

## Claiborne Electric urges members to prepare for storm season

The first named tropical storm appeared this year before the official beginning of hurricane season, kicking off the summer storm season, a time when volatile weather brings the possibility of damaged homes and electric equipment.

Of course, summer storms also result in electrical outages.

After a major storm, when electric outages are most prevalent, one of the best things a homeowner can do is use a portable generator to run needed appliances and electric equipment. Claiborne Electric members have the unique opportunity to have a device installed that makes using a portable generator much safer and easier.

The perfect accompaniment to a portable generator is a GenerLink device, which allows a member to safely and easily operate devices which he pre-determines will not exceed his generator's load capacity. GenerLink switches are interconnection devices that enable a member to connect a portable generator directly to his home's wiring system. During a power outage, the GenerLink switch allows the portable generator to become the home's source of emergency back-up power.

The Co-op stocks 30-amp and 40-amp GenerLink options, one of which will fit almost any portable generator. The device will be installed at no charge, and the \$10 or \$12 fee for leasing a GenerLink product will appear directly on a member's monthly Claiborne Electric bill.

During an outage, a member uses a connection cord, which is provided as part of the lease, to connect a portable generator to the GenerLink device installed at the meter. The device will use power from the generator to run the items the member has pre-selected in his breaker box.

According to Mark Brown, General Manager and CEO of Claiborne Electric, having back-up generation is a good idea, and using a GenerLink device in conjunction with a generator is even better.

"We are proud of the service reliability we provide to our members," Brown said. "However, the reality is that electric lines are outside, in elements beyond our control, and outages can happen, especially during early summer. Our members know that as soon as it is safe, we will be out restoring power, but having a GenerLink paired with a generator is always a good idea, especially in rural areas."

Brown said the Co-op has offered GenerLinks since 2010, and more than 500 members have taken advantage of the offer. He said any member who wants to see how a GenerLink works can stop by either Claiborne Electric office during business hours to get a hands-on demonstration. Brown said each office is equipped with a demonstration area that includes a GenerLink device installed with a meter on a model pole, along with a portable generator and the connection cord. A Co-op employee will demonstrate how the device works, answer questions, and allow the member to handle the device.

"This is really a game-changer in back-up generation," Brown said. "Not only does it make your generator easier to use and your home more comfortable during an outage, it eliminates the need to use several messy extension cords, and prevents back feeding power onto our lines, which keeps our crews safe. I have a GenerLink at my home, and it's a device I never want to go without. We are one of the only utilities in the state that offers this service, and I would urge our members to take advantage of this device."

**The Co-op has offered GenerLinks since 2010 and more than 500 members have taken advantage of the offer.**

Brown also wants to make sure members with medical needs know how important it is to have a plan in place to adequately manage their healthcare during an outage. He wants members to understand that during a widespread outage, it is impossible to restore power based on medical priority.

"During the spring, we had several tornadoes in our area, leaving several thousand people without power," Brown said. "That storm system left us with more than 40 broken poles. Even though we brought in extra crews and had line crews working around the clock, we had members that we could not physically get to for two days."

Brown said when a severe storm system moves through and there are broken poles between a member's home and the substation that delivers power to that home, it is impossible to restore the home's power quickly even if the member has a medical need. He also explained that damage to a substation must be repaired before it is possible to restore power along lines connected to that substation.

"We strongly recommend a back-up generator for any member with a medical condition requiring electricity," Brown said, "and for any member faced with a potentially life-threatening situation in an outage. We cannot guarantee restoration within a specific time, especially during a widespread outage. We will always restore power as quickly and safely as possible, but we need members to understand it is their personal responsibility to keep themselves safe. People who rely on electricity for their wellbeing need a back-up generator to manage their medical needs."

Brown encouraged preparing for storms by having food, water, flashlights, batteries, prescriptions, a first aid kit, matches, and a battery radio on hand.

For more information about a GenerLink device, please call the Homer office at 927-3504 or the Farmerville office at 368-3011.

# Claiborne Electric News

Claiborne Electric Cooperative  
P.O. Box 719, Homer LA 71040  
Homer - (318) 927-3504 • Farmerville - (318) 368-3011  
**Outage Reporting: 1-800-900-9406**  
www.our.coop

## SmartHub and automated phone system used for Claiborne Electric member outage reporting

Claiborne Electric offers a free SmartHub app and recently added 48 new phone lines to the Co-op's automated system used to report outages directly to a dispatcher's computer.

