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A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF OTERO COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP

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May 2008

Shocking? May is National Electrical Safety Month

Arlington, VA – Hazards commonly found in older homes are increasingly causing fires and fatalities in the US. However, by taking a few simple steps and by incorporating newer technology you can protect your home from many of these dangers. Each year the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) sponsors May as National Electrical Safety Month. For this year's campaign, the foundation is helping consumers to take an active roll in identifying older home hazards and in safeguarding their families from the dangers these hazards pose.

Home electrical problems account for nearly 55,000 home fires every year. These fires cause over 500 deaths, injure more than 1,400 people, and account for \$1.4 billion in property damage. Older homes are at even greater risk to fire. According to the US Census Bureau, half of the homes in the United States were built before 1973. These homes and electrical systems were built before many of the appliances and electronics that we commonly use today were even around. To put this into perspective, a third of US homes were built before hair dryers or electric can openers were invented! Half of the homes were built before the advent of the garage door opener or the home computer!

"As each year goes by Americans are using more energy in their homes," says Brett Brenner, President of ESFI. "Many homes and electrical systems in the US are simply being overburdened leading to fires, deaths, and injuries."

For May 2008, ESFI is providing consumers with a checklist which will allow consumers to identify electrical dangers commonly found in each room of their home. ESFI will also be educating owners of older homes on newer fire prevention technology such as Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCIs). These advanced electronic circuit breakers detect dangerous conditions in a home's wiring and cut off power to the circuit before a fire develops.

Additionally, the foundation will be encouraging those living in older homes with children to install tamper resistant receptacles. These devices look like normal electrical outlets except they have a built-in shutter system that prevents children from inserting foreign objects into the slots. These outlets will prevent most of the 2,400 burns sustained by children each year from outlets.

More information and resources relating to National Electrical Safety Month 2008 can be found at www.electrical-safety.org.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety. Established in 1994, ESFI proudly sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May and focuses on reducing electrically related deaths, injuries and property loss. Funded solely by the industry, ESFI is the leading authority and advocate of electrical safety.

Technology is Key in Keeping the Lights On!


Right now, there are a lot of "what-ifs" surrounding electric power. As a nation, we need to add more generating resources to meet growing electric consumption.

As your provider of safe, affordable, and reliable power, it's our job to make prudent, long-term energy decisions that will benefit you and the communities we serve for decades to come. But today those decisions are mixed up with politics like never before. Every question of supplying power is being impacted by the debate surrounding how best to meet climate change goals. Policy limiting carbon dioxide emissions is becoming more likely, although specifics are still up in the air.

Massive investments in new technology will be required and soon to find a balance in meeting both our energy and climate change goals. The Electric Power Research Institute estimates it will take a research investment of \$1.4 billion a year from now until 2030 to develop new technology such as carbon capture and storage for our power plants.


Once we add this advanced technology to the equation, we can develop power plants that burn coal and isolate carbon dioxide emissions. The gas can then be compressed and pumped for permanent storage deep underground. Many experts believe that with the right financial commitment from the federal government, cost-effective carbon capture and storage technology could become commercially available around 2020.

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GFCIs should be tested once a month to make sure they are working properly.


Testing Your GFCI




Push the “Reset” button of the GFCI receptacle to prepare the unit for testing.



Plug in an ordinary night light into the GFCI and turn it on. The light should now be ON.



Push the “Test” button of the GFCI. The nightlight should go OFF.



Push the “Reset” button again. The nightlight should now go ON again.

The nightlight should go out when the “Test” button is pushed. If the light does not go out, then the GFCI may have been improperly wired or damaged and does not offer shock protection. In this case, contact a licensed electrician to check the GFCI and correct the problem.

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At Otero County Electric Coop, we are dedicated to keeping you supplied with reliable and affordable electricity. We are, with electric cooperatives across the country, engaged in a grassroots campaign called “Our Energy, Our Future” to start a dialogue with lawmakers about critical questions such as technology’s role in our energy future. Please visit www.ourenergy.coop to contact your elected officials and add your voice to the campaign.

Congressman Pearce announced that the 2008 Congressional Art Competition is coming up.

This year’s competition is sponsored by Savannah College of Art and Design who will be awarding the Artistic Honor Scholarship in the amount of **\$5,000** per year to the first place winner in the 2nd District of New Mexico (NM02).

Eligibility: Applicants must be seniors in high school considering a degree at the Savannah College of Art and Design and must have a 3.0 GPA. The scholarships are not transferable to other schools. Students are expected to submit a portfolio and complete a SCAD scholarship application. For this year’s contest, local entries will be due in Hobbs at 200 E. Broadway, suite 200 NM, 88240 by Tuesday, May 27, 2008.

The guidelines and student release forms for the contest are available online at <http://pearce.house.gov>. Should you have questions, please refer to Demetrius.Moreno@mail.house.gov or ArtComp2008@mail.house.gov.