

Safety First



By Joe Ticheli
SLECA Safety Coordinator

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. (Acct. No. 1451614206)

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. 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 in your home 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.

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.

SLECA News



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

Since South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Association (SLECA) began participating in the annual Washington, D.C. Youth Tour program in 1982, 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 Jamie Price, who attends Central Lafourche High School, and Christina Cockerham, who also attends Central Lafourche High School.

Monique Henry, a H.L. Bourgeois High student who participated in the first SLECA Youth Tour in

Reed Pitre joined the 1989 SLECA Youth Tour. The oldest of six brothers and the son of Rickie Pitre, SLECA's Director of Commercial and Industrial Development, Reed called his Youth Tour trip "a life changing experience." (Acct. No. 2555238600)

"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.



1982, is now Mrs. Gordon Bradbery, the mother of three sons recalls, "I was on the first SLECA sponsored Youth Tour, 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 is part of a much bigger world. Some of the experiences may fade, but they have remained a part of my life," Monique recalls.



2009 Youth Tour winners Jamie Price and Christina Cockerham, above, participated in co-op education activities as well as touring Washington's many monuments and historic sites.

"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. 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. 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."



Energy emergency deferred billing

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:

- 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.

Helpful hurricane tracking chart 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 landfall in this area. (Acct. No. 8552704901)

Rest assured, SLECA will be prepared for such storms and you should be, too.



Across the Board

May 11, 2009

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 Penny Antill, Benefits Administrator.

After the invocation and pledge, the board approved the minutes of the April 8 regular board meeting, 184 new members and the ALEC report.

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. (Acct. No. 4053771400)

Following an update on upcoming schools, meetings and events, Mr. Guidry reviewed the following items: (1) SLECA continues to have the lowest rates in the area; (2) New health care legislation being proposed by the Obama administration; (3) Senator Ken Salazar's belief that most coal-fired plants in the United States can be replaced by windmills placed off the east coast; (4) The EPA's intention to regulate carbon dioxide if no legislation is passed by Congress; (5) Information included in the 650-page draft of a Global Warming bill release by Representative Henry Waxman; (6) Janet Woodka has been appointed as the new head of the Gulf Coast Recovery and Rebuilding Group; (7) A 2005 FERC ruling that Entergy Arkansas did not pay its fair share of generation costs will result in rate reductions for the remaining Entergy systems; (8) A request before the PSC by DEMCO to establish a Formula Rate Plan Rider; (9) The possibility of SLECA becoming an "Occupational Point of Distribution" site was discussed with the Department of Health and Hospitals; (10) SLECA is working to enact suggestions made by RUS Field Auditor Bill Baker during a recent audit; (11) Work on the steel pole line is progressing and should be completed shortly; and (12) The NERC/FERC report shows that SLECA currently has no critical assets.

Following Mr. Guidry's report, the board approved the manager's report and expenses, the safety report, the attorney's report and fees, and a resolution approving Form 219 that documents inspection and approval by an outside agency of work done by SLECA from April, 2007 to September, 2008.

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 (985) 876-6880 or 1-800-256-8826.

Your Cooperative Connection

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**SLECA'S YOUTH TOUR
IS A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE!**

Look inside for your
2009 hurricane
tracking
chart