

NEWS Central

May 2020

Monthly newsletter from Central Electric Membership Corp.

May is National Electrical Safety Month

Safety is the highest priority for us, and as your local energy partner, we encourage our members to make safety a priority too. May is National Electrical Safety Month, but it's important to take safety precautions year round. Here are some simple tips:

- ▶ **Unplug it.** Appliances, tools and other devices are still connected to electricity when they are plugged in, even if they are turned off. Turn off AND unplug all electric devices when you're done using them.
- ▶ **Inspect it.** Examine electrical cords often for broken connectors or fraying, and throw away any worn cords. Buy only cords that have been approved by an independent testing laboratory. Also watch your wattage and only use light bulbs that don't exceed the maximum wattage listed on your lamp or fixture.
- ▶ **Check it.** Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) outlets should be used in any area where water and electricity could mix—including kitchens, bathrooms, garages and outdoors—and should be tested monthly. You should also check your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors once a month to ensure they are working properly.

DON'T:

- ▶ **Don't overload it.** Overloaded electrical circuits can cause residential fires. Never use extension



cords or multi-outlet converters for appliances. All major appliances should be plugged directly into a wall outlet, and you should only plug one heat-producing appliance into an outlet at a time.

- ▶ **Don't extend it.** Extension cords are not a permanent solution. If you're using extension cords regularly, you may need extra outlets and should contact a licensed electrician.
- ▶ **Don't touch it.** Never go near or drive over a power line. If you encounter a downed line, leave the area immediately and call the co-op. Never place ladders, poles or other items near power lines, and don't fly kites or drones near lines or substations. Teach children not to put their fingers in electrical outlets, use child-proof outlet covers and keep appliances and cords away from children. Also, never touch electrical appliances with wet hands or use them near sinks, tubs, toilets or showers.



MAY 1 is when applications for Central Carolina or Sandhills Community College scholarships are due. Visit CEMCPower.com for more details.

MAY 15 is the deadline for applications for Cooperative Leadership Camp at White Lake, N.C. Apply online at CEMCPower.com.

MAY 25 the CEMC office will be closed for Memorial Day. Crews will be on call.



POINT OF VIEW

Your co-op is here for you

From the desk of CEO & General Manager Eddie Oldham

“ We are grateful to be a part of your community and honored to provide electricity and services that power your life. While we all work together to relieve the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, we are here for you, just as we always have been, and always will be. ”

As I sit down to write this column at the end of March, a great deal of uncertainty still surrounds one of the most impactful events to ever affect a majority of our lives. COVID-19, or more commonly known as coronavirus, has turned our worlds “upside down,” so to speak. Just a short time ago, most of us could hardly have ever imagined our world coming to an almost complete stop. But for all intents and purposes, it did.

We at Central Electric are no strangers to crisis situations. Being on the frontlines during a crisis is something we are very used to, as we have responded to countless ice, snow, and major hurricane storms. However, this has been a new challenge. Rather than being a familiar situation that involves getting the lights back on, one we are very comfortable dealing with, the COVID pandemic has been a world-wide crisis situation. In this scenario, we have been just a small piece of a very large puzzle.

From the start when COVID began to impact our local communities, we knew we needed to respond quick. Based on recommendations from both health and public officials, we put in place measures to do our part in containing the spread of the virus, as well as policies aimed at helping ease the economic burden for our members. We made the tough decision to close our front lobby to walk-in traffic. While we love interacting directly with our members and it is part of what drives the cooperative difference, under the circumstances it made the most sense. Fortunately, we have worked very hard over the years to provide many

ways for you to stay connected with the co-op and we hope that you have been able to take advantage of these, such as our mobile app, online service portal or website chat feature.

We were also very aware of the economic impact to our members, knowing our communities were not going to be spared from the negative impacts from industry and commerce shutdowns, lost wages and school closures. To help ease this burden, we postponed disconnects for nonpayment, waived all late payment fees and we are providing payment arrangement extensions free of charge. In the coming months, we are also very aware that the needs of our members will run deeper than just needing assistance with utility bills. That’s why we are also partnering with our local non-profit organizations to provide funding to be used in the areas of greatest need.

