

# New Hampshire Electric Co-op TODAY

- Scholarships
- CFL Disposal
- Online Bill Pay
- Rebate Program
- Eco-Friendly Landscaping

MARCH 2008

Your Electric Co-op's Newsletter



## FEATURE ARTICLE: A New Home for Squam's Ospreys



When a pair of Ospreys was spotted on Squam Lake last spring, it was cause for celebration...and concern.

The birds were the first of their kind known to take up residence at the lake, but the location of their nest – atop the crossarms of a Co-op utility pole near the shore of the lake – put them dangerously close to live wires. That's when Iain MacLeod knew he'd finally found a use for the osprey nest he had stashed in his garage for the past 15 years.

MacLeod, Director of the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, oversaw the Co-op's careful dismantling of the pole top nest and set in motion a plan to relocate the pair to safer accommodations once the birds flew south for the winter. In January, with labor and equipment donated by the Co-op, MacLeod supervised the setting of a 50-foot pole topped by the nest he built years ago when he worked for the Audubon Society.

Erecting the pole required a small fleet of vehicles and some off-road ingenuity. Dragging the pole several hundred yards behind a tracked excavator over narrow woodland trails, a contract crew from J.C. Reed maneuvered the pole into place while Co-op Operations Supervisor Brent Fysh hauled the nest behind a snowmobile in an aluminum boat. After the nest was bolted to it, the pole was set in an 8-foot deep hole and carefully raised into position.

Located in the center of an open field close to the shore on Science Center land, the new nest is in an ideal location for the pair to settle down for the summer, and hopefully raise a family.



"They'll stay together and return to the same place year after year," MacLeod explained. "So, if all goes well, they'll spot this new location and move right in."

Built of interwoven sticks and padded with straw, the nest appears inviting enough. Bird watchers and Science Center naturalists will have their fingers crossed this spring that the Ospreys think so, too.

# Co-op Expands Program of Rebates



New for 2008, the Co-op is expanding its program of rebates for installations of renewable energy systems in Co-op service territory.

Continuing the program begun in 2007, members will still collect sizable rebates when they install qualified wind generators and solar hot water systems. And, new this year, members can collect Co-op rebates for the installation of qualified solar photovoltaic systems (solar PV).

Solar PV is a technology that converts light directly into electricity. Photovoltaic production of electricity has been doubling every two years worldwide, increasing by an average of 48 percent each year since 2002, making it the world's fastest-growing energy technology. A typical solar PV system consists of solar cells connected electrically to form a module that can measure two to four feet wide and four to six feet long. Some solar modules look just like traditional roof shingles.

A typical two-kilowatt system can produce about 2,500 kilowatts of electricity per year, offsetting your annual electric bill by nearly \$400 (at 15 cents per kWh). Co-op rebates on solar PV combined with state and federal incentives make this technology affordable for members who want to make socially and environmentally responsible energy choices.

Social and environmental responsibility is also what's driving the Co-op to offer a number of other programs in 2008, including free home energy audits for non-electrically heated homes, fossil fuel savings programs for commercial and industrial members, and a new program that offers significant incentives for commercial and industrial members to install geothermal energy systems.

Complete details, including the latest rebate amounts available, are listed on our energy efficiency website: [www.smallsteps.coop](http://www.smallsteps.coop).

## WATTS HAPPENING!

### 2008 Annual Meeting Is June 21

Mark your calendar for June 21 – the date of the Co-op's 69th Annual Meeting. We've got some big changes in store, starting with the date and location. This year's meeting will be held on a Saturday at the Mountain Club on Loon in Lincoln, NH. Look for more details in next month's newsletter and plan to join us Saturday, June 21 at Loon Mountain.

### 2008 Scholarships

The NHEC Chapter of Dollars for Scholars will be awarding six \$1,500 scholarships this year to college-bound high school seniors or students currently attending college. To apply, you must be a Co-op member, or be residing with a parent or legal guardian who is a Co-op member. Applicants must be enrolled or planning to enroll in an accredited undergraduate educational or training institution. College students and non-

traditional students are also encouraged to apply. Complete details, including a downloadable application, are available online at [www.nhec.coop/community](http://www.nhec.coop/community).

### Board of Directors Meetings

The NHEC Board of Directors meets monthly at dates and locations that are available on the Co-op website at [www.nhec.coop/boardofdirectors](http://www.nhec.coop/boardofdirectors), or by calling Sharon Yeaton at 603-536-8801.

## New Law Governs CFL Disposal

A new state law effective January 1, 2008 in New Hampshire requires that compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) be treated as hazardous waste and must either be recycled or disposed of in a safe way.

CFLs contain a very small amount of mercury sealed within the glass tubing – an average of five milligrams – about the amount that would cover the tip of a ballpoint pen. By comparison, older thermometers contain about 500 milligrams of mercury. Currently, mercury is an essential component of CFLs and is what allows the bulb to be an energy-efficient light source. Unfortunately, when released into the environment, mercury can pose a hazard to human health or harm the environment.

At present, recycling/transfer stations in more than 60 New Hampshire towns will accept fluorescent bulbs, including CFLs. For an up to date list of facilities that accept CFLs, visit the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) website at [www.des.state.nh.us](http://www.des.state.nh.us).

Thanks to a voluntary partnership between DES and True Value Hardware, spent fluorescent light bulbs can also be recycled for free at participating New Hampshire True Value Hardware stores. The complete list of participating stores can also be found at the DES website. Please be advised that stores limit quantities collected to six bulbs per customer and no broken bulbs are accepted.



