

FEC® POWER

Source

Vol. 21 No. 9

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Operating Heavy Machinery? Don't Do It Near Power Lines!

If your to-do list involves working with ladders, irrigation pipes, awkward machinery, or any tall implements, keep them as far away from power lines as possible.

First rule: **Look up!** Before carrying anything tall around your yard – like a ladder – know where the overhead power lines are located. Also:

- Most local laws require you to leave a clearance of at least 10 feet from power lines (depending on voltage) when you're operating machinery. Best practice: Give your machinery twice the required clearance to minimize the electrical risks.
- The manufacturer of your equipment might recommend even greater clearances. Follow those guidelines.
- If a chore requires you to work near a power line, enlist the help of a friend or family member to watch you work an alert you if you're getting too close to the line.
- If your helper is going to take over the job for a while, stop and re-evaluate the safe clearances. Talk about safety plans so anyone who is operating equipment on your property is aware of necessary clearances.
- Use highly visible ground markers to alert your helpers that they're near overhead power lines. Use maps or diagrams to show the location of



- power lines when planning or performing work.
- Machinery such as irrigation pipes, grain augers, silos, drill rigs, cranes, loaders, and excavators can easily contact a power line if you change the position or elevation. Always lower machinery before relocating it.
- Designate areas for high-risk operations such as elevating machinery. Evaluate machinery height before work begins when the tools are well clear of power lines.
- Check power tools for rust and cords for fraying before each use. Never store tools outdoors.
- Carry pipes horizontally – and get a partner to help you. If you try it on your own, you'll wind up carrying the pipes vertically, which makes them more likely to contact a power line.
- Never touch a downed power line; always assume it is live. If your vehicle or tractor or anything you have in tow comes into contact with a power line, do not exit the vehicle! Call Farmers' Electric at 1-800-445-8541. We urge you to enter this number in your contact list on your phone. You could also dial 911. We can disconnect the line in order for you to safely leave your vehicle. It's always better to be safe than sorry.



Manager's Message...**Lance Adkins, GM**

FEC Education Foundation

Today, a sure sign of fall is in the air, the unmistakable aroma of fresh green Chile roasting at the local Farmers' Market. Another sure sign, several first-time college students stopping by the office with their "proof of enrollment" and class schedules to claim scholarships awarded this past spring. Back in April, the Farmers' Electric Education Foundation awarded more than \$48,000 in scholarships to area graduating high-school seniors and other students seeking to further their education.

On occasion, someone will ask where the funds for scholarships comes from and understandably question if scholarships are funded through the rates they pay for electric service each month. I am always pleased to report that the scholarships are not rate-based, rather, they are funded by investment income realized from donated and unclaimed capital credit refunds. Prior to 1986 unclaimed capital credit refunds were sent to state coffers as required by law. A few enterprising cooperative trustees and managers felt those funds could be better utilized locally and approached key state legislators with the idea of creating scholarship opportunities for local students. With overwhelming support, legislation was signed into law enabling cooperatives to form charitable trusts and offer educational scholarships.



FEC members voted to amend the Cooperative's bylaws at the annual membership meeting, in April 1986, providing for the establishment of an education foundation. That fall, FEC awarded seven \$500 scholarships. Over that past 31 years FEC has awarded 1,148 scholarships totaling \$794,730 to students from across the FEC service area. Scholarships are available to active members receiving service from FEC and their dependents who are enrolled as full-time students at an accredited vocational school, technical school, college, or university.

Planning is already underway for next year, with the FEC Board of Trustees approving a plan to award fifty-five \$1,000 (\$55,000) in scholarships next spring. It would be great to hear from some of our past recipients to see what they are up to now, and perhaps we can share their stories with readers. I do recall that Curry County Manager, Lance Pyle, was an FEC scholarship recipient back in 19?? Who knows, perhaps one student's success could be just the inspiration needed to spur on the next generation. Further, most recipients do not realize they are eligible and encouraged to reapply each year, for as long as they continue their education. I recall awarding three perhaps as many as four scholarships to students who took time to reapply.

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 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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**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(s), please contact the Cooperative's Billing Department at 575-762-4466 or 800-445-8541.

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Thank you to the many FEC members who have voluntarily donated their capital credit refunds to the FEC Education Foundation. Their sacrifice has made a significant difference in the number of scholarships available each year.

Scholarship information will be making its way to area guidance counselors this month and applications will also be available on the FEC website www.fecnm.org. Seventeen scholarships are reserved for returning college applicants, including those who may be currently in the workforce and determined to go back to school.

Until Next Month,

**Tailgate
Special!**

**Charbroil Patio Bistro
Electric Grill**

\$149

Save \$40!

***While supplies last**



**Which would you rather do without,
lunch out, or electricity for a day?**



For about the cost of a cheap burger and fries, (\$4.00), most of our members get all the conveniences and comfort of electricity for a day. Which would you rather give up, lunch out, or your cooling, heating, hot water, entertainment, phone charging, clean clothes, lights, and a home-cooked meal?

Electricity – it's still a great value!

Standby Generator Safety

During power outages, many members use backup generators for their emergency electrical needs. If installed properly, use of generators to power your home, farm, or business poses little danger.



But, if installed incorrectly, your generator system could threaten the lives of family, friends, neighbors, and electric utility line crews trying to restore service.

There are specific ways to properly install generators in your business or home. Farmers' Electric Co-

operative (FEC) strongly suggests you have a qualified professional electrician assist you.

To safely operate a standby generator, make sure it has a transfer safety switch to isolate the load from the normal utility source. Without this safety switch, there is a good chance electricity can travel back through the lines causing "back feed." Back feed creates a dangerous hazard for anyone near the power lines, particularly the utility crews working to restore power.

The transfer switch, also known as a "double-throw switch" near the service entrance panel or fuse box, in your home or business by a qualified electrician.

If you would like a copy of *Connecting Your Standby Generator Safely*, a brochure published by the National Food and Energy Council, simply call FEC today and a copy will be sent to you at no charge. FEC's toll-free number is 1-800-445-8541.

Faulty Electrical Controls Should Be Investigated

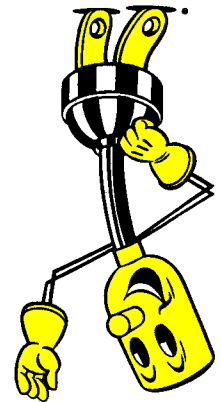


Do you have a wall switch that fails to control the overhead light or an outlet that doesn't deliver power to an appliance?

Don't just bypass or ignore the problem. There's a reason the switch or outlet isn't working.

The problem could be something minor, or it could be the symptom of something more serious. Why not go ahead and have a qualified electrician check it out and fix the problem? Simply ignoring the problem is not worth the risk.

"Owned By Those We Serve"



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