I’ve never been a huge soap opera fan, but there is one that has an introduction that I believe resonates with everyone who hears it. “Like sands through the hourglass, so are the days of our lives.” The sand in the hourglass marking time for the 2007 Annual Meeting of Members seems to run through at the speed of light.

The Annual Meeting of Members is a vital part of our operations, and it is a tremendous advantage to each of our member/owners. It gives you an opportunity to participate in the way your Cooperative is run by electing representatives you believe will best represent you on our board of trustees.

Annual Meeting gives all of us at Horry Electric an opportunity to make direct contact with our member/owners. We’re able to update you on what we’ve been doing for the past year and give you an idea of where we’re heading.

You don’t mess with success

We had the biggest turnout for the Annual Meeting and the most positive comments about the event that we’ve ever had in the history of Horry Electric. I’m a firm believer in not messing with success. If it’s not broken, don’t fix it.

The Health Fair is once again being coordinated by Loris HealthCare Systems and our own WIRE (Women Involved in Rural Electrification) chapter. A complete listing of the health screenings and information that will be available will be provided in materials that will be sent to you a little closer to the date of the Annual Meeting. I’ve seen some of the preliminary plans and can tell you that it promises to be a bigger and better Health Fair this year. Loris HealthCare Systems was very impressed with the turnout last year, and they want it to be an even greater success this year.

I understand from our energy management group that the energy exhibits will be much more engaging this year, with even more energy-efficiency tips for members.

Conway National will be back

Our friends at Conway National Bank had such a good time last year, they’ve already called to let us know they want to do it again. They served around 9,000 hotdogs last year and will be prepared for an even larger crowd this year. For those of you who didn’t attend or who aren’t familiar with what Conway National does for their customer appreciation days; you can count on a real treat if you just take the time to come to your Annual Meeting. They prepare and serve up some of the most delicious hotdogs, complete with all the trimmings, that I think I have ever tasted. They’ll be serving up FREE hotdogs and drinks to all members who come to participate in the Annual Meeting.

They’ll begin serving hotdogs when we open up the doors for registration and voting at noon and will continue serving throughout the day until the beginning of the business meeting.

We are very appreciative of the folks at Conway National and of the catering department and the General Manager of the Sheraton for allowing us to use their facility to provide FREE food to our members/owners. The team working hard to make the Annual Meeting a success is strong.

$25 Credit on bill for participation

If, and only if, you are a member of Horry Electric Cooperative and you come to the Convention Center on May 22, 2007, between the hours of noon and 7 p.m. to register and vote in the trustee election — you will receive a $25 credit on your electric bill as your registration gift.

The purpose of the registration gift is to encourage participation in the Annual Meeting. If you don’t participate, you don’t get it. No exceptions.

Official Notice coming in May

We’ll have further updates for you in next month’s edition of Living in South Carolina Magazine, but all of the details of the meeting will be presented to you as the external wrap of the May edition.

The Official Notice of Annual Meeting will be mailed to you in advance of the meeting, and it will be barcoded with your membership information to help make registration a little easier for everyone. You must bring the registration card we mail and some form of identification with you to the Annual Meeting.

There will be no mistaking the Notice when it hits your mailbox. Our logo and the logos of Conway National, Loris HealthCare Systems and our WIRE group will all be on there. We don’t want it to get mixed in with all of the other mail and perhaps lost before you get a chance to put it somewhere safe to bring with you to the Annual Meeting.
Olde Dawg coming back for more

By Penelope Hinson

Olde Dawg, the band that played at the 2006 Annual Meeting of Members, was a huge hit with the members who attended. I personally don’t think I’ve seen so many people having so much fun at a business meeting. There was a lot of toe-tapping, hand clapping and singing going on among the audience throughout their entire performance and Willie Wiredhand, our official mascot, as well as McGruff the Crime Dog, even got in on the action by doing a little dancing with the kids in attendance.

