

**WEEKLY DIGEST**

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**NRECA Says EPA Too Hasty on Air Rule**

The Environmental Protection Agency's sweeping new air toxics rule fails to provide sufficient compliance time for utilities and threatens to make electricity less affordable, NRECA CEO Glenn English said.

EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson announced the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards rule, the most expensive in the agency's history, on Dec. 21.

It is aimed at emissions of mercury and hazardous air pollutants and requires utilities to use the maximum available control technology to meet new standards.

Under the rule utilities will have three years to comply, with the possibility of a fourth at the discretion of individual states.

"This simply will not provide all facilities sufficient time to cost-effectively comply with the standards. Ultimately, consumers will bear these additional costs," English warned.

Nearly 1,400 units at about 525 plants will be subject to the rule, and could require expensive new controls to continue operating and avoid fines or penalties. EPA put the cost of the final rule at about \$10 billion, slightly less than its previous estimates.

Co-ops said the deadline poses special problems for small utilities that will have to compete with large utilities to secure the vendors, equipment and expertise they will need. [▶ Complete Article](#)

**TVA Seeks Help Fighting Copper Theft**

Just like at so many electric cooperatives, copper theft is hitting the Tennessee Valley Authority hard. So TVA is asking the people it serves to be on the lookout.

"We have received tips and information from neighbors that have already helped us recover stolen items and solve cases," said David Jolley, vice president of TVA Police and Physical Security. While TVA has security measures in place, Jolley noted that "we can't be everywhere." Metal theft figures bear that out.

"We've had approximately 70 thefts of copper and other metals from TVA property in calendar year 2011," Scott Brooks, a TVA spokesman, told *ECT.coop*. Theft occurred in each of the seven states TVA serves.

TVA estimated its 2011 losses at more than \$90,000. "It's likely higher than that because some of the cases don't have a dollar value of the losses listed," Brooks said.

On Dec. 12, an electrician working for a TVA contractor was sentenced to five years probation and ordered to make \$17,800 restitution after pleading guilty to stealing copper from a TVA substation at Alabama's Wheeler Dam in August 2010. [▶ Complete Article](#)

**Energy Managers Share Concerns at Meeting**

Get 15 corporate energy managers in a room and you can guarantee a lively discussion on the energy issues of the day. That's just what happened at this fall's meeting of the Touchstone Energy® Business Advisory Council.

One hot topic was what members consider to be the most promising

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**Incentives for Renewable Energy Projects Expire**

A federal "tax grant" program that is helping electric cooperatives finance renewable energy projects is set to expire at the end of the year, and that could slow the pace of alternative energy development.

The 1603 Treasury Grant Program will come to a halt on Dec. 31, after Congress passed up opportunities to extend it.

Co-ops turned to the program this year after funding dried up in 2010 for Clean Renewable Energy Bonds. Since 2005, co-ops have used the CREBs program as an incentive to finance renewable energy projects.

The 1603 Treasury Grant program provides a taxpayer with a grant to cover 30 percent of a project's cost once it is placed in service. That has provided an indirect benefit to co-ops in the absence of CREBs funding.

NRECA CEO Glenn English said failure to reauthorize the 1603 Treasury Grant program, in combination with the lack of funding for CREBs, will have a chilling effect on new renewable generation.

"The development of new renewable projects or execution of new power purchase contracts will grind nearly to a halt," he warned this month in a letter to the leaders of the House and Senate tax-writing committees. Supporters on Capitol Hill said they will attempt next year to breathe new life into renewable energy tax incentives. [▶ Complete Article](#)

**POPULAR STORIES ON ECT.COOP...**

**Automaker works on special charging feature for electric car**

**Minnesota co-op honored for its philanthropic work in the communities**

**Florida co-op sponsors third annual youth cattle show**

**Gift of electricity helps co-op members during the holidays**

**'Texas Winds of Time' photo featured in NRECA's Spotlight on Excellence**

## Energy Managers *Continued*

energy management strategies. Many said it's become important to have everyone at their company involved in energy matters.

"At Cox we call that 'employee engagement from the basement to the boardroom,'" said Keith Mask, assistant vice president for energy and engineering at Cox Enterprises, and a council member. "Energy management is no longer owned by the energy manager."

Mask said it's not a question of carrying energy procurement down to the lowest level. Rather, it's an issue of "involving the lowest level in the company in how we use energy."

Council members also discussed some of the common questions they get from senior company leaders. Mask said that many of those questions are along the lines of, "What's the payback on that?" or "What's the internal rate of return?"

"Energy managers have come to realize very quickly that we're not only energy managers but we also have to become financial wizards," he said. [▶ Complete Article](#)

## Book Program Bonds Troops and Children

Call it a different kind of Christmas story.

When Wabash Valley Power Association directors arrived for their Dec. 7 board meeting, they brought children's books that are likely headed to distant military bases where U.S. troops are stationed this holiday season.

Why children's books? The directors of Indianapolis-based Wabash Valley donated them to United Through Reading, a California-based nonprofit group.

Since 2006, the program has partnered with the USO on a reading initiative designed to give the children of service personnel stationed abroad a few moments of comfort with the familiar face and voice of mom or dad.

"The USO sends the books to troops serving overseas," said Sabrina Kapp, manager of communications at Wabash Valley. "After the parent reads the book, it's retrieved and sent home to their children."

But before that happens, the magic of modern technology provides a heartwarming twist. The service member is videotaped reading the tiny tales aloud.

"When a deployed parent takes the time to read a story to his or her child at home, the effects are far-reaching and long-lasting," said Helen Westcott, director of communications for United Through Reading.

The organization sends the books and videos to the service members' families. [▶ Complete Article](#)

## NRECA Employees Make Dresses for Orphans

The sewing machines were whirring again at NRECA's Arlington, Va., headquarters when employees in the Management Advisory Services group put their talents to use for a good cause.

Nimble-fingered employees gathered at the association recently to transform pillowcases into sundresses for African girls living in orphanages.

All told, NRECA volunteers made 37 pillowcase dresses over several days. The garments will go to Little Dresses for Africa, a nonprofit group that since 2007 has distributed 130,000 dresses to villages and schools in 22 countries.

Inspired by Nancy Couste, a dispatch clerk at United Power Brighton, Colo., who also made the pillowcase dresses, NRECA's Anna Amaczi and Cathy Windfield-Jones organized the workplace sewing bee.

Windfield-Jones said she read about the project in RE Magazine. "We talked with her to see how to do this project, and our staff donated supplies," said Windfield-Jones, a senior compliance representative.

"With some lessons learned," Windfield-Jones hopes her department will organize the dresses project next year at NRECA. "But next time," she said with a laugh, "I'll have more people pinning. That takes a long time!" [▶ Complete Article](#)

## Emergency Warning Sirens to Aid Public Safety

An Indiana electric cooperative is using its equipment and the skills of one of its linemen to improve public safety in its service territory.

Jasper County REMC has been a full partner in the pole work needed to deploy a new generation of warning sirens throughout the county.

"This is our contribution to public safety," said Stephanie Johnson, director of member services for the Rensselaer-based co-op. "These weather emergency sirens are part of the county's system to provide people with as much notice as possible when the weather is changing and people need to take cover."

"Jasper REMC has been kind enough to donate its time, personnel and equipment to help us stretch our soft cost contribution to this project," said Karen Wilson, the county's director of emergency management.

The co-op helped install four sirens for the county in 2007; this time it is installing 13 more on 50-foot poles similar to those maintained in the co-op's inventory. The project should be completed by late January, barring foul weather.

[▶ Complete Article](#)



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