Ride of a Lifetime

Suzy Curry heads out on a training run prior to her 82-mile kayak trip to Key West with the Castaways Against Cancer. A breast cancer survivor, Suzy had never paddled a kayak before deciding to join the adventure that raises money for the American Cancer Society. Read her story on page 10.

PHOTO BY KATHY SYMPSON
Membership Really Matters

Celebrate the fact you are an owner, not only a customer

October is National Cooperative Month. For the many different types of cooperatives in the United States, it is the time of year to celebrate what membership truly means.

You could be a member of a lot of different places: a gym, a 4-H club, a food-of-the-month club. The list goes on. But being a member of a cooperative is different.

As a member of a cooperative, you own a stake in the business. Just like any owner, there are many benefits to your membership.

As a member of Glades Electric Cooperative, you have a say in the representatives elected to serve on the cooperative’s board of directors.

You have an opportunity to make your voice heard every year at our Annual Meeting.

You get a say on policy issues your electric cooperative supports or opposes.

Our bottom line is providing you with safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

As your local electric cooperative, we get to be a part of this community. When we think about membership, we think about all the ways we can give back to you, our members—and that is what matters most to us.

At GEC, we live our slogan every day. We are “neighbors working for neighbors.”

Members acknowledge that $3.96, plus actual postage, is the cost to publish 12 issues a year of Florida Currents (USPS-8300). Published by Ruralite Services Inc., 5605 NE Elam Young Pkwy., Hillsboro, OR 97124—a not-for-profit Oregon cooperative corporation—the magazine serves the communications needs of consumer-owned electric utilities in Florida. Preferred Periodicals postage paid at Hillsboro, OR 97123 and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Please send address corrections to 5605 NE Elam Young Pkwy., Hillsboro, OR 97124.

HOW TO CONTACT FLORIDA CURRENTS
Have a problem receiving your edition of Florida Currents? Utility members should contact the local utility office listed on the back cover. Nonmembers should contact Ruralite Services, 5605 NE Elam Young Pkwy., Hillsboro, OR 97124; (503) 718-3717; email info@floridacurrents.com.

Subscription services: Nonmember subscriptions $12 (U.S.) per year; $25 (foreign) per year. Prepayment required. Allow 4 to 8 weeks for first issue. Be sure to identify which local edition you want to receive. Order online at www.floridacurrents.com.

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611 S. Congress Ave. Suite 504
Austin, TX 78704
(800) 626-1181 or (512) 441-5200
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PRINTED IN FLORIDA
Trend Offset Printing Services
10301 Busch Drive North
Jacksonville, FL 32218

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GLADES Electric Cooperative, Inc.
“Neighbors Working for Neighbors”
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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October 2015
Vol. 4, No. 12

Downsizing in a Big Way 12
Homeowners opt for alternative and smaller domiciles.

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Deciphering the Clean Power Plan

What the EPA rule means to your electric bill is not yet known

When new regulations directed at the electric utility industry come out of Washington, D.C., electric cooperatives ask, “What will the impact be on our members’ electric bills, and will it affect reliability?” That is because as your trusted local electric cooperative, our first responsibility is providing reliable, affordable and safe electricity.

On August 3, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency unveiled a final regulation aimed directly at our industry. Known as the Clean Power Plan, the rule targets coal-fired and natural gas-fired power plants in an effort to reduce carbon dioxide emissions 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

Since that time, wholesale power provider, Seminole Electric Cooperative, have been studying the rule to determine its impacts on the electric service we provide.

What exactly does this 1,560-page rule mean for Florida and, specifically, GEC members?

At its core, the Clean Power Plan is a framework for states to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions based on specific reductions identified by the EPA. For example, the Clean Power Plan requires Florida to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions 26 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. Additionally, the state must hit aggressive interim targets that begin in 2022—only seven years from today.

Why coal?