SmartHub delivers accurate, timely account information that members can use to handle a variety of account management tasks right from the palm of their hands, including the ability to report an outage with the touch of a button.

"While we know many members prefer to use a telephone system to report an outage, our suggestion is to use the free SmartHub app from a mobile device instead," Brown said. "The app reports a member's outage to the exact same Outage Management System, with the touch of a button inside the app."

In addition to reporting an outage, members can use SmartHub to make a payment in a secure environment, check usage, contact our office, and more. These things can be done from a mobile phone, tablet, or computer, without any further contact to the office.

SmartHub puts the power of data in members' hands through convenient account management and detailed usage information. The two-way communication available with SmartHub also allows members to notify us of account and service issues while providing us a way to let members know about special offers, programs, events and more.

More information about SmartHub is available at www.smarthubapp.com. Apple users can download the app in the App Store, and Droid users can download it in the Play Store. QR codes for both operating systems are printed here.

Brown said if members prefer to report an outage by telephone, the best way is to call 1-800-900-9406.

"Our members usually love the fact that our office telephone lines are answered by live, local employees," Brown said. "During outages, however, the telephone lines become our most frequent service complaint."

Brown said that during widespread outages, the phone lines manned by employees fill up quickly, and many members are left with a busy signal when dialing



Android



Apple iPhone

the local numbers. He compared it to a radio station during a call-in prize giveaway.

"When an announcer gives away a prize on air and listeners begin calling in, very few callers get through. Most people only hear a busy signal, then they hang up and try again," Brown said. "The same thing happens at our offices during an outage. If a substation loses power, we may have thousands of members calling at the same time, and there are typically 10-15 employees answering those calls. Inevitably, most members hear a busy signal."

Brown said that by calling the automated line, members can report their outages using the phone number listed on the account, and the outage will immediately show up in the dispatcher's Outage Management System. Brown said it is very important for members to make sure the Co-op has an updated phone number on their account.

"At the end of 2017, we added 48 new phone lines. The extra lines on the automated system will alleviate frustration with busy signals to a degree, but we still need members to understand that if hundreds or thousands are calling at once, these 48 new automated lines still won't be able to handle all calls at once," Brown said. "That is why we have offered a free mobile app for a few years that can be used to report an outage with no wait, and no need to call the office."

Brown said the Co-op has invested a great deal of time and resources during the past 10 years to revamp Claiborne Electric's right-of-way program. He said the

improvements to that program have increased reliability and decreased the number and length of outages for the Co-op's members.

"We have made enormous progress, and we will continue to maintain and improve our right-of-way schedule, but the reality is that we deliver our product to our members outdoors in the elements, and unfortunately outages will occur," Brown said. "When an outage occurs, our members know that our crews will be out to restore power as quickly and as safely as possible. Meanwhile, the absolute best way to let us know you don't have power is through SmartHub."

Brown explained that the Co-op's mission is to meet the needs of its members, and members have expressed a need for more telephone lines during an outage. Brown said the new lines will meet that need, but he feels the Co-op went above and beyond meeting that need by making SmartHub available. The app actually eliminates the need to call the office during an outage, allowing members to report an outage easily and immediately, right from a smartphone or tablet.

"As soon as members finish reading this article, I hope they do two things if they haven't already," Brown said. "First, I hope they download our SmartHub app as their first resource during an outage. Second, I hope they write down 1-800-900-9406 or store it in the contact list in their phone as the Claiborne Electric outage number to use if they cannot use SmartHub."

## Annual fireworks show scheduled for two area lakes

Claiborne Electric members have multiple options to celebrate Independence Day on a lake with a great fireworks display, as shows are scheduled for Lake Claiborne in Homer and Lake D'Arbonne in Farmerville.

### Lake Claiborne:

Fireworks show and boat parade - Pleasure Point, Saturday, June 30 @ 7 p.m.

### Lake D'Arbonne:

Fireworks show - Ruston Ramp Road, Saturday, July 7 @ 9 p.m.

