Idlewild Research Station looks for practical solutions to complex problems
By John Vranic
DEMCO CEO and General Manager

May is recognized as Electrical Safety Month

In today’s highly polarized political environment, it is apparent that there are many diverse opinions of what is best for America.

But there are still some things we all want:
• We all want our power bill to be as low as possible.
• We all want our electricity to stay on all the time without any interruptions.
• We all want to stay safe and free from harm around power lines.

As your member-owned, not-for-profit power provider, we share with you all of these common interests.

These are the very things we work hard to accomplish around the clock on your behalf.

Our mission to deliver safe, reliable, affordable power to your home or business would be made a lot easier if we had more control over the political system, market forces, weather patterns and even animals that sometimes find their way into our equipment and cause outages.

Even though we do all we can to anticipate obstacles before we encounter them, not everything will run as flawlessly as we would like.

It is important to remember safe behavior when around power lines. DEMCO does its best to provide such information to its members.

It was unfortunate that just before the calendar turned to May, the National Electrical Safety Month, word came of another electric cooperative consumer fatality.

In this case a consumer, belonging to an electric co-op serving the south-west region of the state, while attempting to trim trees that were growing close to power lines, was killed instantly when his equipment made contact with an energized conductor.

DEMCO maintains our Right of Way through the use of trained outside contractors. This practice ensures safety for all involved.

Also, in an effort to educate the young of the dangers that electricity poses, we implement programs in elementary schools and youth organizations to bring our message of safety directly into classrooms.

Magician Scott Davis has delivered his entertaining and educational show to tens of thousands of students, bringing to life characters such as “Sparky,” who mystifies the students with his tricks while letting them know that electricity is a tool that can be dangerous if not used properly.

This campaign is just a small part of our overall safety program. From state-of-the-art training fields and employee requirements to answering calls from consumers, we want to make sure everyone has the information they need to stay safe from harm.

In closing, while May is Electrical Safety month, it’s also a time when we are all spending more time outdoors. I encourage you to visit our website at www.demco.org or the Electric Safety Foundation International at www.esfi.org to learn more about how to keep you and your family safe.
DEMCO board representatives re-elected to serve members

Livingston Parish director Danny Berthélot, East Feliciana Parish director Glenn DeLee, East Baton Rouge Parish director Randy Lorio, West Feliciana Parish director Freddy Metz and Tangipahoa Parish director Eugene Traylor will all return to the DEMCO board of directors each for a new three-year term.

All of these board representatives were unopposed in their re-election efforts.

In Livingston Parish, Berthélot was first elected to the board in 1989. He is an independent businessman and alligator farmer. Berthélot also represents DEMCO on the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives (ALEC) board of directors. He is Chairman of the Operations Committee and a member of the Strategic Planning Committee.

Glenn DeLee joined the board in 2010 when he was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Mandy “Amanda” Stroughter. He is a resident of Clinton and for the past 27 years has worked for the state Department of Transportation where he is the project engineer over new construction in East and West Feliciana parishes. He serves on the Purchasing, Rate and Manager’s Evaluation Committees.

Randy Lorio is employed by the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff’s Office and has been a member of the DEMCO board since 1994. He serves as Chairman of the Purchasing Committee as well as the Strategic Planning and Policy Committees.

West Feliciana Parish resident Freddy Metz was re-elected to the board of directors representing district 13. Metz is a member of the board’s Operations, Policy and Strategic Planning Committees.

Eugene Traylor, a native of Tangipahoa Parish, was re-elected to the board for the ninth time having first been elected in 1983. He is a former president of the board and a former ALEC board member. Traylor serves on the Operations and Rate Committees.

DEMCO CEO and General Manager John Vranic stated that due to an unopposed election this year, the members whose interests are represented by these directors have expressed their agreement with a job well done.

Continuing, Vranic said, “DEMCO offers power rates that are among the lowest of any electric utility provider in the state of Louisiana along with service for our valued members that is second to none.”

Each of the directors expressed their gratitude to the members for re-electing them to the board of directors for a three-year term.

Foundation accepting applications for school uniforms

The DEMCO Foundation, a charitable organization established to help DEMCO members in times of need, is now accepting applications to help families who have school-aged children purchase school uniforms for 2016-17.

