

May flowers require April showers

As I write this article in late February, at least a month before you receive it, the weather has made a change for the better. The cold weather with temperatures in the teens has given way to a sunny day in the mid-'70s.

The beauty of spring is all around us as God's earth begins a new cycle. The changing season brings with it blooming flowers, budding trees and spring showers.

Sometimes the spring showers turn into violent thunderstorms with wind, lightning, rain or hail. Wind and lightning from these storms are the biggest nuisance to

Pickwick Electric Cooperative when it comes to keeping your lights on.

High winds blow limbs and trees into the power lines. When these objects come in contact with the lines, they create a short circuit that causes your lights to blink. If the line does not clear itself in a few seconds, your power will be off until we can manually clear the problem. Even though blinking lights are annoying, it indicates our line protection equipment is working properly during a thunderstorm.

Lightning is one of the most expensive problems we deal with in the springtime as it can literally burn up thousands of dollars in equipment during a severe thunderstorm. Lightning naturally seeks a path to the ground. The co-op's tall poles and long power lines are an easy route for lightning to travel. Lightning runs along the electric line until it's voltage is so great it flashes over a piece of equipment connected to the line. This may be an insulator, a transformer or, we

hope, a lightning arrestor designed to dissipate the lightning to the ground.

PEC serves all of McNairy county and parts of five other counties. Your electric system consists of 21,000 customers and more than 2,000 miles of power lines. It is 40 miles across our system and extends from Yellow Creek, Miss., in the south to near Henderson, Tenn., in the north and from Pocahontas in the west to the Tennessee River in the east. A thunderstorm moving across this large area can create numerous outages in a short period of time.

When this happens, it takes longer to restore your power

than you and I would prefer.

When restoring electric service, we have a sequence that we follow. We begin at the source and work our way out. By doing this we can turn on more lights for more people in a shorter period of time. Public safety is always our top priority, therefore any dangerous situation will be dealt with as soon as possible.

There are a few things you can do to help us get your lights back on. First, check with your neighbors to see if they have power because yours could be an isolated case. Call the office and give us your name and account number if possible, along with your phone number and 911 address. If you heard or saw anything before the lights went out, give us that information also. Our goal is to provide you with the best electric service possible, so please be patient while we restore your power.

I still believe the beauty of spring far outweighs the temporary nuisance of a thunderstorm.



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Pickwick Electric Cooperative

**Serving members in all of
McNairy County and
portions of Chester,
Hardeman and Hardin
counties in Tennessee and
Alcorn and Tishomingo
counties in Mississippi**



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These five pages contain local

news and information

for members of Pickwick

Electric Cooperative.



Pickwick Electric Cooperative offers new decorative lighting for homes and businesses

Outdoor lighting has always been one of the more popular programs that Pickwick Electric Cooperative provides. The cooperative introduced a leased lighting program last year that has sparked a greater interest in outdoor lighting. The program was designed to provide area lighting for homes, businesses and industries.

With this increased interest, the cooperative has added some new options to our program that now gives all members more choices for lighting around their homes and businesses. The program can even assist cities and counties with lighting special projects such as ballfields, walking tracks, parks and city streets.

There are many advantages to having a well-lit home or business. Additional lighting provides security that helps discourage prowlers and deter vandalism. A well-illuminated area helps to prevent accidents around the home or business by providing lit sidewalks and parking lots. Outdoor lighting extends your hours of business, particularly in the dark winter months. In addition, your signs, landscape and architecture are much more noticeable. It also adds convenience when opening doors and checking around the property after dark.

The cooperative has partnered with several companies to provide new decorative and parking lot lighting. Ameron International and Dynamic Lighting are providing decorative concrete and aluminum poles and Dynamic Lighting and American Electric Lighting are providing decorative fixtures that will work with all four types of poles. The poles are available from 12 feet to 35 feet in height and range from a simple, round design all the way up to a fluted, ornate one. The lights range from an acorn-style fixture that is typically seen on city streets to a colonial design.

Once you have selected the lighting style you prefer, PEC will design and install your new outdoor lights. The cooperative will take care of the repairs and maintenance, right down to changing the lamps, all for an easy, convenient lease payment that is added to your electric bill. One affordable bill every month covers everything, including power use.

The cooperative has installed samples of all poles and fixtures in the front parking lot area of the PEC

office. Brochures and pricing lists are also available so our customers can choose the fixtures they want to install. For more information about the lighting program contact Keith Johnson at 646-3773.



