

## Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation

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### Mission Statement

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation is committed to providing dependable, affordable electric service through the expertise and dedication of competent leadership and a well-trained and responsive workforce.

## AS I SEE IT

Manager's Viewpoint

# Protecting our silent sentinels

It's easy to take something for granted when you see it every day. We drive by row after row of them, but how often do we think about

utility poles? Yet these silent sentinels — often under attack in our community — are critical to Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation's mission of delivering safe, reliable and affordable power.

Electric cooperatives like CEMC own and maintain more than 2.5 million miles of distribution lines stretching across two-thirds of America. Some of these lines can be found underground, but for the most part they stretch above ground, chasing after us on roadsides and doggedly climbing through harsh terrain to deliver power to homes.

Co-ops rely on more than 41 million utility poles to deliver these lines, and these staunch supporters of electricity are under constant attack from the elements — storms, woodpeckers, insects, moisture and harsh soils. But people play a part in pole erosion, too.

I can't tell you how many times I've driven by a pole and noticed yard sale

signs or ads tacked to the base. It's illegal to attach unauthorized items to poles. When a lineworker is responding to an outage and climbs a pole, abandoned nails or tacks can rip through protective gloves, leaving the lineworker potentially exposed to thousands of volts of energy. And even when nails are removed, the leftover holes provide easy entry for bugs and water, causing a pole that should have lasted four decades or more to weaken much faster.



**Jim Coode**  
General Manager  
Cumberland  
Electric  
Membership  
Corporation

We need your help. If you notice anyone trying to attach something to a utility pole, let them know it's dangerous and against the law.

Whenever we see an illegal attachment — whether it's a satellite dish, birdhouse, basketball hoop, deer stand or anything else — our employees will remove it and are not responsible for any damage caused to the unauthorized item.

Thank you for your help as we work together to prolong the life span of these silent sentinels that provide us with safe, reliable and affordable electric service.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Use motion sensors on your lights to save on your electric bill. These sensors turn on lights automatically when someone enters a room and turns them off after a person leaves.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

# Pole parole

*Attaching objects to poles puts lives on the line — and it's a crime*

*By Megan McKoy-Noe, Certified Cooperative Communicator*

**W**hat do yard sale signs, basketball hoops, deer stands, satellite dishes and birdhouses have in common? They're often found illegally attached to utility poles. But this isn't only a crime of inconvenience. Safety issues caused by unapproved pole attachments place the lives of lineworkers and the public in peril.

It may seem innocent, but a small nail partially driven into a pole can pierce a lineworker's glove, stripping away critical protection from high-voltage electricity.

"Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation line crews climb utility poles at all hours of the day and night, in the worst of conditions," explains Chip Miller, CEMC safety coordinator. "Anything attached to utility poles can create serious hazards for our line personnel. Sharp objects like nails, tacks, staples or barbed wire can puncture rubber gloves and other safety equipment, making linemen vulnerable to electrocution."



*Satellite dishes and other unauthorized attachments must be removed to protect lineworkers. Source: Crawford Electric Cooperative*

CEMC lineworkers have reported more poles used as community bulletin boards, satellite mounts and even support legs for deer stands, lights and carports. Not only do these attachments put line crews at risk — anyone illegally placing these items on poles comes dangerously close to

energized power lines with thousands of volts of energy pulsing overhead. It's always wise to keep any structure at least 10 feet away from utility poles.

Unauthorized pole attachments violate the National Electric Safety Code. With this danger in mind, many states make it a crime to attach any unapproved item to a utility pole.

Please help us keep our linemen — and our communities — safe. Remove any unauthorized items attached to utility poles. Fixtures not belonging to the cooperative or another utility will be removed by CEMC line personnel; the co-op is not responsible for any losses if an item is damaged or destroyed during removal.



*An illegal birdhouse perches on a utility pole below an equally illegal sign. Source: Allamakee Clayton Electric Cooperative*

## We have a date with a turkey

**A**nd that's why Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation offices will be closed Thursday and Friday, Nov. 24 and 25 for Thanksgiving. Our employees will be enjoying time off with their families during this long holiday weekend, and we hope you and your family have similar plans. Should you experience a power outage or other electrical emergency, crews will still be available to help. Just call 800-987-2362.

**Happy Thanksgiving** from your friends at



# Giving efficiency

Story and photographs by Kelly Trapnell

**W**ith the holiday rush starting earlier and earlier every year, get a jump-start on your shopping wish list with some great green gifts. Using these tips, you can have everything wrapped up before the ho, ho, ho turns into go, go, go!

## Why give efficiency?

Green giving is thoughtful on many levels. The person receiving the gift has a new gadget to use that keeps long-term electric costs low year-round.

“Choosing a green gift can be easy,” says Brian Sloboda, senior program manager for the Cooperative Research Network. “Be aware of energy use. Look for any mention of energy ratings on large appliances and televisions. Think solar, reusable and recyclable. Even something as small as the packaging and wrapping can make a difference.”

Look for items with lightweight packaging. And think about wrapping your gift in something like a fabric bag that can be reused or even an accessory like a scarf to tie things up.

## Green gift Ideas

• For decorators:

LED Christmas lights (\$15-\$35) — These energy-efficient lights are becoming easier to find. They save on high holiday electric bills and stay cool to the touch. For a festive complete package, wrap in a decorative stocking.

• For gardeners:

Solar garden lights (\$15-\$50) — Available in endless colors, styles and sizes, solar garden lights can be a lovely addition to your favorite green thumb’s garden. To up the green quotient, wrap in a burlap bag.



