

# Currents



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## Your Link to Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative



### High Voltage . . .

#### ID Please...

Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative employees are issued an identification card that has a picture of the employee and our office contact information on the front face of the card. If you have any questions about an employee being at your home, please ask the employee for their photo i.d. and the purpose of their visit. If you have any doubts about the employee's identity, please contact us at 973.875.5101.

### Commentary by the President & CEO



#### Climate Change - What they haven't told you

by Jim Siglin  
President & CEO

**T**he facts of this article are from a presentation made to the general managers of the PA and NJ cooperatives by Penn State meteorologist, Fred Gadomski in September 2007.

The debate around climate change is commanding a lot of attention. The United States Congress is wrestling with legislation intended to limit and reduce the amount of greenhouse gases produced in the country in an effort to mitigate the effects on our climate and ultimately our way of life. As the debate continues, there is substantial coverage of the perceived effects. The media treats us to images of drowning polar bears, shrinking Arctic ice cap, and severe weather. What gets less play is the equal body of science that says the current warming trend is not unusual and is certainly not the result solely of mankind's activities. As evidence, the Antarctic ice cap is near its maximum extent (since measurement began in 1955), temperatures in the Arctic are almost as warm as in 1940 and Fairbanks experienced the coldest January and February in 2007 since 1904.

The Earth's weather can be characterized by change: profound, natural change. It is always doing something no one expects, for the simple reason we do not understand all there is to know about this enormously complex system. Global warming is also not a new phenome-

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non. The Earth has had at least four ice ages with subsequent warming periods. Presently we are in a warming period that began 400 years ago.

Many pundits point to recent temperature increases as proof positive that man is causing climate change primary through CO2 emissions. What they ignore is the fact that there was a greater temperature spike in the 1930s that directly caused the Dust Bowl. Given the state of America's industrialization at that time, manmade emissions could not have been the cause. So the logical question becomes if that wasn't manmade then why is everyone convinced the current trend is? Maybe it is simply a normal weather cycle. The fact is, the more data you look at the harder it becomes to assign blame solely to the activities of mankind.

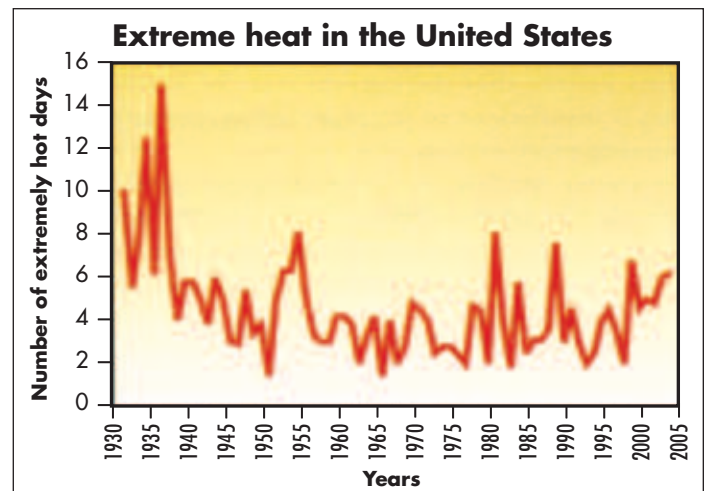
Reducing emissions can be a positive step particularly when it focuses on conservation and efficiency. These areas are beneficial regardless of the climate change rhetoric. Who doesn't want to get more miles from a gallon of gasoline, heat and cool their home for less, reduce the amount of



Many of you may have noticed that we are trimming the right of ways in our service area. We are in the second year of a five-year plan and Asphlund, a national tree-trimming contractor, is performing the work for us.

Trimming trees and any vegetation around power lines is a job best left to the professionals. Working near our lines carries a significant risk of electrocution so we ask that our Members never attempt to trim around our lines. If you feel that a tree is in danger of contacting the lines and creating an outage, please call our office to discuss your concern. You can reach us at 973.875.5101.

