

# Currents



AUGUST 2007 • Vol. X, Issue VIII

## Your Link to Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative



### High Voltage. . .



#### PLAY IT SAFE THIS SUMMER

Summertime brings people outdoors. Whether heading outside for summer fun or yard work, Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative and Safe Electricity recommend that families follow simple safety rules to avoid outdoor electrical hazards that can cause serious injury or death. Of particular concern are overhead power lines and the added dangers of using electricity outdoors, especially around water.

"Keep your summer season enjoyable and safe," said Molly Hall, director of Safe Electricity. "Be aware of overhead power lines when working or playing outside your home. Make sure children know and follow basic safety rules."

Safety tips to keep in mind this summer:

- ⚡ Look up and around you. Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long metal tools like ladders, pool skimmers and pruning poles, or when installing rooftop antennas and satellite dishes or doing roof repair work.
- ⚡ Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house. Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from lines. Never trim trees near power lines - leave that to the professionals.
- ⚡ If your projects include digging, like building a deck or

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### Commentary by the President & CEO



#### Our Focus Remains On Our Members

by Jim Siglin  
President & CEO

On June 25th, the Board of SREC offered me the opportunity to serve as President and CEO of your cooperative. I accepted the offer eagerly and began my tenure at the helm of the only electric cooperative in New Jersey.

Many of you already know me from my years with the cooperative but the majority of you do not. So, let me launch my first "Currents" commentary with a brief background. Originally from Southern New Jersey, I moved here in 1986 to begin my career at SREC as the Staff Engineer. Skeptical of the move from the Shore to Sussex County, I quickly discovered what a great place the county is to live, work and raise a family. Today, I live in Vernon with my wife, Kathy, and our three children.

On a professional note, I want to assure the members that our focus will remain squarely on you and your needs. Our mission is to provide the highest possible reliability at the best possible value. A key to reliability is reducing tree contact with our wires. In this area, we will continue with our system-wide tree trimming program, now in the second of its five years. You can contribute to our system reliability by reporting trees within a foot or less of our wires and by making sure any plantings on your property are at least 15' away from both overhead and underground services.

To deliver the best possible value, we are investing in technology. We are the only utility in New Jersey with 100% automatic meter reading. This system provides tremendous savings

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and a wealth of data we can utilize in helping make the system more efficient. We are expanding our control systems and have a ten-year plan in place to accommodate our steady growth without having to increase rates.

Safe operations is another area of emphasis for your cooperative. Our ongoing maintenance is designed to make our systems not only reliable but safe as well. If you are working near our services, be aware of their location. Keep ladders and long tools away from our overhead wires and call before digging in an area where you suspect our underground services might be. Also, if you see a dangerous situation such as damaged transformers (either aerial or on the ground), please call us and report it.



Above all, we will remain member-focused and community involved. One of the great advantages of belonging to a cooperative is that every member has an equal voice. Unlike investor owned utilities where the shareholder with the largest number of shares wields the most influence, a cooperative is completely democratic. If you have an issue you want to raise or need assistance of any type, contact me or any of your staff at [ContacttheCEO@sussexrec.com](mailto:ContacttheCEO@sussexrec.com), 1-973-875-5101, 1-973-875-4114 (fax) or drop by our offices at 64 County Route 639.

I look forward to serving as your President and CEO.

# HOME OWNER WARRANTY

by Tom Tate

To quote a well-worn phrase, "Your home is your single largest investment." That said, we all take pains to make sure it is insured properly against all foreseeable hazards; fire, hail, wind, etc. If you are a regular reader of this newsletter, you know we also encourage you to weatherize your home to keep energy bills as low as possible; protection against energy loss if you will. This month, I want to touch on another step you can take to keep your home safe, sound and a happy place to live. The topic is home owner warranties (HOW).

