

Currents

Your Link to Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative



High Voltage. . .



High Voltage CFL Benefits

Now don't jump to any conclusions here, this is not an article about the retirement benefits of the Canadian Football League. No, this is a short missive about the potential benefit from the use of compact fluorescent lamps (CFL). Certainly, everyone is aware that CFLs are touted as a way to save energy, reduce electric bills and curb manmade carbon emissions. That is, everyone who has not been living in seclusion in a remote cabin for the last decade.

If you are still on the fence with regard to CFL use, don't worry. The Clean Energy Act of 2007 bans certain incandescent bulbs by January 2014. Here is a brief synopsis of the legislation with respect to incandescent bulbs from Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phase-out_of_incandescent_light_bulbs.

... the federal Clean Energy Act of 2007 was signed into law on December 19, 2007. This legislation effectively banned (by January 2014) incandescent bulbs that produce 310 - 2600 lumens of light. Bulbs outside this range (roughly, light bulbs currently less than 40 Watts or more than 150 Watts) are exempt from the ban. Also exempt are several classes of specialty lights, including appliance lamps, "rough service" bulbs, 3-way, colored lamps, and plant lights.

In December 2007, The United States enacted the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, requiring all general-purpose light bulbs be 30% more energy efficient (similar to current halogen lamps) than current incandescent bulbs by 2012 to 2014. **The phase-out will start with 100-watt bulbs in January 2012 and end with 40-watt bulbs in January 2014.** By 2020, a second tier would become effective; which requires all general-purpose bulbs to

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Commentary by the President & CEO



Electric Co-ops Fight for Fair Climate Change Policy

by Jim Siglin
President & CEO

For several months, I have written to you about the climate change legislation moving through Congress, its potential impacts and encouraging all of you to get involved and make a change. While the battle is far from over, I feel it is important to let you know that your efforts have indeed made a difference. The following is an article from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, which I offer as evidence of your efforts.

Electric cooperatives, with support from consumers across the country, are seizing opportunities to improve climate change legislation being considered by the U.S. Congress. Last June, the partnership bore fruit when the U.S. House of Representatives listened to co-op concerns and revised its climate change bill, H.R. 2454.

Among the revisions: future impacts on co-op consumers' electric bills were reduced by more than \$3 billion over the next 10 years, and possible federal financing will be available to co-ops for nuclear power plants.

"The bill still needs a lot of work, but it could have been much worse. By staying engaged in the process electric co-ops had a measureable impact," says Glenn English, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

At the core of the climate change proposal lays a cap-and-trade system to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Under cap-and-trade, greenhouse gas emissions from power plants and other sources would be required to stay below a set limit-the cap. All emissions would then have to be accounted for by allowances issued by the federal government, which could be swapped and sold-the trade.

Electric cooperatives and NRECA pushed for

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changes to the House bill with support from the Our Energy, Our Future(tm) campaign, which gives consumers a voice through its website at www.ourenergy.coop. The effort was enough to reshape H.R. 2454.

"As originally written, H.R. 2454 distributed allowances in an unbalanced and unfair way," argues English. "Without supporting the bill, co-ops were able to reduce the impacts on co-op consumers' electric bills where the inequity was the greatest."

English stresses that the U.S. Senate must make climate change legislation fair, recognizing regional differences in how electricity is produced; it must be affordable for all Americans; and its goals must be achievable-when they take effect, the technology needed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions should be commercially viable at each step of the way.

"Rest assured that if Congress loses sight of treating all co-ops fairly and fashioning affordable solutions to America's energy and climate change challenges, we will not hesitate to fight against a bad bill for co-ops."

Now is not the time to let up. The progress made so far can be lost with the stroke of a pen (or the press of a key) if we are not vigilant. We need to be sure that Congress stays aware of our position and our requirement that any legislation must have fairness, affordability, and achievability as its central tenants. Anything less is unacceptable. Thank you for your help and for staying involved as the Senate takes up the legislation. If you cannot access the Our Energy, Our Future site, call us and we can send the message for you.

Errata

by Tom Tate

Cue Cuban accent, "Lucy, you have some splaining to do!" Ricky often had to use this line with Lucy in the TV series of yore. Well, I need to do some splaining of my own. A good friend and loyal reader let me know that I had misused a word in an August article on local place names. In that article, I said that "Ron Dupont elucidated me" which means he explained me. Yes, there are some folks who would like to have me explained. However, in the context of the article, I needed to use a different term such as "enlightened" since Ron helped me understand the derivation of the local place names.