In 1978, the U.S. enacted the Powerplant and Industrial Fuel Use Act, which restricted new power plants from using oil or natural gas and encouraged the use of coal. Seminole’s coal-fired facility came online in 1984. The act was not repealed until 1987.

Now the EPA—through the Clean Power Plan—aims to punish consumers who buy power from electric utilities that burn coal—even though many of those utilities did not have another option.

Seminole’s coal-fired facility has a remaining useful life through 2045. Premature closure of the plant would place unnecessary financial burdens on its not-for-profit electric cooperatives, including GEC. Seminole is a responsible environmental steward. Since the plant came online in 1984, Seminole has invested more than $530 million in environmental upgrades at its coal facility, making it one of the cleanest coal plants in the United States.
The way we look at this rule is that the government asked us to do something, we did it, and now our members and their end-use consumers face the very real possibility of being penalized because of it,” said Seminole CEO Lisa Johnson.

When will we know the full impact of the rule?
Compliance with the Clean Power Plan begins with each state—including Florida—submitting a plan for implementation to the EPA by September 6, 2016. The plan must describe how the state intends to meet the emissions reductions targets set by the EPA. States can ask the EPA for a two-year extension to file their proposal.

The key is that it will not be a GEC or Seminole plan. Ultimately, it will be up to the state of Florida to decide how affected power plants—including Seminole’s facilities—are impacted.

It is unclear how the state intends to address carbon dioxide reductions to meet both the interim and final state goals. Seminole does not know with any certainty how the Clean Power Plan will specifically affect its power plants.

More investigation is needed
Solutions for GEC and Seminole will be found in the coming months and, likely, years. Litigation and lengthy court challenges to the rule are certain. GEC and Seminole are keeping their options open during review of the lengthy rule, which includes thousands of additional pages of supporting technical documents.

Right now, the plan’s impact on members’ rates and the reliability of the electric grid are uncertain.

The goal of Seminole and GEC is to continue to be responsible environmental stewards while protecting the main interest of electric cooperative members: affordable, reliable electricity.

Stay tuned to Florida Currents and GEC’s Facebook page as GEC and Seminole respond.
Consider a Small Increase to Charitable Giving

Glades Electric Cooperative members can increase their charitable giving by participating in Operation Round Up Plus.

Under the original program, members round up their electric bill payment to the next even-dollar amount. Operation Round Up Plus clears the way to donate even more. By opting into this program, members may contribute additional money ($1 minimum) to their normal Operation Round Up amount. Individual donations are accepted at any time.

Interested in making an even bigger difference in the community? Stop by your local GEC office or call (863) 946-6200 to participate in Operation Round Up Plus. Please join GEC in its mission as "Neighbors Working for Neighbors."
Glades Electric Cooperative announces The Davey Tree Expert Company as its exclusive right-of-way contractor. This partnership is an example of GEC’s commitment to provide exceptional service.

The Davey Tree Expert Company will work directly with a GEC liaison to complete regularly scheduled right-of-way clearing and emergency tree trimming. This work is vital to limit vegetation-related outages and ensures the system is safe for employees and the community.

GEC is excited about the company’s commitment to provide employment opportunities for members served by the cooperative.

The Davey Tree Expert Company is proud to serve Glades Electric Cooperative.

Employment opportunities available.
North America’s oldest tree care company is looking to hire career-minded individuals for Line Clearance Tree Trimmers and Foremen positions.

- Competitive pay
- ESOP
- Full medical, dental and vision benefits

For more information, contact:
Gary Thomas
(863) 221-7939
Gary.Thomas@davey.com

AMI Update

Installation of Glades Electric Cooperative’s advanced metering infrastructure is progressing as planned.

By the end of August, all substation equipment had been installed. Meters have successfully communicated energy use data back to the GEC office.

More than 15,000 meters have been changed to AMI at residences and business throughout the service territory. About 700 meters still need to be installed. GEC employees are working to complete upgrade of the entire service territory.

The AMI system will provide more efficient and accurate information to allow GEC to manage its service territory and its members’ bills more effectively and efficiently.

