



By Joe Ticheli  
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## Unless properly installed and operated, emergency generators can be deadly

Now that hurricane season is upon us, many people may want to purchase an emergency generator to be used in case a storm hits our area.

No emergency generator, whatever its size, should EVER be connected directly to household wiring. Any emergency power system MUST be directly connected only to those appliances or equipment it serves UNLESS THAT GENERATOR IS CONNECTED TO A PROPERLY INSTALLED AND OPERATED DOUBLE-THROW SWITCH.

Such a switch is NOT OPTIONAL.

When any generator, no matter how small, is connected directly to a home's wiring, say by being "plugged" directly into an electrical outlet, the energy produced by that generator can "back-flow" through the household wiring, the service wire and even through the transformer serving that home or business.

Transformers work both ways. It takes 14,000-volts from a power line and reduces it to the 120-volts used in your home. (Acct. No. 8201852402) But 120 volts generated by an emergency generator, when it "back-flows" through that same transformer, is transformed into 14,000 volts that will travel back along a power line.

Line crews working to restore service miles away on what should be a "dead" line risk death or injury from this current. So do any neighbors who touch a downed power line. Children, pets and livestock can all be endangered.

If the power comes back on while that generator is improperly connected, appliances and electrical equipment can be damaged by power surges.

All generators are sold with instructions that outline their safe installation and proper use. No generator should ever be connected to household wiring without using a special Safety Transfer Switch.

Take time to read and obey safety material that comes with standby generators. The following tips can help avoid a tragedy.

- Deficiently or improperly installed generators can cause damage to the generator, the appliances connected to it or to utility equipment and could cause injury or death to service personnel or the public.

- Installation is not a do-it-yourself project—get an expert to do it.
- No matter who does the installation, make certain your generator has a double-throw (transfer) switch.
- Follow all regulations established by your local utility when using emergency generators.

- Once installed, operate the generator according to manufacturer's recommendations (proper ventilation, limited load and preventive maintenance are all essential to safe operation).

The double-throw switch is not optional equipment. This transfer switch permits a safe change-over from utility service to an on-site power supply. The National Electrical Code requires a double-throw switch on a standby generator installation.

Otherwise, individual appliances should be plugged into the generator. Never connect a generator to household wiring that cannot be isolated from the utility system by a transfer switch.

**Take time to read and obey safety material that comes with standby generators.**



## SLECA's Youth Tour program is a 'life changing' experience

SLECA's Washington D.C. Youth Tour is a 'life changing' experience for students

Since South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Association's (SLECA) began participating in the annual Washington, D.C. Youth Tour program in the early 1980s, dozens of local students have benefited from what has often been a "life changing" experience.

This year the two area high school students who won top honors in SLECA's annual Rural Electric Youth Tour Writing Competition and took part in the Youth Tour were Tyler Bunnell, son of Thomas and Angela Bunnell of Houma, and Alyssa Ann Dowouis, daughter of Darren and Rhonda Dowouis of Raceland. They join a select group of former winner who praise the annual event (Acct. No. 4450736300).

"It was my first and only trip to Washington, D.C.," recalls 1982 participant Monique Henry, then an H.L. Bourgeois High student who today is Mrs. Gordon Bradbery and the mother of three boys. Monique worked with a Nashville publishing company where she resided over 10 years before opting to be a "full-time, stay-at-home mom" and who now only works part-time via the internet.

"I was on one of the first SLECA sponsored Youth Tour's, and it was a very impressive experience. I've never forgotten our tour of the Smithsonian or seeing the Bill Of Rights. The trip is a unique experience that demonstrates that Louisiana



Tyler Bunnell, left, and Alyssa Dowouis, right, visit with Congressman Charles Melancon during the annual Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C.

is part of a much bigger world. Some of the experiences may fade, but they have remained a part of my life," Monique recalls.

