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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

Facts about mercury in CFLs

ADS AND PACKAGING materials for compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) proclaim that they use much less



energy and last much longer than standard incandescent bulbs. However, if you read the fine print on the packaging or find the notice on the base of each bulb, you'll see that it contains mercury.

While that may raise an alarm in your mind, there's no need to worry. The amount of mercury inside the glass tubes of an average CFL is miniscule, about the equivalent of the tip of a ballpoint pen, and it's especially small when compared to other items you may have around your home. The amount of mercury in a CFL runs about 4-5 milligrams (mg), while a glass fever thermometer contains 500 mg and an old-style thermostat could contain up to 3,000 mg.

CFLs are safe to handle and use in your home, and they release no mercury when in operation. Even if you break a CFL, the amount of mercury that may become airborne poses a very low risk of exposure, says Energy Star. (To prevent breakage, carefully unpack a CFL, and always screw and unscrew the bulb by its base.) When CFLs burn out or break, the best course of action is to recycle them.

CFLs fall into the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) category of household hazardous waste (HHW), but there's no federal or state requirement that the bulbs be recycled.

Some hardware stores, including Home Depot, have CFL recycling buckets on hand. NEC also has a small bin at the office for the occasional bulb that is brought in by a consumer or employee.

You may put burned-out or broken CFLs with your regular trash. In no



DEBRA SHAW

Co-op member and employee Sherry Livingston disposes of CFL bulbs.

case should you burn or incinerate them. Here's what EPA says about properly disposing of CFLs.

Burned-out CFLs: Put the CFL in a sealed plastic bag, and place it with your regular trash.

Broken CFLs: If you break a CFL in your home, open nearby windows to disperse any vapor that may escape, and carefully sweep up the glass shards. (Don't use your hands!)

Wipe the area with a damp paper towel to remove glass fragments; don't use a vacuum cleaner. Put the fragments, the base of the bulb and the paper towel in a sealed plastic bag, and place it with your regular trash.

CFLs are a great idea. They'll help you cut your utility bills, and they'll help reduce the need for electricity production. However, to create the maximum benefit for the environment, recycling burned-out and broken CFLs makes sense.

G. Keith Avery
President and Chief Executive Officer



Heather Brown (l) and Holly Tarver pose outside the White House.

YAN CO NYA

Mount Vernon, Pentagon cited as favorite Youth Tour sites

TWO LOCAL STUDENTS have returned home after touring the nation's capital on a trip sponsored by Newberry Electric Cooperative.

Heather Brown and Holly Tarver, both of Prosperity, represented Newberry Electric on this summer's Youth Tour. Both students are members of the co-op and were selected on the basis of their academic achievement, school activities and community service.

Heather and Holly joined students representing other co-ops across the Palmetto State for a whirlwind tour of historic sites, government buildings, monuments and much more.

Both were very appreciative of the opportunity and shared their favorite places. Holly says, "I enjoyed the tour of Mount Vernon; it was really neat knowing that I was walking right where our first president had, many years ago." Heather states, "My favorite memorial was the Pentagon Memorial because it was something that I remember happening, and I thought the people from the event were represented very well."

If you are a high school junior residing in the Newberry Electric Cooperative service area and are interested in the 2012 Youth Tour, please contact Debra Shaw at dshaw@nec.coop or (803) 276-1121.

WALTER ALLREAD



All aboard!

South Carolina Living stopped in Prosperity recently and found several Newberry Electric Cooperative members who are helping with a community effort to restore the railroad depot. Brothers Ronald and Johnny Conger, both NEC members, are among the workmen on the project. A citizens group affiliated with the Newberry Historical and Museum Society is raising funds to match a National Trust \$3,500 matching grant for an engineering study to determine if the depot can be moved. Since the railroad is no longer active, Palmetto Trust and the Town of Prosperity are in negotiation with the railroad to allow the depot to remain where it is. This is just one of many projects funded by the county one cent sales tax continuation as proposed by the Town of Prosperity. Go online to PalmettoTrust.org or go across the town square to Prosperity Drug Company, where Cathy Shannon works. Shannon, above, who is also an NEC member, says local people are definitely on board with the effort. "They've been coming in asking about it and sometimes donating money," she says.

Capital credits

Just one of the benefits of a co-op member-owner

Unlike an investor-owned utility (IOU), any profit made by a cooperative is returned to its member-owners in the form of capital credits. With IOUs, this money goes to the stockholders. Capital credits allow Newberry Electric Co-op to serve a growing number of customers while implementing the latest technology to provide the best possible service. These excess earnings are accumulated in order to provide financial stability for your cooperative. This financial stability helps keep rates at a competitive level by reducing the amount of funds that have to be borrowed by your cooperative.



In 2010, Newberry Electric Co-op paid back capital credits to members who had service in 1986 and 1987, totaling \$913,029, bringing the total of capital credits paid back to members over the years to \$8,856,183. 2010 marked the 25th consecutive year that Newberry Electric Co-op has returned capital credits to member-owners. This has been possible due to the overall good financial condition and sound management of the cooperative.

Capital credits are just one of the benefits you receive as a member-owner of Newberry Electric Co-op.