



Pitt and Greene

Electric Membership Corporation

“Where Customers Have A Choice”

Member Newsletter

February, 2012

A 2012 Pitt & Greene calendar was mailed to each member in December. If you did not receive a 2012 calendar in the mail, please call our office at 252-753-3128 and we will be glad to mail one to you.

Insulation Installation Safety Tips

When tackling home insulation installation on your own, safety should be top of mind. Follow these tips from the North American Insulation Manufacturers Association on safe insulation installation practices.

- * *Wear appropriate clothing.* To reduce the chances of skin irritation, wear a head cover, gloves, and loose-fitting, long-sleeved, long-legged clothing.
- * *Wear proper personal protective equipment.* Safety glasses and respiratory protection may be necessary, depending on your work environment. The U.S. Occupational Health and Safety Association offer guidelines in its Respiratory Protection Standard that may be helpful.
- * *Take care if fibers get on your skin or in your eyes.* If insulation fibers collect on your skin, don't rub and scratch or remove with compressed air. Instead, lay tape, adhesive-side down, and then remove it gently, so fibers are pulled from the skin. If fibers get in your eyes, never rub. Flush with water or eyewash solution. Contact your doctor if you have continued irritation.
- * *Keep dust to a minimum.* Leave the materials in packaging for as long as possible. Use tools that create the least amount of dust; power tools should have dust-collection devices. Put scrap materials in the trash.
- * *Maintain adequate ventilation.* Determine whether your work site needs a dust-collection system. Also, exhausted air containing fibers should be filtered before being recirculated into inside workspaces. Finally, ventilation systems used to capture fibers should be regularly checked.

***Don't Forget That Daylight Savings Time Begins
Sunday, March 11, 2012. Set Clocks Ahead 1 Hour.***

Caulk Up The Savings

The greatest sources of heating and cooling losses in your home are often invisible. Controlling air leaks provides the best way to extend the life of your home, conserve energy, save money, and increase comfort.

Bottom line? If you don't tighten up your home first, money spent on insulation may be wasted.

Fortunately, you can seal a lot of leaks around your home's exterior with less than \$100 worth of caulk. It's generally possible to seal openings up to one-quarter inch between window frames and

Continued on P. 3



Manager's Message

By: Mark A. Suggs

Most of America's electric cooperatives bought into power plants in the 1970s and 1980s. This ample stock of generation allowed co-ops to maintain a safe, reliable, and affordable supply of power. Current conditions may place affordability and reliability at risk.

Half of the nation's total generating capacity, 530,000 megawatts, passed the 30 year mark by the end of 2010, according to the U.S. Energy Information Association (EIA). There are costs associated with maintaining a power plant, expenses compounded by a slew of environmental regulations. In fact, these rules could result in a chunk of America's coal-fired power plants shutting down by 2018.

In addition, some co-ops need to add new generation plants to meet growing demand. However, with required environmental controls coupled with rising prices for construction materials, new power plants are going to be much more expensive.

All of these factors will impact our electric bills for many years to come. Our collective wallets are under pressure. More folks around the world are using power; China has surpassed the United States as the top global energy user, and in just over two decades it's predicted to consume 68 percent more power than we do. Americans are using more energy too, despite efficiency measures. It's easy to see why, with TVs, laptops, iGadgets, and other electronics crowding power outlets.

Generally, when there's increased demand say, for the latest model car, manufacturers open a new assembly plant to roll more models into showrooms. But at a time when electricity needs are rising, our affordable power supply is beginning to dwindle.

Today, nearly 80 percent of the power provided by electric co-ops nationwide comes from coal, compared to about half for the rest of the electric utility industry. Why the difference? The majority of co-op coal power plants were built between 1975 and 1986, when building natural gas facilities was restricted by the federal Powerplant and Industrial Fuel Use Act due to concerns that natural gas reserves were running low. Of course, those worries proved to be unfounded, and the law was repealed in 1987. But by then co-ops had already built a generation of coal-fired power plants, the same plants that are now being saddled with heavy regulatory costs.

There is nothing wrong with wanting clean and green energy, but lawmakers in Washington D.C. need to keep balance, common sense, and affordability in mind when adding layer upon layer of requirements to the way we generate power.

Working with the folks at our national service are, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), we're urging the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to consider a more balanced and common-sense approach to rules, and how increased electric power costs affect consumers like you and I. Stay informed on these issues and find out how you can help us keep the price of power affordable at www.ourenergy.coop.

Continued from P. 1

siding or around door frames. For larger gaps, add a backing material before caulking, or use a spray foam sealant instead.

Most types of outdoor caulk are sold in tubes that fit a caulking gun. In addition, some caulks come in aerosol cans; they're a good choice for filling gaps up to one-half inch around pipes and wires.

When shopping for caulk, there are many choices. Prices range from a couple of dollars to several dollars per tube, so be sure to read the labels and choose a product that will adhere best to the materials you're sealing.

If your budget allows, spend a little more for a higher quality caulk. Inexpensive caulks may last only a few years, while premium priced caulks are rated for 20 years or more.

