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IN to Altamaha EMC

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Regulation on horizon for carbon, with or without congressional action *Likely increases in electric bills will result*

Federal curbs on emissions of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas blamed as a principal cause of climate change, are quickly becoming a reality. It's just a matter of which government branch gets there first: legislative, executive—or both.

In December the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), part of the executive branch, declared that six key greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, are endangering public health and welfare. Emissions from motor vehicles of four of those greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, are also said to contribute to dangerous air pollution under this “endangerment finding.”

“This action puts a ‘foot in the door’ for EPA to promulgate sweeping new regulations that could impose strict limits on carbon emissions from power plants, driving up electric bills,” warns Glenn English, CEO of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), which represents the interests of the nation’s 900-plus consumer-owned and governed electric cooperatives.

The concern is that with carbon dioxide emissions from vehicles falling under federal Clean Air Act regulation, other emitters of carbon dioxide—fossil fuel-fired power plants included—may also soon be subject to EPA oversight.

“The Clean Air Act as written was never designed to deal with carbon, and it would be awkward at best and probably a disaster at worst,” English adds.

Electric co-ops believe that any controls on carbon dioxide should be established by Congress, where the impact of these proposals can have a full public debate. Unfortunately, a climate change bill passed by the U.S. House last summer (H.R. 2454) and another reported by the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in November (S. 1733) include unachievable goals and timelines for reducing carbon dioxide emissions, inadequate technology development incentives, and no guarantee that electric bills will remain affordable.

Current proposals will unfairly penalize consumers in fossil fuel-dependant states by saddling them with higher bills to essentially subsidize and lower electric bills for those in other regions.

What’s more, Senate leaders have admitted that climate change legislation has stalled and will likely be picked up sometime in the spring. This legislative logjam makes it all the more important for co-ops and consumers to pay careful attention to EPA’s current efforts.

English insists that any climate change legislation should protect consumers and preempt use of the federal Clean Air Act and any other existing laws. Otherwise, utilities and businesses could be burdened with the task of trying to comply with more than one set of regulations.

“Regulation of carbon dioxide as a pollutant will occur with or without congressional input,” English explains. “But Congress must not simply add new legislation on top of old regulations. Any climate change bill should become the roadmap—the single strategy—for reducing carbon dioxide emissions at federal, state, and local levels.”

He continues: “By staying engaged in the process, electric co-ops can have a measureable impact on the outcome.”

Electric co-ops are fighting to ensure that any climate change policy goals adopted are fair, affordable, and achievable. To make your voice heard in this debate, join NRECA’s Our Energy, Our Future™ grassroots awareness campaign at www.ourenergy.coop. To date, more than 600,000 of your fellow co-op consumers across the country have already done so.



Our Energy, Our Future
A Dialogue With America

The Washington Youth Tour – A Chance of a Lifetime

Altamaha EMC invites local high school juniors and seniors to apply for the trip of a lifetime to Washington, D.C. We will be selecting two lucky students for an all-expenses-paid trip to our nation's capital. These students will join hundreds of other students from across the country as delegates on the 2010 Washington Youth Tour. The tour will be held June 10 – 17, 2010.

The Washington Youth Tour program goes well beyond being just a topnotch tour of our nation's capital. Students will be able to meet with state and national leaders, undergo leadership training, and visit all the major sites in Washington, D.C.

The competition process begins with a written test comprised of 50 multiple choice, true-false, fill-in-the-blank and essay questions covering topics such as the history of rural electrification, the basics of how electricity works, electrical safety and the cooperative business model. Students are given a packet of material several weeks before the contest. The highest scoring individuals on the written test go on to participate in an interview where the winners are then chosen based on personality, leadership qualities, school activities, community service and academics.

Our Youth Tour Coordinator, Tammye Vaughn, will be visiting all of our area high schools during the month of January to promote the program. Students interested in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience America's government and history up close – while having fun, making new friends and gaining leadership skills – can obtain additional information by contacting Tammye Vaughn via e-mail at tammye.vaughn@altamahaemc.com, by phone at (912) 526-2120, or toll free at 1-800-822-4563, ext. 120.

The Washington Youth Tour contest is sponsored each year by Altamaha EMC to increase awareness among local youth of the role of a nonprofit, cooperatively owned electric system.