For more information about the AMI system and other GEC programs, please call (863) 946-6200.
Operation Round Up Monthly Report

More than 70 percent of Glades Electric Cooperative members participate in Operation Round Up, which helps people in GEC’s service area who have exhausted normal avenues of financial assistance.

Sign up today, and your electric bill will be rounded up to the nearest dollar. The extra is placed in the fund for deserving individuals and organizations.

As of September 1, your Charitable Trust Board of Directors has approved $902,109.36 in disbursements. These funds have provided assistance with food, emergency lodging, disaster relief and specific emergency needs for 579 individuals and/or families and 124 community organizations.

The trust does not fund utility bills (electric, phone, water and gas) or budgets of organizations. Organizations in counties served may apply for funding for a specific need or project.

The Charitable Trust Board of Directors meets monthly to review applications for funding.

If you know of people who need and deserve assistance and live within our service area, encourage or help them to complete an application. Applications can be picked up at each of our three offices: Moore Haven, Lake Placid and Okeechobee.

Charitable Trust Board of Directors

Jack Wilson
District 1
Moore Haven

Beverly Eaves
District 2
Hendry County

Kelly Brantley
District 3
Ortona/Palmdale

Dori Evans
District 4
Lakeport

Lori Thompson
District 5
Venus/Hicora

Lee Andrus
District 6
Highlands Park

Vacant
District 7
Lorida

David McCadam
District 8
Lake Josephine

Paula Byars
District 9
Okeechobee

The Charitable Trust Board of Directors will meet in Moore Haven October 22 at 1 p.m.

$25 Credit Winners

Johnnie and Lisa Yongue
No. 110290-001
Brenda and Mitchell Zion
No. 116742-001

Winners should call (863) 946-6200 or sign their name on this page and mail it to:

Florida Currents $25 Credit
Glades Electric Cooperative
P.O. Box 519
Moore Haven, FL 33471

Church of the Month
Bethel Holiness Church
2821 SR 66
Sebring, FL 33875

Tap Into Savings With the Co-op Connections Card

One of the ways Glades Electric Cooperative looks out for you is with the Co-op Connections Card. The nationwide membership program is designed to save you money on everything from prescriptions and home goods to restaurant dining and hotel rooms. The card does not cost you anything. It is a benefit of GEC’s partnership with Touchstone Energy Cooperatives. To browse national and local offers, incentives and discounts that come with using the Co-op Connections Card, visit www.connections.coop. A search feature allows you to locate goods and services by zip code. Please support the local merchants who participate in the program.

Church of the Month
Bethel Holiness Church
2821 SR 66
Sebring, FL 33875
Serving All Your Telephone Needs at GEC

Automation has undoubtedly made our lives easier. We punch in a PIN and get money from an ATM. We use our smartphone to order pizza and have it delivered. The lights and thermostats in our home can be programmed to turn on and off on schedule.

When you call the Glades Electric Cooperative office you are greeted by an automated system. From there you can quickly access your balance, make a payment or report a power outage—all automatically.

While that automation can mean a quick and easy response to a basic request, GEC understands that sometimes you want to speak to a real human being. When you need or want to speak to a live person, assistance is just the push of a button away. GEC still has real people answering the phones in our local offices to help you update your account information, take a payment, provide energy-saving tips and more.

Whether an automated world is what you are seeking, or you want to speak to a live person, GEC has you covered. Call (863) 946-6200 for all of your account needs.

Maria Suarez is one of the Glades Electric Cooperative employees ready to take your call.
What do you see when you look at a power line? What are all those attachments, and why are they important?

The power lines that carry electricity from the substation to your home or business are called distribution lines. They are part of a system of poles, wires, transformers and other equipment used to deliver electricity.

Sometimes, the power lines are buried underground. However, often they are run overhead.

Below is a description of the main components of an electrical distribution system.

