



Power Facts

An informational publication for members of Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative concerning electricity and related subjects.

October 2009

Power to the People



It's 57 degrees at the height of summer in Old Harbor on Alaska's Kodiak Island.

Fewer than 200 residents, mostly Native Alaskans of the Alutiq tribe, live in this fishing village nestled along the sheltered waters of Sitkalidak Strait. This is the lifelong home of teacher Phyllis Clough, who was five years old when Alaska Village Electric Cooperative (AVEC) introduced power there in 1968.

More than 4,000 miles southeast is the Atlantic coast home of Sharon Laney. The Summerville, South Carolina, business owner can't remember the last time it snowed there nor has she ever lived a day without electricity. As the July temperature spikes near 90 degrees, she enjoys air-conditioned comfort powered by Berkeley Electric Cooperative.

Despite differences defined by distance and environment, these women share the kinship of being customer-owners of a rural electric cooperative. There is a big club; an estimated 39 million Americans get their electricity through a co-op.

Powering the Last Frontier

There are more than 900 rural electric cooperatives in the U.S.

providing power to about 75 percent of the nation's land mass. This includes the far-flung AVEC, which serves villages with populations ranging from 88 to slightly more than 1,000. These 52 geographically diverse and remote villages throughout interior and western Alaska represent a service area about the size of Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska combined. It is larger geographically than any electric cooperative in the world.

Establishing and maintaining power to improve life in Alaska's tiny communities is difficult. Only one of the villages AVEC serves is accessible by road, meaning diesel fuel and power system equipment arrives by barge or airplane.

Keeping Up With Growth

With 75,000 current customer-owners and about 3,000 new members joining annually, Berkeley's membership ranks among the country's largest. The annual membership meeting attracts more than 30,000 attendees—the nation's highest for a rural electric cooperative.

The co-op's service area includes three counties surrounding tourism-charged Charleston. Affordable, reliable electricity is one of



the attractions transforming this once-rural area into suburbs packed with new residential neighborhoods, new infrastructure such as schools and hospitals, and retail centers. Standing at the front door of her commercial printing business, Laney can see the growth with which her cooperative is working to keep pace. A Super Wal-Mart, Lowe's and Home Depot are among the big-box businesses that are her new neighbors on Highway 17A.

From the Deep South to north of the Arctic Circle, from remote villages to burgeoning suburbs, cooperatives are bringing power to the people and enhancing the quality of life in the communities where they live.

--Taken from A Day in the Life of Cooperative America, a project of the National Co-op Month Committee.



TOGETHERWESAVE.COM

Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative's website (www.meckelec.org) has a new link to help members save money. Together We Save is a program that offers the following:

- [A room-by-room energy savings virtual home tour](#)
- [Entertaining and informative energy-saving applications](#)
- [Touchstone Energy TV videos](#)
- [A calculator to estimate yearly energy savings from various actions and home upgrades](#)

Energy choices range from inexpensive upgrades, such as installing compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), to major upgrades, such as installing an Energy Star furnace. Several options are free, including drawing the blinds during the summer or turning the water heater thermostat down to 120 degrees.

Flip the switch. Lower the blinds. Insulate your attic. Lower the temperature on your thermostat. These sound like simple tasks. Take all of these steps around your home or business, though, and you can rack up big savings.



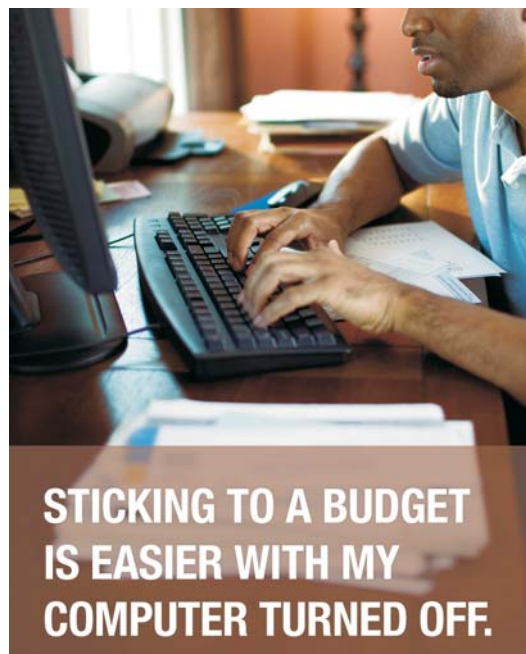
**I'M TIGHT
WITH MY MONEY.
AIRTIGHT.**

**You can save \$212 a year by
sealing a few cracks.**



**I SET MY THERMOSTAT
TO CHEAP.**

**You can save \$280 a year just by
programming a thermostat.**



**STICKING TO A BUDGET
IS EASIER WITH MY
COMPUTER TURNED OFF.**

**You can save \$105 a year by
shutting down all the way.**