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POWER Source

December 2013 Vol. 17 No. 12

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Editorial Thoughts by Thom Moore

Merry Christmas!

While going through our Christmas cards in the office this morning, I couldn't help but notice the lack of those wishing us a "Merry Christmas." Oh, most of the cards have beautiful artwork or photographs, with everything from a wonderfully decorated tree to an awe inspiring wintery snow scene. But, inside the cover, there is something missing. Sure, some remind me of Christmases past, of yuletide carolers, gift giving, and of course good food. However, none of them take me back to those memories I hold so dear, those memories of Christmas time as a child.

Those memories seem such a long time ago now. Simpler times, that's for sure, especially now with commercial giants, the "big box" stores dictating the standard by which all Christmas gifts are judged. I long for the days when I would awake on Christmas morning, usually with the help of one of my brothers eagerly shaking me and at the same time declaring, "Santa's been here! Santa's been here!" We would all run into the living room, so cold in the house that we could actually see the breath from our excited little mouths. We would find our stockings (Dad's old socks) brimming with assorted candies, apples, clementines, and nuts! If we were really lucky, we may have Silly Putty, jacks, a Yo-Yo, or maybe even a Slinky! I

fondly remember one Christmas, must have been a banner year at the Moore household, my brother got a Radio Flyer scooter, another brother a View Master, and me a cork gun. Wow, I can almost smell the scent of our tree. Indeed, our tree

did have a unique aroma. My parents, for as long as I could remember, mixed Ivory Flakes detergent with a little water together in a mixing bowl and whipped up what they called "snow." My dad would take this snow in its fluffy spender and spread it equally upon all the tree's branches. It would harden overnight and in the morning, it truly looked like a fresh winter's snowstorm had blown through our living room!

The smell... oh that smell of the Ivory Snow, so clean, yet to me, an impressionable young child, the smell of Christmas. Did I mention the homemade eggnog... topped with a little nutmeg, and of course a little extra "nog" added in my dad's. We would sip on it while we all huddled around our TV,



not far from our free-standing stove, watching "It's a Wonderful Life." Simpler times? You bet, but times that have been cherished and gone unforgotten now for some 40 plus years.

When I get a Christmas card, or receive a greeting at a store during the Christmas season, I want to be reminded of those times. And where a "Happy Holidays" or a "Season's Greetings" can't take me, a simple, "Merry Christmas" is all it usually takes and I'm right back there peeling my clementine or gnawing on some haystack candy all while watching one of my brothers transferring the funnies onto his Silly Putty and another meticulously trying to untangle his Slinky.

I have an idea, let's take Christmas back! Starting today, say "Merry Christmas" at every opportunity. Put the poor clerk at the department store on the spot to say it back, simply by you bravely uttering it first. Say it from the heart so there's no confusion why you're so merry. It will be contagious! In short order we'll have Christmas back... at least in our small part of the world. That's your first challenge. Your second challenge is to peel a clementine (seedless tangerine), smell the rind, and see where that smell takes you.

Your third and final challenge... this may sound a little cliché, but what we really need to do is, "remember the reason for the season." If you accomplish this last challenge, everything else will just fall into place.



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Manager's Message...

Lance Adkins, GM

DACC - Las Cruces, Offers Quality Lineman Program

Every now and then, I think back to early days of my career at Farmers' Electric. At the time, I was working part time for a local grocery chain and engaged to be married. I needed full time work and a co-worker told me about a job opening where her husband worked, Farmers' Electric. Applying for the opening, having no idea about what Farmers' Electric did, what type of work environment would be involved, or what a cooperative was did not concern me at all. In other words, my career choice was not intentional; I did not put much thought into what I wanted to be doing twenty to thirty years down the road of life. My first twelve years with the Cooperative were spent in the line department working through the apprenticeship program to become a lineman. I am very grateful for the opportunities the Cooperative has given me over the years and appreciate both the people I work with and the folks we work for, the members of the Cooperative.

