

Preparing your members for AMI

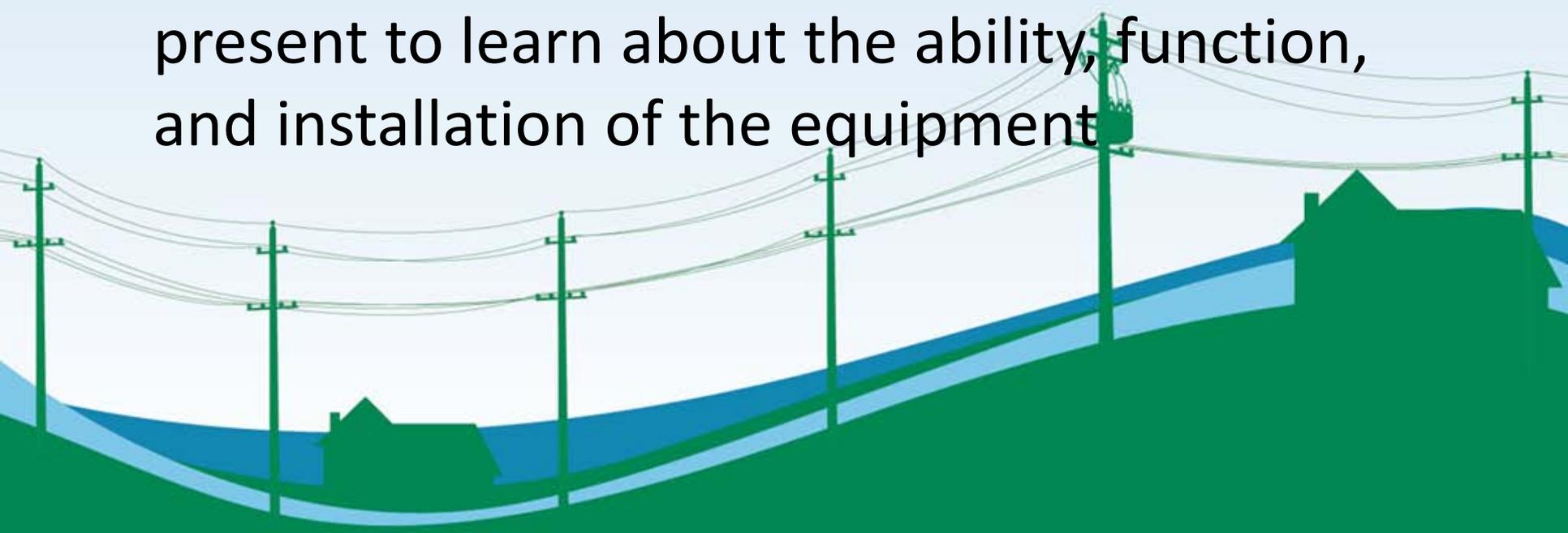
Chellie Phillips, CCC/MCC

South Alabama EC





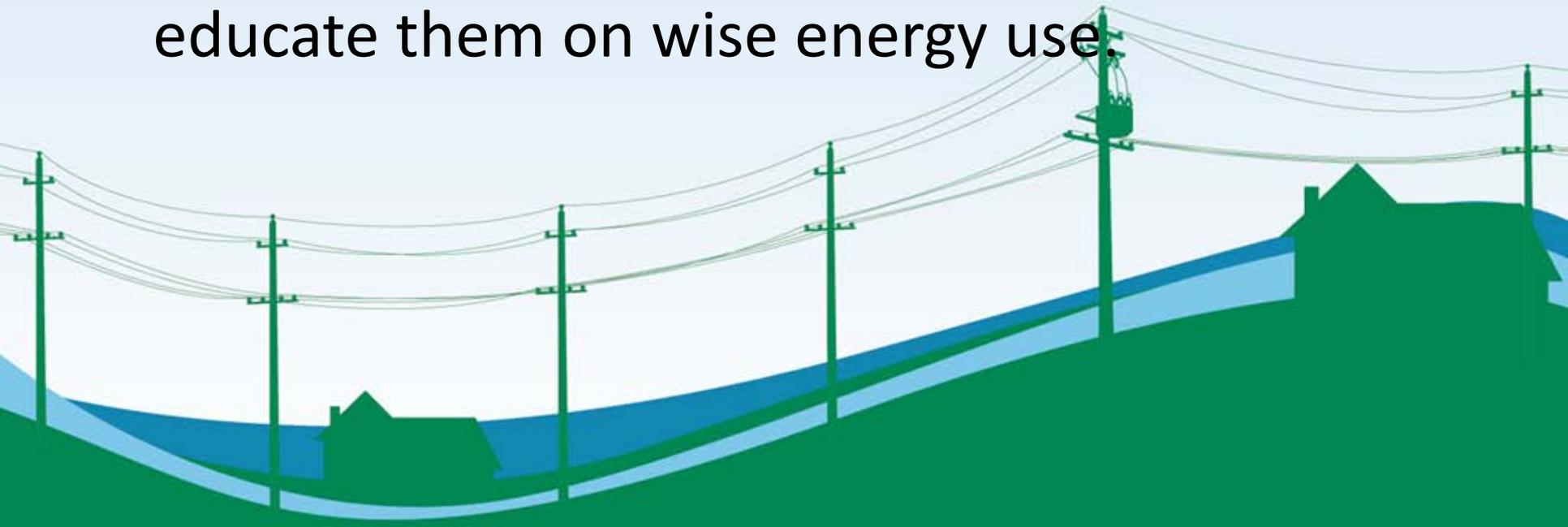
Start at the beginning... prepare your employees