Let the record now be straightened. :)

Home Improvement the Internet Way

by Tom Tate

Over the past few months, I have written frequently about our online energy audit. It is an excellent tool and provides members and non-members alike with a resource that can accurately identify the way their homes use energy. Much of what you learn from the exercise requires very simple fixes such as changing temperature settings or replacing a few light bulbs.

However, do you know how to handle the issue of poorly sealed storm windows or the best way to caulk and weatherstrip? What tools and materials do you need and where can you get them? For you handy types, this presents little if any challenge. But, for those readers without the DIY gene, such things might be intimidating. Fear not, oh yea of novice DIY knowledge (and even you DIYophobes). Lowes has come out with a home energy project calculator to remove the fear, uncertainty and doubt you might experience at the thought of weatherizing your domicile.

Least you think me a shill (you did read the *August Currents*, right?) for the fine folks at Lowes, let me assure you I am not. I am simply offering a geeky way to plan and execute a home improvement project. Before you get started, retrieve your printout from the Sussex REC energy audit to simplify data entry. It's not an absolute necessity but it'll save some time and generate consistent results.

Ready? Then navigate to this URL http://www.lowes.com/lowes/lkn?action=pg&p=/BYS/home_audit_tool.html to start the process.

PRODUCT	ESTIMATED STARTING COST*	ESTIMATED MAXIMUM SAVINGS*
ENERGY STAR® Bath Fan	\$118	\$6
Light Dimmer	\$12	\$30

explanations. However, not all recommendations are spot on. The audit ignored the fact that I specified that I had an EnergyStar thermostat and refrigerator and suggested that I replace them. These limitations aside, I selected the EnergyStar bathroom fan as my project. To move forward, I checked that option and clicked on the Step 3 button. The next graphic shows the results. Click the suggestively

styled "Buy Now" button and you get a listing of all the fans Lowes offers with an EnergyStar rating. You can then check to see if the item you want is in the Lowes nearest you. Pay for it online and go get it, have it delivered or just use the data to comparison shop (Lowes most likely prefers you don't do the latter).

Ta-da! Proper project guidance for your convenience. Give it a try and save some cash today.

Press the big friendly Start button on the right hand side and begin entering data. You'll navigate six pages (now I will toot the Sussex REC horn - we only require one) to provide the needed data. This brings you to a project page where their audit makes suggestions that can save you money. The graphic shows the results of my Lowes audit. The audit came up with 13 projects to consider. The starting cost for all 13 comes to \$955 and has a maximum savings potential of \$1481 per year.

The overall process is painless and the interface is slick. Each project lists the source of data used to project savings and provides brief

WE NEED YOUR HELP.

Climate Change Legislation Should Be:

Fair. Affordable. And Achievable.



Our Energy, Our Future™
A Dialogue With America

Senators are drafting climate change legislation NOW, and you can impact the outcome. Go to www.ourenergy.coop to make your voice heard.

Senators are drafting climate change legislation NOW, and you can impact the outcome. Climate Change legislation should be **FAIR**, recognizing regional differences in how electricity is produced; it should be **AFFORDABLE**, keeping electricity affordable for all Americans; and **ACHIEVABLE**, since only a realistic plan can ensure long-term success. Contact your elected officials at www.ourenergy.coop, or fill out this form and return it with your next power bill. An email will be sent to your legislators on your behalf.

Your name: *Please print!* _____

Your home address: _____

City: _____ ST: _____ ZIP: _____

E-mail: _____

Signature: _____ Home phone: (____) _____

I authorize the Our Energy, Our Future™ campaign to communicate with Congress on my behalf regarding America's electricity challenges.



Tough Times Require Humor

by Tom Tate



Our culture is full of admonitions and pithy sayings on how to handle tough times. My preferred approach is to apply a generous dose of humor. These days, we are beset on all sides with a persistent drumbeat of bad news and negativity. It appears that the human condition prefers a juicy bad-news story to good news. At least, the major media seem to believe that. To that, I snap my fingers and say, "pa-shaw." Okay, that didn't translate all that well from real life to paper. Let's just say pa-shaw is an expression of disdain and rejection of the premise.

So, given the torrent of bad news, how can you fight back? Where can you get the humorous nuggets to carry the fight to the enemy? Why the Internet, of course. Regular readers will have anticipated this recommendation. So, how does one employ the vastness of the Internet to combat the evil that is bad news? I have two ways to lighten even the darkest news days.