Give an energy-smart gift like LED Christmas lights this year.

• For cooks:

Toaster oven (\$60-\$140) — Especially great for the empty-nester or others only cooking for one or two, toaster ovens are a good choice to save energy as an alternative to heating a large standard oven.

• For movie buffs or sports fans:

ENERGY STAR-rated TV (price based on size) — Televisions are getting bigger and better. But before you give something that uses as much electricity as a refrigerator, look for the ENERGY STAR label. It will offer the smallest impact on your electric bills possible.



Think green when wrapping gifts by using reusable or recyclable wrap like a newspaper sports page and twine.

• For techies:

Smart strip (\$20-\$40) — This new cutting-edge technology is great for plugging in electronic gadgets. Not your average power strip, smart strips sport designated outlets that make it easy to power down certain devices to save energy while not affecting others plugged into the same strip.

Solar cell phone charger (\$55-\$100-plus) — Help unplug energy-sucking chargers from the wall; solar chargers can be placed in a window to charge a cell phone or other devices — like GPS units or even MP3 players — anywhere the sun shines, even in a car on-the-go!

There are many options when you start looking for green gifts. Get creative, and remember that what you give impacts future electric bills. So give the “green” light on energy-smart gifts this year!

*Kelly Trapnell writes on safety and energy efficiency issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation’s 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*

# Tracking energy use may reveal areas of savings

**N**ow that cooler weather is here, it just makes sense to look for ways to save energy and money while keeping the homestead as comfortable as possible. Tracking the way your home uses energy is a good way to accomplish this.

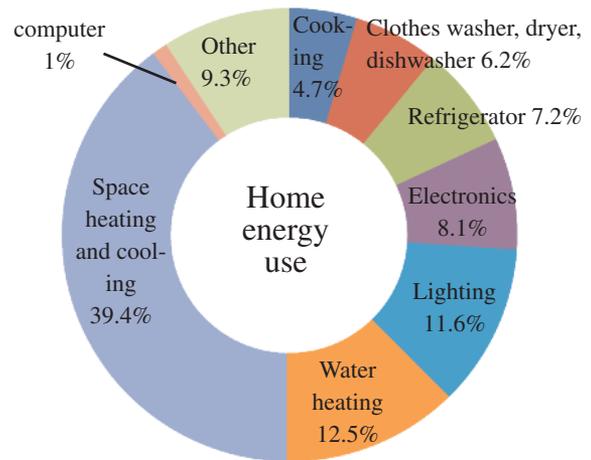
On one hand, homes today are being built to be more energy-efficient. Ironically, many residents are filling up their new homes with more energy-intensive appliances such as big-screen TVs and recording devices that could offset the savings the energy-efficient home promised.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), in 1978, 69 percent of the average home's energy use went to space heating and cooling. Today, thanks to better window design, insulation and HVAC equipment, the amount we spend on heating and cooling our homes has declined to less than 40 percent.

What has kept our energy use steady over the years is a 14-percent jump in consumption by electronic gadgets. "DVD players and digital video recorders (DVRs), which did not exist 15 years ago, are now widespread," the EIA says. "As of 2009, 79 percent of homes had a DVD player, and 43 percent had a DVR. Nearly a third of all households also had at least four electronic devices such as cell phones plugged in and charging at home."

Computer use is also growing. More than 75 percent of homes have at least one computer, and 35 percent have at least two. That's twice what was reported in 2005.

When it comes to a home's energy-efficient features, homes built during the past 30 years are more likely to have



Source: 2009 Buildings Energy Data Book, U.S. Department of Energy. Represents an all-electric home. Updated February 2011.

double-pane glass windows instead of single-pane. The use of ENERGY STAR appliances has also increased in recent years. ENERGY STAR-rated refrigerators are found in 39 percent of all homes. Efficient clothes washers are in 36 percent, and efficient dishwashers are in 24 percent.

And those compact fluorescent lightbulbs that CEMC has been handing out for the past few years? About 60 percent of households are using them. Those homes are saving money on lighting expenses!

## Seal cracks to save energy, money

**F**inding and sealing air leaks can save you energy and money. Here are some tips from Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation that can help keep your home cooler in summer and warmer in winter while lowering your utility bills:

Caulking cracks and openings can save you \$212 a year. Find cracks by waiting for a windy day and then carefully holding a lit incense stick or a smoke pen next to your windows, doors, electrical outlets and other spots where outside air may infiltrate. If the smoke stream moves horizontally, you've found a leak that needs to be sealed.

Experts recommend using waterproof, flexible and long-lasting silicone caulk to seal cracks and gaps that are less than a quarter of an inch wide. Remove any old caulk and clean the surface before applying new caulk.

Fresh caulk takes several hours or longer to dry, so it's best to do the job on a dry day when humidity is relatively low and the temperature is above 45 degrees. In addition to caulk, you can use low-expansion spray foam to seal leaks.

For other tips on how to save energy — and money — visit [www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov) or call the efficiency experts at CEMC.

# What's going on here?



*These people are registering their attendance at Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation's 2011 Annual Member Meeting, held Sept. 24 at Rossvie High School in Clarksville. Coming up in next month's issue of **The Tennessee Magazine**, we'll offer a wrap-up of who did what and who won what during this very successful event.*



## Young guns

*CEMC's support of area school students and the programs they are interested in extends even to the shooting range!*

*At left are students from Cumberland Heights Elementary School and Montgomery Central Middle School and the many, many trophies and awards they won this past school year. CEMC is proud to promote gun safety!*