Striking the right balance

I continue to be amazed at the magical and magnificent view I am able to enjoy through the eyes of my little granddaughter, Ellie. As I shared with you last year, she has literally changed my life, and I’m thankful for the opportunity to see things from her point of view.

As she continues to grow, so does my resolve to keep the commitments I made to her last year. Taking the time to explore and see the world through her eyes is a true pleasure. She’ll be full of questions and see the world through her eyes is a reality. Experience is the key, which brings to mind an old saying with which I’m sure many of you are familiar — “those who don’t learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”

Not so long ago

Throughout his term as the thirty-ninth president of the United States, Jimmy Carter advocated energy conservation. In 1977, he convinced the Democratic Congress to create the U.S. Department of Energy and delivered his first of several fireside chats focused on energy.

In spite of his efforts to encourage the American public to avoid it, we were hit square in the face with a full-blown Energy Crisis in 1979. On July 15 of that year, Carter delivered a very straightforward, matter-of-fact appeal to the American people to join him in adapting a new age of limits.

Because we were already in a real crisis, he asked for the authority for mandatory conservation and standby gas rationing. For what he considered to be the good of the country, Carter listed several sacrifices people should make, including eliminating unnecessary trips and setting back thermostats to save fuel. “Every act of energy conservation like this is more than just common sense, I tell you it is patriotism,” Carter said in his speech. “In a nation that was proud of hard work, strong families, close-knit communities and our faith in God, too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns,” he continued.

A fork in the road

We’re not in the exact same position today that we were back then, but we’re close. As a nation, we are at a fork in the road. We can only hope that our representatives make the right decisions for our collective welfare with regard to energy. Our individual welfare is in our own hands.

I’ve often said that while we can’t control the price of electricity, we can each be in the driver’s seat of how much we use in our own homes and places of business. Conservation in the ’70s and ’80s meant doing without. I don’t think we have to resort to that extreme, but there are a lot of things we can do if we become more conscious of conserving the amount of energy we each use.
Research shows lower cost of electricity

Electricity is safe and comfortable and costs less than natural gas, a new study confirms.

The study was conducted by a certified energy management manager with input from energy management specialists with electric cooperatives in South Carolina. Key points include:

- Electric heat pumps can heat homes for about half the cost of natural gas
- The price of residential natural gas has more than doubled in the last 15 years
- New electric heat pumps provide more comfort than ever and have fewer temperature swings than natural gas
- All-electric homes cost less to operate than homes with natural gas appliances.

Study details

Details of the study can be accessed at ecsc.org, a Web site maintained by The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina, Inc. (ECSC), the co-ops’ statewide association. ECSC reports that nearly three out of four co-op consumers in the Palmetto State use electricity for heating their homes. Visitors to ecsc.org can click on the Energy Center and follow a link to a section about “Electricity’s Value.”

This section describes how the researchers arrived at their estimates on heating and cooling costs. They calculated energy use, both electric and natural gas, for a typical 1,900-square-foot home located in Columbia. The calculation used as its standard a heating and cooling system with a seasonal energy efficiency rating (SEER) of 13, a heating season performance factor (HSPF) of 7.7 and an annual fuel utilization efficiency (AFUE) rating of 80%.

The resulting figures are estimates only, researchers note. Actual operating cost will vary based on individual locations, lifestyles, equipment efficiency, and weather conditions.

Energy price trends

Energy rates used for the calculations were $0.095 per kilowatt-hour (kwh) and $1.61 per therm. While prices for all forms of energy have increased, retail electricity costs have been more stable than residential natural gas costs.

In the last 15 years, the price of residential natural gas has more than doubled in South Carolina, according to the federal Energy Information Administration (EIA). The price of residential electric service in South Carolina, meanwhile, has remained relatively stable in the same period. The EIA reports that the average price was 7.19 cents per kwh in 1992, compared to 9.09 cents/kwh in 2006, the most recent year for which information was available.

CFLs available for 3-way switches, recessed fixtures

Energy- and money-saving compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) are available in a number of styles.

If you’re replacing a bulb that’s operating on a dimmer or three-way switch, then look for a compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL) made for this use — otherwise, the CFL will not perform as well nor last as long as it should.

If you’re replacing a bulb in a recessed fixture in your ceiling (also called “recessed can”), select an Energy Star-qualified reflector CFL for this purpose. Note that reflector CFLs may take longer to warm up than a regular CFL, but they will offer bright light and perform better in your recessed fixture.

Choose a bulb that offers the same lumen rating (amount of light) as the light you are replacing.

Select the color that works best for you.

Warmer colors (2700 to 3000 Kelvin) are appropriate for most rooms, but a cooler color (3500 to 6500 Kelvin) may be preferable for task lighting. Cooler color tones are generally referred to as “bright white,” “natural,” or “daylight.”

