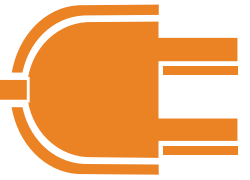


Clark Energy Lines

A publication of Clark Energy Cooperative, Inc., proudly serving our members since 1938.



Clearing the lines for safety and reliability



Cutting and removing trees can be an emotional issue for property owners, particularly in rural areas where established trees are a beloved part of the landscape. Still, when storms sweep through or ice begins to fall, trimmed trees and clear right-of-ways mean less outage time and more efficient power restoration. See story on page 32D. Photo by David McCord.

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From the President's Desk



A thimbleful of co-op vision

People predict the future poorly. That's because there are so many variables beyond the knowledge and, yes, imagination of the human mind.

In 1998, Google Inc. was conceived in the Stanford University dorm room of two graduate students. No one predicted that over a decade later, Google would be the Internet's most widely accepted search engine.



Paul G. Embs
President & CEO

As the electric utility industry works with others to address the problem of global climate change, one thing is clear: technological innovation flowing from human creativity is virtually limitless.

We will need the creative energy of our best engineering minds if we are to find a balanced solution that meets the nation's growing appetite for energy while meeting industry's obligation to help reduce greenhouse gases.

Part of the co-op challenge is to convince elected representatives that technological innovation offers the best strategy for reaching affordable and long-term solutions.

In co-op boardrooms today, directors are taking a long, hard look at the effectiveness of energy efficiency and conservation in order to maximize the value of member service and minimize the impact outside factors are having on electric bills. Not since the energy crises of the 1970s-early 1980s have efficiency and conservation received so much attention.

Electric cooperatives are recognized industry leaders in promoting energy efficiency to help consumer-members reduce electricity consumption and save money. Virtually all electric co-ops provide energy-efficiency education to their members, while more than 40 percent offer services such as high-efficiency lighting systems, geothermal and air-source heat pumps, energy audits, insulation, and Energy Star appliances.

A free and open market for new ideas and new technology, unfettered by government restraints, is the best incubator for those solutions. Importantly, any proposed solution that increases rates and puts the cost of electricity out of reach for our consumer-members is unacceptable.

In the 1930s, electric co-ops demonstrated their vision for a more productive rural America by committing to delivering electricity to the very last house on the line. Their vision—and the work of those who followed in their footsteps—built a generation and distribution network that reliably serves 40 million Americans in 47 states today.

A thimbleful of their vision will be enough to guide us through the current challenge. May we be worthy of their legacy.

Clark Energy's offices will be closed on Thursday, November 26, and Friday, November 27, for the Thanksgiving holidays. We will resume normal business operations at 8 a.m. on Monday, November 30.

In the event of an emergency, please call (800) 992-3269.



The all-electric home is back

Whether you're choosing your energy supply for a new home or looking to consolidate the energy sources in your existing home, consider these advantages to an all-electric house:

- If your home is already wired for electricity, there's no need to also install and connect gas and oil lines.
- Electric appliances are quiet, clean, and fume-free. Electric appliance manufacturers are constantly working to produce more efficient products like those with the Energy Star label, which means the government has deemed them extra-efficient.
- Electricity is made in the USA. While some fossil fuels must be imported, electricity is produced here. Buying it supports your local economy.



Tree trimming a year-round necessity

By Shanda Crosby

When Benjamin Franklin said more than two centuries ago that nothing in the world is certain "but death and taxes," he didn't yet know what we know about trees and power lines. Add this truth to life's certainties: trees and power lines don't mix.

To reduce outages and ensure safety, electric utilities must have aggressive tree trimming and right-of-way clearing programs. "Service reliability becomes more important every day as we become more dependent on electricity and there is no way we can have reliable service without a strong right-of-way program," said Scott Sidwell, Clark Energy's vice president of engineering and operations.

With 3,000 miles of primary overhead lines to maintain, including hundreds of miles of dense forest, and brush in the eastern part of its service area, Clark Energy's trimming and clearing demands are never-ending.

In the aftermath of the most devastating ice storm in co-op history earlier this year, Clark's outage situation would have been significantly compounded if not for its year-round attentiveness to keeping the lines clear.

Cutting and removing trees can



The method of directional pruning calls for the pruning of only the branches that are growing toward the line and no stubs remain. This method does not sacrifice the health of the tree in any way. Photo by David McCord.

be an emotional issue for property owners, particularly in rural areas where established trees are a beloved part of the landscape. Still, when storms sweep through or ice begins to fall, trimmed trees and clear right-of-ways mean less outage time and more efficient power restoration.

The following discussion with Clark Energy's tree trimming and right-of-way specialists will help members understand more about our program.

What is the primary purpose of right-of-way clearing and tree trimming?

