

## News Notes

**BEWARE OF BILL SCAM** - Clay Electric has received calls from members who have been contacted regarding an alleged utility bill credit provided by President Obama. This is a scam that has impacted other utility customers in several states across the country.

The scam claims that President Barack Obama is providing credits or applying payments to utility bills. In some cases, scammers have asked for social security numbers in order to allow for credits or to apply payments to customers' utility bills, presenting an identity-theft risk. Scammers reportedly have visited customers in person, posted fliers and used social media and texting to send messages claiming that President Obama will provide a credit or directly pay utility bills. Please remember that Clay Electric employees carry proper identification on the job, and we do not randomly call or text members asking for social security numbers or other personal information. Members should not give any personal information to anyone in response to this or any scam.

**OLD PHOTOS SOUGHT**- Clay Electric's 75th Anniversary is next year, and we're looking for old photos of all aspects of the cooperative from the 1940s, '50s, '60s and '70s -- the earlier, the better. If you have photos of Clay Electric's early years, please send them by mail to Kathy Richardson, c/o Clay Electric, P.O. Box 308, Keystone Heights, FL 32656. Photos can also be dropped off at the district offices. The photos will be returned, so please include your name, complete address and phone number. Please call 352-473-8000 ext. 8359 with questions.

**LIKE US ON FACEBOOK** - Your Co-op is on Facebook! We are using the social media site to connect with members and others. Fans see current photos, get updates on major outages, and learn about energy efficiency and conservation. If you're on Facebook, you can visit Clay's site at [www.facebook.com/ClayElectric](http://www.facebook.com/ClayElectric)

## Got something to sell? Try our two Trading Post options

Clay Electric's Trading Post offers a variety of items for sale or rent by Clay Electric members. The Trading Post is available online and in the Kilowatt newsletter, which is read by more than 165,000 members in North Florida.

Members can post a non-commercial ad in the Trading Post - either online or in the Kilowatt - at no cost, and anyone can shop. If you're shopping, you'll find all kinds of treasures there, but if you see something you like, you'd better act fast. Trading Post ads tend to get quick results.

If you would like to place an ad in the Kilowatt Trading Post, please mail your written ads to P. O. Box 308, Keystone Heights, FL 32656 attn: Trading Post, or drop your ad off at your nearest district office. The Kilowatt newsletter is published six times per year - January, March, May, July, September and November.

To post an item for sale on the online Trading Post, visit [www.clayelectric.com/tradingpost.aspx](http://www.clayelectric.com/tradingpost.aspx) and follow the instructions.

Power Line is an informational publication of Clay Electric Cooperative, Inc. It is distributed monthly with members' billing statements. If you have questions or comments about the Power Line publication, contact Editor Kathy Richardson at P. O. Box 308, Keystone Heights, FL 32656; e-mail: [KRichardson@clayelectric.com](mailto:KRichardson@clayelectric.com).

Clay Electric also publishes the Kilowatt six times a year (January, March, May, July, September and November). The Kilowatt is the official voice of Clay Electric and has been published continuously since 1948 as an informational and educational service for co-op members.

Clay Electric's website (<http://www.clayelectric.com>) offers online services such as payments, and information about the co-op's programs and services. Members can also write their own ads online to be published on the website's Trading Post. To enter your ad on the Trading Post, you must use your Clay Electric customer number which is printed on your electric bill statement.

Clay Electric's Board of Trustees will meet on August 28 beginning at 12:30 p.m. in Keystone Heights.

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The Clay Electric Cooperative, Inc. \_\_\_\_\_

# Power Line

August 2012

## Our discount savings program now has 144 local businesses participating

Members received their Co-op Connections Card in the May Kilowatt, and they're enjoying this money-saving tool that connects them with discounts on everything from hotel stays to prescription drugs.

A wide variety of merchants throughout Clay Electric's 14-county service area accept the card. Be sure to present the card at the register to receive your discount! Clay Electric encourages its members to visit local businesses that participate in the Co-op Connections program. These merchants will benefit from increased traffic, so it's a win-win situation. To date, 144 businesses are participating in the Co-op Connections discount program.

As a Touchstone Energy co-op, Clay Electric strives to serve its members according to four core values: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community.

The cooperative's Co-op Connections Card is one of the ways that Clay lives up to those values. Visit [clayelectric.com](http://clayelectric.com) to learn more about the Co-op Connections card program.