To a large degree, many of the new hires we have in the line department begin their career in much the same way, applying for an open position without any idea about what will be required. Fortunately, we have had great success in hiring from our local communities, employees that have grown up in the area and appreciate life in a rural setting. Unfortunately, this is not the case for many of the electric cooperatives around the state. Even the utilities serving the larger communities have had difficulty in recruiting qualified apprentice lineworkers. Together, utilities across the state worked with New Mexico State University and Dona Ana Community College (DACC) in Las Cruces to develop a line-worker training program.

DACC was a great choice for developing a "beginners" training program due to the close proximity of DACC to the overhead line, underground line, and climbing training facility already established by the electric cooperatives in New Mexico for conducting more advanced training of linemen. Students from DACC have access to the training facility and often participate during the training sessions for cooperative employees. DACC's Electrical Lineworker Program differs from other programs offered around the country in that the DACC program is a one-year pre-apprenticeship certificate program designed to provide students with a technical background and the manual skills necessary for a career as a line-worker. Graduates are still required to go through a formal, documented apprenticeship program, usually at least four years, at a utility where they are employed.

In talking with DACC recently, classes are generally small, between ten and twenty students and the dropout rate is fairly high at thirty percent. Utilities are not too concerned about the dropout rate for the program, it is better for students to decide early if line work is not a good fit for them. For those that complete the course, placement has been 100 percent since the program began. In general, a good lineman can find work just about anywhere they want to live. For graduates of the DACC Program they find that the certificate they earn gives them an advantage when applying for job opportunities. If you know of someone looking for a career opportunity with a potential for growth, the DACC Program may be a great start. Additional information about the DACC Program is available at 575-527-7590 and online at dcaa.nmsu.edu.

During this season of Thanksgiving and Christmas, I am thankful for and appreciate the opportunities I have been given by the members of Farmers' Electric. Merry Christmas!

Board of Trustees:**Mike West***President***George Dodge***Vice President***Ernest Riley***Secretary-Treasurer***Paul Quintana***Trustee***Pat Woods***Trustee***Billy Tate***Trustee***Donnie Bidegain***Trustee***General Manager:****Lance R. Adkins****POWER SOURCE**

is published monthly by Farmers' Electric Cooperative, Inc. Questions or article ideas should be directed to :
Thom J. Moore,
POWER SOURCE
Editor, P. O. Box 550
Clovis, New Mexico
88102-0550
Phone 762-4466 or
1-800-445-8541
www.fecnm.org

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NMSU Doña Ana Community College



Youth Tour 2014!

In 2014, FEC will again sponsor two area high school Juniors on the Government inAction Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. Please call 1-800-445-8541 for more details on this exciting opportunity!

Highlight Business of the Month!

Cotton Patch

2604 N Prince St.
Clovis, NM
(575) 762-2233



***Deal: 10% Off Total Ticket**

To learn more about how your business can benefit from becoming a Co-op Connections partner or to **request a card**, call the Co-op today at 800-445-8541. To view all the local, regional, and national deals, visit www.fecnm.org.

**Pharmacy discounts are not insurance and are not intended as a substitute for insurance.*

Scholarship Applications Available Now...

Farmers' Electric Cooperative will be awarding scholarships again this year through the Farmers' Electric Education Foundation. Scholarship applications may be obtained from area high school guidance counselors or from cooperative office locations in Clovis, Fort Sumner, or Santa Rosa. Scholarship applications can also be requested by calling the Clovis office at 762-4466 or (800) 445-8541. All cooperative members and their dependants are eligible to apply for these scholarships.

Don't Delay! Deadline For Applications Is February 3, 2014! Contact Your Guidance Counselor Or Our Office Today!

There are two different scholarship forms. Be sure when requesting a form that you specify either the "**Graduating High School Student Application**" or the "**Returning College Student - Non-Traditional Student Application.**" Both forms are available from any FEC office or are available to download from the FEC website at www.fecnm.org.

The Farmers' Electric Education Foundation was established by the members of the cooperative in 1986 and is funded through donated and unclaimed patronage capital refunds and donations by private individuals. Only the interest earned on donations is used for scholarships, ensuring that the Education Foundation will continue to support higher education for our members for many years to come. Through 2013, the foundation has awarded 935 scholarships totaling \$618,880.00.