“Many families find it difficult to make ends meet each month,” says Chanon Johnson, Case Manager for the DEMCO Foundation. “The expense of school uniforms and supplies can place a burden on families with low income.”

The funds available through the DEMCO Foundation can be used in a variety of ways, such as helping members to pay medical or pharmacy bills, providing the resources to make a home handicap accessible or helping to purchase necessities like food and clothing.

Special assistance is also available in times of emergency such as in the aftermath of a hurricane, fire, flood or other natural disaster.

In 2001, the DEMCO Foundation established a new scholarship program designed to help DEMCO members who are seeking to better their lives through education.

The scholarships are valued up to $1,250 each and can be used by students to help pay for school tuition and book fees at any Louisiana college, university or trade school.

“Helping to purchase school uniforms is just another one of the many ways that the DEMCO Foundation provides assistance to DEMCO members and helps make our community a better place to live,” says Johnson.

Established in 1997, the DEMCO Foundation is funded through a program called Operation Round Up® where DEMCO members volunteer to “round up” their monthly electric bills to the nearest dollar.

The overage amount, which averages 50 cents per bill and only $6.00 per year, is then used by the DEMCO Foundation to assist other DEMCO members in their times of need.

To receive an application for assistance provided through the DEMCO Foundation, please call (225) 262-2141, or log on to www.demco.org, click “Community,” “DEMCO Foundation,” then “Application for Assistance.” Applications must be received by July 8, 2016. (Acct. No. 80154630-001)

WARNING: ELECTRIC SHOCK DROWNING HAZARD FOR BOAT OPERATORS

Unknowingly, many swimmers and boat operators place themselves in the face of danger by swimming near electric-powered boats and docks. This innocent act of fun can turn tragic as electric shock drowning occurs each year. Help prevent electric shock drowning or other electrical injuries with these tips from ESFi.

Don't allow anyone to swim near docks or boats.

1. Have Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) installed on your boat. Test them once a month.

2. Keep your boat's electrical system well maintained. Have a certified electrician inspect the electrical system before season.

3. Remember to unplug unused or old electrical equipment. Never use cordless or a wet cord.

4. Never use cordless or a wet cord.

5. Always monitor boat's electrical system and remove overloaded plugs.

6. Always monitor boat's electrical system and remove overloaded plugs.

7. Always monitor boat's electrical system and remove overloaded plugs.

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For more information on boat and marine electrical safety visit: www.esfi.org

May 2016 • ALONG THESE LINES • Page 3
Gone are the herds of emus and ostriches that used to graze around open pastures at the Bob R. Jones-Idlewild Research Station many years ago.

And gone are the sprawling peach orchards that once covered 25 acres of the LSU AgCenter facility located on 1,800 acres south of Clinton.

Emus and peaches were prime subjects of research when Glen Gentry was hired as a research associate at Idlewild back in 1991. But the center has moved on to other projects in order to remain viable and relevant to the public it serves.

Gentry left for a brief period to take on an assignment in north Louisiana several years ago but he returned last year as coordinator of the program.

“Things have changed a lot,” Gentry said. “The economy has changed, markets have changed, the political landscape has changed, our research emphasis has changed. The many projects we have gone on right now reflect the needs of our producers and the problems our stakeholders need us to help them solve.”

A top concern being addressed at Idlewild is the state’s feral hog population estimated at over 500,000 – and growing rapidly. According to Gentry, the hogs are reproducing at an alarming rate and causing all manner of destruction, including wrecking crops, uprooting coniferous and hardwood seedlings, spreading disease, accelerating erosion, damaging levees and accounting for millions in economic losses.

Studies show that a sow can have two litters a year, averaging six piglets per litter. According to Gentry’s calculations, that means 75 percent of the population must be harvested just to keep the hogs in check.

So Gentry and his team are developing and testing a variety of ways to thin the population after more conventional approaches have failed to do the job, such as declaring open season on the animals and allowing recreational hunting and trapping, night hunting, and even running the beasts down with high-powered rifles from helicopters.

“You can’t kill enough of them,” Gentry said. “Their reproduction rate is unbelievably high. Hunting policies have hardly touched the increase in the number of these animals that we have seen.”

