Wake
ElectriConnection

"the power to make a difference"

a newsletter for members of Wake Electric Membership Corporation

June 2008

Wake Electric Membership Corporation

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Over $50,000 in grants for TEACHERS!

May 1 marked the kick off of Wake Electric's Bright Ideas grant application program for area teachers. Grants will be awarded in the fall for exciting and innovative instructional projects that teachers will carry out during the 2008-2009 school year.

The grants support educational initiatives that cannot be funded by school systems due to financial limitations.

Teachers in Wake Electric's service territory, which includes Franklin, Granville, Nash, Durham, Wake, Vance and Johnston counties, who serving grades K-12 are eligible for grants up to $1,500.

Teachers who apply by Aug. 28 will be entered into a drawing for a **$500 VISA GIFT CARD.** The final deadline to submit all grants is Sept. 26, 2008. For more information or to apply go to www.ncbrightideas.com.

Wake Electric is seeking grant applications from non-profit organizations in Durham, Franklin, Granville, Johnston, Nash, Wake and Vance counties.

Through its Operation RoundUp program, the Wake Electric Foundation board is considering grant requests for projects and proposals that:

- serve a broad range of individuals
- use funds for educational, charitable, or economic development purposes.

Grant requests can be made for up to $5,000 and are given out in January, April, July, and October. The next grant application deadline is Friday, June 13.

For more information or for an application, go to www.wemc.com or call 919.863.6300 or 1.800.863.6300.

Funds for Operation RoundUp grants come from voluntary contributions from WEMC members.

(Pictured left) Students at Youngsville Elementary School in Franklin County will benefit from a recent Operation RoundUp grant. The grant, which was awarded in April, will assist in the creation of a new playground.

What's going on with CFLs and mercury?

Many of Wake Electric's members have read news articles or seen newscasts about mercury in compact fluorescent light bulbs. Since many of our members now have use CFLs in their lamps and light fixtures, they want to know, "What's going on with them and mercury?"

CFLs save money, use less electricity and help promote energy efficiency. But, what if a bulb breaks or burns out?

Is the amount of mercury in the bulb harmful? How would I clean it up safely?

According to the Environmental Protection Agency's Web site, there are no serious concerns.

How do you clean up a broken CFL?

According to the EPA, the greatest risk if a bulb breaks is getting cut from the glass shards. Research indicates that there is no immediate health risk to people should a bulb break if it is cleaned up properly:

- Sweep up, do not vacuum, the glass fragments and particles.
- Place the broken pieces in a sealed plastic bag and wipe the area with a damp paper towel to pick up any remaining stray shards or particles. Put the paper towel in the sealed plastic bag when you are finished. If weather permits, open the windows and ventilate the room.

What should you do with a CFL when it burns out?

Like paint, batteries, thermostats and other hazardous items, CFLs should be disposed of properly. The EPA is working with CFL manufacturers and U.S. retailers to expand disposal options. You can search for the very latest disposal options online by using your zip code at www.earth911.com, calling (877) EARTH-911 or visiting www.lamprecycle.org.

- Also, check with your local waste management agency.
- If a disposal site is not available in your area, the EPA suggests placing the burned-out or broken bulb in a plastic bag, which should be sealed before being placed in the trash.
- Never send a CFL or other mercury-containing product to an incinerator.

The benefits of CFLs greatly outweigh the risks.

"There is only a very small amount of mercury in CFLs, hardly enough to worry about," said Jim Stine, Senior Principal, Environmental Policy Department for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. "On average, the bulbs contain five milligrams of mercury. Compare that to 3,000 milligrams of mercury in older thermostats and 500 milligrams of mercury in a mercury thermometer."

Switching from traditional light bulbs to CFLs is an effective, accessible change every American can make to save energy and help the environment.

Tree trimming and right-of-way maintenance help reduce power outages

Trees are a tremendous asset to homeowners and the environment, providing shade, wildlife habitat, and aesthetic value to all of us.

Unfortunately, trees also are a leading cause of power outages, especially when the wind blows.

That is why Wake Electric recently started its schedule of routine maintenance of trees and other vegetation.

Why do we have right-of-way and vegetation management programs?

These vegetation management activities are essential to maintain reliable electric service to our members and to provide for the safety of your family and the general public. Wake's vegetation management activities include the following four components:

- Tree pruning
- The removal of hazard trees and other trees that require excessive pruning
- The mowing or cutting of brush and small trees on the right-of-way
- Herbicide application to small trees on the right-of-way

Wake employs Ed Wheeler, a licensed pesticide applicator, to oversee it's vegetation management program. Wheeler is a board member of the N.C. Vegetative Management Association. Routine vegetation management activities are completed on a regular cycle of approximately every 2 to 4 years. Tree pruning or removal outside of this regularly scheduled maintenance is completed only at the request of the landowner or to correct a hazardous situation.
Wake Electric employs contractors and tree-trimming specialists for right of way maintenance.

A guide to planting trees near power lines

Wake Electric can minimize expenses and let Mother Nature take her course if you consider power line clearance requirements before planting trees. Consult your nursery salesperson to determine the mature height and width of trees before purchasing them.