## Pay Your Bill Online

### Choose One-time or Recurring Payments

Save the stamp and pay your bill online at [www.nhec.coop](http://www.nhec.coop).

Our website offers two methods of on-line payment – a **one-time payment** anytime, or a **recurring payment** which automatically drafts your balance each month two days before your bill is due. Either option allows you to pay by credit card, debit/ATM card or electronic check (ACH). You can also pay by phone anytime by calling 1-800-698-2007 and following the prompts. There are no fees for any of these payment options.

NHEC has contracted with BillMatrix, an independent payment processing company which secures your transaction with state of the art encryption technology. When you choose a schedule of recurring payments, the balance of your bill is deducted automatically from your checking account, statement savings account or credit card. Or, choose a one-time payment and pay any amount, any time.

To enroll in Recurring Payment, or take advantage of our other convenient payment options, go to [www.nhec.coop](http://www.nhec.coop) and log into your My Account homepage by clicking on the SECURE LOGIN link. If you've never used our site before, you'll need to sign up as a new user. Once you've registered, you'll have complete access to the online resources that are making doing business with the Co-op **quicker and easier**.

## 11 Suggestions to Create an Eco-friendly Landscape

1. **Incorporate Native Plants in Your Landscaping.** When planning your landscape, consider using a collection of native plants. Native plants are adapted to your area, which means they naturally require less maintenance and water than exotic plants. They are also more resistant to pests and diseases than many exotics, reducing the need for pesticides. You don't need to exclude exotic plants from your yard and garden, but incorporating natives in your design can make a big difference.
2. **Plant Deciduous Shade Trees to Reduce Energy Use.** Planting deciduous trees (trees that drop their leaves in the fall) is a great way to cool your home and reduce your air conditioning costs during the summer. When these trees drop their leaves, they also allow sunlight to warm a home or building during the winter. To maximize the benefits of deciduous trees, plant tall trees on the east and west-facing sides of your house. This will help shade your home during the hottest months of the summer. Planting trees on the south facing side of your home

*Continued on P4*

# The BACK PAGE

## Eco-Friendly Landscapes *Continued from P3*

can help shade the roof, as the sun will not hit that side of the house much during the summer. Make sure to prune trees so that at least a few branches are shading the roof and the air conditioning unit. This adds up to additional energy savings.

3. **Plant Evergreen Trees to Block Cold Winter Winds.** Evergreen trees are very useful if you want to create a natural windbreak to reduce those chilly winds that hit your home during the winter. It's common to plant trees for windbreaks on the north and west sides of a home. However, you will need to determine the dominant wind direction for your area and plant upwind.
4. **Use "Xeriscaping" in Your Landscape.** While Xeriscaping is mostly associated with the arid landscapes of the Southwestern U.S., its main concepts are applicable to all gardens and landscapes. The basic ideas of Xeriscaping are the use of efficient irrigation systems, low-water use plants, reducing turfgrass, and creating water-wise garden designs. There's a lot of info about Xeriscaping on the internet.
5. **Use Efficient and Non-polluting Reel or Electric Lawn Mowers.** While

gas-powered mowers are a great time-saving device, there are alternatives that are cleaner, non-polluting and more energy efficient. Modern reel mowers are a great way to mow the lawn and get exercise

**FRED SAID:** "The proper placement of only three trees will save an average household between \$100 and \$250 in energy costs annually."

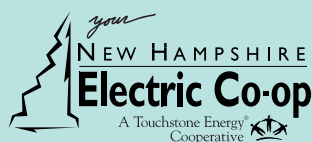


*Who is Fred? He's Fred Anderson, President & CEO of the Co-op and he's big on energy efficiency!*

at the same time. They are also easier to use than you might imagine. If you have a large lawn, consider a non-polluting electric mower (some of which are cordless!).

6. **Convert to Drip Irrigation Systems.** Drip irrigation systems (micro-irrigation systems) deliver water directly to your plants with minimal waste. According to Colorado State University, drip irrigation systems are around 90 percent efficient, whereas traditional sprinkle systems are only around 50-70 percent efficient.
7. **Cut Down on Energy Use with Solar Powered Landscaping Lights.** Using a few solar powered landscaping lights can help to reduce your overall energy use.
8. **Use Rain Barrels to Irrigate + Landscape.** You can cut back on your water use by storing water in rain barrels and using it to irrigate your garden and landscaping. Rainwater is naturally soft water that is chemical-free. Using rainwater also reduces municipal storm water runoff.
9. **Compost!** Composting occurs in nature and is a process that keeps organic nutrients cycling from soil to plants and back to the soil. Things like fruit peels, grass clippings, leaves, etc. are great materials to recycle and mix into garden soil. Composting has many benefits, including: reducing municipal waste, improving soil moisture retention, boosting plants' immune systems, and reducing the need for chemical fertilizers.
10. **Use Natural and Organic Products and Techniques for Landscape Maintenance.** Try out a few organic pesticides or fertilizers and see what works for you. Even if you switch to just a couple organic products, you'll be helping by reducing harmful wastewater runoff and creating a healthier environment for your family and pets.
11. **Grow a Small Kitchen Garden of Fruits and Vegetables.** Harvesting your own fruits and vegetables is a great way to save money and live in a more sustainable way.

*-JetsonGreen.com*



**For member service please call**  
1-800-698-2007  
Monday-Friday, 8-5:00  
or visit us online at  
[www.nhec.coop](http://www.nhec.coop)

**To report an outage please call**  
1-800-343-6432

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