Reed Pitre joined the 1989 SLECA Youth Tour. The oldest of six brothers and the son Rickie Pitre, SLECA's Director of Commercial and Industrial Development, Reed called his Youth Tour trip "a life changing experience."

"It was a challenge to earn the trip and a challenge to complete it with so much to do and see. It was a really big deal for any student who took part in it. We made friends and created memories that will last a lifetime. You had the opportunity to meet

other students from all over the country. Over one thousand kids took part in the event from nearly 40 states," Reed recalls.

"It was also my first real experience outside of Houma and it helped prepare me for college and opened up new horizons for me as well as all the students who took part in the event," notes Pitre who went on to attend Yale University and then the LSU Medical School in New Orleans. He did his residency in psychiatric medicine at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta planning to work in public health policy.

Marshelly Scott took part in the 1993 Youth Tour and discovered it opened up "whole new vistas for me. It sparked my interest in travel and discovering new places and new experiences."

Marshelly, who earned her law degree at Pepperdine University in California, completed her undergraduate studies at Loyola in New Orleans. She also attended summer school in Paris and intended to take the bar in Louisiana and New York or California in pursuit of a career in the entertainment industry.

"I was 16 years old when I went on the SLECA Youth Tour trip to Washington. It opened up a whole new, wonderful world. I discovered new challenges, new cultures and new horizons. I met interesting people who were changing the world," Marshelly says. "A lot has happened since then, but it's something I'll never forget."

## Ways to save on summer energy use

Summer heat has a way driving up electric bills dramatically. Of course, air conditioning is the biggest factor contributing to higher summer electric bills and having all the kids home with school out all day doesn't help a lot.

So, how can you reduce the damage that summer does to your energy budget?

- Use or install ceiling fans, which pull warm air toward the ceiling and help keep living areas cooler. Air movement also increases comfort because it makes your skin feel cooler, so you could set the thermostat lower and still be comfortable.
- Keep the sunlight out of your home. Window blinds, drapes and tinted window coating keep the sun's rays and heat out of living areas.
- Save moisture-producing chores like running a dishwasher, washing machine or taking showers for after dark or early morning when it's cooler.
- Install a programmable thermostat that reduces air conditioning use overnight and while everyone's at work during the day.
- Clean or replace your air conditioner filters every month. You should also clean the lint trap on clothes dryers with every use.

- Remove weeds, leaves and debris from around your outdoor air conditioner compressor. This material restricts air flow to the unit and increases operating costs.

- If your air conditioner is 10 years old or older, it might be cheaper to upgrade to a more energy-efficient system than to continue operating the old unit. Newer models can provide tremendous energy savings. You should also have your system inspected and serviced every year, normally before subjecting it to serious use.

- Inspect your air ducts, especially if they are located in your attic. This is a job best done before the attic heats up. Look for air leaks and use the proper tape to make repairs. It may require an expert to do the job properly.

- Taking a vacation? Don't assume your appliances aren't using power. "Instant-on" electronics ALWAYS use some power. Your electric hot water heater, refrigerator and freezer run constantly. Lower refrigerator and freezer temperatures if you're going on vacation. Turn off your hot water heater at the breaker. Connect security lights to a dusk-to-dawn timer.

### Hurricane brochure provided to SLECA members

Included as an insert in this issue of LOUISIANA COUNTRY is SLECA's annual Hurricane Preparedness Brochure to assist you, your family and your neighbors in preparing and dealing with any hurricane that makes land-fall in this area. Rest assured, SLECA will be prepared for such storms and you should be, too.

### SLECA SWEEPSTAKES

Did you know that each month SLECA gives away CASH just for reading LOUISIANA COUNTRY? It's true. Every month, four lucky SLECA consumers have their account numbers randomly selected by computer. The numbers are then hidden in the articles in the SLECA News section of LOUISIANA COUNTRY. Then it's up to you. If you see your account number, call SLECA and win \$25.00 in cash or have your winnings applied to your bill. It's that simple. So, if you are not reading LOUISIANA COUNTRY you're missing out on great local articles and the possibility of winning extra money.