Replace bulbs where lights are typically left on the longest for maximum energy savings.

Remember to dispose of your CFL responsibly when it burns out, so the small amount of mercury in it may be reclaimed.

Whatever style CFL you choose, make sure it has qualified to meet the Energy Star standards. Energy Star is the federal Department of Energy’s efficiency rating for appliances, electronics and homes.

Source: energystar.gov
Hustle, heart make it happen at Friendship Clinic

Patients thankful for efforts of clinic’s small staff, large team of volunteer health care providers

By Walter Allread

Testimonials for Friendship Medical Clinic & Pharmacy are easy to come by. Just stop by the clinic, located at 1396 Hwy. 544 in Conway, and talk with the patients.

For instance, Clifton Cannon, 63, has been managing his diabetes for almost seven years with assistance from the clinic. “They help me a lot,” says Cannon. “It would probably cost pretty good money to go to a private doctor. Here, they help you. They do a good job.”

A farm laborer, Cannon learned he had diabetes when a mobile health-care team from Conway Hospital visited the Cool Spring Farm Center. The hospital referred him to Friendship Medical Clinic, he said. There, Cannon has learned to manage the disease as well as high blood pressure and high cholesterol. “I feel a whole lot better,” Cannon notes.

Cannon says the clinic has taught him the importance of a proper diet in controlling his diabetes. Unfortunately, that means bypassing a lot of good old-down-home cooking, he says. “I had to give up white rice, white bread … no sweets. You have to drink diet sodas. You can’t eat a lot of starch. You can’t eat potatoes.”

But Cannon says the sacrifices are worth it. “I’m doing all right,” he notes. “You have to take care of that thing [diabetes] because if you don’t, it’ll take you out,” Cannon says. He agrees that diabetes and high blood pressure are like a snake: “It can sneak right up on you right quick.”

A history of helping

The majority of Friendship Medical Clinic & Pharmacy’s patients suffer from diabetes, high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, high cholesterol or arthritis. Diagnosis and management of these chronic diseases keeps adults healthy and employed, clinic officials note. Left untreated or unmanaged, these

Community support vital to free clinic’s success

Friendship Medical Clinic & Pharmacy receives funding from the United Way and is critically dependent on grants, gifts from churches, civic groups, businesses and individuals. Major expenses include the cost of lab work, including blood work, medical procedures such as X-rays, CT scans, mammograms, biopsies. The costs for specialists to read results or see clinic patients is another expense. An ongoing struggle is having funds to purchase diabetic test strips. At least a third of Friendship’s patients are diabetic.

To offset these and other expenses, the clinic will host a fundraiser called Walk With The Docs in January. Details on the event will be announced later. To reserve tickets for the event, or to make a donation to the clinic, call 347-7199 or write to Friendship Medical Clinic, 1396 Hwy. 544, Conway SC 29526.
patients would run a high risk of becoming disabled and unemployable, leaving them dependent on taxpayer support, officials add.

The clinic, begun in 1965, is the oldest free medical clinic in South Carolina, officials say. Its origins are surprising: A group of 10th graders at Myrtle Beach High School formed an organization to work in predominantly black communities. They established prescription services and a clinic card referral system, in which volunteer doctors saw patients in their offices.

The clinic’s name has changed over the years and its mission has expanded, although it remains, surprisingly, the only free clinic in the county. Friendship now provides basic, primary medical care and medications to low-income adults in Horry County who have no access to medical insurance. Clinic officials say more than 95% of its total funding is devoted to program services.

Hustle and heart make it happen. The clinic has only two full-time and three part-time paid staff. Volunteers are an ongoing need, whether they can help two hours a week or two hours a month, says Terri Harris, clinic director. She notes that 65-70 volunteers donated about 2,000 hours of service in 2006 for a total labor value of about $114,222.

The clinic includes a state-licensed pharmacy. The majority of the medications dispensed are secured through patient assistance programs provided by some pharmaceutical companies. Other medications are purchased by the pharmacy when necessary. In 2006, the pharmacy dispensed more than $733,000 worth of medications, calculated at the retail value. In 2005, Harris adds, the pharmacy dispensed medications valued at about $1,040,000. An estimated 500 patients, some of whom make $3 donations, probably pay between $13,000 and $15,000 a year for these medications, she estimates.

Even outdated or otherwise unacceptable medicines are put to use, Harris notes. “We have a couple of doctors who also volunteer in Third World countries,” she says. The clinic donates the medications to these physicians.

Serving local people

The clinic, which receives some funding from the United Way of Horry County, also saves the public money by reducing the number of uninsured people seeking treatment in area emergency rooms, Friendship officials note.