Attention

Protection from winter shut-off begins November 15, 2013. To avoid potential disconnection of services please contact the Human Services Department for eligibility information for the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) at 800-283-4465. Your service will not be disconnected from November 15, 2013, through March 15, 2014, if you qualify for LIHEAP and have no past due amount or are making the agreed upon payments.

Atención

La protección del interruptor de invierno empieza el 15 de noviembre de 2013. Para evitar desconexión potencial de servicios contacta por favor al Humano Atiende al Departamento para la información de elegibilidad para los Ingresos Bajos que Calientan Programa de Ayuda de Energía (LIHEAP) en 800-283-4465. Su servicio no será desconectado del 15 de noviembre de 2013, por el 15 de marzo de 2014, si califica para LIHEAP y tiene no cantidad debida pasada ni hace el aceptó pagos.

ATTENTION: IRRIGATION CONSUMERS SUBJECT: IRRIGATION ANNUAL MINIMUM CHARGES

In accordance with Farmers' Electric Cooperative's irrigation rate schedule, certain annual minimum charges apply to all irrigation accounts. Your original minimum charges were calculated through a contract with the Cooperative, based on the cost of line extension to the irrigation load. Upon expiration of the contract, the horsepower on that account determines the annual minimum at the rate of \$20.00 per horsepower, but not less than \$110.00 for single-phase service, and not less than \$165.00 for three-phase service.

Under the irrigation rate schedule, consumers have one calendar year, (approximately December 20 through December 20 of the following year), in which to use the annual minimum charges. The December billing will reflect the remaining charges, if any.

If you have any questions regarding the annual minimum charges for your irrigation account, please contact the Cooperative's billing department at 762-4466 or 1-800-445-8541.

Energy and Safety Tips – Have Your Furnace Checked Annually

Did you know that your furnace and air conditioner accounts for up to 60% of your home's utility bills? Did you also know that if your equipment is not properly maintained, it could be costing you additional money each month? Each heating season you need to have your furnace and/or heat pump checked by a licensed service company.

There are a few things that you, as a homeowner, can do to help keep your system running most efficiently - like replacing your air filter at least every other month. If gas, visually inspect the burner flame (it should be blue in color, yellow is bad). Also, keep items clear from all sides of the furnace. However, a heating service company can disassemble the furnace and clean it properly. They will inspect the heat exchangers, the flue piping and fittings, test the ignition, ensure proper burning, inspect the electrical components, test all the equipment safeties, and perform a carbon monoxide test. They can also address and check all components associated with electric furnaces.

Because many Farmers' Electric members utilize gas/propane to heat their homes, we suggest this maintenance not only to make your system operate as efficiently as possible, but we want you to be safe as well. Gas has proven to be a very effective heat source, but at the same time, if neglected, can be dangerous. Each year over 500 people die from carbon monoxide poisoning. Many of these deaths could have been avoided with a simple check of the heat-

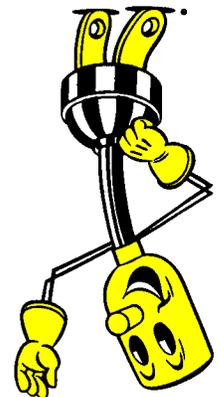
ing system.

Here are some additional Safety tips for you:

- Never discard hot ashes from your fireplace or wood-burning stove inside or near the home. Place them in a metal container outside and well away from the house.
- Never use a range or an oven as a supplemental heating source.
- If you use an electric heater, do not overload the circuit. Only use extension cords which have the necessary rating to carry the load.
- Avoid using electrical space heaters in bathrooms, or other areas where they may come in contact with water.
- Frozen water pipes? Never try to thaw them with a blow torch or other open flame, (the pipe could conduct the heat and ignite the wall structure inside the wall space). Use hot water or a UL labeled device such as a hand held dryer for thawing.
- If windows are used as emergency exits in your home, practice using them in the event fire should start. Be sure that all windows open easily.
- If there is a fire hydrant near your home, you can assist the fire department by keeping the hydrant clear of snow so that when it is needed, it can be located easily.
- Be sure every area of your home has working smoke alarms. If utilizing gas, make sure you have carbon monoxide detectors as well.



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FARMERS' ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
OF NEW MEXICO
 3701 Thornton St., P.O. Box 550
 Clovis, New Mexico 88102-0550

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