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**Office Hours**

8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday–Friday

**General Information**

(803) 276-1121  
(800) 479-8838  
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nec.coop

**Nights, Weekends, Holidays**

(803) 276-1121

**Interim President &  
Chief Executive Officer**

Robert O. Williams

**Board of Trustees**

- William D. Kibler, *Chairman*
- C.J. Bishop, *Vice Chairman*
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- J. Wayne Nichols, *Zone 2*
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- Patty H. Ruff, *Zone 3*
- Tobie R. Shealy, *Zone 3*

In observance of the Memorial Day holiday, Newberry Electric Cooperative will be closed on Monday, May 30. Power outages may be reported by calling (803) 276-1121. Emergency crews are on standby.



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

## Live wire

### Metal theft threatens safety, lives

**THANKS TO THE MEMBERS** who took part in NEC's Annual Meeting on April 6. Member participation is crucial to the success of these meetings and, really, when you get right down to it, it's important to our co-op every day of the year.



For instance, this month we'd appreciate you directing your attention for another important matter—that of electrical safety.

Would you risk being hit by lightning for \$100? Seems a bit ludicrous, but desperate times cause folks to do foolish things.

Thefts of copper, aluminum and bronze are on the rise, at abandoned commercial buildings, empty homes and—most dangerously—at power substations near neighborhoods. We need your help to keep our equipment safe, prevent outages and save lives.

At an electric co-op in Oklahoma last year, metal thieves took off with about \$100 worth of wire in a substation, but left behind a \$1 million repair bill after a fire destroyed regulators, switches and a \$600,000 transformer. More than 3,500 consumers were temporarily left in the dark after the incident, although the co-op moved quickly to reroute power to affected areas.

#### Crime rises with copper prices

It's hard to understand why folks would put their life on the line for a few dollars. Many law enforcement officials believe that methamphetamine users are responsible for much of the problem. And the damage done to our system packs a big punch, since equipment can be ruined without the protection copper wires provide. There's also the potential for loss of life. In 2010,

metal theft-related deaths occurred in North Carolina, West Virginia, Illinois and Ohio.

The cost for scrap copper goes up and down, but recently it's been on the rise—and so have robbery attempts. In January 2011, scrap copper sold for five times the amount it went for in 2001.

We use copper to ground our equipment, protecting it from electrical surges and lightning by giving electricity a safe path to ground. We use a lot of copper wire in our substations, where we step-down high-voltage electricity arriving from distant power plants before it travels to your neighborhood. Then another transformer near your home—either mounted on a utility pole or in a green box on the ground—lowers the voltage again so you can use the power at home. Copper is an essential component every step of the way.

#### How you can help

Our linemen are highly trained professionals who understand the dangers of working with electricity and take proper safety precautions. To protect the public, we surround our substations with secure fencing and post warning signs. But some thieves will not be deterred.

Please help us prevent these thefts. If you notice anything unusual, such as an open substation gate, open equipment or hanging wire, call Newberry Electric Cooperative immediately at (803) 276-1121. If you see anyone other than our utility personnel or contractors around substations or other electric facilities, call the police.

**Robert O. Williams**  
*Interim President and  
Chief Executive Officer*

## A record turnout

**NEC REGISTERED** a record 1,892 members at the Annual Meeting on April 6. The members re-elected William D. Kibler, Jr., C.J. Bishop and Richard O. Koon to their Board of Trustees.



**Gary Roberts, left, and Paul Livingston win the grand prizes—a \$500 NEC bill credit each. Both live in Pomaria and have known each other for years.**

**Shirley Taylor tries her hand at generating enough power for an incandescent bulb. It's easier to light the CFL at left, she and others who tried learned.**



WALTER ALLREAD

**Dedrea Scott wins \$5 from emcee Lou Green for being willing to prove she's wearing a wig. Her granddaughter Kendra, 8 months old, appears ready to take his job.**



**Karen Brehmer and other members who registered received an umbrella and a flashlight.**



**Golden Steel entertains with classic country and pop favorites.**