Consequently, researchers are working to develop a sodium nitrite bait that can be delivered to the swine without causing damage to other foraging wildlife.

At the research station are several contraptions that are being tested for their effectiveness in isolating the hogs, a variety of machines and devices designed based on the latest technology and research available.

At least one of them utilizes a system of cameras, gates and cell phone technology to ensure the poisonous substance is consumed only by the hogs and not raccoons, deer or other animals.

In addition to the feral hog project, visitors to Idlewild will also see captive herds of cattle along with hundreds of whitetail and redtail deer. These animals are the focus of another research project led by Dr. Lane Foil. The professor has been studying the spread of disease on both captive and wild populations of cattle and deer.

Dr. Foil is focusing his efforts on a disease called Blue Tongue. He explains that when he began his studies at Idlewild in 2012 there was an epidemic of Blue Tongue brought on by a prolonged drought and it devastated deer populations in several regions.

“We were trying to do is figure out which insects transmit these organisms so that we can then figure out how to protect both our wild and domestic ruminants,” Dr. Foil said. “We bleed cattle all the time, so we know what the virus is doing. But the ultimate purpose of our work is to deliver an applied tool for the deer farmers, cattlemen and managers of our wild herds to use.”

Still another area of focus is the chemical and biological control of the giant salvinia species that invades freshwater lakes and waterways throughout Louisiana, causing a wide range of problems with navigation and both recreation and commercial fisheries. Gentry said the biological control project is the largest of its kind in the country.

“The giant salvinia grows astronomically fast and chokes waterways. We have a project using weevils that are released into the salvinia and kill it. The problem is the weevils succumb to winter temperatures, so we’re looking to develop a cold-tolerant weevil.”

The station regularly hosts field days inviting members of the public to learn about the latest developments pertaining to wildlife, cattle and forestry.

The facility is administered through the LSU AgCenter and works with the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and other public and private agencies.

Idlewild is supported by grants, contracts and donations from those who recognize the value of the research projects undertaken there. (Acct. No. 2976009-002)

One organization created to support the facility is the Bob R. Jones Wildlife Research Institute, named after a man who was instrumental in bringing electricity to rural parishes in the 1940s. Gentry said the institute, headed by former DEMCO Board Member Ann Reiley Jones, was formed to provide funding and other support for science-based information for wildlife enthusiasts, private landowners, corporate landowners and others involved in wildlife and habitat management.

Another key supporter is the Pennington Foundation, Gentry added.

In his role as overseer of the 1,800-acre facility, Gentry said visitors often point out that for an outdoorsman he must have the greatest job in the world.

He wholeheartedly agrees with that assessment, then adds, “It’s a great job to have, but then it’s not really about me. It’s about the people we serve, those in both the public and private sectors who benefit from what we do here. We feel we’re making a big impact in learning how to more effectively and economically manage wildlife and habitat. We’re helping people find new ways to help them achieve their goals and save a lot of money for everybody in the process.”
Whether you need reliable protection for your boat and vehicles or extra storage for your backyard, Mueller has the solution. Our pre-designed steel buildings are easy to assemble and available in a variety of sizes. Plus, you get 85 years of experience and expertise built into every structure. Call or visit our website today.

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(877-268-3553)

Size up your storage needs.
MAKE SPACE FOR THE IMPORTANT THINGS.
Energy scammers are on the hunt

A quick search of the Internet reveals many great ways to save energy around your home. Little things, such as adding insulation or using energy efficient bulbs, are simple and relatively inexpensive ways to save small amounts of energy. The same search will also reveal “amazing” products that claim to cut up to a third of your energy bill – without you changing anything about your energy use habits. Claims like this sound too good to be true, and there is good reason. These claims almost always turn out to be exaggerations or downright lies. An energy efficiency scam is easy for a person who works at an electric co-op to spot and identify. However, it isn’t so easy for most people. Scams generally center around misinformation of science or confusion over utility programs. A popular scam these days is a little box that promises to save you energy. The box is a device that supposedly saves energy without the consumer making any changes to behavior, turning anything off or adjusting the thermostat. The people who sell these boxes often claim outrageous energy savings — sometimes as much as 30 percent or more. They often use terms, such as power conditioning, capacitors and power factor, all of which are legitimate industry terms. The sales pitch usually goes something like this: The device being sold will control alternating current, power factor and reduce the cost of electric bills. It will condition your power and make appliances last longer. The device uses no power and has no moving parts. It will make the motors in your home run better. (Acct. No. 5577501-011)