Colonial-type fixture



**Acorn-type fixture
w/clear globe**



Acorn-type fixture



Shoebox-type fixture



For the love of pottery

For as long as Vicki Cowan can remember she has enjoyed playing with dirt. As a child, she grew up on a farm in southeast Kansas and always loved playing in the dirt and making mud pies. So it is no surprise that she is still using her hands, not to make mud pies, but pottery.

In 1994, while attending the University of Arkansas, Cowan double majored in creative writing and art. Her intentions were to write the great American novel, but it did not take her long to realize what truly made her happy was working with clay. She continued her studies and graduated in 1996.

After graduation she had an opportunity to open a shop with two other artists that would display and sell their wares. She thoroughly enjoyed operating the business and did so until she and her husband moved to Tennessee in 1999.

“My main reason for working with clay is because it is a good natural resource,”

Cowan says. “The earth’s crust breaks down into clay, so the earth is making more clay than we can use up.”

“Not many people realize the time and work that goes into making a piece of pottery,” she says. “Handmade pottery is not perfect, and even good potters will lose 20 percent of their production.”

Cowan makes three different styles of pottery: coil-building, slab-building and throwing on the wheel. Her pieces are mostly functional potteryware such as platters, trays, cups and bowls.

Cowan begins the pottery process with prepackaged clay. She purchases the clay in 25-pound blocks from a distributor that guaran-

tees lead-free clay and meets all the standards for healthy living. She says, “Clay shrinks, but with experience you learn

about how much it takes to make each piece of pottery.” Each piece of clay must be worked, or wedged, which ties the molecules in the clay together. Throwing pottery requires lots of upper body strength, so Cowan uses an electric wheel. “It is wonderful to be able to use modern electric tools to produce an old art,” she says.

The first step of throwing on the wheel is centering. You then open and pull to form the sides of your bowl, cup or platter. The pieces are now ready for trimming and adding handles, if necessary.

All dust should be rinsed off each piece once it is trimmed and set aside to dry. Pottery is fragile and sometimes cracks before you get it to the kiln. Each piece must be bone dry before it is put in the kiln to bisque fire. The pieces may be stacked one on top of the other in the

bisque fire. They are fired for approximately seven hours at 1,818 degrees and must cool down for at least 24 hours afterward. Cowan dips the bottom of each piece in hot wax to keep it from sticking to the kiln shelf. The pottery is now ready to glaze with color. Once the glaze is applied it must be refired. It is critical that the pieces do not touch once loaded in the kiln for refiring because the colors will bleed together. Size and intricacy

play an important role in the pottery-making process. A small piece may take two or three weeks to complete, while the larger pieces may take up to six weeks.

After moving to Tennessee, Cowan renamed her pottery business Sypress Creek



Vicki Sisco-Cowan proudly displays one of her creations known as “Sypress Creek Stoneware.”



Cowan’s pottery is available in a wide variety of colors, shapes and sizes.



Stoneware. Although she works out of her home, her pottery is displayed and sold at Creative Basket in Selmer, Tenn., The Sanctuary in Corinth, Miss., and Terri Hanna Home and Garden in Germantown, Tenn. She has a wide variety of colors, shapes and sizes that vary in price from \$20 to \$150.

Cowan's pottery represents a style of her own. She says, "It's not made to just sit on a shelf, it can be used in everyday life." Nothing makes her happier than knowing her customers enjoy using her functional wares.

For more information, you may contact Cowan at (731) 646-1815.



Cowan demonstrates the wedging process, top left, and throwing on the wheel, center. Above is pottery after it has been bisque fired.

One of Cowan's specialties is broom-corn pottery. From left are a pot trimmed with dried broomcorn and a plate imprinted with broomcorn.

Holiday closing

The Pickwick Electric Cooperative office will be closed Friday, April 6, in observance of Good Friday. Should you have an emergency, we will have standby crews available. We can be reached by calling 645-3411, 632-3333 or 1-800-372-8258.

Have a safe and enjoyable holiday.



Buying
TWO BLOCKS
of **GREEN POWER**
for a year
is the
ENVIRONMENTAL
Equivalent of
RECYCLING
15,322
aluminum cans

TVA

Green Power Switch

**Sunday, April 22
 is Earth Day,
 a day of national
 environmental
 awareness.**

Did you know that a handful of quarters could help change the world? Join Pickwick EC and TVA as they work to create clean, green sources of renewable energy by harnessing the power of the earth, sun and wind. To learn how you can sign up for the Green Power Switch program, call PEC or visit www.greenpowerswitch.com