

Roanoke Electric FLASHES

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Bundle up - it's going to be cold outside

Consumers may see higher electric bills this season. That's what federal officials are saying to prepare consumers for higher heating bills this winter. The 2006-2007 winter season is expected to be 6% colder than last year, when a warmer than usual January kept down heating costs.

"Based on this 6% estimate, December and January are going to be where consumers see some

heating costs for that month compared to last year. "But, unfortunately," he said, "the projections show that January 2007 will be much colder than January 2006, meaning a higher heating bill in that month than last year."

Overall, federal officials say that the average household will spend \$45 less on heating this winter.

But, emphasized Cherry, that drop depends on the fuel source.

"Natural gas prices have dropped since the soaring prices of last winter," he said, "and that's good news for the households that use it." Estimates call for a drop of \$119 in winter bills for natural gas users, according to federal statistics.

On the flip side, homes that use heating oil will

see their winter bill rise as much as \$91, or 6%. The cost of electricity is also estimated to be higher, said Cherry, citing higher wholesale prices and increased consumption that will cause an increase of about \$58, or 7.4%, for electricity users.

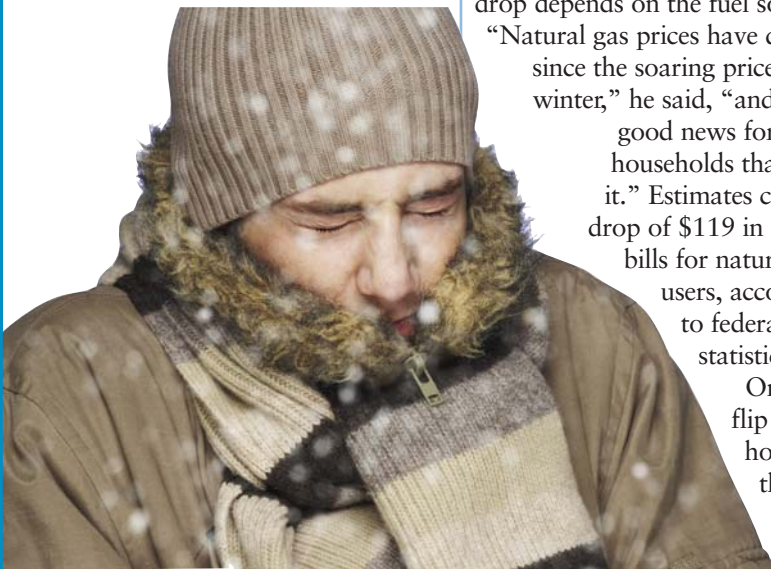
"Coal prices are still rising and coal is the primary source of electricity generation," said Curtis Wynn, CEO of Roanoke Electric. "Knowing that this is going to be a cold January, Roanoke Electric is encouraging its members to winterize their homes." REC tips include:

- Change the air filter in your heating and cooling system to ensure that it runs efficiently.
- Check the ductwork of your central heating system and seal any leaks with duct tape.
- Install storm windows or cover windows with plastic, insulate walls and attics, and apply caulk and weatherstripping to doors and windows.

If you use electricity, you might wonder, "Should I switch to an alternative heating source? After all, the prices seem to be going down for natural gas and oil."

The answer to that, says Wynn, is no. "Compared to natural gas, propane, or heating oil, the cost of electricity has remained relatively stable," he said. "The prices of these fuels fluctuates wildly and that means that each year, your heating costs could be vastly different compared to the differences in costs for electricity."

For more energy-saving tips, go to www.roanokeelectric.com.



difference in their bills from last year," said Marshall Cherry, VP of Member Services and Marketing for Roanoke Electric.

Cherry said that good news is that the temperature outlook for this December is for slightly warmer weather than last December, meaning slightly lower

Roanoke EC awards \$8,000 in Bright Ideas grants to teachers

Roanoke Electric recently awarded \$8,000 in grants to area teachers as part of its annual Bright Ideas grant program. "A record number of applications were received this year," said Marshall Cherry, VP of Member Services and Marketing at Roanoke. "Our judges stressed that it was tough deciding who to fund because all of the projects had merit."

Judges from each school district in Roanoke Electric's service territory were represented, including Halifax, Bertie, Hertford, Gates, and Northampton counties. Teachers submitted applications detailing innovative classroom/schoolwide projects that are typically not funded by school systems. Receiving grants this year are:

Terri Harris of Gaston Junior High: Gaston; Northampton County Schools, \$550 for "Robocamp Goes Feet Wet."

Emily Smith of Weldon High: Weldon; Weldon City Schools, \$1,000 for "Flowers for Romeo, Juliet, and Friends."

Barbara Best Toti of Gates County Senior High: Gatesville; Gates County Schools, \$900 for "Come Play a Part - Improving Literacy and Developing Character Through Dramatic Art."

Courtney Barker of Northampton High-West: Gaston; Northampton County Schools, \$900 for "Revolution in Recyclables."

Connie Burgess of Gates County Senior High: Gatesville; Gates County Schools, \$550 for "Anatomy in Clay."

Katrina Cobb of Colerain Elementary: Colerain; Bertie County Schools, \$1,400 for "Community Listening Center."

Pamela Flack of Chaloner Middle: Roanoke Rapids; Roanoke Rapids Graded School District, \$300 for "Poetry People."

