NEW STATE LAWS that increase the penalties for the theft of copper and other metals will help protect members of Horry Electric Cooperative, the general public and our lineworkers.

The law, which deals with nonferrous metals and the regulation of junkyards and demolishers, contained crucial provisions that benefit our cooperative. Among them was the addition of copper-clad steel wire to the list of regulated metals, the inclusion of damage to personal property in the criminal statute for nonferrous metal theft and the reinstatement of a prohibition of transporting more than 25 pounds of copper or other nonferrous metals without a permit from the local sheriff.

Horry Electric Cooperative worked closely with our sister cooperatives to push for these legislative changes. We were joined by investor-owned electric utilities, Santee Cooper, telephone utilities and the Sheriff’s Association in the effort.

Copper theft was a part of our legislative efforts last year, too. We worked hard to promote new laws that connect the amount of time served for theft of copper and other metals with the amount of damage done during the theft. This proved to be beneficial this past February in a copper theft case at a sister cooperative. Thieves removed wires in a substation, causing voltage regulators to overload, overheat and ignite. The end result was an outage impacting 3,000 members of the cooperative. The copper would have netted thieves only $45, but damages were estimated at more than $40,000.

Cost aside, copper theft endangers lives. The substation thief that caused the outage for 3,000 members narrowly escaped death. The lives of 3,000 members who found themselves in the dark were also put at risk. February temperatures can be brutal. Older members and children are certainly susceptible to wintry weather.

Through this publication and through our efforts to enforce these new laws that further protect our cooperative and you, we are spreading the word about the deadly consequences of copper theft. We need your help with spreading the word and with keeping an eye out on co-op property. If you observe suspicious activity at any of our substations or other facilities, we ask that you immediately contact law enforcement, as well as Horry Electric Cooperative.

Thank you, legislators
The effort on this legislation from the floor of the South Carolina General Assembly was led by Senators Luke A. Rankin, Dist. 33 — Horry County; Paul G. Campbell Jr., Dist. 44 — Berkeley County; Thomas C. Alexander, Dist. 1 — Oconee and Pickens counties and C. Bradley Hutto, Dist. 40 — Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell and Orangeburg counties. They were joined by Rep. William E. (Bill) Sandifer, Dist. 2 — Oconee and Pickens counties.

James P. “Pat” Howle
Executive Vice President/CEO
A display of concern
The ‘green box’ guy has something to say: BACK OFF! (Please!)

BY WALTER ALLREAD

IF YOU’VE BEEN TO HORRY ELECTRIC Cooperative’s annual meeting in the last few years, you’ve seen a lot of fancy displays. The biggest one is HTC’s pre-fab home that’s wired to the gills with high-tech gadgetry.

Next to it, landscaped just as nicely with synthetic pine straw and potted plants, sits a plain green metal box. Nearby is a man at a table with a sign. Every so often, the guy gets up, opens the green box and pokes around inside with a long yellow pole.

People who walk by on the way to or from the free hotdogs sometimes pause there, wondering what it’s all about — and yes, they also wonder: What kind of freebies does he have? Small calendars. Free seed packets. Nothing fancy, nothing big. That is, if you don't consider potentially life-saving safety tidbits “big stuff.”

Keep your distance
The man is Buddy Parker, right-of-way coordinator for Horry Electric. His message is big stuff indeed: Keep your distance. No, not from his display. Parker means keep away from the green boxes, a.k.a. underground transformer covers.

Educating members and the general public about safety around underground service boxes has been a personal mission for Parker for years. His persistence is paying off.

At the meeting this year, for instance, Parker talked with HEC members Barbara and Frederick Coonradt of Longs. As Parker admitted, there’s nothing pretty about an underground transformer cover, but they are an important component in the delivery of electric service to homes and businesses on the co-op’s system.

‘An ugly one’
“Yes, we have an ugly one in our yard,” Barbara told Parker. Like many members, she wanted to know if she could landscape around the green box so it wouldn’t be so noticeable.

Well, yes, Parker explained. But like so many things in life, it’s all about boundaries. The right-of-way clearance boundaries posted on a sticker on the green box, that is. For members’ safety and the safety of co-op crews, that’s four feet on the sides and 10 feet in the front, as Parker’s pamphlet points out.

Even though Barbara didn’t get the answer she wanted, she thanked him and other co-op employees at booths around the meeting, noting that their questions were “thoroughly answered” and “everything we learned made sense!”

Lost in the hubbub, Parker’s low-key display and high-stakes mission quietly continued. He was probably thinking: “Two down, 62,675 members to go!”

Transformers need to be left alone
The green metal box that sits in your yard is an underground electric transformer. Because the transformer is connected to underground powerlines, you should never dig anywhere in your yard without first calling Horry Electric at (843) 369-2211 to find out where the cables are buried.

If you need advice on how to safely beautify the area around your transformer, call Buddy Parker, Horry Electric’s right-of-way coordinator.

Source: “Keep Your Distance” brochure. Download or read a copy at horryelectric.com.
Questions about your bill?
Study it first

WE MAIL OUT thousands of residential electric bills each month. “Bills sent after periods of extreme temperatures can sometimes generate a lot of phone calls coming in to our call center,” says Gail Morton, customer service supervisor for Horry Electric. “We handle those calls on a one-to-one basis, so if call volume is high, you might be on hold for a while.”

Before picking up the phone to call about your bill, take a look at your statement carefully. “Compare the number of kilowatt-hours and the number of days in the billing cycle to the bill for the same month last year. If the number of kilowatt-hours differs by more than 15 or 20 percent, on a daily-use basis, ask yourself a few questions.