The sales material often claims that the utility does not want you to know about the device. That last part is actually true – because it is a rip off. Variations of the product have been sold to both residential and commercial customers. There are several questions that you should ask a salesman (or yourself!) when reading an ad for the next magical cure-all:

1. Does it violate the laws of science? Some products claim that they are capable of “changing the molecular structure … to release never-before tapped power.” Changing the laws of science is no easy task. If the inventors truly can do this, the product will surely be sold at every store in the nation, and they will become very wealthy. They won’t be mailing out flyers or operating from a poorly designed web site.

2. Was the product tested by an independent group like a national lab or university? If the performance of the product was not tested and certified by a lab or other entity not connected to the company selling it, then be skeptical. Call the third party group and talk to them. Sometimes scammers lie about the tests.

3. Is it too good to be true? In today’s economic times, saving money is top of mind. We want something to be true so that we can save money, improve our lives and feed our families. But wanting something to work doesn’t mean it will.

Sometimes scammers contact consumers directly, either by calling or stopping by and claiming they represent the local electric cooperative.

Never give anyone personal or financial information who claims to be a co-op employee without confirming their identity. Ask for a call back number, then verify their identity with your co-op.

DEMCO Foundation accepts scholarship applications for fall 2016

In 1997, DEMCO established the DEMCO Foundation, a charitable organization dedicated to assisting DEMCO members in need. Since its inception the Foundation has provided assistance in many ways and has impacted the lives of families and individuals throughout DEMCO’s seven-parish service area.

As part of its continuing mission, the Foundation initiated a scholarship program.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the DEMCO Foundation Scholarship Program is to provide assistance to DEMCO members who are seeking to better themselves through attending a university, trade school, vocational or technical schools, community college and/or other forms of educational programs in the state of Louisiana.

TERMS

The deadline for scholarship applications is the third Thursday in June for the Fall Semester and the third Thursday in December for the Spring Semester. The DEMCO Foundation will award several scholarships in the amount of $1,250.00. The number of scholarships awarded will be determined after all scholarship applications are received. Funds are to be used for payment of educational expenses such as tuition, books, and fees. Payment of scholarships will be made directly to the applicant’s school of attendance.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

• Applicant must be a DEMCO member, as defined by DEMCO Foundation Bylaws (see definition below).
• Applicant must possess a high school diploma or equivalent.
• Applicant must plan to attend a trade school, vocational or technical school, community college or other such Louisiana institution.
• Applicant must submit a completed DEMCO Foundation Scholarship Application and all supporting documentation to the DEMCO Foundation office. The application package should include the following:
  - an official transcript including the most recently completed coursework
  - a 2.5 cumulative GPA on an overall 4.0 scale
  - a minimum of three (3) letters of recommendation of which none can be from a family member, DEMCO board member or DEMCO Foundation board member.
  - an acceptance letter from the school of choice for first time or transferring students
  - a cover letter by the applicant detailing reasons for consideration

SCHOLARSHIP LIMITATION

Recipients are eligible to apply for a maximum lifetime scholarship award of four (4) semesters per individual.

Excerpt from ARTICLE II, DEMCO Foundation Bylaws

Definition of DEMCO Member: “For the purposes of these Articles of Incorporation, DEMCO members are defined as those individuals who are members of Dixie Electric Member-ship Corporation and the members of their immediate family. Members of the immediate family shall mean those natural persons regularly residing in the member’s home which is served by DEMCO.”
In Honor of Those Who Have Protected Our Freedom

Join us in observing Memorial Day on Monday, May 30, as DEMCO salutes those men and women who have fought and died for our freedom.

Have a safe and happy Memorial Day!

You may be in a special flood hazard area.

Forty-two percent of East Baton Rouge Parish has a potential of being flooded, 70 percent in Ascension Parish, and 75 percent in Livingston Parish.


Here are some things you can do to protect your family and property from flooding:

Buy flood insurance. Even if you’re not in the mapped floodplain, you may be subject to local drainage flooding. In either case, flood insurance can be a good investment because homeowners’ insurance policies do not cover damage from flooding. To find out more about flood insurance contact your property insurance agent to see what policy is right for you. Don’t wait for the next flood.

