

### Two New Services Available to Our Members

Check out our website, cecoop.com, for the new SmartHub tab, which will have two new services for you to make your payments easily.

**SmartHub** is the newest release of an easy and convenient site to pay your account balance, get details of your energy usage, compare usage to previous months or years, check for outages in your area, or even report an outage.

In SmartHub, a first-time user needs to “create a New user” by entering your account number, name, and email address. The site will then email a temporary password to the provided email address. Once you are logged in with the temporary password, you will automatically be asked to change your password. You then change it to a password of your choice. Then your account is registered, and next time you go to SmartHub, you just need to log in with your email and chosen password. Please note if you have more than one account, you will need to register each account the first time. If you choose or change the same password for all your accounts, then next time you access SmartHub all of your accounts will display.

**PayNow** is exactly what it says. You don’t have to register your account to make a payment. You just

enter your electric account number and last name, and your balance due for that account will be retrieved and displayed. Then select the large yellow button “PayNow” and you can select how you are going to make your payment, either by card or draft from your checking or savings account.

These programs are also avail-

able for mobile devices, such as your iPad or smartphone. Just go to the App Store and search for SmartHub, then download SmartHub-National Information Solutions Cooperative.

If you have any questions regarding how to access the SmartHub option, please contact our office at 715-267-6188 or 1-800-272-6188. ■



### Youth Leadership Congress Set for July 16–18

Electric cooperatives from across Wisconsin will sponsor local high school students at the 51<sup>st</sup> Youth Leadership Congress (YLC) July 16–18 on the campus of UW–River Falls. The YLC is sponsored by UW–River Falls and Wisconsin electric cooperatives and is designed to develop the next generation of community leaders.

The event will feature leadership seminars led by nationally acclaimed speakers, hands-on activities, team-building exercises, cooperative education, and fun events, all designed to develop and enhance your leadership potential. Clark Electric Cooperative has sponsored students to this event since its inception. We believe in developing the potential of tomorrow’s leaders. The YLC is a fun and educational event, designed by students who were elected by their peers at the previous year’s conference to serve on the WECA Youth Board.

There is no cost to the student for attending the event. Registration and travel expenses will be covered by the cooperative. If you going to be a sophomore or a junior in high school this coming fall and would like to be a sponsored representative for Clark Electric Cooperative, contact your FFA or FBLA advisor. ■

**Never Forget  
Ever Honor**

Clark Electric’s office  
will be closed Monday,  
May 26, in honor of  
Memorial Day.

# Spring is Finally Here!

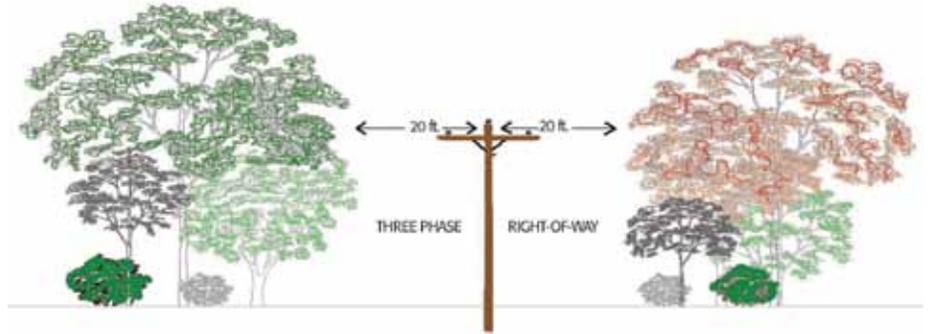
With the winter season in the rear view mirror, the smell of spring in the air, and thoughts of green grass comes the planting season.

As the farmers prepare to take to the fields and the gardeners, landscapers, and arborists sharpen their shovels, we are reminded that spring is a good time to plant trees.

Whether you are planting a single tree in the front yard or several thousand trees to start a plantation, it's important to consider the species of trees and the location in which you plan to plant them. This is especially important if you are planting trees near overhead power lines, says Mike Ruff, director of operations.

Many people plant trees too close to power lines for various reasons. They think that the trees will never get tall enough to grow into the power lines, or they simply forget to look up before they plant them.

The fact is that most trees will



grow tall enough to touch power lines faster than you think. So take time to research your tree selection or consult with your local tree nursery for advice on which trees are appropriate for your landscaping area.

As the trees grow they can come into contact with the power lines and create power outages or momentary interruptions. However, the greatest concern is the safety risk that can be created when children climb trees near power lines. Accidental contact with electrical wires while playing in or

climbing a tree can be fatal.

As we move through the spring season and into summer, please take some time to consider a few things, especially if you plan to plant trees around power lines.

1. Clark Electric Cooperative requires 15 feet of clearance on both sides of the line for single-phase lines and 20 feet on both sides of the line for three-phase line right-of-way.
2. Be sure to plant your trees far enough away from power lines so that when the trees are fully grown, there will still be 20 feet of clearance to the power line without the need for trimming.
3. Remember, if you chose to plant trees in the right-of-way or too close to the right-of-way, your trees may need to be trimmed or cut some day, and that day may come sooner than you think.

If you have trees that appear to be growing into power lines, contact Clark Electric Cooperative at 1-800-272-6188. Never try to prune them yourself. We have skilled professionals trained to safely prune and trim trees for electric line clearance. ■

## Know what's below. Call before you dig.

Do you have some spring projects that involve digging? Call Diggers Hotline at least three working days before doing any digging or excavating to have all underground lines located first.

Dial 811 or 800-242-8511 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Diggers Hotline is a free service.

Visit [call811.com](http://call811.com) for more information.



