

Clay Electric is now on Facebook!

With the growing popularity of Facebook in recent years, many businesses and organizations are using it to reach out to their customers.

Electric co-ops aren't watching from the sidelines. Clay Electric is joining the more than 130 electric co-ops already on Facebook.

Surveys show that co-op members are interested in receiving information about their energy provider via Facebook, including restoration updates. In a nearby state, a co-op used Facebook to keep members updated on restoration efforts after an ice storm, and members reacted positively to the effort.

Clay Electric joined the social networking site several months ago. The Member & Public Relations Department plans to use its Facebook presence to connect with members and others who "like" us.

Wayne Mattox, manager of communications, says the communication staff's ability to make use of multiple mediums is important.

"We've been looking at expanding the ways we can communicate with our members, and we think Facebook will help," Mattox said.

"We generate a considerable amount of information about our programs and services, and having a presence on Facebook helps us share this information with folks we aren't reaching through our traditional communication channels, like our printed newsletters or bill inserts," Mattox said "Facebook is a two-way street - our members can also let us know about their concerns."

While we all hope the hurricane season doesn't send a storm our way, if a prolonged outage event does occur, Clay can use Facebook as a tool to get restoration updates out to its members.

If you're on Facebook, you can visit Clay's site at www.facebook.com/ClayElectric



News Notes

POWER OUTAGE MAP - Internet users can now view the general location and approximate number of power outages on Clay Electric's lines by visiting clayelectric.com. The outage map also allows users to view outage information system-wide or by county.

The information is based on outages reported by Clay Electric members and is automatically updated approximately every five minutes. While the method for determining the extent of an outage is quite accurate, the information presented is an estimation and may not reflect the actual number without power.

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.

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 July 28 and August 25 beginning at 12:30 p.m. in Keystone Heights.

The Clay Electric Cooperative, Inc. _____

Power Line

July 2011

Helping your fellow co-op members

The downturn in the economy has an increasing number of families finding it difficult to meet their monthly expenses. Some co-op members are having difficulty paying their electric bills. Many of these families have been receiving help with their electric bills by participating in Project Share.

The co-op's Project Share program continues to receive considerable support, thanks to the generosity of Clay Electric members. However, with more families needing help, the co-op encourages you to consider participating in Project Share.

Since the program's inception in July 1997, Project Share has helped 2,711 members (through April of this year) with a total of \$419,206.77 in disbursements.

Project Share was created to enable members to help other members pay their electric bills during a period of financial difficulty. Clay Electric collects the Project Share donations and the Salvation Army distributes the funds based on their financial criteria.

By designating a tax-deductible amount to be added to your electric bill each month - or by sending a one-time donation - you can help others keep their lights on when times are tough. To sign up for Project Share, please call the co-op (the number listed on your bill statement).

 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) or call your local district office.

ONLINE ACCOUNT INFORMATION

Visit the Clay Electric website (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) and at your local district office.

Power outages can frustrate computer users; surge protection and battery backup can help

As a computer user you have probably experienced the frustration of having your power supply suddenly flicker or go off completely with a resulting loss of data.

Rapid changes in the amount of electricity your computer needs to operate properly can result in damaged circuitry, loss of important data and irritation.

What can you do to protect your computer from power fluctuations and outages?

Equipment is available for home or office use that is designed to eliminate or filter out voltage fluctuations and provide a back-up supply of power should your electricity go off.

Protector or suppressor devices provide protection from brief but intense voltage increases. This type of equipment may save your computer's life if a lightning bolt hits nearby and enters your home's wiring system.

According to Sherman Phillips, Clay Electric's manager of Energy Services, a surge protector's response time to incoming power surges is a critical factor to consider when choosing a unit.

The faster the response time, the better the unit is at preventing the power surge from entering your computer and causing damage.

Also consider the amount of power the unit can dissipate when a surge occurs. Cheaper units that can't handle higher surge levels may not provide the protection you need. Surge protectors can vary in price from \$40 to over \$120.

But it can be the loss of data, not the equipment damage, that causes concern among computer users.

Phillips advises that if you can't shut down



Computer users may want to consider purchasing equipment designed to protect not only their computer but their important data as well. Power fluctuations and outages can create a hassle when important data is lost.

your computer during periods when power interruptions are likely (such as during intense lightning storms), then an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) may be for you. A UPS system operates with a battery backup that supplies instant power to your computer should the outside voltage suddenly drop. Because the back-up system takes over quickly, your computer doesn't notice. Battery backup systems can vary widely in cost.

If the expense of a battery backup system is too much for your budget, consider saving and/or copying your data frequently. If the data you are keeping is extremely important, you may also want to consider making copies or using an external hard drive.

In conclusion, if power surges and outages concern you, you may want to invest in surge protectors and battery backup systems.