## Energy Emergency Deferred Billing Program

South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Association's (SLECA) Energy Emergency Deferred Billing Program provides eligible customers with a mechanism to defer utility payments in the event the Louisiana Public Service Commission should declare an "Energy Emergency."

To qualify for the program, a residential customer or government entity must meet certain requirements and be pre-qualified and pre-enrolled prior to any LPSC declared energy emergency.

For details and the requirements to become a "Qualified Consumer," contact SLECA at P.O. Box 4037, Houma, LA; 985/876-6880.

Eligible consumers—Eligible customers include any one of the following (Acct. No. 2704469606):

- Those persons whose income does not exceed 150% of the poverty level as established by the Federal Government and who are 65 years of age or older.
- Those persons who receive either one of the following: (1) Food stamps; (2) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
- Those persons whose sole income consists of Social Security payments.
- As determined by the Commission or other vital government entities who provide services, the absence of which could result in imminent peril to the public health, safety, and welfare.
- Those persons who need life-sustaining, electrically operated equipment, or life-sustaining medical treatment that requires electricity in order to live.

## Across the Board

May 1, 2008

Present were directors Alexander Doyle, president; David Luke, vice-president; Brian Rivet, secretary; Terry Trahan, treasurer; Tracy Duval, J. D. Boudreaux, Eroy Acosta, Roger Dale DeHart, Larry J. Daigle and Lloyd Gibson, advisor. Also attending were Michael Guidry, general manager; James Funderburk, attorney and Elaine Robertson, member services supervisor.

After the invocation and pledge, the board approved 175 new members, the minutes of the April 7th regular board meeting and the ALEC report (Acct. No. 1600657501).

The financial report, approved by the board, highlighted interest earnings, cash on hand, rate comparison showing SLECA having the lowest rates compared to other area utilities, line loss, kilowatt hour sales for the month, cumulative sales to date, cost of service, equity, TIER, electric and total revenue versus cost per kilowatt hour.

Following an update on upcoming schools, meetings and events, Mr. Guidry reported on the following: (1) SLECA continues to have the lowest rates in the area; (2) CLECO has asked the PSC for a rate increase to cover the cost of its Rodemacher Plant addition; (3) Entergy's request for a \$1BB bond to help raise money for its Katrina-related costs has been approved; (4) Beauregard Electric was granted a 5.45 percent rate increase; (5) PSC Chairman Jay Blossom has been heavily criticized for sending a letter on PSC stationery to 235 motor carriers urging them to consider buying "tracking devices" from one of his golfing buddies; (6) David Crane, NRG CEO, exercised stock options purchasing 200,000 shares of stock; (7) Commissioner Foster Campbell questioned La Gen about its reported "discouraging of retail load growth"; (8) The only complaint about the annual meeting was that the temperature was too cold; (9) The S.T.A.R.T. Corporation has made an offer to purchase SLECA's old office building; (10) The arbitration with La Gen is ongoing; and (11) SLECA experienced a cumulative fuel savings of \$5,002,719 as a result of the board's decision to go with the actual fuel rate instead of a fixed rate.

The board then approved Mr. Guidry's request to replace Buck Theriot's vehicle because it is beginning to need minor repairs.

The manager's report and expenses, the safety report, showing employees have worked over 1,861,625 hours without a loss time accident, and the attorney's report and fees were then approved by the board.

Finally, the board approved a motion that all SLECA officers and advisor and the ALEC representatives and alternates remain the same for the next year. The meeting was then adjourned.

You may obtain copies of the minutes by contacting SLECA, P.O. Box 4037, Houma, LA 70361 or by calling (504) 876-6880 or 1-800-256-8826.

Your Cooperative Connection

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Don't Miss SLECA's  
hurricane brochure  
insert in this  
issue