Just what is a HOW? Think of it as an insurance policy that covers the mechanical and electrical problems that arise in every home. Say your stove goes on the blink and it is no longer under the manufacturer's warranty. Typically, you call a repair service and have them come see what is wrong. Depending upon the service, simply coming to your house might be \$100.00 or better. Then there is the cost of the repair itself. Something relatively simple might turn into a \$300.00 outlay. There goes the weekend at the beach. What about something more serious, say your furnace kicking the bucket? Now you're looking at thousands of dollars for repairs or replacement.

A HOW is designed to minimize your out of pocket costs. Generally, they include a deductible, like any insurance policy and after that; the cost of the repair is covered by the warranty. If the cost of the repair is such that a replacement makes more sense, the warranty company may elect to replace the appliance. Most warranties cover more than just your appliances. They may cover your wiring, plumbing and other components. As a rule they do not cover structural items that fall under traditional home insurance.

So, what should you look for in a HOW? First, see what is covered and what is excluded. Most are pretty good about listing this but be sure you focus on exclusions. Some high-end appliances like Sub Zero may be excluded due to their high cost of repair and replacement.

Next, see what the deductible is and what they promise as a response time. Talk to the company and tell them where you live. Rural areas always take longer to service.

Third, find out who performs their service. Ask if your local contractor can provide the service. Most HOW companies have provisions for including local contractors as it improves their ability to respond.

Fourth, make sure the policy will replace your appliance or equipment with a model of comparable features and functions. Some programs allow you to upgrade if you pay the difference. Here's your chance to go for the EnergyStar appliance of your dreams!

Finally, find out about their terms. The keys here are how long you must wait before you can file a claim (30 days is typical) and how long you have to continue

the policy following a claim. If you file a large claim and immediately drop the policy, you might be faced with charges from the HOW company.

The last advice I offer is to research the companies. Ask for references. Compare to other offerings. Talk with realtors to see who they have used and know are trustworthy as a HOW is often included as part of the sale of a house. Talk to your insurance company as they might have an offering. My mortgage company made a HOW available and rolled it into the mortgage payment for convenience.

What follows are the links to four widely used HOW companies. A Google search will turn up more.

#### American Home Shield

<http://www.ahswarranty.com/>

#### GE Home Warranty

[http://gehomewarranty.com/?gclid=CNDiio\\_DvYwCFRPdPgodo2lNaw](http://gehomewarranty.com/?gclid=CNDiio_DvYwCFRPdPgodo2lNaw)

#### AON

[http://www.aon.com/us/busi/warranty\\_products/default.jsp](http://www.aon.com/us/busi/warranty_products/default.jsp)

#### Mutual Warranty

<http://www.mutualwarranty.com/homeowners/index.htm>

From personal experience, I can vouch for the value of HOW offerings. It may also be a good option for you.



## Make the wise choice

*When it's time to buy a new water heater, there are a number of choices you can make. You can purchase a heater warranted for six or eight years, one that will be cheap to buy, but expensive to operate. Or you can invest in a Marathon and save money in operating costs...for a lifetime. Marathon - super efficient and warranted not to leak for as long as you own your home.*



- **Seamless Polybutylene Tank** will never rust, corrode or leak.
- **Environfoam® Insulation** completely surrounds the tank. Superior efficiency with no Ozone-depleting chemicals.
- **Heating Elements** designed to maintain water temperatures and perform in the harshest water environments (just like ours here in NJ).
- **Bowl-Shaped Tank Bottom** developed to allow more complete tank draining.

Contact us today for model availability, pricing and complete information. 973-875-5101 x117 or go to our website:

<http://www.sussexrec.com/brochures/Marathon.html>

**Marathon** *Simply the wisest choice*  
WATER HEATERS *in water heaters.*

# HIGH EFFICIENCY FLUORESCENT LIGHTING - PART 2

by Tom Tate

Most of the "buzz" in lighting nowadays centers around compact fluorescent lamps (CFs). These replacements for the trusty but energy hungry incandescent bulb are practically mainstream now and we've provided information regularly on how they can help cut your energy costs.