1. **Utility pole:** The half-ton wooden pole is the backbone of the electrical line. It is partially buried to support all of the equipment. It usually is about 40 feet in length, and typically is made from logs made of cedar, pine or fir trees.

2. **Transformer:** The cylindrical metal tank-shaped device steps down the voltage to a level safe for delivery to the customer, either 120 or 240 volts. Many transformers have a lightning arrestor, which protects them from a strike.

3. **Fused cutout:** This provides overload protection. A link inside a fiberglass barrel operates the cutout, which isolates the tap from the main line. When a loud blast is heard from a utility pole, it is the fused cutout operating.

4. **Wire and clamp:** This wire is secured by a clamp, and connects the main line to the transformer.

5. **Primary conductor:** This is the main series of wires that carries electricity from the supplier to the consumer through the distribution system. A three-phase line—typically used to serve large power users, such as commercial and industrial accounts—has three separate current-carrying conductors. A single-phase line—which serves most homes—has just one current-carrying conductor.

6. **Secondary tap (hot and neutral):** This conductor carries electricity between the transformer and the consumer’s electric meter.

7. **Strain insulators:** These ceramic objects hold the conductors in place and insulate them from the pole.

8. **Pole ground wire:** This wire is connected to a metal rod driven eight feet into the ground. Its job is to ground the system.

9. **Guy wire:** This stranded wire helps stabilize the pole. Hardware connects it to the pole and an anchor in the ground.

10. **Insulators:** These porcelain or rubber objects support the electric wires and prevent an undesired flow of electricity.

11. **Pole-top pins:** These support the insulators on the pole.

12. **Crossarm and braces:** This is the horizontal piece on the pole that makes the structure look like a cross. It holds the insulators, and keeps the lines on a three-phase line from touching one another. It usually is made of the same wood as the pole.

13. **Main line neutral conductor:** This wire is the neutral conductor in a distribution circuit.

14. **Insulator pins:** These support the insulators on the crossarm.

15. **Security light:** Although not on all power poles, a dusk-to-dawn light is visible on many power poles.
Evaluate and Act on Problem Areas

Start saving with a home energy audit

By Anne Prince

Whether your home is old or new, chances are you spend more on energy costs than necessary. Armed with some basic knowledge and a little time, you can conduct a baseline energy audit of your home to identify where you are losing energy—and money. Use a checklist and take notes on problems you find as you walk through your home.

Remember: The audit itself will not save you money. You need to act on your findings.

DIY 101

Where do you start? If your home has multiple levels, work from the top down. Begin in your attic or highest floor, and work your way to the first floor or basement.

- Insulation and air leaks (drafts). According to the U.S. Department of Energy, improving your home’s insulation and sealing air leaks are the fastest and most cost-effective ways to reduce energy waste and make the most of your energy dollars. Check to see whether there is sufficient insulation in the attic. Are openings that contain piping, ductwork and chimney sealed?

- Electronic devices. Inventory all of the electronic devices you have and how often you use them. Computers, printers, DVD players, phones and gaming consoles are notorious “vampire power” users. They drain energy even when not in use. If items can be turned off without disrupting your lifestyle, consider plugging them into a power strip that can be turned on and off, or put them on a timer.

- Lights. Note where you still have incandescent bulbs. Can you replace them with light-emitting diodes or compact fluorescents? Do you have nightlights? If so, consider replacing them with LED nightlights. Are there places where you can install motion sensor lights in low-use areas, such as a closet, porch or garage?

- Thermostat/indoor temperature. Do you have a programmable thermostat? When was the last time it was programmed? Are the date and time correct? If not, this could throw off the automatic settings. Is it set so the temperature is adjusted during the day and/or times when no one is home and at night when people are sleeping? Consider raising the temperature a few degrees.

- Appliances. If your appliances are more than 10 years old, they are likely not as energy efficient as today’s options. Appliances are large energy users. How and when you use them make a difference. Do you wash your clothes in hot water, or can you use cold water instead? Do you use your washer, dryer or dishwasher during the day? Consider running them at night, during off-peak times. Does your hot water heater have a blanket? If not, consider insulating it. Make sure your dryer vent is not blocked. This not only saves energy. It also may prevent a fire.