Do not walk or drive through flood waters. Currents are deceptive; six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. Do not drive around barriers, as the road or bridges may be washed out. Do not drive around barriers, as they are deceptive; six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet.

Prepare for an emergency can reduce the possibility of personal injury, loss of life and damage to property. Know your flood warning signals, create an emergency plan, and prepare a disaster supply kit. To find out more information on flood warnings and emergency preparedness; contact your local Emergency Preparedness office.

Talk to us about protecting your house or business. You can protect your home or business from drainage and flooding problems by modifying your building to minimize flood damage. Where flooding is shallow, measures such as small floodwalls, regrading the yard, and floodproofing the wall or utilities can be relatively inexpensive. Where flooding is deep you may need to elevate your building. For more information on flood proofing your building there are publications in the Public Libraries or you can call at the city’s floodplain management office.

Check with the Building Department before you build, alter, regrade or fill your property. A permit is required for any type of development including new construction, substantial improvements, placement of fill, paving or excavation to ensure that a project is compliant with all regulations. These regulations are designed to protect your property from flood damage and to make sure you don’t cause a drainage problem for neighbors. To find out how to get a permit, contact your Permit Office. Also Elevation Certificates for newly built structures are available at your Permit Office.

Don’t pour oil, grease, pesticides or other pollutants down storm drains or into the ditches and streams. Our streams and wetlands help moderate flooding and are habitat for fish and other wild life that provides us with recreation or food. Let’s protect them and their homes.

The city has an ordinance that makes it illegal to dump debris in streams channels and drainage systems. You must utilize storm water protection/ Erosion Control when building, keeping building debris and pollutants out of the storm drains. The city also has a drainage maintenance program which can remove blockages from a drainage ditch or stream such as downed trees and branches. To report problems call the Department of Public Works.

Check before you buy. Before you commit yourself to buying property, do the following:

Ask the real estate agent or your city floodplain management office if it is in the flood zone and requires flood insurance; ask the seller or neighbors if it has ever flooded or if it is subject to other hazards, such as sewer backups or subsidence. Talk to the building department about the building and zoning regulations. In accordance with City ordinance 7210 every transfer of land or building are required to provide a flood hazard disclosure statement to prospective buyers.

Contacts for flood information in your area:

- EBR Parish (225) 899-3196 www.br.gov.com
- City of Baker (225) 778-0850 www.cityofbakerla.com
- City of Zachary (225) 654-1935 www.cityofzachary.org
- City of Central (225) 975-1563 www.central-la.gov
- Ascension Parish (225) 621-5730 www.ascensionparish.net
- City of Gonzales (225) 647-9570 www.gonzalesla.com
- Town of Sorrento (225) 675-5337 www.ascensionparish.net
- Denham Springs (225) 667-8327 www.denhamsprings.us
- Town of Walker (225) 665-8893 www.walker.la.us
- French Settlement (225) 689-6100 www.central-paris-la.gov
- East Feliciana Parish 2(225) 635-3864 www.woffourag.org
- St. Helena Parish (225) 222-3266
- St. Tammany Parish (985) 898-2532 www.stgov.org
- Tangipahoa Parish (985) 542-2117 www.tangipahoa.org

May 2016 • ALONG THESE LINES • Page 7
I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank the good folks at Cub Cadet for drastically improving my quality of life.

May God grant eternal favor upon those kind souls who manufactured my brand new canary yellow Cub Cadet XT1 Enduro and shipped it to the local Home Depot store where I gladly forked over $1,500 – and got my life back.

After decades of walking behind lawnmowers, monotonously whacking blades of grass in 22-inch swaths, I’m now riding on top of one and getting back one hour of my time per week. It’s like experiencing the joy of springing forward for daylight saving time every single week.

It’s a thing of beauty, but it didn’t come without considerable thought.

Living on a standard-issue subdivision lot, it has always been hard to justify spending scads of money on a riding lawnmower with all the other family expenses taking precedence.

Plus, there were always good reasons to keep on walking behind my trusty Briggs and Stratton. That money could go to use for better things such as - I don’t know – food maybe. Besides, push-mowers provide more exercise, which is a good thing, I concluded.