Need Money for College?

January 29, 2010 is the deadline for Walter Harrison Scholarship applications to be submitted to Altamaha EMC.

Based on academic ability and financial need, the \$1,000 scholarship can be used at any accredited two- or four-year university, college or vocational-technical institute in Georgia. Applicants must reside in the primary residence of an Altamaha EMC member or Altamaha EMC employee, and show proof of acceptance of enrollment in an accredited undergraduate program, full or part time.

For more information or for an application, call Tammye Vaughn at (912) 526-2120, toll-free at 1-800-822-4563 (ext. 120), or send an e-mail to tammye.vaughn@altamahaemc.com

Fire Extinguishers:

A Little Preparation Can Go a Long Way

House fires can happen in seconds: in one instant, you could go from whipping up dinner to watching flames spring up from the stovetop.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, 410,500 fires—or 78 percent of all reported structure fires—occur in homes. In the right hands, a household fire extinguisher can save lives and protect property should a small fire start.

“Every home should have at least one fire extinguisher, and you need the right type and you must know how and when to use it,” says John Drengenberg, consumer affairs manager at Underwriters Laboratories (UL), the Chicago, Ill.-based not-for-profit firm that tests and sets minimum standards for electric-consuming items.

Fire extinguishers should be placed in easily-accessible areas of the home, close to where they might be needed (such as in a kitchen, garage, or bedroom). Some basic rules to keep in mind when using household fire extinguishers:

1. If the fire is not spreading and remains confined to a small area, use the appropriate type of extinguisher. Select a multi-purpose extinguisher (rated A, B, or C) with the UL mark that can be used on all types fires such as wood, cloth, paper, flammable liquids (gasoline, oil, grease, oil-based paint), and energized electrical equipment including wiring, fuse boxes, circuit breakers and appliances.
2. Know both your limits and that of the fire extinguisher.
3. Periodically inspect your extinguishers to determine if they need to be recharged or replaced. Extinguishers need to be recharged or replaced after each use—even if you haven’t used the entire extinguishing agent. Check the gauge on the fire extinguisher for this information.



Be sure to have a fire extinguisher rated for the type of fire at hand: Class A fires are ordinary materials like burning paper, lumber, cardboard, and plastics; Class B fires involve flammable or combustible liquids like gasoline and kerosene; Class C fires involve energized electrical equipment, such as appliances, switches, panel boxes, and power tools.

4. When operating a fire extinguisher, stand at least 6 feet away from the fire and keep your back to a door so you can escape easily, if necessary. Remember the word **PASS**:
 - **P**ull the pin, hold the extinguisher away from you and release the locking mechanism.
 - **A**im low, pointing the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
 - **S**queeze the lever slowly and evenly.
 - **S**weep the nozzle from side to side.

“Fire extinguishers for home use are not designed to fight large or spreading fires,” stresses Drengenberg. “Rather than fighting the fire, your number one priority should be getting out safely.”



Wash Clothes Efficiently Without Getting Caught in the Spin Cycle

Washing machines perform a fairly simple function—getting dirty clothes clean. Yet prospective buyers today can be overwhelmed with all of the different models and “bells and whistles” available top-loading, front-loading, high-efficiency (HE), water saver, steaming, and wrinkle removing, to name only a few.

Energy-efficient washing machines, easily identified by the Energy Star label, are a priority for any cost-conscious consumer's list. Approximately 93 percent of all American households have a clothes washer, adding up to 102 million

clothes washers across America. About 9 million washing machines are sold each year—efficient models account for slightly more than one-third of sales.

Energy Star-rated washing machines cost slightly more than their less-efficient counterparts, anywhere from \$400-1,500, depending on other features selected. To get a handle on how much electricity a particular unit will draw, pay close attention to the yellow energy guide before making a purchase.

An energy-efficient washing machine can save the typical homeowner around \$50 a year, or \$540-\$600 over the life of the appliance. Efficient machines also save more than 5,000 gallons of water annually. The energy and water efficiencies of clothes washers are measured according to their modified energy factor (MEF) and water factor (WF). These criteria generally limit Energy Star qualification to front-loading and advanced top-loading models.

