



## Marlboro Electric Cooperative, Inc.

254 Hwy 15-401 Bypass East  
P.O. Box 1057  
Bennettsville, SC 29512

### General Information

(843) 479-3855  
(800) 922-9174  
www.marlborelectric.coop

### Office Hours

8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.  
Monday–Friday

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Doug Jennings

### Co-op News Editor

Christy J. Overstreet  
email: cjoverstreet@  
marlborelectric.coop

### Mission Statement

The aim of Marlboro Electric Cooperative, Inc. is to make electric energy available to its members at the lowest cost consistent with sound economy and good management.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# Mother's Day safety check

Tips to keep your loved ones free from harm



**ON MOTHER'S DAY**, our children or my husband would sometimes sneak into the kitchen to whip up a surprise

breakfast for me. It's always a treat to wake up to the smell of breakfast cooking—eggs, bacon, and, of course, toast. And their smiles more than make up for the disaster zone normally left in the wake.

It's great to see how excited they would be about cooking something special for me. And I can rest easy knowing I've made the kitchen as safe as possible for the experiments (and mountain of dishes) to come.

Every month, I check all of our appliance cords. Our toaster was replaced one year—after some early-on motherly tributes, the cord got too close to the toaster and melted. Since an average of 3,600 home fires each year start with toasters and toaster ovens, it's best not to take chances.

### A first line of defense

I've also installed special outlets in the kitchen and our bathrooms (anywhere near water, really) called ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). If a problem occurs—an appliance over-heating or a wayward coffee maker tipping into the sink—power is shut off. A red test button reminds me to check these outlets monthly. They're my first line of defense.

Even cold appliances pose a safety

risk—refrigerators are responsible for about a thousand fires annually. Every three months, I have my husband help me take off the small panel at the base of our fridge and vacuum away dust and debris. Not only does this prevent a fire, it makes our fridge more efficient. By getting children, like grandchildren, to help, I teach them how to take care of their own kitchen someday.

### More safety resources

A third of all home fires start in the kitchen, but every room could hold potential danger. May isn't only a time to honor mothers—it's also National Electrical Safety Month. Please take the time this month to check your home for electrical hazards. Spending a few minutes to check for problems can make all the difference when you're faced with a potentially unsafe situation. To learn more, take a home safety tour at [virtualhome.esfi.org](http://virtualhome.esfi.org). There's also a wealth of safety knowledge available at [SafetyatHome.com](http://SafetyatHome.com) and [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

On Mother's Day and every day, we want to help you keep your family safe. Sharing electrical safety tips is just another way we're looking out for you. For more tips, see the story on pages 20B-C or access our website, [www.MarlboroElectric.coop](http://www.MarlboroElectric.coop).

### Janelle Sauls

*Trustee, Secretary/Treasurer*

## Co-op observes Memorial Day

Marlboro Electric will be closed in observance of Memorial Day on Monday, May 30. Emergency crews will be on standby.

## Meet our members

IF YOU HAVE something unique to share with our readers, please contact Christy Overstreet at (843) 454-2872.



In an 'original and classic' style of his own, Robert Lee Porter of Latta visited Marlboro Electric last month to pay his electric bill in an eye-catching, red 1957 Chevrolet. He rebuilt and refurbished the car, originally bought by his late father-in-law, after it sat in a field for many years. Porter said it runs like a charm and is an original classic like him.



CHRISTY OVERSTREET

Chomping at the bit to come to Marlboro Electric Cooperative is Pete Tucker, a 12-year-old Dachshund. Any time Jim Tucker, his 'daddy', rides by the co-op, you can hear and see Pete's love for the co-op, as he hangs his head out the window and barks. He announces his "Ruff" arrival in a drooling manner and wags his tail rapidly with excitement. Pete finds paying the electric bill rewarding to receive a dog treat from customer service.

## Who won the truck?

**MARLBORO ELECTRIC CELEBRATED** its 70th Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 16. The lucky winner of the 2006 Ford F150 truck is Willie Alford, 75, of Hamer. He has been a co-op member for more than 60 years. See more photos of our members in next month's issue of *SC Living* or visit [www.marlborelectric.coop](http://www.marlborelectric.coop).



### Power tips

#### What happens if I'm away for an extended period?

Power use in the home does not stop unless you turn off the main breaker or request to have the meter physically disconnected by Marlboro Electric Cooperative. Otherwise, refrigerators, freezers, furnaces, baseboards and water heaters continue to operate.

Make payment arrangements before you leave to prevent service from being unnecessarily disconnected during an extended absence. Call one of our customer service representatives at (843) 479-3855 or email. We'll help you determine how much to pre-pay on your account or get your authorization to charge a credit card. We can also take a number to call you in case of an emergency.