Your safety is of utmost importance so please; let our crews take care of any trimming.



Source: Kenneth E. Kunkel, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

trash they generate and so forth? And, the beauty of efficiency and conservation is that it can be done by everyone, no special tools or laws required.

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# Recycle for the Environment

by Tom Tate

Rechargeable batteries are a boon. Take the cordless drill. I absolutely love mine and consider it the greatest advance in toolhood in my lifetime. The convenience of not being tethered by an electrical cord makes all the difference. I can hang shelves in the closet or assemble a pergola in the garden all without concern for trailing a mile long extension cord to the nearest electric outlet. And cordless telephones? Wow! I can carry the phone to my hammock and answer calls without stirring (using caller ID to decide if I want to answer) or walk all over the house while talking on the phone. Try that with your old-fashioned corded phone.

With every convenience we seem to inherit some unanticipated detriment. In the case of rechargeable batteries, it is the fact that they eventually fail. Corded appliance aficionados will be quick to point out that their appliances have much longer lives and don't require constant replacement of power sources. Okay, a point to their side but I will take my cordless any day. So what if I have to fork out for a new battery every few years?

Well, unfortunately, the "so what" involves what happens to those dead bat-

teries. They go to the landfill along with tons of other things that are better recycled than buried. Once in a landfill, the batteries will ultimately decay and release their hazardous component materials into the ground. From there they might eventually leech into the water table. This has been identified as such a potential problem that many states have laws prohibiting improper disposal. For instance, in NJ it is illegal to place small sealed lead (Pb) and nickel cadmium (Ni-Cd) batteries in the trash.

As a service to our members and our community, SREC is participating in the *Call2Recycle*<sup>™</sup> program. This national program is dedicated to recycling rechargeable batteries and cell phones in an effort to preserve natural resources and prevent hazardous materials from entering the solid waste stream. How does this work? We have a box in our lobby where you can deposit your Ni-Cd, Pb, Lithium Ion (Li-ion) and Nickel Metal

Hydride (Ni-MH) batteries with a maximum weight of 2 pounds and any make of cell phone except for bag phones.

When the box is full, we ship it to an approved recycling facility where they process the contents. A thermal recovery process reclaims the metals (nickel, iron, cadmium, lead, and cobalt) from the batteries and prepares them for use

in new products such as new batteries and stainless steel. Cell phones are refurbished and resold when possible. You are encouraged to terminate your service and erase your personal data before recycling your phone. If you're recycling your old phone because you're upgrading to a new model, please ask your new cell phone provider to erase the data and deprogram your old phone. A portion of the proceeds from the resale of the cell phones will benefit select charities.

Help the environment and reduce your clutter a bit by recycling today.



## Are compact fluorescent lamps dangerous?

It dawned on me that not everyone might know exactly how a fluorescent lamp works. Given the prominence of compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) in the news and advertising these days, a little background brief is in order. With a bit of internet sleuthing I came across the following description:

*Inside the lamp are electrodes and a gas containing argon and mercury vapor. A stream of electrons flows through the ionized gas from one electrode to the other.*

*These electrons collide with the mercury atoms and excite them. As the mercury atoms move from the excited state back to the unexcited state, they give off ultraviolet photons. The photons hit the phosphor coating on the inside of the fluorescent tube, and this phosphor creates visible light photons.*

Short, sweet and to the point. Notice the reference to mercury in the description. Yes, all fluorescent lamps contain mercury. Five (5) milligrams is a common amount in CFLs and this is just enough mercury to cover the tip of a ballpoint pen. Contrast that to older mercury thermometers that contained 500 milligrams. To better inform consumers, new packaging is frequently listing the amount of mercury. It is typically shown using the Periodic Table abbreviation, Hg.