Front-loading clothes washers use a horizontal or tumble-axis basket to lift and drop clothing into the water, instead of rubbing clothes around a central agitator in a full tub. These units use less energy than conventional clothes washers by reducing the amount of hot water needed to clean clothes. Front-loading models also squeeze more water out of clothes by using spin speeds that are two to three times faster than conventional washers, reducing both drying time and energy use.

Energy Star-qualified top-loading models typically use spray valves to rinse clothes, rather than a new tub of water. This method not only reduces the energy required for water heating, but typically saves an average of 15 gallons of water per wash, compared with conventional clothes washers.

Qualified top-loading models also boast sensors to monitor and adjust incoming water temperature. This keeps water hot enough to dissolve the detergent and provide high-performance cleaning, but cool enough to save energy and minimize hot water damage to fabrics. One limitation of efficient top-loading washers is that many models do not offer a high-temperature standard wash option.

By looking for the Energy Star logo and shopping at a store with knowledgeable staff, you should be able to leave with a new washing machine that will, over time, pay for itself.

YOU can make a DIFFERENCE

Every time you turn a light switch off, you're doing more than saving a couple of pennies on your energy bill. You're contributing to a nationwide effort to make the country more efficient.

Your simple energy choices can have a great impact on the environment. One by one, as every household in the country becomes a bit more efficient, the results become significant. Here's how:

- If every household replaced its five most frequently used lights with compact fluorescent light bulbs, it would prevent more than 1 trillion pounds of greenhouse gases.
- If every home washed clothes in warm or cold water instead of hot, it would save energy comparable to 100,000 barrels of oil a day.
- If just one household in 10 chose an Energy Star-qualified appliance when replacing old equipment, it would prevent more than 17 billion pounds of greenhouse gases.
- If every family turned the water temperature down by 20 degrees, it would prevent more than 45 millions tons of annual greenhouse gas emissions.
- If everyone saved just one gallon of water a day while showering, it would save—in a year—twice the amount of fresh water drawn from the Great Lakes every day—plus the energy used to heat that water. Shortening a shower by two minutes can save 10 gallons.

Member **RECIPES**

Quick and Easy Skillet Lasagna

1 (24- to 26-ounce) jar marinara sauce
3 cups water
8 ounces lasagna noodles
1 pound bulk hot Italian turkey sausage or
sausage links with casings removed
2 garlic cloves, pressed
2 ounces Parmesan cheese
Parsley, divided
1 cup fresh whole milk ricotta cheese
½ cup shredded mozzarella cheese
¼ teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
Additional grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

Combine marinara sauce and water in a skillet. Cover and bring to a boil. Meanwhile, to keep from scattering noodles, wrap noodles in a clean kitchen towel and break crosswise into quarters. Stir noodles into sauce. Cover, reduce heat and simmer 14 to 15 minutes or until noodles are tender, stirring occasionally.

As noodles cook, place sausage into a skillet; cook and stir over medium-high heat for 6 to 8 minutes or until sausage is no longer pink. Then break sausage into crumbles. Add pressed garlic and cook for 1 minute. Remove from heat. Stir sausage into noodles and sauce. While noodles are cooking, grate Parmesan cheese and chop parsley for garnish. Combine cheeses, remaining parsley and black pepper. Scoop cheese mixture over noodles and let simmer for 3 to 5 minutes or until cheese is melted and ricotta mixture is heated through.

To serve, sprinkle lasagna with reserved parsley and add additional Parmesan cheese, if desired.

(Tip: Fresh whole milk ricotta cheese is preferred in this recipe for its smooth texture. Be sure to drain off excess liquid before using.)

From the kitchen of Dawn Grimes

Each month, our newsletter features recipes submitted by our members. If you have a favorite recipe and would like to share it with other readers in the Altamaha EMC service area, send a copy, complete with name, address and daytime phone number to: Tammye Vaughn, Altamaha EMC, P.O. Box 346, Lyons, GA 30436. Each month, a recipe will be selected for publication. The member who submitted the featured recipe will be given a \$10 credit on their next Altamaha EMC bill. Due to limited space, not all recipes received will be featured. Recipes printed in *Plugged In* are not independently tested; therefore, we must depend on the accuracy of those members who send recipes to us.