But CFs don't fill every fluorescent lighting application. Many of us have light fixtures that use 4' long fluorescent lamps. What do you do about these? These fixtures would sure look funny with those corkscrew CFs installed where the long lamps used to be, right?

The most common residential 4' fixture uses a T12 lamp and a magnetic ballast. In a 2 lamp fixture, this combination requires 72 watts to operate and 144 watts in a 4-lamp fixture. Now, compare this with the T8 lamp coupled with an electronic ballast. In the 2-lamp fixture you use 58 watts and in the 4-lamp, 112

watts. Certainly a nice savings and you actually can get more light from the newer T8 lamps.

Up until a couple of weeks ago, I was under the impression that T8 lamps and electronic ballasts were solely applicable in commercial and industrial applications. They have been the source of substantial savings to business and industry for years. While on a visit to my parents, we embarked on a project to repair the kitchen 4' fluorescent light fixture. Not to bore anyone with infinite detail, we decided that it was better to replace than repair. While perusing the various options at the local big box store, I was amazed to find T8 lamps and fixtures for sale. Shortly thereafter, the new fixture was in place and brightly shining. I use the term brightly in earnest as we had installed a 4-lamp fixture in place of a 2-lamp. Other than requiring sunscreen and sunglasses in the kitchen, the project was a shining success.

And yes, it does use more energy since it has 4 lamps in place of 2 but we could always take out the extra 2 lamps...

I encourage you to look for T8s for your next replacement project. As we conservationists like to say, every little bit saved helps. One word of caution. You cannot simply replace a T12 lamp with a T8. The T8 is much smaller in diameter (1" versus 1.5"), requires different sockets and the electronic ballast. If you are holding onto a 4' fluorescent fixture for sentimental reasons, you'll have to stick with the T12 lamps. If the fixture can be replaced, make the smart energy choice and go with the T8.

Already out are T5 lamps. I haven't seen these in the stores yet but commercial users are starting to tout the savings over the T8. Based on my experience with the T8, I plan to keep my eyes open and will let you know when they hit the retail level.

## MARK 'EM AND CELEBRATE



Folks really like September for the unusual and off beat holiday celebration so make sure to leave plenty of time to observe your favorites!

### August

- Aug 1 Girlfriend's Day
- Aug 4 National Mustard Day
- Aug 5 Sisters' Day
- Aug 6 National Fresh Breath Day
- Aug 8 National Underwear Day
- Aug 15 Best Friend's Day
- Aug 15 National Relaxation Day
- Aug 17 National Men's Grooming Day
- Aug 29 More Herbs, Less Salt Day

### September

- Sep 1-30 Backpack Safety America Month
- Sep 1-30 Go Wild During California Wild Rice Month
- Sep 1-30 National "5-A-Day" Month
- Sep 1-30 National Biscuit Month
- Sep 1-30 National Chicken Month
- Sep 1-30 National Coupon Month
- Sep 1-30 National Honey Month
- Sep 1-30 National Mushroom Month
- Sep 1-30 National Organic Harvest Month
- Sep 1-30 National Potato Month
- Sep 1-30 National Rice Month
- Sep 1-30 National Skin Care Awareness Month
- Sep 1-30 Fall Hat Month
- Sep 1-30 Great American Low-Cholesterol, Low Fat Pizza Bake
- Sep 2-8 National Waffle Week
- Sep 3 Labor Day
- Sep 9 National Grandparents Day
- Sep 12 Video Games Day
- Sep 15 Int'l. Eat An Apple Day
- Sep 15 Wife Appreciation Day
- Sep 16-22 National Clean Hands Week

- Sep 16-22 National Love Your Files Week
- Sep 17-23 Bottled Water Week
- Sep 22 Ice Cream Cone Birthday (1903)
- Sep 23 Autumn Begins
- Sep 23-29 National Keep Kids Creative Week
- Sep 24 Family Day - A Day to Eat Dinner with your Children

## ADDRESS/TELEPHONE CHANGE?

Has your mailing address or telephone changed recently? If so, please make sure you contact us and provide us with the new information. In the event of an outage, we rely on your phone number to bring up your account information quickly and accurately.