You can't miss the albino alligator in the renovated Blackwater Swamp Exhibit in the South Carolina Aquarium. Use your Co-op Connections card for \$1 off general admission up to five people.



News EXTRA

SOUTH CAROLINA AQUARIUM

## Hitting the road? Use your Co-op Connections

**PLANNING A SUMMER VACATION?** A weekend getaway? Start your trip by visiting the Co-op Connections discount program website, offered by Marlboro Electric Cooperative, to reserve a hotel room.

Several hotel chains offer discounts to Co-op Connections cardholders, with some offering special online, telephone discounts, and other accommodating deals, including:

**Days Inn**—Co-op Connections members receive an additional 20 percent off the best available rate at participating locations. Find a hotel at [DaysInn.com](http://DaysInn.com) or call (877) 670-7088. To receive the discount, give ID number 1000004709 at time of booking.

**Endless Vacation Rentals by Wyndham Worldwide**—Receive 10 percent off the best available rate at vacation rental properties booked at [EVRentals.com/coopconnect](http://EVRentals.com/coopconnect) or call 1-877-670-7088 prompt 3, and provide promotion code 1000004709 at time of booking. Offers luxurious resorts in Mexico, condos in Orlando, authentic villas in Tuscany or seaside cottages in the United Kingdom.

**S.C. Aquarium—at a discount!** Headed to Charleston soon? Your Co-op Connections card gets you \$1 off general admission, up to five people—or \$10 off Aquarium membership. More than 10,000 animals call it home, including pythons and alligators. Already visited the Aquarium?



Stop again to see the renovated Saltmarsh Exhibit and catch a glimpse of shoreline favorites such as diamondback terrapins and pufferfish, as well as more than 25 stingrays in a new 6,000-gallon tank. Meanwhile, the renovated Blackwater Swamp Exhibit includes a new “star,” an albino alligator!

Wherever you're bound, click the Co-op Connections card link at [www.MarlboroElectric.coop](http://www.MarlboroElectric.coop) to look for deals. Plug in the ZIP code of your destination, select the proximity, and you're on your way. ☺

## Don't forget your meds

Whether you are traveling or staying close to home, you can save on prescriptions with your Co-op Connections discount card.

Marlboro Electric members have saved more than 50 percent on prescriptions by using their card, according to Touchstone Energy, the nationwide co-op alliance that coordinates the discount program. Nationwide, co-op members have saved more than \$28 million; members of South Carolina electric cooperatives have saved more than \$4 million on pharmacy costs.

Your Co-op Connections card is good for 10 to 60 percent discounts on prescriptions at more than 60,000 national and regional pharmacy stores, including CVS, Walgreens, Walmart and Target. Find participating pharmacy locations at [locateproviders.com](http://locateproviders.com).



CHRISTY OVERSTREET

Fowler Pharmacy participates in the Co-op Connections program located on Market Street, Bennettsville. Visit your local pharmacist, Robert Fowler, pictured, or Jeannie Dalton for your home health and gift needs.

A woman with short brown hair, wearing a maroon long-sleeved shirt, stands in front of a light blue mobile home with white trim. The background shows trees and a clear sky.

## Life is never the same

Co-op members share house fire experiences

CHRISTY OVERSTREET

Jackie Richardson still has a feeling of emptiness from losing almost all of her belongings to the fire.

**DEVASTATION, TRAUMA AND SHOCK** are a few emotions people experience when they lose their home to a fire. A house fire does not discriminate its victims.

### Empty feelings, unreplaceable items

Jackie Richardson, a Marlboro Electric Co-op member, was at church on January 16 when neighbors came and told her that her mobile home was on fire.

"I felt as if I had physically been hit with a ton of bricks, as my knees weakened and tears hit the floor." She worried and cried from the church to her home about the unreplaceable items like Pam and Mary Ann's pictures, her two daughters, and her cats that she loved as her children.

Richardson's home burned due to a



Jackie Richardson's cats were all okay, except "Smut," who had to have some oxygen due to the smoke. Smut has been with her for six years, since he was a kitten and was found at the salvage yard.

faulty power strip in her bedroom into which a lamp and answering machine were plugged. Her smoke detectors had sounded and she did have a fire extinguisher in her home.

"Thank the Lord my whole house wasn't gone, and my cats were fine," Richardson said. "I miss my home and a part of me feels empty now, but I do have a place to come back to once the cleaning and restoration is complete in May."