If you had a chance to see them last year, then you’ll be as excited as we are to know they’ll be back for the 2007 Annual Meeting of Members. If you didn’t get to attend, then you’ll want to go ahead and mark your calendar so you won’t have to miss out on this unique second chance to get in on some real foot-stomping fun. They describe their music as Americana, which is the new buzzword for a genre of music sweeping urban areas across the country. It’s a combination of American music that includes Classic Rock ‘n’ Roll, Southern Rock, Country, Country Rock, Blues, Bluegrass and even Cajun.

Take all of these styles and mix them with the vocal harmonies and virtuoso instrumentation of the five talented members who make up Olde Dawg and, as they put it themselves, “you’re cookin’.”

All five members, Tom Conner, Art ‘Red Dog’ Titus, Skid Row, Steve ‘Catfish’ Ahlquist and George ‘Woof’ Calhoon are seasoned, veteran road warriors.

Tom, former partner of David Wingo and band leader of southern rock group, Drivin’ Wheel, has logged many miles all over the country performing with such acts as Gregg Allman, Wet Willie, Kris Kristofferson, The Bellamy Brothers and a host of others too numerous to list.

Red Dog came south with the Detroit-based rock group, Dust. When the tour was over, Red Dog came back. One of his first endeavors down south was producing Mercury Recording Artists ‘Whiteface’. From this, he met Paul Davis and soon became touring bassist, appearing on such TV shows as American Bandstand and Solid Gold. Just before becoming an Olde Dawg, Red Dog recorded and toured with Cherokee County Line.

Skid Row’s first exposure to music was Cajun. Playing banjo at age 16 with one of Florida’s best-known bluegrass groups, he found himself performing with greats such as Bill Monroe, Josh Graves, Vassar Clements, Keith Whitley and Ricky Skaggs. Later moving to Atlanta, he moved away from bluegrass and began playing country, blues and rock with groups like REEL PEOPLE, The Ron Kimber Band, Teddy Baker and Footloose.

Steve, originally from Long Island, NY, played harmonica and guitar with such bands as New Highway, which included Mike Faverano of Hot Tuna fame. After moving south, he continued to play with many bands including Mudcat, Medicine Man and with Bill Sheffield. He can be heard on numerous audio tracks for TV commercials.

George, with a music education degree from Georgia State University, has performed with artists and bands such as: Turner Network TV Grammy Awards Band, Georgia University Orchestra and Percussion Ensemble, Francie Reed, Percy Sledge, Derek St. Holmes, Ron Kimball Band, Chicago Bob and more. He has been teaching percussion for 25 years at Keynote Music.

What others say about OLDE DA WG...

...these guys can really play!
(Press Release for Snellville Days, Atlanta Journal Constitution & Gwinnett Post)

...Olde Dawg was the only band asked to play for the 25th Dukes of Hazard Reunion (Covington News-Herald)

...plenty of production (lighting & sound) ... some good time barkin’ (Gainesville Times)
Horry Electric Cooperative’s electric safety demonstration, Trouble in Tiny Town, makes a big impact wherever it goes. Chad Mackey, an advanced lineman, ground worker, Brandon Shelley and co-op Safety Coordinator Brian Chestnut brought the safety message to a health fair at Colonial Mall in North Myrtle Beach on January 20.

Loris Healthcare Systems, which presented the popular health fair, and the Tiny Town demonstration will be a part of the Horry Electric annual meeting on Tuesday, May 22, at the Myrtle Beach Convention Center. While blood tests will not be offered at the annual meeting health fair, blood pressure screenings and other information will be available.

Christie Hardee, RN, with Loris Healthcare Systems, gets a blood sample from Horry Electric member Dick Colby at the health fair offered January 20 at Colonial Mall in North Myrtle Beach. Colby and his wife, Pat, co-op members in Little River, both got good results on their blood sugar tests.