When the lamps are in use no mercury is released. If a CFL breaks, you have more risk from getting cut on glass shards than from the very small amount of mercury. Mercury is at its toxic worst when it leaches from landfills into the water supply and ultimately into fish. Your only concern with the presence of mercury should be in proper clean up and disposal. Do not put lamps in regu-

lar trash unless your locality permits it. If it is not permitted, take them to your landfill or waste disposal facility for proper handling. In Sussex County, you can contact SCMUA for information about proper recycling. Their number is 973.579.6998 or you can visit them online at [www.scmua.org](http://www.scmua.org).

Interested in how much energy, and money, you can save with CFLs? Try this handy calculator at <https://touchstone.energy.cooperative.com/public/programs/EnergyEfficiency/Lightbulbcalculator.htm>. When you see the calculator, simply type in the number of incandescent bulbs you want to replace and click the Calculate button.

The Bottom line? Normal use and disposal of CFLs appear to pose no special dangers.

Recycling and conservation help everyone.

# In the Garden... Fall Clean Up & Spring Prep

If you don't want to be haunted next spring by garden clean up tasks that should have been done in October, follow the steps provided below courtesy of Smith & Hawken's Vice President of Gardening, Virginia Hayes to ensure a great start to the growing season:



1. **Get Down and Dirty** - Rake up leaves, pull weeds, cut back dead wood, and remove any leftover fruit and fruiting canes. Refrain from major pruning as that task is better left for late winter or early spring when the plants are dormant. Check garden stakes and ties for trees, shrubs, flowering vines, and vegetable vines. Replace or adjust as needed.
2. **Compost Away** - Compost dead leaves and wood to create healthy mulch in time for spring. Insulate compost heaps or containers by placing dense, heavy fabrics on top of the compost which will conserve heat and allow the composting process to continue without interruption.
3. **Tilling Magic** - In order to seal and protect the amendments from the icy elements, turn the soil. This will provide for a clean, fertile slate when it comes time for springtime planting.

4. **Take Cover** - Bring plants inside or cover them with cold frames (small greenhouses), ceramic cloches, blankets, or plastic tarps. Complete coverage of potted plants will prevent water leaks which could freeze and cause the pot to crack, break, or even explode.
5. **From Dreary to Cheery** - Create drama and infuse color into an otherwise dull garden by replanting free-standing and hanging containers with fall/winter plant varieties like bright cyclamen.
6. **Fall Planting** - Plant fall bulbs and seed new lawns before the first frost. Planting during this time period will allow strong roots to establish. Furthermore, the cooler temperatures assist in the healthy growth and flowering process.

7. **Conserve and Reduce** - Reduce mowing cycles and resist the temptation to cut the lawn too short. Reduce watering cycles as growth slows and plants slip into dormancy. Additionally, help plants soak up the water more efficiently in colder weather by using warm water.
8. **Spring Prep** - Clean, repair, sharpen, and oil tools as well as lawn mower blades to prepare them for spring use. Also wash and scrub pots with a pot brush, knocking out excess dirt and grime.
9. **Keep the Moisture Out** - Organize and stow away tools, containers, fountains, and hoses. If suitable storage is unavailable, place pots upside down so as to keep water from freezing inside, which could ultimately damage the container. Cover up items that are too large or too heavy to store to provide insulation and protection.
10. **Garden Makeover** - Design and lay out new spring ideas for the garden. Based on these plans, order the flower and vegetable seeds needed for spring planting.

## FEED YOUR INNER GEEK

by Tom Tate

Christmas, Chanukah and Kwanza are rapidly approaching so folks are gearing up for some major gift getting and giving. Don't know what to give that geek in your life or how to explain what it is you want to non-geeks? Look no further as your resident geek guru wannabe has salvation for you in terms of Internet sites catering to geeks and gadgets. Why the Internet? If you've asked that question, you really need an inner geek makeover. Never fear, these sites can help you research, review and purchase those gadgets geeks love to get and give.

The table to the right has the shopping sites highlighted in yellow, the review sites in blue, news in green and how-to in white (for help in putting things together or hacking them for greater geek satisfaction). Happy surfing and shopping!