But after cutting grass all summer long, even my December Cadet – thanks El Nino – I decided to rummage through my house and turn over the seat cushions to drag up some dough.

At first, I figured selling my wife on the idea would take some work. If there’s $1,500 floating around somewhere, she’s got her sights set on all sorts of new furnishings. But she needed no convincing at all. She grew up on a farm in central Louisiana and is used to being around machinery. She also knows that farmers ain’t so dumb – they’re good about getting the right machine for the job, no matter how much they have to borrow.

So with my base of support in place and a wheelbarrow full of rolled quarters ready to go, all I had to do was poke around and figure out how to get the best mower for the money.

The search began when most such searches begin, with John Deere. This choice had a bit of sentimentality attached to it. When my son was 3, he went through a phase where he was set on one day owning a farm and siring five kids, the first of whom would be named Jamal.

Eight years later, he still remembers the moment he received his battery operated, ride-on, deep green John Deere tractor - complete with a functioning front-loader and wagon - for his birthday. As the event was winding down, it’ didn’t long for John Deere to be eliminated from the mix. I made another round of seat cushions and bottom drawers, and even scoured the glove box in my car but couldn’t even come up with enough to pay the “clean penny” sales tax increase to the attic with the John Deere lamp that was the last vestige of his farmer phase, I entered the market for a riding lawnmower. (Acct. No. 80098860-001)

For the time being, he’s firmly entrenched in his baseball phase and pretty oblivious to lawn equipment. When I told him I was looking at buying a riding lawnmower, the first thing he wanted to know was if he could race it like the characters on Duck Dynasty.

He vividly recalls an episode in which one of the boys gets his fill of an old childhood rival and decides to challenge him to a lawnmower race. Enough hilarity ensued that pretty much every member of my family can recite the dialogue by memory several years later.

I told him there would be no lawnmower races. What I didn’t tell him is that he’s soon about to start taking some laps around the yard, all right, only it won’t be called a race. It’ll be called work. Besides that, he’s going to need a crash course and my Cub Cadet and I will introduce him to a lawnmower race. Enough hilarity ensued that pretty much every member of my family can recite the dialogue by memory several years later.

But there are some things the Cub Cadet can’t do. Not even a John Deere can do a decent job on power lines. When I was backtracking to Home Depot, first, because the thing wouldn’t kick into reverse, and two, because when I went to consult the manual I realized they had given me the manual to a Cub Cadet garden tiller.

My face turned International Harvester red when the garden manager cited operator error in explaining why the mower wouldn’t run in reverse. He instructed me to mash a separate knob on the floorboard after turning the ignition key to reverse mode. Ha. Ha. Sure, that’s it. I knew that. Um, I was just there to return that manual. I didn’t know you had to be a dang engineer to cut your grass, but I received my orientation crash course and my Cub Cadet and I are like boon companions.

Make the Most Of Your Ceiling Fan

If you are like most Americans, you have at least one ceiling fan in your home. Ceiling fans help our indoor life feel more comfortable. They are a decorative addition to our homes and, if used properly, can help lower energy costs.

1. Flip the switch – Most ceiling fans have a switch near the blades. In warm months, flip the switch so that the blades operate in a counter clockwise direction, effectively producing a “wind chill” effect. Fans make the air near them feel cooler than it actually is. In winter, move the switch so the fan blades rotate clockwise, creating a gentle updraft. This pushes warm air down from the ceiling into occupied areas of the room. Regardless of the season, try operating the fan on its lowest setting.

2. Adjust Your Thermostat – In the summer, when using a fan in conjunction with an air conditioner, or instead of it, you can turn your thermostat up three to five degrees without any reduction in comfort. This saves money since a fan is less costly to run than an air conditioner.

3. Choose the right size – Make sure your ceiling fan is the right size for the room. A fan that is 36-44 inches in diameter will cool rooms up to 225 square feet. A fan that is 52 inches or more should be used to cool a larger space.

4. Turn it off – When the room is unoccupied, turn the fan off. Fans are intended to cool people – not rooms.

Smarter Meters Reduce Outage Time

Better technology has been making your electricity more reliable with every passing year.