Harris stresses that the clinic is focused on helping local people. “We feel like we’re really here for Horry County residents, not people blowing in and blowing out,” she says. Patient lists are updated regularly.

Disaster just a step a way

The health care providers volunteering at the clinic when Living in South Carolina Magazine visited say the work is rewarding. And, they add, many Horry County residents could all too easily find themselves in need of the clinic’s services.

Dr. Joe Moyer, who was treating Cannon and other patients, volunteers about twice a month. “I enjoy doing it,” says Moyer, an allergist. “This gives me a chance to practice some general medicine as well as my specialty.”

He notes, “Most of the folks here, they work. They just don’t have health insurance.” Unfortunately, he adds, “They have a lot of medical problems.” Clinic officials report that Horry County has more than 28,000 persons not covered by medical insurance.

Down the hall, Registered Nurse Cathy Little was with patient Nettie Jordan, an Horry Electric member who is also receiving help with her diabetes.

Jordan says heart surgery she had in 2005 put her out of work. Her husband is also disabled, she notes.

Little points out that almost anyone could find themselves in a situation like Jordan’s. “We’re all a step away from it,” Little says. “I work for insurance myself.”

Jordan says she wishes she could find a way to help raise money for the clinic. “I could sell candy bars, or whatever,” she says. For now, she is helping by spreading the good word about the clinic. “I tell other people about this place,” she notes. “I could not ask for better people. I love them all here.”

Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc. is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this or any other program or activity.

The person responsible for coordinating the organization’s nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Abigail Lewis, Human Resource Coordinator. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected him or her to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from the organization; or write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC, 20250-9410; or call, toll free, (866) 632-9992 (voice). TDD users can contact USDA through local relay or the Federal relay at (800) 877-8399 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (relay voice users).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.
Horry Electric Cooperative (HEC) and Horry Telephone Cooperative (HTC) joined forces again this year to help kick off October as National Cooperative Month in Horry County. As part of the celebration, the two locally owned cooperatives awarded nearly $4,000 in grants to Horry County teachers who submitted winning suggestions to the new Bright Ideas program. HTC and HEC launched the Bright Ideas program in January with the hopes of providing funding for innovative classroom-based education projects. “Bright Ideas” grants are intended to fund projects outside normal public school funding parameters and can be made available to all disciplines in grades K–12 in Horry County. A school may submit an application, and teachers are limited to one application per year. Both HTC and HEC extend their heartfelt congratulations to the winners of this year’s Bright Ideas awards. They include Michelle Thompson, Media Specialist at Kingston Elementary, who received $1,000; Joanne Rabon, a teacher at Whittemore Park Middle School, who received $950; Vivien Vega-Leon, a Spanish teacher at Forestbrook Middle School, who received $1,000; and Amy Truett, a child development teacher at Pee Dee Elementary, who was awarded $1,000.

Pay your bill online or by phone?

Either way, you’ll have more options in 2008

Our customer service representatives and cashier won’t be accepting credit cards in the office or over the phone after December 31, but that doesn’t mean you won’t be able to use a credit card as a funding source for paying your electric bill.

On the first day of business in 2008, thanks to the secure and reliable payment services of Western Union Speedpay, you’ll be able to use a variety of funding sources to pay your electric bill — by phone or online.

By phone, all you have to do is dial our local number and listen carefully to the greeting for “to pay your bill using your MasterCard, Visa, Discover, checking or savings account, please press ‘two’ and you will be transferred to the automated payment processing attendant.”

When you press option two, your call will be transferred straight to Western Union Speedpay where you’ll be guided step by step through the process. Included in the process is acknowledgement of the $2.95 fee being charged by Speedpay to process the transaction.

To make your payment online, all you have to do is visit horryelectric.com. Here, you actually have two options. You can click on the ‘my account’ icon to access your Horry Electric account information in our system using your account number and PIN or, if you want to simply make a payment and don’t need access to your specific account information, you can simply click on the Western Union Speedpay icon on the payment options page. For both options, you’ll need your account number and accurate validation information.

Once the appropriate information is verified through Western Union Speedpay, you’ll be guided step by step through the process. Acknowledgement of the $2.95 fee being charged by Speedpay to process the transaction is one of the steps included before the transaction is completed.
Save time, don’t wait in line!

Pay your Horry Electric Cooperative bill online or over the phone with

Starting January 2, 2008, you can pay using your Visa, MasterCard or Discover credit or debit card, or your checking or savings account.

2 easy ways to pay:

- Visit horryelectric.com and click on “My Account,”
- Or call (843) 369-2211 and select option 2.

Avoid the lines and make your payment with Speedpay!

Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

horryelectric.com