Crape myrtles are considered "utility-friendly trees" because their mature height and width typically don't interfere with transmission lines.

The following trees are utility friendly when planted outside of the right-of-way:

Utility-friendly trees

Crape myrtle	Dogwood	Eastern redbud	Japanese maple
Purpleleaf plum	Star magnolia	Yaupon	

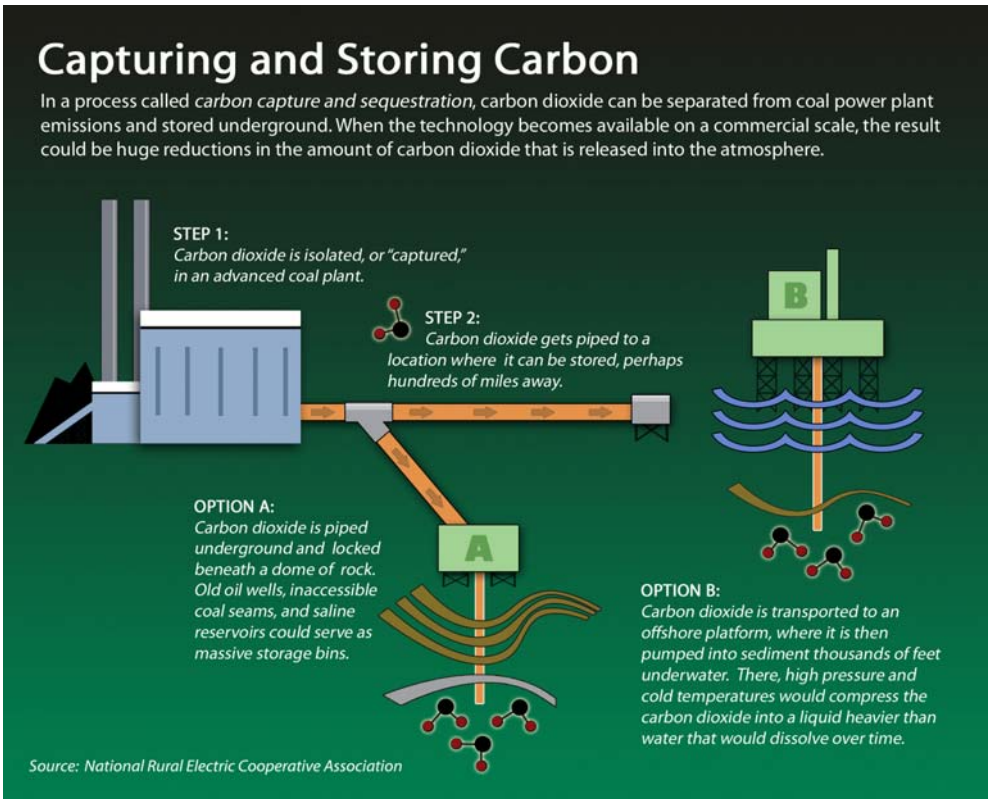
Measure 15 feet from the power line and then half the distance of the width of the tree's spread when fully grown. This is as close as you should plant to power lines.

Try not to plant these tall growing trees within 50—75 feet of power lines:

Tall-growing trees

Ash	Beech	Birch	Black gum
Cedar	Chestnut	Chinaberry	Elm
Maple	Oak	Pecan	Pine
Poplar	Southern magnolia		

Carbon—the basics



Carbon, the basic building block of life on Earth, has recently become a celebrity of sorts. While most students receive a formal introduction to carbon in science class, those of us who missed out on (or have forgotten) the lessons can find a quick summary in the following few sentences:

> ***Car · bon (noun):*** *A naturally abundant, non-metallic element that occurs in all organic compounds and can be found in all known forms of life. Diamonds and graphite are pure forms.*

Concentrated carbon also makes up the fossil fuels we use to produce approximately 70 percent of our nation's electricity (primarily coal and natural gas). When those products are burned, carbon combines with oxygen and gets released into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide.

For better or worse, carbon dioxide molecules can last for a century or more in the atmosphere, where they soak up heat. As result, carbon dioxide is considered a "greenhouse gas" blamed for contributing to climate change.

In the U.S., power plants that burn fossil fuels produce about 2.4 billion tons of carbon dioxide every year, which is about 39 percent of the nation's man-made output (the largest single source). Since one pound of the gas would fill a beach ball a few feet across, imagine almost 5 trillion beach balls being made every year–enough to fill more than 600,000 football stadiums!

Researchers are working on a new ways to reduce the amount carbon dioxide in the air process called "carbon capture and sequestration," through which carbon dioxide can be isolated, or captured, in an advanced coal power plant and stored underground. When the technology becomes available on a commercial scale, the result could be huge reductions in the amount of carbon dioxide that is released into the atmosphere.

Technology holds the key to tackling challenges connected to climate change. Wake Electric will play an active role in this effort to tackle those changes.

Call to report outages:
919.863.6499 or 800.743.3155

Regular Office Hours: M– F, 8 am—5 pm

Telephone Hours: M– F, 7 am—9 pm
863.6300 or 800.474.6300
Underground locating service—call 811

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