 Clay Electric Cooperative, Inc. \_\_\_\_\_

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

## MEMBER SERVICES

### **AUTOMATIC MONTHLY PAYMENT PLAN**

Allows your monthly electric bill payment to be automatically deducted from your bank account on the due date. Sign up online ([clayelectric.com](http://clayelectric.com)) or call your local district office.

### **ONLINE ACCOUNT INFORMATION**

Visit the Clay Electric website ([clayelectric.com](http://clayelectric.com)) and access your account information:

- View your bill statement
- Make a one-time payment online
- View current charges
- View account balance
- View billing history
- View estimated meter reading dates
- Request emailed bill statements (Clay eBill)

**PROJECT SHARE** - Help others by designating a tax-deductible amount to be added to your electric bill or make a one-time donation.

**REMOTE METER READING (RMR)** - Enables a co-op meter reader to obtain the meter reading without entering the homeowner's property. The monthly charge is \$3.95.

**ENERGY SMART REBATE PROGRAM** - Offers rebates for members who install additional insulation in their homes, or who install a high efficiency heat pump or solar water heating system.

**ENERGY EFFICIENCY LOANS** - Available for the purpose of installing certain energy efficiency measures, including metal roofing and solar water heaters.

**SURGEBLASTER** - High quality surge protection equipment at a low monthly lease.

**LONG DISTANCE PHONE SERVICE** - Clay has contracted with TransWorld Network Corp. (TWN) to offer members competitively priced long distance phone service. Call (877) 877-CLAY (2529) for more information.

**PAYMENT STATIONS** - Clay has contracted with Fidelity Express to offer payment stations for paying your electric bill at various businesses in the co-op's service area. Fidelity Express charges \$1.50 for each transaction. A list of payment locations is available online ([clayelectric.com](http://clayelectric.com)) and at your local district office.

## Report from the manager

**Ricky Davis**

General Manager/CEO



## ***Rights-of-way & reliability - the importance of vegetation management***

**T**ropical Storm Debby's recent visit to North Florida reminded us how important it is to be prepared for power outages and – in the case of Debby – the likelihood of flooding in low-lying areas.

Debby didn't cause a lot of power outages because the winds weren't all that high. But still, tree limbs broke and trees fell over due to rain-softened ground, resulting in some outages.

This reminds us how important our vegetation management program is at Clay Electric.

Vegetation management (formerly referred to as right-of-way maintenance) is essential in providing safe and reliable electric service. Clay Electric works hard to ensure that rights-of-way are cleared regularly of trees and brush to help reduce potential outages and hazards. Trees and branches growing in or near power lines can cause interruptions in service. Uncontrolled brush can impede access to utility structures.

### **Keeping safety first**

Trees and branches pose significant safety concerns when they are too close to power lines. Children climbing trees in this situation could be severely injured or even killed if they contact an energized line. Adults are also at risk. Pruning trees near power lines should be left to qualified vegetation management professionals.

Additionally, trees and branches can break and fall across power lines during strong wind and inclement weather. Not only can power lines be damaged, but power poles and towers can break and fall as well. Although weather-related

outages are not always preventable, successful vegetation management minimizes damage, injury and outages.

### **Reducing the likelihood for power outages**

In August 2003, approximately 40 million people lost power for roughly two days in the northeastern United States. The root cause for this massive blackout: overgrown trees that contacted high-voltage power lines. The importance of vegetation management cannot not be stressed enough. In fact, the North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC) has established mandatory requirements for transmission vegetation management.

Seminole Electric Cooperative, Clay Electric's wholesale provider of electricity, owns and maintains more than 400 circuit miles of transmission line through its transmission vegetation management plan. According to James Frauen, Seminole's vice president of energy delivery, regular vegetation maintenance increases electric reliability and decreases service interruptions.

Vegetation management for distribution lines is addressed through the National Electric Safety Code (NESC).

Clay Electric is committed to providing safe, reliable and affordable power, and our vegetation maintenance program is key to fulfilling that promise.

In addition to safety concerns and outage prevention, vegetation management is necessary to reduce unexpected costs. By keeping rights-of-way clear, co-op crews are able to restore power more quickly, improve reliability, and prevent expensive repairs to systems damaged by fallen trees or neglected vegetation.

Clay Electric performs vegetation management on a continual basis, depending on the service territory and terrain. Should you notice any trees or brush that need attention, please contact Clay Electric. This will help ensure that your cooperative can continue to deliver safe, reliable power at the lowest possible cost.