Trees are a leading cause of electrical power outages. In fact, when trees and power lines touch, it is a very dangerous situation and may even be deadly to anyone in close proximity.

Trees and woody brush can also present a hazard and a hindrance to our crews when they are working to restore power.

How does tree trimming and right-of-way clearing contribute to storm preparedness?

One would only need to drive down the road during the devastating ice storm of 2009 to realize that trees close to the power lines were drooping down, making it impossible to keep the lights on or pull the lines back up. The majority of lines with no trees lying on them were able to withstand the ice strain.

When it is necessary to trim trees that have grown into or close to power lines, how do you make sure you trim them in a healthy way?

The traditional tree trimming method used for many years is called "topping," which cuts the whole crown of the tree below the lines. We have learned in recent years that this method is not healthy for the tree or environmentally sound. The preferred pruning technique is called directional pruning, which, while not always popular with property owners, ensures a healthier tree.

Why is directional pruning sometimes unpopular?

This method makes the tree look different than does the topping method. Trees could have a V-shape or an L-shape after trimming, depending on where the line is located. While some trees may have an unusual appearance after the initial trim, it quickly improves with time and growing seasons.

Exactly what happens when trees are "topped?"

After a deciduous tree is topped, the natural reaction of the tree is to increase its growth rate to make up for the missing vegetation. The tree will not slow down until it reaches about the same size it was before it was topped, and in the case of a fast-growing species, it may only take a year or two.

Exactly what happens in directional pruning?

This method calls for the pruning of only the branches that are growing toward the line and no stubs remain. Because branches are pruned at the joint, tree decay and sprouting is minimized. Pruning with this method

does not sacrifice the health of the tree in any way. The need for subsequent pruning is minimized because the remaining branches are not growing into the lines. Obviously, this saves money, but it is also better for the tree than topping.

How does the co-op decide when to remove trees?

If a tree has been topped several times or if the species is fast-growing and the crown of the tree is directly under the line, the co-op would prefer to remove the tree rather than continue to trim it.

In what situations will Clark Energy replace a tree for the member?

The tree replacement program was designed to replace yard trees that present public safety or reliability problems or require constant re-trimming. If a tree is designated as a problem tree by our ROW coordinator, the landowner may choose from several species of trees from a local tree

nursery who will then plant the tree for them at a place of their choice as long as it is not close to the power lines.

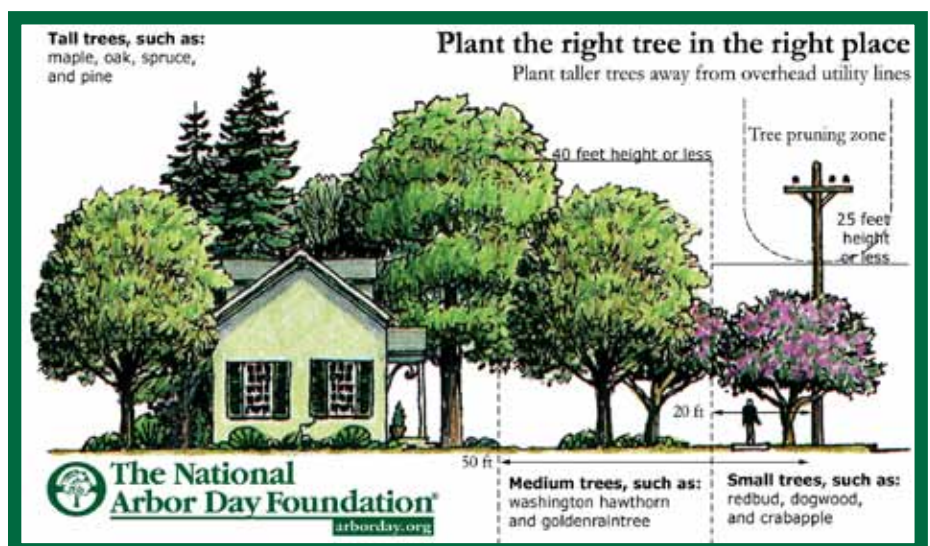
When does the co-op chip and/or remove brush after trimming?

Clark Energy always chips brush when we trim trees in a member's yard. For trees that are trimmed or cut in a field, we chip or remove brush that is located near a stream or in a location where leaving the brush presents a hazard. Clark also removes noxious vegetation when cut, such as wild cherry trees and walnuts, from a pasture where livestock may be present. If an appropriate area is available, we will leave the brush in the right-of-way corridor.

If I want to plant a tree on my property, what should I remember?

First, find out how much the tree will eventually grow and plan accordingly. Try not to plant even

(story cont'd on page 32F)



Source: The National Arbor Day Foundation

(story cont'd from page 32E)

small trees directly under lines to allow crews access. The best idea is to contact the co-op before planting.