But longstanding troublemakers from lightning to squirrels still knock our lights out occasionally.

In the last few years, less expensive and more sophisticated meters and monitoring systems can detect outages faster than ever. The amount of time a typical cooperative consumer is without power during a year is down to less than two hours, according to a benchmarking report from the Institute for Electrical and Electronics Engineers. That’s a 20 percent decline from 2011 to 2014, the latest year in the study.

Some causes of power outages are hard to eliminate. Those include lightning strikes, equipment failure, trees falling and receiving an assurance from the clerk at Home Depot that she NEVER sees any yellow riding lawnmowers being returned by dissatisfied customers, I settled on the Cub Cadet.

I noted the irony of the clerk’s comment as I was heading back to the store with my Cub Cadet after the machine took its maiden voyage around my yard. I was backtracking to Home Depot, first, because the thing wouldn’t kick into reverse, and two, because when I went to consult the manual I realized they had given me the manual to a Cub Cadet garden tiller.

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DEMCO offers scholarships to area students

One-year scholarships to students attending a Louisiana public college or university will be awarded in a random drawing highlighting DEMCO’s annual membership meeting on May 14, 2016. According to David Latona, Manager of Member and Public Relations, several scholarships will be awarded. “We will determine the number of scholarships awarded after the random drawing. How many students receive assistance will depend on whether the winners receive assistance through Louisiana’s TOPS program,” he said.

The scholarships awarded by DEMCO provide full academic tuition to a Louisiana public college or university for both the fall and spring semesters of the academic year provided the student is not enrolled in the Tuition Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) program. Students eligible for the TOPS award or other scholarship assistance receive a $1,000 cash award to be used by the student as needed.

DEMCO is allowed to use unclaimed deposits, refunds and other monies owed to former members to provide funding for the scholarship program. Complete eligibility requirements are listed below.

2016 Scholarship eligibility requirements

1. Applicant must be a DEMCO member, child or the legal ward of a DEMCO member who has been a member in good standing for at least 12 consecutive months as of the application deadline, May 6, 2016. Only one scholarship will be awarded per family per academic year.

2. A student can receive the DEMCO scholarship one time. It is not renewable. The term of the scholarship will be for one continuous academic year beginning with the fall semester (or quarter). The scholarship does not include summer sessions.

3. The scholarship money can be used by an undergraduate student to attend, on a full-time basis, any Louisiana PUBLIC university. The scholarship will not be awarded to a student attending a private university or vocational/trade school of any kind.

4. A first-time college student applying for the DEMCO scholarship must: a) have graduated from high school with at least a B average (3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale, or the equivalent); or, b) have graduated from high school and received a minimum ACT score of 21. High school applicants must be seniors.

5. An undergraduate college student seeking the scholarship must have achieved a minimum of 2.5 (on a 4.0 GPA scale) on all prior college work.

6. A scholarship application must be completed and returned to DEMCO.

7. Scholarship recipients will be chosen in a random drawing at the annual meeting of the DEMCO members.

8. The scholarship recipients will be required to provide DEMCO with an official transcript verifying his/her eligibility within 10 days after the drawing.

9. The scholarship funds will be paid to the recipients at the beginning of each semester (or quarter) upon presentation of an official receipt for the payment of full-time undergraduate tuition (see No. 10 below). To receive the second semester (or quarter) payment, the student must provide evidence that he/she successfully completed at least 12 semester hours (or 9 quarter hours) and that he/she maintained a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale).

10. The scholarship provides full tuition to students who DO NOT participate in Louisiana’s TOPS program or receive other scholarship assistance. Students who participate in Louisiana’s TOPS program, or receive other scholarship assistance, receive a limited scholarship award of $1,000 per semester.

11. Members of the DEMCO Board, employees of DEMCO (including part time employees, students, and temporary employees) and children of the Board of Directors and employees are not eligible for this scholarship.

Application for Scholarship Program

Student Name: ____________________________

Parents Name: __________________________

Address: __________________________ City: ____________

E-mail Address: __________________________

Telephone: __________________________ Cell: __________________________

DEMCO Account #: __________________________

Do you qualify for TOPS Assistance? Yes ___ No ___

College you will attend: __________________________

(Complete this form and return to DEMCO by May 6, 2016, 4:30 p.m.)
Whole house energy monitoring offers a real opportunity to learn how your home uses electricity and to teach everyone in your family about what uses watts.

