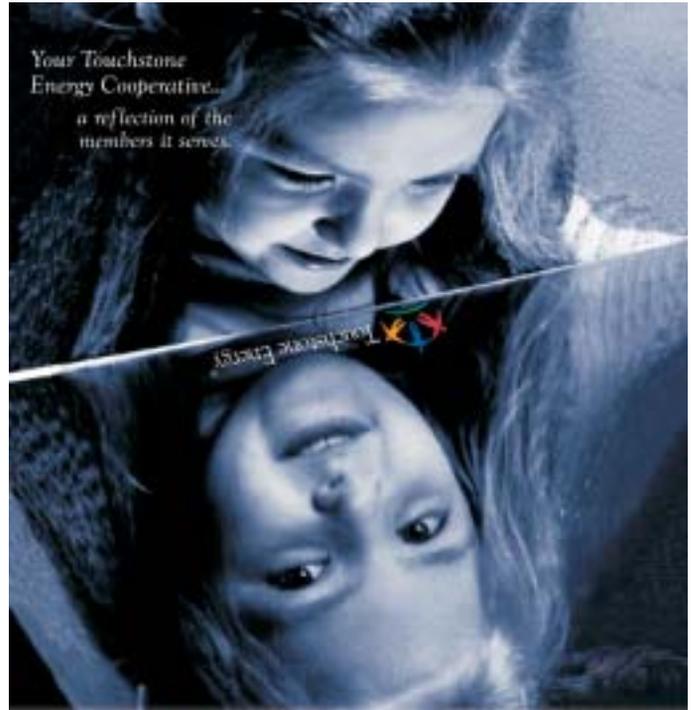


ATTEND YOUR ANNUAL MEETING

It's Your Annual Meeting

Tuesday, March 29, 2005, Starting at 10:00 a.m., Loyal American Legion Hall

Come help us celebrate 68 years of service at our annual meeting March 29, 2005, at the American Legion Hall in Loyal, beginning at 10 a.m. This is an important meeting of the members that is held every year. The members will review financial information, hear management reports, and participate in the democratic process by selecting their representatives to serve on the board of directors. In addition to these matters, the board of directors is recommending several modifications to the bylaws of the cooperative. These modifications are the result of a periodic review of the Cooperatives Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. A complete annual report, along with the proposed bylaw amendments, will be mailed to you for your review in March 2005. I urge all members to join us on March 29, 2005, in Loyal for the annual meeting, a fine noon luncheon, door prizes, and information about the cooperative. We hope to see you there! ■



Follow The Turtles...

KIDS TO BENEFIT

After-School Kid's Club Receives Donation



Tim Stewart, Clark Electric General Manager / CEO, presents a check from the cooperative to Dr. John Eitenmiller, Interim District Administrator of Greenwood Public Schools.

Kid's Club is an after-school program at the Greenwood Public School for students in grades 1–6. Clark Electric Cooperative recently presented a check for \$1,000 to the school system for the program. The program is not funded by school funds, but is operated totally by donations. The school district is currently trying to obtain a grant to help finance the program.

Currently, 78 students utilize the after-school program. Kid's Club meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the school year. The students work on homework, and volunteers help with other educational projects. The program is important as it lets parents know where their children are, but it also provides additional educational help with school work. ■



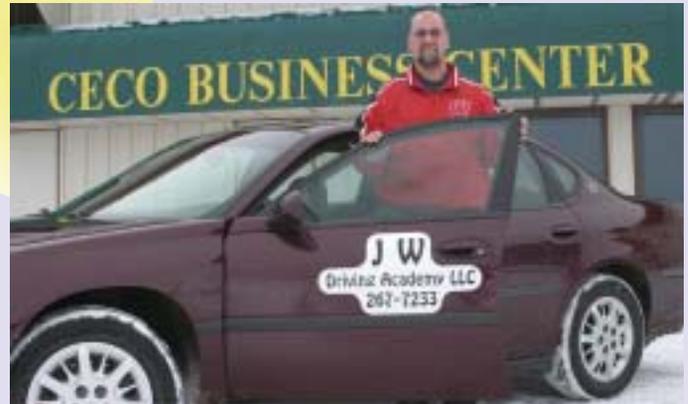
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Shrinking school budgets and the desire to provide a needed service inspired Jack Wissell to become an entrepreneur. The J.W. Driving Academy, LLC., was formed to provide classroom and driving instruction that meets the Department of Transportation (DOT) guidelines.

J. W. Driving Academy is located in the Clark Electric Economic Development Center, 1106 W. Dallberg St., in Greenwood. The space that Clark Electric had meets all of Jack's and the DOT's needs. Jack went through a lot to get his instructor's license and is ready to meet the needs of parents who want their children to get the proper instruction to be safe drivers.

Because of budget concerns, most schools will soon have to eliminate their driver education programs. J.W. Driving Academy meets that need. If you have

questions about how to sign up or just want information, call Jack Wissell at 715-267-7233. ■



Jack Wissell, owner of J.W. Driving Academy, in front of the CECO Business Center.—Photo courtesy of Dean Lesar, TRG Newspaper

THE TURTLES ARE COMING!