Evaluation

Once you have completed the audit, take a look at the findings. Prioritize actions you can take based on your time and budget, weighing where you will get the most impact for your investment.

Increasing your home’s energy efficiency will make your family comfortable and save you money.
## DIY Home Energy Audit Check List

### 1. Insulation and air leaks (drafts)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result/suggested action</th>
<th>Next steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Is the attic hatch above an air-conditioned space weather stripped and at least as heavily insulated as the attic?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Does the attic hatch close tightly?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Are openings for pipes, ductwork and chimneys sealed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Are drafts coming from windows, doors or electrical outlets?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Are there gaps along the baseboard, edge of flooring and/or at junctures of walls or the ceiling?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Quick fixes:

#### Long-term solutions:

### 2. Electronic devices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can device be plugged into a strip (and/or put on a timer?)</th>
<th>Next steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inventory of electronic devices:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Computers/printers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mobile devices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- DVD/Blu-ray players</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stereo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gaming consoles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Quick fixes:

#### Long-term solutions:

### 3. Existing incandescent lighting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Switch to CFL or LED bulbs?</th>
<th>Next steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Note locations of existing incandescent lighting:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hallways</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bedrooms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bathrooms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Closets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Nightlight areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Utility/storage areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Living area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Kitchen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dining area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Porch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Laundry/mudroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Quick fixes:

#### Long-term solutions:

### 4. Thermostat/indoor temperature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result/suggested action</th>
<th>Next steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Do you have a programmable thermostat?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* When was the last time it was programmed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Are the date and time correct?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Is the temperature adjusted during the day and/or times when no one is home and at night when people are sleeping?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Can you adjust the temperature a few degrees and still be comfortable?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Quick fixes:

#### Long-term solutions:

### 5. Appliances and cleaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result/suggested action</th>
<th>Next steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Which appliances are more than 10 years old?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Refrigerator/freezer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stove</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dishwasher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Washer/dryer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Can you wash your clothes in cold water instead of hot?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Can you use your washer, dryer or dishwasher during an off-peak time instead of during the day?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Does your hot water heater need an insulating blanket?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Is your dryer vent blocked?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Quick fixes:

#### Long-term solutions:
CEO’s Message

Improving Our System to Deliver Even Better Service

During the course of the past two years, we have dedicated an extraordinary amount of time to outage management. Every morning, we dig into the details behind any outage that occurred the previous day. Weekly, we gather our team together to review our findings and set a course of action to mitigate what we can. So far, this process has led to an improved transformer installation process that includes animal guards. We have witnessed a notable decline in animal-caused outages and will continue this system improvement plan.

Another program we are evaluating closely is our lightning arrester plan. This year in particular has been one of the worst on record for us with lightning strikes. The engineering department is reviewing the types of arrestors we install, the installation methodology and placement methodology. We will implement new strategies in the coming year.

With 196 outages during the past 12 months caused by trees, we have taken a hard look at our right-of-way program. This year we brought in two firms to work different areas of our territory and evaluated their effectiveness. We also established a right-of-way manager position dedicated to monitoring their work. From this process, we have established a partnership with The Davey Tree Expert Company. With Davey’s expertise, we expect to have our right-of-way program in top shape in three to four years, eliminating as many tree-related outages as possible. Davey will have to set up several new crews to complete this program. They prefer to hire from the territory they work. Look on page 7 for employment information with Davey.

In addition to these programs, we are modernizing our systems operation center. It is our 24-7 communications gallery. We are evaluating programs that track crew locations, link AMI metering information for predictive analysis and tie all this together on a single visual platform that will allow our system operators to manage outages more efficiently.

Our mission is exceptional service, and we are dedicated to continuous improvement to achieve that mission.