You can contact us by sending an e-mail to [customerservice@sussexrec.com](mailto:customerservice@sussexrec.com), indicate the change on your bill stub, or call us at 973-875-5101 and select the customer service option.

## Play It Safe

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planting a tree, call your utility locating service before you begin. You can contact NJ One Call at 1.800.272.1000 or Dig Safely New York at 800.962.7962. Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. Call at least two business days ahead of your dig date. This service is free, prevents the inconvenience of having utilities interrupted, and can help you avoid serious injury.

⚡ For outdoor landscaping and decorative lighting, consider solar lighting units available for patios, steps and sidewalks.

Be careful using electrical appliances outdoors. Whether it is a lawn and gardening device, a bug zapper, an electric charcoal lighter, a radio or CD player, caution must be exercised. Be sure you use outlets that have ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) to prevent serious shock injuries. Use portable GFCIs for outdoor outlets that don't have them.

If you need to use extension cords outside, check them carefully for exposed wires, make sure they are in good shape, and not frayed or cracked. Use only extension cords that are UL-rated for outdoor use, and are large enough to handle the current needed for the device you are using. Check that the prongs on the extension cord plugs are clean, not broken or bent. Make sure the ground prong is intact in a three-prong plug, and avoid use of adapters for safety reasons.

Never use electric yard tools if it's raining or the ground is wet. Keep electrical appliances and tools at least ten feet away from pools, ponds and wet surfaces. "Electricity and water are a danger-



ous mix," warns. Hall. "Do not use electrical appliances in wet areas - even wet grass can create a hazard."

Children often do not understand the dangers of electricity. For safe outdoor play, Safe Electricity recommends that children be taught to follow these rules:

⚡ Never climb trees near power lines.

Even if the power lines aren't touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch.

⚡ Fly kites and model airplanes in large open areas like a park or a field, safely away from trees and overhead power lines. If a kite gets stuck in a tree that's near power lines, don't climb up to get it. Contact your electric cooperative for assistance.

⚡ Never climb a utility pole or tower.

Don't play on or around pad-mounted electrical equipment.

⚡ Never go into an electric substation for any reason - even on a dare. Electric substations contain high-voltage equipment, which can kill you. Never rescue a pet that goes inside. Call your electric cooperative instead.

When designing an outdoor play area for your children, do not install playground equipment or swimming pools underneath or near power lines.

"Summer storms and floods can also leave electric hazards behind," Hall added. "It's a good idea to keep utility emergency numbers close at hand." Never step into a flooded area if water is in contact with electrical outlets, appliances or cords. Before re-entering a storm-damaged building, make certain the power is shut off. Don't touch main circuit breakers or fuses when you're wet or standing in water.

If you see a downed power line, keep everyone away from it, and call your electric cooperative. Assume that all downed power lines are energized.

Your friends at Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative wish you and your family a safe and happy summer. If you have any questions or need assistance please call us at 973.875.5101.

## Quick tip

You can't always grill outdoors - too hot, too cold, precipitation issues, insects inviting themselves to your activities, neighbors inviting themselves... For those times when stove top grilling is a necessity, take this simple step to alleviate the need for hard scrubbing to remove grease and burned drippings from between the grooves of your skillet. Pour some Kosher salt between the grooves, not so much that it touches the food. As you grill, the salt absorbs the grease and since it won't burn, your clean-up consists of wiping the skillet out and washing. What could be easier - okay, Burger King is easier but that's beside the point.

**BE A HERO  
SAVE A LIFE  
GIVE BLOOD  
AUGUST 28, 2007  
2:00-7:00 PM  
SUSSEX REC OFFICES**

## Currents

is published monthly by



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