## Give Your Air Conditioner a Spring Tune-Up

Spring is a good time for maintaining your air conditioner. Chances are you welcomed the cooler temperatures when they arrived last fall and turned off your air-conditioning unit without a lot of thought. Now, before you turn it back on again for the season, you'll want to make sure your unit is clean and ready to work properly and efficiently once the hot weather returns. If you keep the coils of your air conditioner clean, it will improve your comfort and reduce your electricity costs this summer.

Start by inspecting the outdoor condensing unit. The large outdoor coil—it looks like a car radiator—is where heat is dissipated from your home. The fan in the condensing unit has to move a lot of air through the coil, so make sure there are no airflow restrictions around the unit. Cut nearby grass, shrubs, and branches so they are at least 3 feet away at the side and 5 feet away overhead.

Most condenser coils are loaded with pollen and

dust even when you can't see it. The longest a condenser should go without cleaning is two or three years, depending on how much it operates during the summer. If you use your air conditioner for four months or more, annual cleaning is an excellent idea. Turn off the power to the unit and remove any visible grass and lint from the fins and/or louvers with an old hairbrush or whisk broom. Then put on a pair of rubber gloves and spray biodegradable outdoor coil cleaner into the coil. Wait five or 10 minutes and flush the coil with a gentle wash spray.

Your indoor coil might also need cleaning, even though you can't easily see it. If your air conditioner's filter or blower is dirty, then your indoor coil is probably dirty, too. This is usually a job for professionals, unless you have easy access, as with a central heat pump. To help keep your indoor coil clean, make sure your filter fits well, is easy to change, and that you change it regularly. Have your air conditioning contractor make improvements to the filter, if needed, so it is easy to get to. Change the filter often to help keep your indoor air conditioner coil clean and reduce energy consumption.—Source: John Krigger, Saturn Resource Management, [www.residential-energy.com](http://www.residential-energy.com) ■

### Central Air Incentive Program

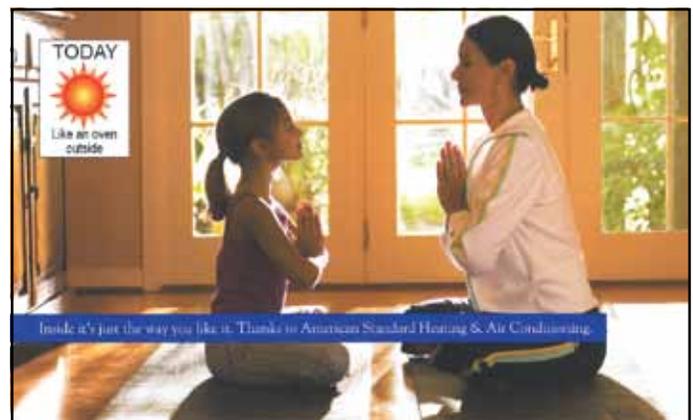
To help reduce the demand for electric power during the summer season, Clark Electric Cooperative offers an Air Conditioner Load Management Program Incentive.

Each central air conditioner (AC) unit being managed during a period of high demand is shut off for approximately 20 minutes and then allowed to resume cooling for 20 minutes. This means they are still cooling about half of the time. Many members say they don't even realize the cooperative is managing the unit because they don't notice any temperature change inside the home.

If you have a central air conditioning unit and it is not part of the load management program, consider trying it for a summer. You will receive a one time \$25.00 bill credit after the load management switch is installed on the AC, and then you will see an \$8 credit on your electric bill for the consumption months of June, July and August.

Call Clark Electric Cooperative at 1-800-272-6188 for questions, or to sign up. Certain restrictions may apply.

**\$8/month credit on your electric bill during the summer cooling season**



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Contact Greg Shaw at:



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# Look Up, Stay Alert During Outdoor Work and Play

As the weather begins to warm up, kids and adults alike will soon head outside to perform winter clean-up and play. Before they do, remind them to look up and be alert for power lines and other electrical hazards, the best way to stay safe from electrocution—and even death.

“Here at Clark Electric Cooperative, using proper procedures and safety measures is a matter of life and death,” explains Mike Ruff, safety coordinator at Clark Electric Cooperative. “We take safety seriously at home, too. Accidents happen, but if we educate ourselves and our children, we can keep them to a minimum.”

## For Kids

- Never fly a kite on a rainy day or anywhere but an open space. A high point in the sky makes a kite a grounding point for lightning, and kites could easily become tangled in power lines.
- Don't climb trees that are near power lines and poles—evergreens can disguise dangers this time of year, as can leaves during late spring and summer.
- Stay far away from power lines lying on the ground. You can't tell if electricity is still flowing through

them. If there's water nearby, don't go in it. Water is the best conductor of electricity.

- Obey signs that say “danger” and “keep out” around large electrical equipment, like substations. These signs aren't warnings; they're commands to keep you safe.
- Never climb a power pole.

**May is  
Electrical Safety  
Month**

## For Adults

- If power lines run through your trees, call Oakdale Electric Cooperative—professional tree trimmers with proper protective equipment can trim branches safely.
- Remember that power lines and other utilities run underground, too. Call 811 to have utility lines marked before you start digging.
- Starting that winter cleanup yard work? Sweep dried leaves and debris from outdoor receptacles.
- If they're not already, consider upgrading your outdoor receptacles—or any outlets that could come in contact with water—to ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). GFCIs immediately interrupt power flow when a plugged-in device comes in contact with water. Regardless, keep your outlets and cords dry and covered outside.
- Use only weather-resistant, heavy-duty extension cords marked for outdoor use.
- Don't leave outdoor power tools unattended for curious children or animals to find. Also, don't work with power tools on wet grass or near water.

For more safety tips and information, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).—Sources: *Electrical Safety Foundation International, Safe Electricity* ■



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