Automated Meter Reading (AMR) Systems

Over the last several years, the cooperative has been investigating several Automated Meter Reading (AMR) systems. The cooperative deployed a phone-based AMR pilot project that offered the ability of time-of-use rates several years ago. While this system has worked relatively well, it did have some drawbacks. I am very pleased to report that after careful consideration, the cooperative will begin implementing the new Turtle AMR System from Hunt Technologies. The Turtle System offers a host of operational efficiencies and the opportunity to streamline processes to provide better service. The most obvious advantage of the AMR system is that the members will no longer have to read their own meters, Clark Electric meter readers won't have to make special trips to read meters, seasonal accounts can be billed monthly, and there will no longer be a need to estimate usage for billing purposes. In addition, since the data will be received from the meter every day, billings will be more accurate, and other tasks—such as opening and closing accounts—will be more efficient. In addition, the Turtle system will help match up purchased power and kwhs sold. This will aid cash flow as line loss will be much more consistent.



Billing and customer service aren't the only areas that will benefit from the new system. Data from the Turtle System will help line personnel pinpoint the location of power outages, so the line crew can be dispatched efficiently and, in some cases, reduce the length of time of an outage. In addition, the system can help identify faulty equipment, loose connections, etc., which aids repair and maintenance planning in a proactive manner rather than a reactive manner.

The backbone of the Turtle System is technology developed by Hunt Technologies, an electronic design firm located in Pequot Lakes, Minnesota. The system is based on patented ultra-narrow bandwidth technology that sends data slowly—hence the name turtle—yet reliably and accurately over long distances via power lines. The Turtle System is a proven technology. Hunt Technology has more than 400 customers worldwide that have installed in excess of 1.8 million transmitters.

The cooperative will begin deployment in early summer of this year, with full deployment of the system expected by year-end 2006. We will keep you informed of the progress. ■

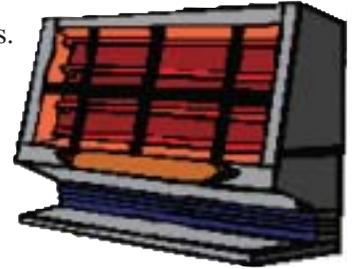
Increased Electrical Usage?

Blame it on Winter

Every year during the winter months, we get calls from members who are concerned because their electric usage has increased. Almost everyone's energy usage increases during the winter, and there are many reasons for the extra usage...

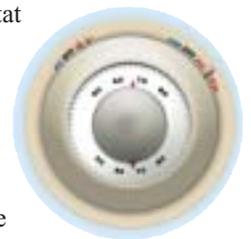
- Christmas tree and holiday lighting has increased tremendously over the past 5 to 10 years. All the icicle lights and other decorative lighting are beautiful to see; however, with all the extra lighting comes the expense of operation. Because we receive our electric bill after the holiday season, we sometimes forget how many days and nights the holiday lights were kept on. While it's true the miniature light bulbs so widely used now consume less electricity per bulb, there are many more bulbs per strand and more strands in use at most homes.
- In addition to the extra lighting during the holiday season, there is often more company visiting and children at home from school. This usually means more baking, cooking, watching TV, playing video games and using the computer, lights, showers, and of course, laundry, especially if you have college kids at home for the holidays. This, like the holiday lighting, adds to our electric usage.
- One of the biggest increases in winter electric usage comes from the use of electric space heaters, heat tapes, and heat lamps. Do you have any? How often do you use them? Not only are they used in milkhouses, but often they are used in basements, garages, entryways, and other cold rooms in the house. While space heaters may be necessary to keep pipes or rooms from freezing, they can significantly increase the electric usage.
- Another item that is often overlooked in the winter is the use of engine heaters. It's not uncommon for someone to have an engine heater plugged in on several tractors, cars, or trucks, and they are often plugged in most of the night and day. Just one 1,000-watt heater used every day can easily add \$30 or maybe much more to your electric bill each month.
- There are other reasons for increased electric usage in the winter. Furnace blowers run longer in colder weather, and heaters in livestock waterers may have been on for most of the billing period. We know that some people have heated water dishes for their pets, and the freezing weather makes the heating elements in the dish operate longer.

We know it's easy to forget about all the different electrical items you may have used during the previous month. However, before calling us about any increased electric usage, please take a few minutes to think about what may have caused it. If you still have questions or concerns about your usage, please contact us. We have a booklet, "Use Energy Wisely," we can send you that gives you the average electrical usage of home appliances and farm equipment. The booklet also has a chart so you can record your own meter readings, which can be very helpful in tracking down the reason(s) for increased usage.



Can't wait for the booklet? Here are a few simple ways you can cut back on your energy usage and bring your energy bills back down:

- Reduce your water heater temperature from 140 degrees to 120 degrees. Moving to the lower setting can lead to appreciable savings. It may also reduce the risk of scalding a small child.
- Clean or replace furnace filters whenever they get dirty. Your furnace may generate much more heat after a simple cleaning and filter change.
- Install a programmable thermostat that automatically adjusts your thermostat set point back at night and during the day when no one is at home.
- Open drapes on your home's south-facing windows during the day to let the solar heat in. Close drapes at night to help keep the cold out.
- Remember this simple rule: When you leave a room, turn off the lights.



Wise use of electricity is important to us at Clark Electric Cooperative; understanding where and how you use your electricity is important to you. Together we can use our electricity wisely and efficiently while keeping cost down now and into the future. ■



