

Energy Partners

A monthly look at the happenings of and related to:



New-Mac Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner The power of human connections



Please help yourself & co-op this summer during Peak Alerts

Keeping costs down is always a top priority for us at New-Mac Electric. When the temperatures get extreme in the summertime, Peak Alerts are an important tool for us in managing power costs for the cooperative.

A Peak Alert is simply a request to our

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New-Mac Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner The power of human connections

Energy Partners is a monthly publication of New-Mac Electric for the purpose of informing members of the programs, services and happenings of, and related to, the cooperative.

Safe Kids Day

New-Mac Electric was one of several community partners helping make Safe Kids Day possible May 4 in the parking lot of the Newton County Health Department.

Every year, local businesses and organizations come together for this event, organized by the health department on the first Friday afternoon in May.

The kids are exposed to a variety of safety education. They can see young farm animals courtesy of a petting zoo ran by the Neosho FFA. Also, each child can have a photo/fingerprint ID made.

New-Mac talked to youth about respecting electricity around the home and gave away electrical safety coloring books, rulers, pencils and pencil sharpeners.



Kids, like Samantha Nolan, always enjoy sporting the gear of a line-man while standing next to the New-Mac truck with its boom fully extended into the sky.



School is out, please watch out for kids

Children are out and about enjoying their break from school, and New-Mac Electric asks that you be mindful of that as you drive around this summer.

It's every driver's responsibility to be on the lookout for kids at play; just as every parent needs to stress that their children always be watchful for cars.

Let's all work together to keep summer both fun and safe.

Up to \$1,000 reward for info on copper thefts

Theft and vandalism at your electric co-op are on the rise, and it's costing everyone. Now you can help strike back at copper thieves. If you see suspicious activity near power lines, substations, vehicles or offices owned by electric cooperatives, call this toll-free hotline number **1-855-COPPER9 (1-855-267-7379)**. If your tip leads to arrest and conviction, you may earn a reward of up to \$1,000.

Remember copper theft is a felony, could be classified as terrorism, is a direct cost to co-op members, could be FATAL, and could cause power outages.

Offices closed for 4th of July

New-Mac's offices will be closed Wednesday, July 4th, for the observance of Independence Day.

Another  on the lines 

Earliest ever blueberries for area's largest farm

Carter's farm going strong 25 years after planting

It's blueberry time, and for local enthusiasts who prefer them fresh, that means a trip to the largest blueberry farm in Southwest Missouri.

In fact, due to the early spring and warm weather, harvesting started earlier than ever at Carter's Blueberry Farm. "We picked some on June 1 one year, but we've never opened this early," said Robert Carter, who saw picking commence May 21 this year at the family farm on the eastern edge of Neosho (1185 Carl Sweeney Parkway/Highway HH).

It was 25 years ago that Robert and Jill Carter planted around 2,400 bushes – then 1,700 more the following year.

Their kids (daughters Kelly and Megan and son James) grew up with blue fingers.

"Jill and I started back when our kids were just little, tiny. We've got pictures of my son, who is 22 now, at two or three picking blueberries. They're all grown now, have got their educations and are moving on."

Now, they're into the next generation of blueberry lovers.



Robert Carter plucks a few berries for a morning snack. Blueberries should be available through the month of June and maybe into July, but please check availability before you come at carterblueberryfarm.com or by calling 451-4160 or 877-293-0010.

"I've got two granddaughters that get to the freezer and get the blueberries out when they first hit the door. They like them. Hopefully, we'll always have some, at least for them."

But it's far more than just family consuming what's grown on the Carters' farm. Indeed, the blueberry farm has drawn customers not just from the surrounding countryside but all across the country. Carter blueberries have made it to Alaska and Hawaii and most every state to the east of those. Some berries were even known to have went to Japan.

"We had a Russian person here picking one time, but I doubt they went back to Russia," said Robert. "It's amazing. Almost every state in the union. Twenty five years is a long time. A lot of people pass through."

Robert said he was aware of customers from as far out as Iowa who would plan their vacation so they could stop in Neosho for blueberries.

But it wasn't always this way.

"In our early years, we didn't have the demand to sell all we produced and we had to wholesale them," he said. "But all of the health benefits that have been documented now for fresh fruit, especially blueberries, have made a lot of difference."

As fruit goes, blueberries are one of the top providers of antioxidants, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.





Carters' Blueberry Farm features well kept, mulched rows of bushes for easy picking. The farm can be seen on the north side of Highway 60/59 as you're leaving Neosho headed east, however you access it by turning south off of Highway HH.



○ Blueberries

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They are also packed with vitamin C and a good source of dietary fiber.

Nowadays, word is out on the well kept, mulched rows of plump berries found at the Newton County farm, and demand far exceeds supply. So much so, that the Carters are even making an operational change.

"From the beginning we had hired pickers to pick berries and sold them already picked. This year, we're going to be strictly *you-pick*."

While this may disappoint some, the berries should all get picked, and it should simplify life a bit for the always busy Carter family. With the hired pickers, Robert said many times he and Jill were up nights "worrying if we'd ever fill all the orders."

In addition to the blueberries, Jill teaches school at Triway Elementary, and Robert raises cattle and tends to their rental properties. However, the berries do require year-round maintenance.

"I prune most of the winter. Then it's weeds and irrigation in the summer, and of course, harvest is a busy time. If I have any slack time, it's in the fall. I can't prune in the fall until they go dormant."

Over the years, Robert has learned a lot about the fruit of his labor. He's had to resort to ingenuity, having built and refined a sprayer four or five times that he's customized to fit inside the rows of bushes. He's dealt with caterpillars and had one challenging year with Japanese Beetles. He says the biggest problem has been birds, but in recent years, he seems to have solved that one.