The first is e-mail. My mailbox (es) collect upwards of 75 messages a day (after spam). Many of these are of a humorous bent. In fact, I pride myself on having the funniest e-mail inbox around. Folks are constantly sending

jokes, funny pictures and sidesplitting videos. It is astonishing how creative some of these mini-works are. Once you have them, don't be selfish, share them with others to help alleviate the gloom. Set up your own joke distribution list and have at it. Remember those old faxed jokes that made the rounds before PCs that had been faxed and copied so many times they were covered with blotches and lines? This is the same idea with the exception that the e-mail doesn't degrade with repeated mailings...

The second is setting up one or more subscriptions to online comic pages. For years, I have subscribed to Dilbert. For those still in the office workplace or who have ever been there, Dilbert is more of a documentary than a comic strip. According to Scott Adams, the creator, he has never had to look for inspiration; he bases every strip on his own experiences or those others have sent him. You can sign up for a daily e-mail at www.dilbert.com or add a Dilbert widget to your iGoogle home page. One word of advice, don't drink coffee while reading unless you enjoy spraying it through your nose.

Another favorite is Non Sequitur by Willey Miller, which has a somewhat dark, cynical and sarcastic tone - perfect for today's political environment. You can access this strip and dozens more at www.gocomics.com. Sign up for a free account and you can create a comic page of your own favorites, just like the newspaper but without the paper. Cool.

Rounding out my top picks is Prince Valiant. Yes, the strip is still around after its debut on Feb. 13, 1937. Wow, that's the first half of the last century! New artists are involved but the strip is as colorful and detailed as ever. This one is harder to access. Owned by King Features, www.kingfeatures.com, you have to pay \$15 a year or visit their site regularly to catch up. The fee might be worth it as these folks offer such favorites as the Phantom, Betty Boop, Popeye, Zits, Shoe and more. If you opt for the fee-based service, go to www.dailyink.com to set it up.

Well, what are you waiting for? Put a smile on your face and chase that gloom away.

Button Up For Winter With Our Help

The frosty wrath of winter is just around the corner and your cooperative has solutions to help you "weather" the worst of it in comfort and efficiency. Take a look at these three offerings. Any combination will serve you well in the years to come.

Sussex REC on-line bill payment

"Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."

This may be fine for the Post Office but why should you risk it to get a bill in the mail? Stay in, off the icy roads, save gas and a stamp and use our on-line bill payment service!

From the comfort of your home, you can pay your bill quickly & securely, on your schedule.

C'mon, it's the 21st century already! Navigate to www.sussexrec.com and click on the on-line bill pay link. Enrollment takes seconds and saves forever - well, for a long time anyway. Or call 973.875.5101 today.

SREC Resources Generators

Nothing says loving like something from the ~~oven~~ generator folks.

Yes, a rip-off of the old Pillsbury jingle, but so true. Power interruptions know no season but they can be especially nasty in the Winter.

Protect your property and your loved ones with an Onan-Cummins generator from SREC Resources. Available in portable and permanent configurations, we can tailor a solution to meet your needs and your budget. Our Onan-Cummins line is one of the best and most reliable in the business and our pricing is very competitive.

Call 973.875.1365 or go to www.sussexrec.com and click on the SREC Resources link.

Electric Thermal Storage (ETS)

Last year saw oil and propane hit new highs in terms of price. If you want to take the sticker shock out of your heating bill, consider an ETS system from your cooperative.

These systems replace your fossil furnaces with clean, low emission and competitively priced electricity. Using our off-peak rate of \$.062/kWh, you can save money and increase comfort. We offer furnaces and individual room units to match the specific needs of your home.

Find out more with a call to 973.875.5101 or go online and check us out under the *Energy Use & Efficiency Information link*. Just think, steady & dependable rates, no more burners or fossil odors, no more tanks... Let us help you select the proper system today.

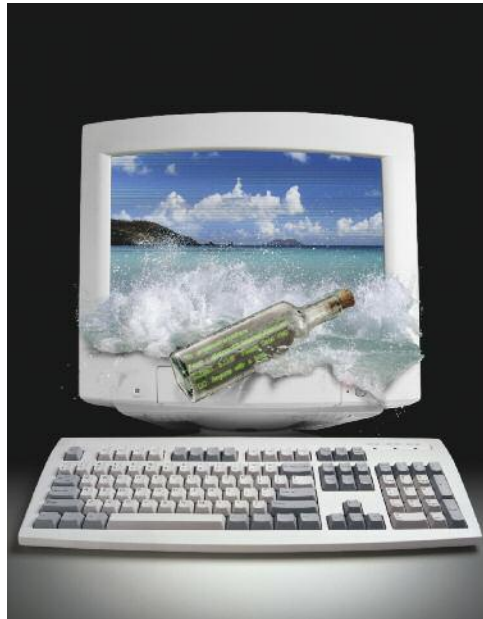
Free Telephone and Video Calls

by Tom Tate

Technology is a fabulous thing, especially when it works, it's free and it's fun. Let's say you have a brand new grandbaby and live too far away to visit regularly. What to do? Enter a technological solution.