There are two primary ways in which whole house energy monitors get their data. The first is to have a sensor you mount on your electric meter. However, with this type of monitor, sensors are hard to align and Mother Nature can knock them out of alignment later down the road.

The second and most preferred option uses current transducers (CTs) placed around the big wires that feed into your electric panel. The clips are easy to install and are out of the way. These connect to a transmitter that sends the information to your system’s monitor.

A caution here; if you are uncomfortable taking the cover off your electric panel, ask an electrician or knowledgeable acquaintance to handle this part for you.

After the transmitter is in place and sending data, you can program the monitor with a variety of information. From there, the unit presents data in a predetermined format.

These systems can help you learn how your home uses energy. Step one is to determine the base load of your home. Base load is a utility term that means the lowest power consumption possible with only essential items using electricity.

The typical home today should have a base load between 600 – 700 watts. This is your refrigerator, freezer, fans and other equipment. The best time to find this information is late at night.

Why is this useful? You want to start identifying how much different items in your home add to your electric use. Going below your base load means turning off something you probably shouldn’t.

Here is a fun test. Turn everything possible off to get to the base load. Now, start turning on appliances, lights and so forth. Note how much each uses. Over time, you can look at the display and know what’s running. Use this data to educate your family.

Kids won’t turn off their game console or television? Show them the monitor, have them turn their stuff off and let them see the difference. Then offer to deduct the cost from their allowance. Or, offer to split the savings. Choose what is right for your family.

Knowing the cost of each item makes you really think before you start using something.
HONORING THOSE WHO GAVE ALL

MEMORIAL DAY

Replace the missing words.

The last Monday in May was chosen for the holiday since this is the time that most flowers are in bloom. In many places, flowers are used to decorate the graves of fallen service men and women. In other cemeteries, American flags are placed on gravesites.

Memorial Day should not be confused with Veterans Day. Memorial Day is a day to honor and honor those who died while serving their country. Veterans Day celebrates those who served in the armed forces.

On Memorial Day, the U.S. flag is to full staff and then lowered to half-staff, where it will remain until noon. It is raised at to show that the sacrifice of lives was not in vain and that we will continue to fight for liberty and justice for all.

Memorial Day should be observed:

- by visiting cemeteries and placing flags or flowers on the graves of our fallen heroes
- by visiting memorials
- by flying the US Flag at half-staff until noon
- by flying the POW/MIA Flag to honor soldiers who are Prisoners Of War or Missing In Action

USS Arizona Memorial

The USS Arizona Memorial is the final resting place for many of the ship’s 1,177 crewmen who lost their lives on Dec. 7, 1941. The 184-foot-long Memorial structure is above the mid-portion of the sunken battleship which still rests below the water’s surface. The names of those killed are engraved on a marble wall.

**How will you and your family observe Memorial Day?**

Draw and color the American flag here.

**Kid Scoop Puzzler**

Do you see four American flags here? Look again. Only one of them is correct – the other three each have something missing or in the wrong place. Which one is the real deal?

**Double Word Search**

Find the words in the puzzle. Then look for each word in this week’s Kid Scoop stories and activities.

- SACRIFICE
- MEMORIAL
- FLAGPOLE
- ARIZONA
- SERVICE
- WREATH
- SUMMER
- MARBLE
- HONOR
- LIVES
- STAFF
- VAIN
- TOMB
- SHIP
- LOST

**PUZZLING PICNIC**

Memorial Day weekend is seen as the start of the summer vacation season. Many people spend the weekend outdoors enjoying barbecues and picnics.

Write the name of each picnic food shown in the correct boxes on this picnic blanket.

**Design a Memorial Day Flag!**

Use pictures and words cut from the newspaper to design your own Memorial Day flag. Display your flag in your classroom or in a window at home.

**Write On!**

A Grateful Nation

Many men and women have given their lives to protect our freedom. Write about what this means to you.
We average your yearly energy bill, and you pay approximately the same amount each month. Sign up at demco.org today.

Through its Operation Roundup program, the DEMCO Foundation has dispersed over $4 million in assistance to DEMCO members in their times of need.