

Operate generators with safety in mind

Every time a storm threatens Florida, news accounts show folks snapping up portable generators.

Clay Electric wants to remind owners of portable generators that the improper use of these devices can create an extremely dangerous situation if they backfeed electricity into the cooperative's distribution system. This situation could result in serious injury or death to an unsuspecting serviceworker, neighbor or family member.

Portable generators should never be wired directly into a home's distribution (breaker) panel or into a receptacle that's connected to a home's electrical panel. Appliances should be plugged directly into the portable generator's outlets, or connected to a heavy-duty extension cord that plugs into the generator. It's a good idea to familiarize yourself with the generator's safety and operating guidelines before using it at your home.

Some co-op members choose to have a permanent stand-by generator installed in their home. County electrical codes require that stand-by generators that are permanently installed must be wired to a transfer switch that separates the generator from the outside power source when it's operating.

If you desire more information about stand-by or portable generator systems and their proper installation, please call the co-op's Energy Services Division (1-800-771-2325, Ext: 8263). More information about the safe use of portable generators is also included in the co-op's annual Hurricane Guide, available at district offices and at www.ClayElectric.com.



The EV section of ClayElectric.com has a charger finder to assist you in finding free, public stations. You can also compare how much you would save by driving an electric vehicle.

EVs

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"Community & Education" tab, you can compare how much you would save by driving an EV as opposed to conventional gas- and diesel-powered cars with a "Savings Calculator."

There is also a charger finder to assist you in finding free, public charging stations.

"Buying an electric vehicle is a little different than purchasing a gas-powered vehicle," Davis said. "It is important to understand key elements, such as vehicle range-per-charge and how tax credits work. You will find our website to be a valuable resource in your research."

To access the EV section of the co-op's website directly, visit www.clayelectric.com/community-education/electric-vehicles.

Power Line is an informational publication of Clay Electric Cooperative, Inc. It is distributed monthly with members' billing statements. If you have questions or comments about Power Line, write Justin Caudell at P.O. Box 308, Keystone Heights, FL 32656; or email: Jcaudell@clayelectric.com. Clay Electric's Board of Trustees will meet at noon Thursday, July 23 and Thursday, Aug. 27 in Keystone Heights.

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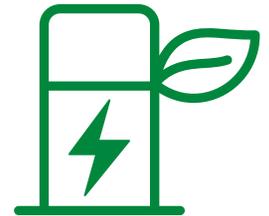
Power Line

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Learn about EVs on our website

Members considering an electric vehicle can now plug in to a special section of Clay Electric's website to learn more about electric vehicles (EVs), their benefits and the different models available for purchase.

Since 2011, the number of EVs on the road in the U.S. has grown from almost none to 890,000. That's a relatively small number today compared to the total of 268 million cars registered in the U.S., but EV sales rose 40 percent in 2018 alone according to the Edison Electric Institute and are expected to make up 55 percent of car sales by 2040.



"With the increasing popularity of electric vehicles, we know members have a lot of questions," said General Manager/CEO Ricky Davis. "As your trusted energy adviser, we want to help you find the right information you need to understand what it means to own an electric vehicle, and our website now has a lot of helpful resources."

On the new electric vehicles section of ClayElectric.com, available under the

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Seminole facilities get performance upgrades

Clay Electric's wholesale power provider, Seminole Electric Cooperative, is responsible for providing electricity to your co-op and eight other member distribution cooperatives at an affordable cost. One of the ways Seminole has been working on ensuring your electricity remains affordable is by improving the efficiency at its facilities.

The Seminole Generating Station (SGS), Seminole's state-of-the-art coal-fired plant, is a primary source of electricity used to meet Clay Electric's daily demand. Consisting of two 650-megawatt coal-fired generating units, SGS is located in Putnam County, just north of Palatka. In 2019, a cross-departmental team at Seminole successfully completed testing to figure out how to run both units at SGS at lower levels while maintaining successful operation at the plant.

Demand for electricity goes up and down during the course of the day, as well as during certain times of the year. If the demand for electricity from the SGS units is low enough, they are shut down to avoid unnecessary fuel and operation costs.

Operating the SGS units at a lower level offers several benefits for Seminole and its members. It gives Seminole the flexibility to keep the unit online and to avoid the significant expense of starting up an otherwise offline unit. A typical startup for one SGS unit takes 12 to 16 hours and consumes startup fuel. If the unit is able to stay online and there is a sudden demand for more generation, the unit is more readily available to meet the demand.

SGS teams have also taken steps to reduce the amount of fuel it takes to run both units. By completing routine maintenance and making necessary repairs, the units can continue to operate at maximum efficiency.

Seminole has also completed performance upgrades for two natural gas-fired combustion turbines at the Richard J. Midulla Generating Station (MGS) in Hardee County. The new turbines each produce 25 more megawatts of electricity while using the same amount of fuel as the previous



Seminole Electric has been working on ensuring your electricity remains affordable by making upgrades at its facilities, which includes this plant in Palatka.

turbines.

In addition to being more efficient, the new turbines are designed to require less maintenance. The previous turbines were built to last 12,500 operating hours. By comparison, the new turbines will last 36,000 hours, or nearly three times as long, before maintenance is required.

As a result of these upgrades, it is cheaper to produce the same amount of electricity as before, and with the longer operating hours there is less down time for maintenance — meaning more time is spent generating the electricity members use every day.

All of this work ensures that Seminole can generate electricity at the most affordable cost, passing those savings onto its consumers at the end of the line.

Payment assistance is available for members

The co-op is continuing to work with members who are having a hard time paying their bill as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members who are behind on their account are encouraged to apply for bill payment assistance with the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP is a federally-funded program administered by states. It provides critical home heating and cooling help to millions of vulnerable American families.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided \$900 million in additional funding for LIHEAP. Local organizations in our service area can access these dollars to help pay electric bills for those who qualify.

Organizations that can help members is located on the "Billing and Payment" page under the "Member Information" tab of Clay Electric.com.

You can bank with the Fla. Rural Electric Credit Union

Another benefit of being a member of the co-op, Clay Electric members can now bank with the Florida Rural Electric Credit Union.

Florida Rural Electric Credit Union membership is open to all members of the co-op and their immediate families. The credit union offers free checking accounts, debit cards, internet banking, mobile deposit, bill-payer, eStatements, an ATM network and no monthly service fees.

A local branch is located at 7433 SR 21 Suite A in Keystone Heights and can be reached by calling 352-327-9194. The credit union's website is www.frecu.org.