Unfortunately, in vehicle accidents that bring down power lines, these natural inclinations can lead to tragic results.

If your car hits a power pole, or otherwise brings a power line down, Safe Electricity urges you to stay inside the vehicle until help arrives. Getting out of the vehicle, with few exceptions, is the wrong thing to do until the line has been de-energized.

"You are almost always better off to stay in the car, especially if the line is in contact with the vehicle," says Molly Hall, Executive Director of the Safe Electricity program. "If the power line is still energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path for that electricity and electrocution is the tragic result."

"It's best to wait until our/the electric utility crew arrives to make sure power to the line is cut off," says Hall.



The only exception would be if fire or other danger, like the smell of gasoline, is present. In that case, the proper action is to jump—not step—with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Jump clear, without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Shuffle or hop to safety keeping both feet together as you leave the area. Like the ripples in a pond or lake, the voltage diminishes the farther out it is from the source. Stepping from one voltage level to another allows the body to become a path for that electricity.

"Even if a power line has landed on the ground, there is still the potential for the area near your car to be energized," Hall says. "Stay inside the vehicle unless there's fire or imminent risk of fire."

Cosby completes REAP training program

Parke County REMC's Matt Cosby recently completed the Rural Electric Apprenticeship Program (R.E.A.P.) This four year program consists of 576 hours of classroom instruction and related study as well as 8,000 hours of on-the-job training.

With the addition of Ivy Tech State College Program, the REAP apprentices are required to take three core classes and earn an Associate of Applied Science degree. The three courses that are required are: Human Relations in the Workplace, Economics Fundamentals and Technical Writing in the Workplace.

Congratulations to Matt Cosby for this accomplishment.



Terry Adkins of Indiana Statewide presents a certificate of completion to Parke County REMC's Matt Cosby.