Richardson noted that people have been very nice, kind and thoughtful during this entire process, and she is so thankful that her lifetime friend, Cathy Sheppard, who has been like her sister, has helped her through this ordeal. The American Red Cross provided clothes and a lot of help, along with the Marlboro Electric Operation Round-up and WIRE organizations.

### Gaining respect

Jeffrey Locklear, another Marlboro Electric member and a law enforcement officer for 26 years, felt the love from Marlboro Electric's Operation Round-up, MEC's WIRE (Women Involved in Rural Electrification), family, friends and complete strangers in Bennettsville, McColl and Laurinburg when he lost everything two weeks before Christmas in 2003.



Marlboro Electric co-op member Jeffrey Locklear lost his mobile home in 2003 due to an electrical fire thought to have started from the stove in his kitchen.

His 1970 mobile home burned due to an electrical fire thought to have started from the stove in his kitchen, and due to the age of the mobile home, he had very little insurance.

"Lord, what do I do now?" Locklear remembers the feeling of helplessness and tears he had that afternoon. "Papa, what are we going to do about Christmas?" asked Locklear's 4-year old granddaughter who lives with him along with his daughter who was expecting her second child at the time. Locklear answered that they were still going to have Christmas. It was the first year he had put up a Christmas tree, and his last.

Locklear slept on his mother's floor for over two months, giving the extra bed to his daughter and granddaughter, until February when he found another mobile home. The mobile home dealer in Laurel Hill, N.C., noted to Locklear that he was the



Jackie Richardson is grateful that the tea set given to her by her mother for Christmas when she was 5 years old was not damaged during the fire. By chance, she had moved the tea set from her bedroom where the fire began to a spare room a few days prior to the fire. Her tea set, along with memories, aren't replaceable for Richardson.

Odom, Marlboro Electric's customer service supervisor, concerning a higher than usual electric bill, just over an hour before he received notice his house was on fire. Odom had advised Locklear about electrical usage, weatherizing his home, being conservative, having a professional electrician check the wiring, and unplugging unused appliances, even for safety reasons.

"I joke now about how I won't be complaining about my light bill any more, but I gained a different respect for electricity usage, fire safety measures, and Marlboro Electric Cooperative," Locklear said.

Advice from Locklear includes making sure smoke detectors work, replace the batteries in smoke detectors, have more than one smoke detector in your home, check appliances before leaving home, unplug and replace appliances when you notice a problem.



David Saveranzo of SERVPRO in Florence has been tearing everything out of Jackie Richardson's mobile home, spraying an odor-blocking agent, reinsulating the home, replacing sheet rock, etc. SERVPRO specializes in the cleanup and restoration of property after a fire, smoke or water damage situation.

"We were lucky because my daughter had been called into work about an hour before the fire," Locklear said. "Don't take chances because it could be too late, and you could lose a family member." ☺

third one that week to have lost their home to a fire.

"Your life is never the same after your home burns...it does something to you," Locklear notes. "Every time someone's home burns, you can relate to what they are going through and it brings back a bad memory."

Locklear had visited with Michelle

## Stay safe all year long

WHEN A LIGHT goes out, it's hard not to notice the bulb needs to be replaced, but how can you tell if your power outlets are working properly? You don't want an electrical fire to serve as your wake-up call.

May is National Electrical Safety Month, a time when Marlboro Electric and other cooperatives educate consumers on ways to stay safe at home, but safety awareness shouldn't stop on May 31.

Here are some simple steps to keep your appliances, outlets and alarms working all year long!

### Clean cold coils

Refrigerators are one of the highest energy-consuming products in your home. In fact, if your current refrigerator was made before 1993, it uses twice the amount of energy used by new models.

Vacuum the coils every three months to eliminate dirt buildup that reduces efficiency and creates fire hazards. To clean condenser coils:

- ▶ **Step 1:** Unplug the refrigerator.
- ▶ **Step 2:** Pull or unscrew the vent plate that protects the coils.
- ▶ **Step 3:** Clean the coils with a vacuum hose, using a brush to wipe off dust you can see.

### Clean air = safe air

Air conditioners need to be cleaned at the beginning of every season to keep them running safely and efficiently. To clean your air conditioner:

- ▶ **Step 1:** Shut off power to the unit and remove the filter cover.
- ▶ **Step 2:** Use a vacuum extension brush on either the coils or the visible air fins.
- ▶ **Step 3:** Pull out the filter and clean or replace according to the instructions in the manual.
- ▶ **Step 4:** Outside, clear leaves and debris away from the condensing unit. Hose off dirt.

### Smoke alarms

On average, eight people die in a home fire each day in the United States, nearly 3,000 fatalities every year. Roughly two-thirds of these deaths occur in homes without working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms save lives by providing early warning of fire. Newer smoke alarm recommendations and technologies provide greater levels of protection than ever before.