The Cole twins’ grandfather, Roy Jarvis of Greenville, NC, tries on a lineman’s safety gloves, with assistance from Chad Mackey, an advanced lineman with Horry Electric Cooperative.
Get unplugged

Even when you’re gone, appliances use energy

By Eddy Blackburn, Marketing Analyst

You may think you’re saving money by making sure you turn everything off before you leave home, but you’re not. Many of the appliances and electronics in our homes are always ‘on’ just by being plugged in to the electric outlet. “You can turn them OFF, but they’re still going to be using electricity as long as they’re plugged in,” says Toni Gore, public relations and marketing assistant for Horry Electric Cooperative.

The list of things in your home that are still ‘on’, even when you have it turned ‘off’ is probably longer than you’d think. “Pretty much anything with a remote control, that has an ‘instant on’ feature or has a clock is going to be using electricity even when you’re not using it and the switch is in the ‘off’ position,” says Gore. Televisions, VCRs, DVD players, stereo systems, clock radios, electric ranges, microwaves, computers and computer monitors fall into at least one of those categories.

“Another thing you might not think about are all those power supplies most of us have plugged in that power or recharge our video games, cordless telephones, cell phones and emergency flashlights,” says Gore.

What can you do?

“You wouldn’t want to do this on a daily basis, but if you’re going to be gone for an extended period of time, it wouldn’t hurt and it will save you a little extra money if you’ll unplug your ‘always on’ appliances or turn off the power source at the breaker,” says Gore. “That’s the only way you’re going to keep them from using energy while you’re away.”

Horry Electric has been providing customers with technology to access energy efficiency information online through our website at www.horryelectric.com for well over a year now. Now, we’ve released a ‘new and improved’ version of the technology that will provide even more accurate and even more detailed information!

The newly enhanced Home Energy Suite™ continues to allow our website visitors to easily see the impact of the weather on their energy use, but this new intuitive interface also allows users the option of viewing charts that break down energy use; system by system. Clicking on a chart and then hovering over the bars will display dollar amounts, representing energy costs broken down by cooling, heating, lighting, cooking, water heating and even big screen TVs.

The ability to run an energy analysis specific to a home’s construction, local weather and utility rates provides valuable data to homeowners, allowing them to make cost-effective energy choices. “The best part of it being on the website is that it’s available to members 24/7, and they don’t have to wait for the office to open to investigate this kind of information and explore their options,” says Eddy Blackburn, marketing analyst and key account executive for the Cooperative.

The Home Energy Suite is run by a sophisticated energy use analysis system developed by APOGEE Interactive, Inc., a software development firm based in Atlanta, Georgia, that specializes in online solutions for the energy industry. They have a strong background in working with cooperatives and Horry Electric is one of more than 200 utilities nationwide that are integrating the new and improved version of the Home Energy Suite into their website.

Members are encouraged to visit www.horryelectric.com and check out the new and improved version of the Home Energy Suite. “Please remember, however,” says Blackburn, “the calculators will provide estimates of energy use costs based on the inputs of the individual. The results are not intended to be extremely accurate, but rather to provide a comparison of various scenarios to help them make decisions about their energy use or any energy improvements they might be thinking about incorporating in their home.”
Saving energy by testing, sealing your home

By Chris Dorsi

If your home has a central heating or cooling system, it probably relies on ductwork to carry conditioned air to each room. If this ductwork is not properly sealed, up to 30 percent of the energy you purchase to operate your heating or cooling system could be wasted by duct leaks. Duct sealing will reduce this loss.

The best way to measure the airtightness of your home’s duct system is by performing a duct-blower test. A duct blower is a portable fan that is used to pressurize the ductwork in your home. It is calibrated to determine the size and location of air leaks, giving guidance to air sealing technicians on where to concentrate their duct sealing efforts. A duct-blower test and subsequent air sealing can be performed by either a building performance contractor or by a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) contractor.