Christy Stevens of Gatesville Elementary: Gatesville; Gates County Schools, \$1,700 for "Mini Meteorologists."

Jennifer Smyth of Hertford County High; Ahsokie; Hertford County Schools, \$700 for "Literature Circles."

All of the teachers, along with the school superintendent and school principal, will be honored in November at a banquet held at the City Hotel and Bistro in Greenville, N.C.

The program, which is administered by cooperatives across the state of North Carolina, awards grants up to \$2,000 to innovative educators in any subject or grade at North Carolina certified K-12 schools.

For more information, North Carolina teachers should go to www.ncbrightideas.com.



Northampton County High School-West biology teacher Courtney Barker (pictured far left), with help from assistant principal Shonda Harris-Muhammed (far right), received a Bright Ideas grant for a recycling project. Also pictured are students who will participate in the project (l to r): Andy Smith, Brittany Garner, and Darrell Moody.



Emily Smith, Media Coordinator, Weldon High School, won a grant to work with students in all grades in designing and cultivating a formal Shakespeare garden in an unused courtyard at the school. Students will learn about Shakespeare's literature, writing, geometry, art, horticulture, and technology to create the garden. Left to right: Raven Carter, Diamond Winstead, Miranda Garner, Quentin Brown, Christina Best, Jasmine Walker, and Emily Smith.



Pamela Flack, teacher at Chaloner Middle in Roanoke Rapids, received a grant for her project "Poetry People." Students will research a person, real or fictional, of interest to them, write a poem incorporating poetry devices, and create an image of their person. One of Flack's students chose Flack as her "poetry person."



Holiday Greetings from Roanoke Electric Cooperative!

October Operation RoundUp Grants awarded to local non-profits

Through the Operation RoundUp program, Roanoke Electric Cooperative awarded grants totaling \$13,100 to 12 area non-profit organizations for the 1st quarter of 2007. Those organizations were:

**Gates County Emergency Services,
Gatesville, Gates County, \$2,000**

**Lincoln Heights Community
Development Center, Roanoke Rapids,
Halifax County, \$3,000**

**Bertie County Rural Health Association,
Windsor, Bertie County, \$2,000**

**N.C. Cooperative Extension Service-
Northampton County, Jackson, \$1,100**

**Tillery Volunteer Fire Department,
Tillery, Halifax County, \$5,000**

The RoundUp program, which is administered by the Roanoke Electric Care Trust, grants funds each quarter to non-profits that

serve local communities. The grant money comes from members who consent to rounding up their electric bills to the next whole dollar.

If your organization is a non-profit organization that provides educational, charitable, or economic development services and is located in Bertie, Hertford, Gates, Halifax, Northampton, Chowan or Perquimans counties, then you are invited to submit grant applications to Roanoke Electric Cooperative's Operation Round Up program. Grant requests can be made for up to \$5,000 and are given out in January, April, July, and October. The next grant application deadline is 5 p.m., January 5, 2007.

For more information or to receive an application, visit our website at www.roanokeelectric.com.



The Northampton County N.C. Cooperative Extension office received a grant that will help them continue a recent energy-efficiency program for the public. Verlene Stephenson, extension agent, shows one of the efficiency kits given to referred consumers who need assistance in bringing down their heating bills.

Farmers beware of electrocution dangers

Every year, N.C. farmers and farm workers die or are severely injured from electrocution accidents, according to the N.C. Division of Labor. Those injuries come primarily from contact with power lines and often happen around grain storage bins, when portable filling equipment runs into power lines.

Roanoke Electric Cooperative suggests the following safety tips and hints:

- Never raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- Review with all workers farm activities and work practices that take place around power lines.
- Know the location of power lines and keep farm equipment at least 10 feet away from them.
- Always lower portable augers or elevators to their lowest possible level before moving or transporting; use care when raising them.
- Have someone make sure that contact is not made with a line when moving large equipment or high loads near a power line
- Don't use metal poles when breaking up bridged grain inside and around bins.

- As in any outdoor work, be careful not to raise any equipment such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines.

- Remember that non-metallic materials such as tree limbs, hay, and lumber will conduct electricity depending on dampness or dust.

- Use qualified electricians for work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

- If you do come into contact with a power line while operating farm machinery, stay in the cab and call for help. Be sure to warn anyone nearby to stay away. Call your electric utility company to cut power to the line. If the power line is energized and you step out onto the ground, you will immediately become a path for the energy to reach the ground and electrocution will result. Unless there is a fire, stay inside the vehicle.

- If fire is imminent, jump - do not step. Make sure that both feet hit the ground at the same time, and that no part of your body touches the equipment. Hop to safety, keeping your feet together as you leave the area. Once you are away from the equipment, stay away from it until power has been shut off.



Roanoke Construction Group and Halifax Community College recently celebrated the opening of a Plan Room on the HCC campus with a ribbon cutting. The Plan Room allows area contractors easy access to information helping them make accurate bids on upcoming construction projects.

This access also will provide Historically Underutilized Businesses with an edge in the competitive market. The HCC Plan Room is open 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. Mon., Wed. and Fri., and Tues. and Thurs. by appointment. To learn more, call Sondra Dickens at (252) 539-2236, ext. 282.

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Holiday closing

The offices will be closed
December 25-26, and
January 1 for the
Christmas and New
Year's holidays.
For emergencies on
those days, call
(800) 358-9437.