### Lake Claiborne

The annual fireworks show and boat parade will take place Saturday, June 30. The boat parade will begin at Pleasure Point at 7:00 p.m.

Parade participants are asked to decorate with patriotic colors. Each boat captain will receive a free hat on a first-come-first-served basis. Participants are asked to follow the parade rules, which will be distributed prior to the beginning of the boat parade.

The parade will end at Lake Claiborne's dam, where fireworks will begin at about 9 p.m. For questions, please contact Dwayne Woodard at the Claiborne Parish Police Jury office - 927-2222.

More information can be found on Facebook by searching Fourth of July Fireworks for Lake Claiborne.

The event is organized by Fireworks for Lake Claiborne, Inc., a non-profit organization whose mission is to see that the fireworks show on Lake Claiborne takes place each year. Monetary support for the show comes from donations from corporate sponsors and private citizens.

Tax-deductible donations may be mailed to Fireworks for Lake Claiborne, Inc. at P.O. Box 181, Homer, LA, 71040.

### Lake D'Arbonne

The annual fireworks show will be held Saturday, July 7. The launch site will be on Ruston Ramp Road, off of Highway 33 coming in to Farmerville from Ruston. Parking will be along Highway 33, and the fireworks will begin at dark - approximately 9 p.m.

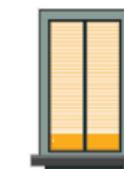
During the day, there will be live music, a car and bike show, and food vendors in the area for a day of family fun. Financial support for the show comes from corporate sponsors and private citizens.

Donations may be mailed to the Union Parish Chamber of Commerce at 116 North Main, Farmerville, LA, 71241.

For questions about the fireworks show, please call the Union Parish Chamber of Commerce at 368-3947.

## Summer Energy-Saving Tips

Costs associated with cooling your home can make up a large portion of your summer electric bills. Stay cool and save money with these energy efficiency tips!



### NO-COST TIPS

Close blinds and drapes during the day to keep heat out.



Set your thermostat to 78 degrees when you are home. Set it to a higher temperature when you're away.



Turn off lights and ceiling fans when you leave a room.

## YOUR POWER OUTAGE PANTRY

We do our best to avoid power outages, but unfortunately, Mother Nature occasionally has different plans. Stay ahead of the storm by stocking your pantry with a variety of non-perishable items.

Set these items aside for extended outages only, and your storm prep will be a breeze!

- BEANS
- CANNED FRUIT
- CANNED TUNA
- CANNED VEGETABLES
- CEREAL
- DRIED FRUITS
- DRIED MEATS/JERKY
- GRAHAM CRACKERS
- PASTA
- RICE
- SPAM
- OATMEAL



Don't forget to stock up on disposable goods, like paper plates, napkins, plastic cutlery and cups.



## HAVE A HAPPY & SAFE 4TH!

Claiborne Electric Cooperative's offices will be closed on Wednesday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day. Stand-by crews and a 24-hour dispatcher will be available to handle emergencies or weather-related outages.

Enjoy your 4th, but use caution and common sense to keep your festivities safe and enjoyable for everyone. For example:

- Make sure fireworks are handled by a responsible adult.
- Designate adults or older teens to supervise sports activities.
- Make sure there is always someone in charge of grills, barbecues and campfires.
- Keep all perishable food thoroughly chilled and stored in a cooler.

A little pre-planning can keep your celebration fun and safe!

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## Union Parish E-911 receives Operation Round Up Grant

Claiborne Electric Board President Hez Elkins, left, presents an Operation Round Up check for \$10,000 to Union Parish E-911 Director Danny Allen. The grant will be used to help replace the back-up generator which powers the E-911 system during emergencies.



*Storms can strike out of the blue,  
leaving you powerless.*

## GenerLink gets you back in power quickly and safely.

Claiborne Electric offers its members the opportunity to lease a GenerLink interconnection switch, which allows a member to safely and easily operate pre-determined electric devices during an outage. A GenerLink switch connects a portable generator directly to a home's wiring system, eliminating the need for extension cords. The device is easy to use, and it keeps line workers safe by preventing back-feeding power onto the Co-op's electric lines.



**Call Claiborne Electric for details.**

**Homer - 318.927.3504**

**Farmerville - 318.368.3011**