Why should duct testing and sealing be a part of your home improvements? Think of your home’s ductwork as part of the building shell, working in conjunction with ceilings, walls, and floors to keep heat outdoors in summer and indoors in winter. You have probably noticed that even small leaks around your doors and windows cause uncomfortable drafts, perhaps forcing you to adjust your thermostat to keep your home comfortable. Yet these door and window leaks allow only room-temperature air to escape. Your home’s ductwork, on the other hand, carries air that is heated or cooled beyond room temperature. Duct leaks are also pressurized by the system’s fan, increasing the rate at which air is lost through even small gaps. This rapid loss of energy-laden air makes duct leaks more costly than similarly sized leaks in ceilings, walls, and floors.

Duct testing and sealing can improve the comfort and efficiency of your home.

To learn more about how duct sealing can improve the comfort and efficiency of your home, visit the Home Performance with Energy Star Web site: www.energystar.gov/ducts.

Chris Dorsi is a nationally recognized expert on energy-efficiency. For more free energy-saving tips, visit the Saturn Resource Management Web site at www.srmi.biz.

Electrical safety in the neighborhood

When thinking about your home or neighborhood, chances are you will not be thinking about the power lines. It is easy to overlook their presence, as power lines reside high above your roof, can run alongside property lines or near trees. Nevertheless, power lines can pose serious electrical hazards if completely forgotten.

Trees can be a power line’s worst enemy. Strong winds and storms can blow trees over or break branches pulling power lines down from poles or supporting towers. It is possible for the line to remain energized and potentially electrify the tree and nearby objects.

Arcing or flashovers between power lines and trees can also cause potential damage or danger. Additional weight from snow and ice can bend or break tree branches bringing them close enough to power lines to cause an arc or flashover. A voltage surge on a power line from a nearby lightning strike can cause a tree to become “electrified” as well. During warm weather or when power lines are carrying heavy electrical loads, they can heat up and stretch, making the lines longer. Thus, power lines can sag as much as 15 or 20 feet bringing them even closer to trees. The electric current caused by arcing or flashovers between power lines and trees can easily injure or even kill an individual caught nearby. It is important to pay attention to power lines in your neighborhood. Below are some tips to consider for power line safety in your neighborhood:

• Make sure to always look for nearby power lines before you begin to cut down any tree or trim branches. If a tree falls into a power line, contact your local electric co-op.
• Treat all power lines as energized. Never climb or attempt to handle a tree that has a limb caught in a power line. You may not see any visible evidence that the tree is “electrified” or dangerous.

• Make sure to maintain required clearances between equipment and power lines.
• If a fire starts from a fallen power line, notify the fire department and your local electric co-op. Stay away from the site of the electrical hazard. Make sure others stay clear of the line and treat it as energized.
• Do not use water on or near the fallen power line.

In addition to taking the necessary steps to respond to an electrical emergency, you can help stop potential power line problems before they start by practicing these safety measures:

• If you notice anything such as trees or branches that might interfere with power lines or pose a serious threat, inform your local electric co-op.
• If you are planning to plant trees on your property, make sure not to plant them directly under or near power lines.
• Shrubs, hedges and other plants should be kept clear of electric towers and poles.

Source: North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives and NRECA
Pay your electric bill on time, every time — without writing a check!

The Bank Draft Program from Horry Electric Cooperative makes it easier to pay your bill on time and to keep track of drafts. When you sign up for this program, Horry Electric will automatically draft your checking or savings account for the amount of your monthly electric bill. You’ll still receive monthly statements showing kilowatt-hour usage and the amount due, but you won’t have to write a check.

The best part is that you won’t ever have to worry about your payment getting to Horry Electric on time. Your account will not be drafted until the actual due date indicated on your bill. If that date falls on a bank holiday, it will be drafted the following business day. As with writing a check, all you have to do is make sure there is adequate money in your account. Otherwise, it will be processed as a return check and additional charges will be applied.

Simplify your life! Just fill out and send us the form at the bottom of the page. It may take a few days to process your request; so continue to pay your bill until ‘Bank Draft’ appears on it. After that, you’ll never have to remember to write a check to Horry Electric to pay your electric bill again!

If you have any questions about Bank Draft, contact us at 369-2211.