Site	Web Address	Content
CNet	<a href="http://www.cnet.com/">http://www.cnet.com/</a>	Everything tech, downloads
CrunchGear	<a href="http://www.crunchgear.com/">http://www.crunchgear.com/</a>	Gadget blog
Engadget	<a href="http://www.engadget.com/">http://www.engadget.com/</a>	Gadget blog
Gear Live	<a href="http://www.gearlive.com/">http://www.gearlive.com/</a>	Reviews
Geek.com	<a href="http://www.geek.com/">http://www.geek.com/</a>	Reviews, resources, products
Gizmodo	<a href="http://gizmodo.com/">http://gizmodo.com/</a>	Reviews, gadget guides
Hackzine.com	<a href="http://www.hackszine.com/">http://www.hackszine.com/</a>	How to hack everyday things
Instructables	<a href="http://www.instructables.com/">http://www.instructables.com/</a>	Step-by-step instructions
Makezine.com	<a href="http://makezine.com/">http://makezine.com/</a>	How to make most anything
Parenthacks.com	<a href="http://www.parenthacks.com/">http://www.parenthacks.com/</a>	Daily parenting hacks (tips)
Popular mechanics	<a href="http://www.popularmechanics.com/">http://www.popularmechanics.com/</a>	Popular Mechanics magazine website
PopSci.com	<a href="http://www.popsci.com/popsci/">http://www.popsci.com/popsci/</a>	Popular Science magazine website
ThinkGeek	<a href="http://www.thinkgeek.com/">http://www.thinkgeek.com/</a>	Gadgets!
ToolMonger	<a href="http://toolmonger.com/">http://toolmonger.com/</a>	Blog with tool reviews and commentaries

# MARK 'EM AND CELEBRATE

## December Holidays

by: Tom Tate

Time to wrap up another year with the holiday list for December. You'd think there would be a lot more events being celebrated given the retail frenzy that marks December. Maybe it's all part of a clever plan by the retailing community - get you trained to come in the stores all year so when December rolls around they have you hooked! Sounds like conspiracy theorist fodder, doesn't it? Regardless of the reasoning, December has the fewest retail events. I do want to point out that



it is National Tie month, which might explain why so many dads get ties as gifts this time of year! Does that suggest January should be National Return a Tie to the Store Month?

## December

- Dec 1-7 Cookie Cutter Week
- Dec 1-31 National Tie Month
- Dec 1-31 Safe Toys & Gifts Month
- Dec 5 Bathtub Party Day
- Dec 5-12 Hanukkah
- Dec 6 National Pawnbrokers Day
- Dec 12 Gingerbread House Day
- Dec 12 Poinsettia Day
- Dec 25 Christmas
- Dec 31 New Year's Eve

## Climate Change

Continued from page 1

Your cooperative is already supplying you with power that is 70% carbon-free. As a whole, the cooperatives in the United States are working to obtain 20% of their energy needs from renewable sources by 2020. In the meantime we are working to promote sensible and affordable solutions to the emissions debate and the inevitable legislation that will result. Poorly crafted legislation will result in extraordinary costs and tremendous economic damage. There is a faction in the debate that is seeking \$.25 / kWh electric rates and \$8.00 per gallon gasoline as a means of

forcing conservation. Is this in anyone's best interests?

How can you help? Contact your legislators and urge them to act cautiously and responsibly. Insist they look at all the science and craft legislation that supports investment in emission reducing technology and that contains emergency stops if the costs derail the economy. And, on an individual level, conserve and look for efficiencies in all your energy consumption. We will continue to provide you with information on how to conserve and are ready to help you make the best energy decisions.

**BE A HERO  
SAVE A LIFE  
GIVE BLOOD  
DECEMBER 11, 2007  
2:00-7:00 PM  
SUSSEX REC OFFICE**

## Currents

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## 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.