What if I have additional questions about the co-op's tree trimming program?

Clark now has a full-time employee to handle member questions and address concerns (see below). We want to make sure we maintain the beauty of your landscape, but more vital than that, we want to make sure your service is dependable and undisturbed.



McCord a perfect fit for right-of-way coordinator

With tree trimming and right-of-way clearing a top priority at Clark Energy, David McCord has been hired as the co-op's new right-of-way coordinator. McCord has been with Clark for 19 years, most recently as operations foreman. His responsibilities are to develop annual and long-range clearing plans and work schedules to provide for clearance and maintenance of Clark's 3,000-mile distribution system.

"We have always felt that our members should have access to a cooperative employee to discuss something as important as cutting and trimming their trees," said Scott Sidwell, Clark's vice president of engineering and operations.

As McCord assumes the day-to-day responsibilities of right-of-way coordinator, he realizes he has been training for this his whole life. Growing up on the farm and having a background in agriculture has given McCord a respect for the land and nature. His experience as a law enforcement officer prior to joining the Clark Energy team developed his people skills. Finally, McCord's nearly two decades of training as a high-voltage lineman ensures his clear understanding of what it takes to have reliable electrical service.

"I look forward to working with our members to make the clearing of our right-of-ways as painless a process as possible while knowing that keeping the lines clear will mean better service for everyone," McCord said. "I want to achieve and maintain good relationships with CEC members."

Time Change

It's time to **FALL** back. Daylight-saving time will end on Sunday, November 1, at 2 a.m. Don't forget to move your clocks back one hour before you go to bed on Saturday night.

This is also a good opportunity to replace the batteries in your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.



Give space heaters their space

Space heaters can work wonders on the coldest winter days to warm rooms your central heating system can't quite reach. But while manufacturers have worked to build more safety features into this alternative heating source, users should still take precautions to ensure these cozy heaters don't become fire hazards.

Space heaters are designed as a supplemental source of heat, not as the main source. So you shouldn't use them constantly, especially in rooms you don't use much. Check your space heaters for an Underwriters Laboratories seal, and follow these guidelines for safely using them:

- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from drapes and furniture that could catch fire.
- Don't use extension cords with space heaters unless absolutely necessary.
- Inspect the heater's cord periodically for frayed wire or damaged insulation. Don't use a space heater with a damaged cord.
- Check periodically for a secure plug/outlet fit. If the plug gets hot, the outlet may need to be replaced by a qualified electrician. This could be the sign of a home wiring issue.
- Place your heater on a flat, level surface. Don't place heaters on furniture, as they may fall and break or even start a fire.
- Unless the heater is designed for use outdoors or in bathrooms, don't use it in wet areas.



It's also a warm idea, because a geothermal system uses the constant temperature of the earth to heat and cool your house for much less than any other heating and cooling system on the market.

Save money, save energy and reduce your carbon footprint. Ask us about a geothermal system.

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The Co-op Connections Card... helping with health care

With all the debate about health care, we'd like to remind you that your co-op and more than 250 others across the nation are already helping thousands to manage their health care expenses through the Co-op Connections Card.

The Co-op Connections Card's pharmacy discount, an instant success when it was first offered in August of 2007, continues to provide substantial savings for co-op members within the state and all across the country. National savings now stand at more than \$10 million and members of participating Kentucky co-ops have accounted for \$433,000 of those savings, with more than \$30,000 saved in August of 2009 alone.

Honored at more than 400 pharmacies in Kentucky and more than 48,000 nationwide, including Wal-Mart, CVS, Rite Aid, and Kroger, the Co-op Connections Card pharmacy dis-

count is not insurance and may not be used in conjunction with other employer-sponsored pharmacy plans; however, some members are finding that the Co-op Connections Card discount is better than the savings offered by their insurance plan. So always compare pricing.

Your Co-op Connections Card should have the pharmacy discount information (group #, member # and Bin #) on the back; if your card does not have that information or you have misplaced your card, call our office or stop by for a new card.

Although the pharmacy discount alone makes the Co-op Connections Card worthwhile, your card is also good for discounts at more than 14,000 online, national, regional, and local businesses across the nation. More than 2,700 of those discounts are offered



by businesses located here in Kentucky.

The Co-op Connections Card is one more example of how your Touchstone Energy Cooperative is looking out for you.

To discover discounts near where you live or where you may be traveling, go to www.co-opconnections.com.

To learn more about the pharmacy benefit, including a complete list of participating pharmacies, call (800) 800-7616 or log onto www.locateproviders.com. To check prescription prices, log onto www.rxpricequotes.com.

Did you know . . . ?

Since January 1, 2009, Clark Energy members have saved an average of 42.21% or \$7,352 on their prescription medications by using their Co-op Connections Card.