1. Has my household grown? A new baby? Children returning from college or moving in because they’ve been impacted by the economy?
2. Did I have houseguests? Were more showers taken? Did I do more laundry? More cooking? Were there more dishes washed than usual?
3. Have I added appliances such as an HDTV, clothes dryer, air conditioner, refrigerator or freezer?
4. Were there many days with unseasonably hot or cold weather?

“If you can’t account for it, give us a call,” says Morton. “We can review your account with you and see if we can help you pinpoint the problem.

“Sometimes there is an easy solution, such as a thermostat being on emergency heat or the heat strips staying on when they shouldn’t,” she continues. “Other times, it might be a leaky water heater.”

Mistakes in billing are rare, but they can happen. “All errors are quickly corrected and a plan of action to prevent a repeat of the same mistake is put in place,” says Morton.

Horry Electric offers a number of helpful tools members can use to sort through an evaluation of the energy they use in their home. “Our Web site offers a free online energy auditing tool, appliance calculators, a ‘do it yourself’ energy audit form you can print out and complete on your own, as well as downloadable versions of our program brochures,” says Morton. Titles include Energy Tips, Energy Guide for Rental Housing, 101 Energy Saving Measures and Operating guide for heat pumps.

For more information, visit horryelectric.com or call your local Horry Electric Cooperative office.
Restoring service after the storm

Goal is to get lights back on ASAP

**RESTORING POWER** after a major outage is an enormous undertaking that involves much more than simply throwing a switch or removing a tree from a line.

The main goal is to safely restore power to the greatest number of members in the shortest time possible. Keep in mind if there is damage to power plants, switchyards or transmission lines, those facilities must be repaired by our power supplier before we can restore your service. Transmission lines seldom fail, but they can be damaged by lightning, ice storms, tornadoes and hurricanes. Tens of thousands of people could be served by a single high-voltage transmission line.

When those facilities are working, problems in your co-op’s electric distribution system can be corrected. Three primary areas of our system must be addressed.

1 — **Substations are repaired first.** A co-op may have several local distribution substations, each serving thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, the local distribution substations are checked first. If the problem can be corrected at the substation level, power may be restored to a large number of people.

2 — **Distribution lines are repaired.** Main distribution supply lines are checked next, if the problem cannot be isolated at the substation. These supply lines carry electricity away from the substation to a group of customers, such as a subdivision. When power is restored at this stage, all consumers served by this supply line could see the lights come on, as long as there is no problem farther down the line.

3 — **Individual services are restored.** The final supply lines, called service lines, carry power from the transformer on utility poles or underground transformers outside houses or other buildings. Line crews fix the remaining outages based on restoring service to the greatest number of consumers.

Sometimes, damage will occur on the service line between your house and the transformer on the nearby pole. This may explain why you have no power when your neighbor does. Your co-op needs to know you have an outage, so a service crew can repair it.

To report a power outage, call PowerTouch, 369-2212.

**If your electric service is damaged**

If there is damage to the equipment where the service drop enters your home, you may need to get an electrician to repair it before the co-op can safely restore your service. The weatherhead, where service lines enter the conduit leading to your home’s electric meter, is the responsibility of the homeowner. So are the conduit and the meter base. The co-op can replace or repair damaged meters or service lines, but if you see damage to your home’s weatherhead, conduit or meter base, contact an electrician immediately to get repairs started.
PowerTouch from Horry Electric Cooperative is the best way to help us get your lights back on even quicker.

This outage management system lets you easily report an outage from your home telephone, or from another location by entering your meter or account number.

**Important:** We MUST have your up-to-date telephone number where you receive service for PowerTouch to work most effectively.

*Please fill out the attached form, mail in with your payment or drop off at your nearest co-op office.*

*Now use PowerTouch to get in touch at 369-2212*

Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

---

**My Up-To-Date Phone Number and Service Address.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Account Name</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Address</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Where You Receive Service – No P.O. Boxes Please)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>ZIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(At This Address)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E-Mail Address</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Co-op Account Number</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Power out? Keep freezer closed

Foul weather is typical this time of year. Frequently, that means power outages. Depending on the severity of the damage, the power could be out for a while.

What about all the butterbeans, corn and okra you worked so hard to put up just last month? “Never fear,” says Eddy Blackburn, marketing analyst for Horry Electric. “A full freezer can keep food cold for at least 24 hours if the door stays closed.”

A half-full freezer will keep food cold from 12 to 24 hours if the door stays closed. Twenty-five pounds of dry ice placed in a 10-cubic-foot freezer will keep foods below freezing for several days.

“You can even unplug your refrigerator when the electricity goes out without speeding the loss of cold air,” says Blackburn. “In fact, it’s a good idea to unplug all of your major appliances during a power outage to prevent damage from a power surge when the lights come back on,” he recommends.

So, what happens if you can’t resist the temptation to check on those butterbeans? “Every time you open the door, you let a little of the freshness-retaining cold air escape,” says Blackburn. “Checking on the things you’re so worried about could end up spoiling them.”

Members save big on prescriptions

Co-op Connections card has real value

Members of Horry Electric Cooperative have already saved nearly $10,000 on prescriptions by using their Co-op Connections discount cards.

“We introduced the program at the Annual Meeting in April and members began receiving their cards in the mail in May,” says Toni Gore, coordinator of the participating business program for Horry Electric. “They obviously began putting the card to use as soon as it arrived,” she continued. “By the end of June, members had filled 701 prescriptions at 62 different pharmacies in our area.”

The Co-op Connections pharmacy discount program offers savings of 10 to 60 percent on prescriptions at some 48,000 locations nationwide, including such giants as Walmart and Walgreens.

Several local pharmacies are also participating.

According to information from Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, co-op members nationwide have racked up $8.6 million in savings.