I'd like to say this was my brain storm but, alas, I can not make any such claim. A friend told my wife how she used a slick new product called a netbook and the application Skype to connect with her newest grandchild through video calls. My PC magazines have recently featured articles on netbooks but they hadn't bubbled to my top of mind (or wish list) until this application was suggested.

What is a netbook? Basically, it is a tiny, scaled back laptop. The Asus EeePC 1005AH I am working with is 10.25" x 6.75" x 1.25" with a 10.5" screen. Unlike the PocketPCs of a few years back, the netbook runs on either Windows XP (one brave manufacturer has attempted Vista) or Linux. Features include a full keyboard, 1 GB of RAM, a 160 GB hard drive, 3 USB ports, a SD card slot, and a battery life of 10.5 hours. It can connect to networks via wireless or wired modes and Bluetooth if you so desire. It has a 1.3 megapixel camera and microphone to provide the video conference capability. Skype (the software that allows you to use the Internet as a free phone service) comes preloaded along with a 60-day trial of Norton's security suite and Microsoft Works.



What is it missing? An optical (CD/DVD) drive but you can buy an external one if needed.

So what is my prognosis? Well, as of this writing, I have about 2 hours of flight time with the Asus and I am very pleased. It starts up fast and shuts down fast, unlike a normal PC running XP. The keyboard isn't one I'd want for extended use but it is great for casual typing and web surfing, exactly what it is designed to

do. The case shows every single finger print and smudge so maybe Asus should include a polishing cloth. The screen is clear and bright making it a pleasure to use. At a smidge over 3 pounds, it is easy to take on the road and around the house.

Now on to the software side and Skype. What is Skype? It is a free application that you install on your PC. After creating an account, you use Skype to connect to another Skype user. The software uses a phone book motif to simplify use. Are there any drawbacks? A couple but what do you expect for free? The person you want to talk to must be online and at their computer. It isn't like the phone will ring on their end. So some planning is required. And having a broadband connection is a must for the video calls as you do not want to labor through one with a dial up connection. With Skype preloaded on the netbook, I simply set up my account, collect some like-minded users and start talking and video conferencing.

Do you need a netbook with Skype to support a free video call? No, you can use an existing PC with Skype, a web cam and a microphone and accomplish the same thing but where is the fun in that? Go on, drop a few bucks in your own economic stimulus and pay for it in long distance savings. Heck, you might even make money just like the government says they'll do with some of their new proposed programs. In my case it will allow us to keep track of a new grand baby in fine style without having to wing over to France all the time.

CFL's *continued from page 1*

be at least 70% more efficient (similar to current CFLs). Exempt from the Act are reflector "flood", 3-way, candelabra, colored, and other specialty bulbs.

Okay, energy efficiency and savings are the drivers. While staffing the Ecotent at the 2009 NJ State Fair, I pondered just how much energy is saved if we used just one CFL for every American. So, I popped into Excel to do some calculating. First order of business, how many Americans are there? I found the answer here, <http://www.census.gov/main/www/popclock.html>.

This is the on-line version of the clock that used to sit outside the Smithsonian Museum.

The following table lists my calculation parameters and the results. Actually, it is pretty impressive for such a simple lifestyle change.

There is some conjecture here. My calculation uses 75 as an average size for incandescent bulbs and relies upon it being on at least four hours every day. It also relies upon the CFL being replaced with another CFL when it burns out. Even if some of these requirements don't hold up, the savings potential from CFLs seems to be substantial.

EFFECT OF USING A CFL LAMP FOR EVERY AMERICAN

Average watt savings	75 - 23 =	52.
Average daily hours of operation		4.
Annual wattage		75920.
Annual kw		75.92
America's Population	307,084,918.	
Total kw	23,313,886,975.	
Total mw	23,314.	
Average power plant mw	280.	
Power Plants saved	83.3	

So, where do we go from here? When asked for my opinion on CFL use, I encourage everyone to give them a try. Use them in hard to reach places since they have much longer lives and use them where they will stay on for at least 15 minutes at a time. Why this last recommendation? My experience shows a much shorter life span when a CFL is turned on and off quickly.

Try a few today and help save energy for other needs. Your pocketbooks will thank you.

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The power of human connections

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