While far from normal, we have worked hard to protect our employees through remote working and staggered scheduling, and still seamlessly continue our business operations to provide you with the service you have come to expect. We are grateful to be a part of your community and honored to provide electricity and services that power your life. While we all work together to relieve the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, we are here for you, just as we always have been, and always will be.

Until next time,

Eddie B. Oldham



Electrifying your lawn care

Spring is here and you can practically smell the freshly cut grass. If you're in the market to upgrade your lawn care equipment, you may want to consider these electric (or battery-powered) options.

Electric lawn mowers have come a long way over the last few years. Early models required corded connections, which were tricky to manage—but the cord has been cut. Newer cordless electric mowers are certainly more expensive than gas-powered mowers, but much of the up-front cost can be recovered since electricity is a less expensive fuel than gas, and electric engines generally require less maintenance than gas engines.

Cordless electric string trimmers are a great option for most lawns. They are much quieter and easier to use and most batteries last about 30 to 45 minutes.

Cordless electric leaf blowers are lightweight and easy to maneuver, but they don't offer quite as much power as gas-powered and corded blowers. If your leaf blowing and clearing needs are minimal, a cordless electric leaf blower can get the job done.

Now accepting Bright Ideas

Everyone knows April showers bring May flowers, but did you also know April brings new opportunities for local educators to fund classroom projects? Here at Central Electric, April marks the official kickoff of the Bright Ideas education grant program. The Bright Ideas grant program supports educators in need of funding to implement creative, hands-on learning projects.

Applications for Bright Ideas education grants for the 2020-21 school year are now being accepted. Educators in K-12 classrooms with creative ideas for learning projects are encouraged to apply for a grant up to \$2,000. This year, Central Electric will award \$15,000 in grants to support local teachers and students.

Grant applications will be accepted through Sept. 15. However, it pays to apply early. All teachers who submit their applications by the early bird deadline of Aug. 15 will be entered into a drawing for one of five \$100 Visa gift cards.

To apply, or for more information, visit NCBrightIdeas.com.



Round Up gives back to the local community

Thanks to the Operation Round Up program, powered by voluntary donations from Central Electric members, almost \$30,000 is being put back into the local communities to provide assistance for worthy projects. Grants were awarded to the following nonprofit organizations:

Chatham County Council on Aging – \$1,787 to help purchase a recumbent bike and new elliptical machine.

Chatham County 4-H – \$3,000 to provide need-based scholarships to campers for registration fees.

Chatham County Literacy Council – \$1,787 to help support adults in receiving their GED or high school diplomas as well as computer and financial literacy.

Five N Two Food Pantry – \$1,787 to purchase canned and boxed food to supplement food drives.

Lee County High School JROTC – \$1,787 to help subsidize the cost of the annual Military Ball.

Lee County Schools – AIG Dept. – \$2,000 for scholarships for



[L-R] Neil Coggins, Vice President, and Laura Spivey, Treasurer, accept a grant check on behalf of Outreach Mission, Inc. The grant will be used to purchase bed covers, bed supplies and cleaning supplies.

the 2020 Kaleidoscope trip to Washington, D.C.

Outreach Mission, Inc – \$3,000 for replacement of bed covers, bed supplies and cleaning supplies.

Overhills High School – \$3,000 for scholarships for 35 students to attend competitive events at the state level.

Project Graduation 2020 – \$1,787 for entertainment equipment and security.

Southern Lee High School Student Government – \$1,787

to provide activities and refreshment for school wide outdoor event.

Special Olympics North Carolina – \$1,787 for uniforms, awards, medals and sports equipment.

St. Provision Community Development Corp. – \$1,787 to offset cost of renting venue for upcoming conference.

Western Harnett Lions Club – \$3,000 to send three or four visually impaired campers to Camp Dogwood for one week.



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