

For immediate release

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jbaker@palmetto.coop

Contact: Jimmy Baker: (843) 208-5550

Cell: (843) 384-7158

fax: (843) 208-

e-mail:

ELECTRIC USAGE SOARS AS TEMPERATURES PLUMMET

“Palmetto Electric Cooperative established a new peak demand for electricity of 404 megawatts at 9:00 a.m., Monday, January 11,” according to G. Thomas Upshaw, president and CEO of the utility. “This all time record peak exceeds the previous peak of 398 megawatts set on January 24, 2003,” said Upshaw.

Not only has it been cold, but it has been cold for a longer than usual period. According to local weather service information, this cold snap represents one of the longest consecutive day streaks with subfreezing temperatures for our area. Palmetto Electric records show that from January 1 through 10, 2009 we purchased 35,848,483 kwh and for the same period this year we have metered 65,868,320 kwh. “This means we have sold 84% more energy to date in 2010, compared to the same interval in 2009,” stated Upshaw.

“Our system has responded very well and we consider ourselves fortunate to have experienced very few outages during this cold spell,” said Upshaw.

As the winter chill continues to remain in our area, Palmetto Electric is alerting consumers of the effects of cold weather on energy consumption. “This means that with the cold temperatures comes increased usage and higher electric bills,” said Upshaw.

Palmetto Electric recommends a thermostat setting of 68 degrees. For every degree above this setting consumers will add approximately 4-8 percent to their heating cost.

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Other energy saving tips include:

- Set thermostats at 55 degrees in a home that is vacant for a week or longer.
- Caulk around all doors and windows. Loose or cracked caulking should be removed or replaced.
- Weather-stripping is a real key to preventing heat loss. Doors and windows should be sealed to prevent drafts. Door bottoms are also culprits; install inexpensive “sweeps” on doors to keep out the cold. Don’t forget to weather-strip your attic access.
- Central heating systems should be given an annual cleaning and tune-up by a qualified technician.
- Keep air filters clean. The air filter of a central forced-air system should be replaced once a month during the heating season if a disposable filter is used.
- Have your chimney checked by a qualified chimney sweep and check your fireplace damper to be sure it opens and closes properly.
- Make sure your attic exhaust fan is not pulling warm, moist air from heated parts of the house into the attic.

Consumers can view 101 energy saving tips including ways to help keep electric bills down during cold weather by visiting Palmetto Electric’s website at www.palmetto.coop.

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