Smoke alarms should be installed in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home.

Test smoke alarms monthly by pushing the TEST button or using other procedures recommended by the manufacturer. Smoke alarm batteries should be changed at least once a year. If an alarm "chirps" or "beeps" to indicate low batteries, change them right away. Replace all smoke alarms at least every 10 years.

Learn more about home electrical safety by visiting ESFI's Virtual Home at [VirtualHome.esfi.org](http://VirtualHome.esfi.org).

### Outlet serves as fail-safe

Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) are designed to protect people from electrical shock and electrocution.

A GFCI constantly monitors electricity flowing in a circuit. If it senses any loss of current, it quickly switches off power to that circuit.

GFCIs can be installed at the main service panel or in place of ordinary outlets. Typically, GFCIs are installed in areas where water and electricity mix, such as a bathroom, garage, kitchen or basement.

Sources: Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers, Electrical Safety Foundation International



Ted Oxendine, who has worked 13 years for BFPE, checks fire extinguishers at Marlboro Electric and on the work trucks on a routine basis to make sure they are functioning properly.

# Better rules for broken bulbs

**IF YOU REGISTERED** at Marlboro Electric's 70th Annual Meeting in April, then you received two compact fluorescent lamps/light bulbs (CFLs) as a token of appreciation for attending.

As an energy-savvy member, equipping five of a home's most frequently used light fixtures with CFLs can save a family about \$70 a year in lighting costs. But what should you do when a CFL breaks?

CFLs are made of glass tubing containing about 4 milligrams of mercury. Although this isn't much—classic thermometers contain 500 milligrams of mercury—consumers should still take precautions if a CFL breaks, since mercury vapors may pose possible health risks. In December, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) updated the guidelines for cleaning up a broken CFL.

The revised guidelines break the process into three steps: what to do before cleanup, during cleanup

and after cleanup.

"We've split the detailed guidance into sections for cleanup on hard surfaces and on carpeting," stresses Richard Yost, an EPA spokesperson. "This will aid consumers who only want the cleanup steps that address their particular situation."

The amount of time EPA recommends waiting before cleaning up a broken bulb has been cut from 15 minutes to 5-10 minutes.

"The results from a 2008 study conducted by Maine on mercury exposure from broken bulbs showed mercury release peaks within the first 5 minutes of the bulb breaking," explains Yost. "Five to 10 minutes is sufficient time to clear the room, ventilate, and to gather the materials needed to clean up the broken bulb."

EPA also removed recommendations on how to handle clothing, bedding or other soft materials exposed to a broken CFL. "We want to keep focus on



**William Penn, Marlboro Electric's facilities/maintenance employee, demonstrates easy cleanup when a CFL breaks.**

the clean-up steps for the CFL," explains Yost. "Each broken bulb situation is unique. If a consumer has a particular concern, they can contact EPA or their local/state environmental agency for assistance."

The updated guidelines feature a brochure in English and Spanish on

proper handling of CFLs, cleanup procedures and recycling tips that is available at Marlboro Electric or it may be downloaded at [www.epa.gov/cflcleanup](http://www.epa.gov/cflcleanup). To learn more about CFLs, visit [www.epa.gov/cfl](http://www.epa.gov/cfl).

Sources: *Energy Star*, EPA

## Quick guide to cleaning up a broken CFL

The most important steps to reduce exposure to mercury vapor from a broken bulb are:

### Before cleanup

- ▶ Have people and pets leave the room.
- ▶ Air out the room for 5-10 minutes by opening a window or door to the outdoor environment.
- ▶ Shut off the central forced-air heating/air conditioning (H&AC) system, if you have one.
- ▶ Collect materials (stiff paper/cardboard, sticky tape, damp paper towels/wet wipes) needed to clean up broken bulb.

### During cleanup

- ▶ Be thorough in collecting broken glass and visible powder.
- ▶ Place cleanup materials in a sealable container (plastic bag or glass jar).

### After cleanup

- ▶ Promptly place all bulb debris and cleanup materials outdoors in a trash container or protected area until materials can be disposed of properly. Avoid leaving any bulb fragments or cleanup materials indoors.
- ▶ Not all recycling centers may accept broken CFLs and some states may have prohibitions on disposal of debris. Check with your local and/or state household hazardous waste authority for disposal requirements in your area.
- ▶ For several hours, continue to air out the room where the bulb was broken and leave the H&AC system shut off.

For more detailed guidance on cleaning up and safely disposing of a broken CFL, please visit [epa.gov/cflcleanup](http://epa.gov/cflcleanup).

Source: EPA