Probably most wouldn't even notice what is keeping the birds away. Four speakers are strategically placed among the berries and wired back to a control box which randomly emits recorded sounds of predator birds or birds in distress. Since he put the system in, the birds have opted to look elsewhere for their food.

The Carters also know by experience what makes blueberries good: time on the vine, not in the carton.

"We try to wait. Blueberries turn blue about 5-7 days before they really taste good," said Robert. "So, we don't push at the beginning of the season to get open, even though there's some

risk there. If we have a storm in those 5-7 days, we're going to regret it, but we try to wait until things are ripe."

He said generally berries that can be found in grocery stores were picked 7-10 days earlier, and there's no telling how ripe they were at the time they were plucked.

So, if fresh, ripe blueberries sound good to you, the Carters usually still have them for picking into July, but call (451-4160 or 877-293-0010) or check the website (carterblueberryfarm.com) first, after all harvesting never started in May before either. They are open from 7 a.m. until noon, Monday through Saturday. Occasionally, during harvest time, they will have to shut down for a few days if they're picked out. If that is the case, that notification is available at both their phone numbers and website.

The Carters will provide you with a gallon bucket for picking. If you fill your container, it usually weighs around 5.5 pounds, and the price per pound is \$2.50. Just be prepared for blue fingers.

Energy Partners' *Recipe of the Month:*

LAZY MAN'S PEACH COBLER

Submitted by New-Mac member: **Toni Banks**

- 1 stick of margarine
- ¾ cup milk
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 cup sugar
- ¾ cup flour

1 can (2 cups) sliced peaches (juice included but drained off)

Melt butter in a large casserole dish. Mix flour, sugar and baking powder. Add milk and spread over butter. Pour peaches over and stir. Once mixed, pour juice over all and bake at 350° for 40-45 minutes.

Send your recipe, along with your name and account number, to: Recipes, c/o New-Mac Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 310, Neosho, MO 64850; or recipes@new-mac.com. If your recipe is selected, New-Mac will apply a \$15 credit to your bill.



AUTO-CHARGE AUTHORIZATION

Name _____

Account Number _____ Map Number _____

Email _____

Daytime Phone # _____

Credit/debit card to which you wish amount to be charged:

VISA American Express

MasterCard Discover

Credit/debit card # _____

Expiration Date _____ Security Code _____

Name as it appears on the card _____

Beginning date to charge _____

.....

I, (print name) _____, do hereby authorize New-Mac Electric Cooperative, Inc., to charge my monthly electric bill to the card indicated above. I certify that I am duly authorized to charge on this card. I understand that my electric bill will automatically be charged on this card each month and that I will receive a monthly bill as well as a charge slip, via U.S. Postal Service, indicating the amount charged. This authorization shall remain in effect until I revoke it in writing and deliver the writing to New-Mac Electric. I shall indemnify and hold harmless New-Mac Electric from and against any losses, claims, judgments, liabilities, or expenses for damage of any kind caused by, or arising from, this authorization or any acts authorized by it.

Customer Signature _____

Date _____

Complete this form and get started with our auto-charge option.



Auto charge makes for one less thing to do

Nowadays, many have found using a debit or credit card is a convenient way to pay bills.

However, when everyone is trying to pay the same bill at the same time in the same way, sometimes waiting to get a card payment processed is inevitable.

This is why New-Mac Electric offers an auto-charge option for customers who like to pay their bill each month with a credit or debit card. Simply fill out an auto-charge authorization form (at left), and New-Mac will process your payment for you each month on the 25th calendar day (or next business day in the event of holidays or weekends).

If you have any questions, contact the New-Mac billing department at 451-1515 or 800-322-3849. If you would like to be on "auto-charge" for the month of May, bring the completed form to the New-Mac office prior to June 20. Don't assume your account has been processed unless you have been notified by the billing department.

Get started with our auto-charge option today and know you've got one less thing to do at the end of the month.



P.O. Box 310 — 12105 East Highway 86
 Neosho, Missouri 64850
Telephone: 417/451-1515 800/322-3849
Fax: 417/451-9042
Office Hours: Neosho — 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 Anderson — 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Or visit us on the Web at www.newmac.com.

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Services Provided to Members

Call our consumer services department for information on the following services:
Autowithdrawal Payment
Levelized Billing
Rental Light
Meeting rooms available at both locations
Credit Card Acceptance
Safety Programs (upon request)
Surge Protection
Green Power

Questions? Comments?

Contact: Mark K. Rakes
 P.O. Box 310, Neosho, MO
 mrakes@newmac.com

Peak Alerts

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members to try and help us conserve energy during a set period (usually in the late afternoon). Even though these announcements occur during the hottest days of summer, it does not mean there is a shortage of power. However, with your help, New-Mac possibly can avoid significant costs that could contribute to rate increases for the membership. By curtailing usage on the days in

which electrical demand will be at its highest point, New-Mac is able to avoid extreme peaks which bring about higher costs for power.

Members can assist New-Mac during a Peak Alert by not running more than one major appliance at a time and turning off unnecessary lights, televisions and small appliances. Raising the thermostat a few degrees can also help significantly by reducing the energy use of air-conditioners.

Homes with elderly or small children should not adjust their thermostat.

Members will be notified of Peak Alerts through local radio and television stations, as well as our *Facebook* and *Twitter* pages. If you are not currently a "fan" or "following" New-Mac through these two social media sites, you can find New-Mac's respective pages from links found at new-mac.com.

So, remember the next time you hear that New-Mac is issuing a Peak Alert, see what you can do to conserve electricity around your home and help keep costs down for everyone.