Caulk like a pro

- * As a rule of thumb, you'll probably use half a cartridge per window or door and up to six cartridges for foundation work.
- * Most caulks pose no known health hazards after they're fully cured. However, some high performance caulking compounds contain irritating or potentially toxic ingredients, so you should carefully read the manufacturer's instructions and take the appropriate precautions.
- * The best time to apply caulk is during dry weather when outdoor temperatures are above 45 degrees. Low humidity is important during application to prevent cracks from swelling with moisture.
- * If the gap you're sealing is too wide, use a special filler made for this purpose. You'll find fillers in the caulking department of your local hardware store or home center. However, note that fillers are not designed for exposure to the elements; so you'll need to caulk or seal over it.
- * Before applying new caulk, remove the old caulk or paint residue with a putty knife, stiff brush, or special solvent.
- * Make sure your work area is dry, so you won't seal in moisture.
- * Hold the caulking gun at a consistent angle; 45 degrees is best.
- * Caulk in a straight, continuous stream, avoiding stops and starts, and make sure the caulk sticks to both sides of the crack or seam.
- * Send caulk to the bottom of an opening to avoid bubbles.
- * Release the trigger on the caulking gun before pulling it away from the crack to prevent applying too much caulk. A caulking gun with an automatic release makes this much easier.
- * Don't skimp. If the caulk shrinks, reapply it to form a smooth bead that completely seals the crack.
- * If caulk oozes out of a crack, use a putty knife to push it back in.
- * Once you've applied caulk, it takes time for it to dry or cure. Curing time is described in two ways. The tack-free time tells you how quickly the fresh caulk's outer surface will dry or skin over. The total cure time indicates the time required for the caulk to become completely stable or reach the point where no further drying or shrinking will occur.
- * Don't allow pets and small children to come into contact with fresh caulk.

Use expanding foam for large gaps

- * Be sure to use the correct type of spray foam for the job. Polyurethane expandable spray foam works well around pipes and gaps around the foundation. However, this type of caulk expands with so much force that it can cause damage to window frames and door frames. In those spots, use a water based spray foam specifically designed for the job.
- * Expanding foam is ideal for filling cracks that caulks can't handle. It comes in aerosol cans and takes a short time to cure. The foam is very sticky and attaches itself quickly, so be prepared to pick up any messes fast.
- * To seal gaps too wide for foam, use foil-faced bubble wrap. For really large holes, cut sections of rigid foam insulation to fit and then glue into place with expanding foam before covering the area with wood or another appropriate building material.



***Pitt & Greene EMC will be closed
Monday, February 20, 2012
in observance of Presidents Day.***

Winter Storm Safety

Although we don't see many snow and ice storms in our area, it pays to be prepared. As with any storm they can lead to downed power lines and outages. Remember the following tips to stay safe and warm should you find yourself in the dark after a severe winter event:

- * Never touch a fallen power line, and assume all wires on the ground are electrically charged. Call Pitt & Greene EMC at 252-753-3128 to report it immediately. Avoid contact with overhead lines during cleanup and other activities.
- * In the event of an outage, an alternate heating source, such as a fireplace, propane space heater, or wood stove, may be used. Extreme caution should be taken.
- * Plan to stay in an area of the home where the alternate heat source is located.
- * Fuel and wood burning heating sources should be vented. Be sure to follow manufacturer's directions.
- * Make sure carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors are working properly.
- * Do not use a gas-powered oven for heating. A gas oven may go out or burn inefficiently, leading to carbon monoxide poisoning.
- * Do not use a gas or charcoal grill inside the home. Do not use charcoal briquettes in the fireplace.
- * If you use a portable generator to power a heating source, be sure the generator is located outside your house for proper ventilation. Do not use a generator in an attached garage. Follow manufacturer's directions for operating the generator.
- * Take special care not to overload a generator. Use appropriately sized extension cords to carry the electrical load. Make sure the cords have a grounded, three-pronged plug and are in good condition.
- * Never run cords under rugs or carpets.
- * Never connect generators to power lines. The reverse flow of electricity can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker.

Ideally, your family will stay warm until the power comes back on. But keep an eye on family members for signs of hypothermia, which include shivering, drowsiness, and mental and physical slowness. The elderly and your children are particularly vulnerable to hypothermia. Call 911 immediately if you notice these symptoms. At least one telephone in the house that does not depend on electricity should be available in the case of a power outage.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Air is drawn into your home from low areas, so inspect your foundation for potential air-infiltration points. Fixing these leaks makes a bigger impact on your electric bill than sealing doors and windows! Caulk all cracks and gaps around your home including spaces around wires for telephone, electrical, cable, and gas lines, water spigots, and dryer vents. Find more ways to save at TogetherWeSave.com.

Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

De lunes a viernes de 8:00 a.m. a 5:00 p.m.
252-753-3128 ó 1-800-622-1362

Snow Hill

De lunes a viernes

De 8:00 a.m. a 12:30 p.m. y de 1:30 p.m. a 5:00 p.m.
252-747-7600

**CORTES DE SUMINISTRO ELÉCTRICO Y
EMERGENCIAS:**

Durante fines de semana, días festivos y después del
horario de oficina
252-753-8778

Co-op Office Hours

Farmville

Monday - Friday - 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

252-753-3128 or 1-800-622-1362

Snow Hill

Monday - Friday

8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

252-747-7600

POWER OUTAGES & EMERGENCIAS

During weekends, holidays and after office hours

252-753-8778