- Once the decision to implement AMI was made, our manager brought in the two leading vendor for an in-house presentation
 - Employees from each department were present to learn about the ability, function, and installation of the equipment
- 



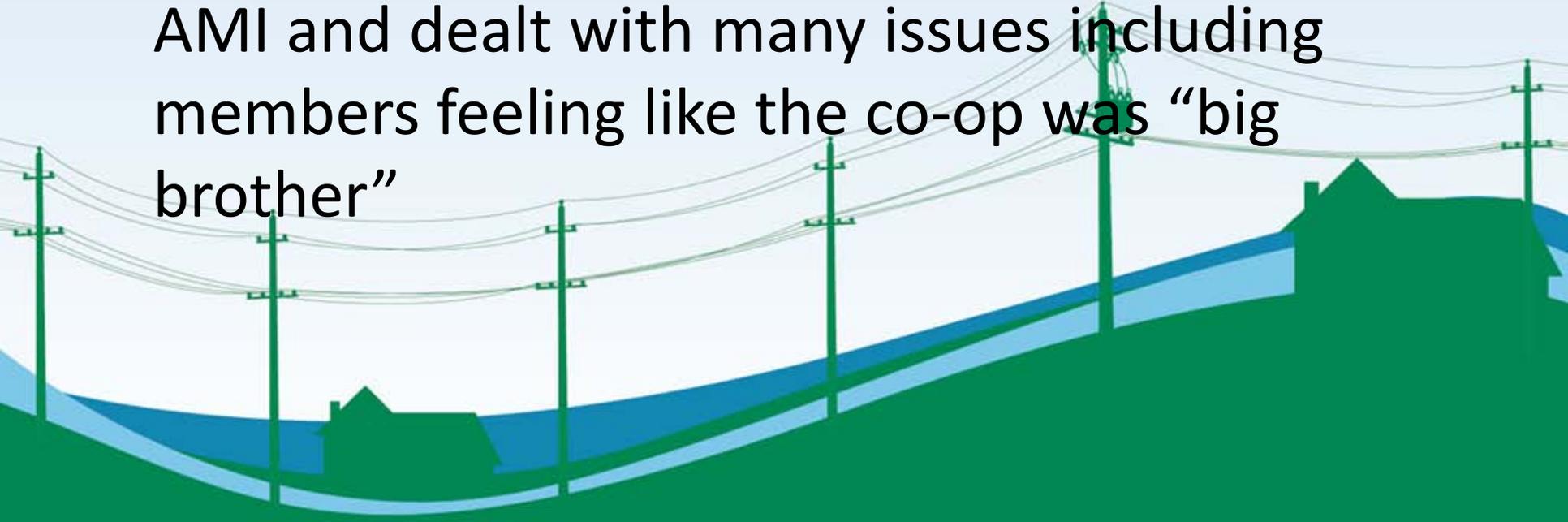
What we were up against

- Surveys showed that our members did not feel we used technology to best help them
- However, we scored high in areas that showed we cared about our members and helped educate them on wise energy use.





More issues...

- We started this project just as AMI was really picking up media exposure thanks to stimulus issues
 - A neighboring co-op had already implemented AMI and dealt with many issues including members feeling like the co-op was “big brother”
- 



Roles at the Cooperative

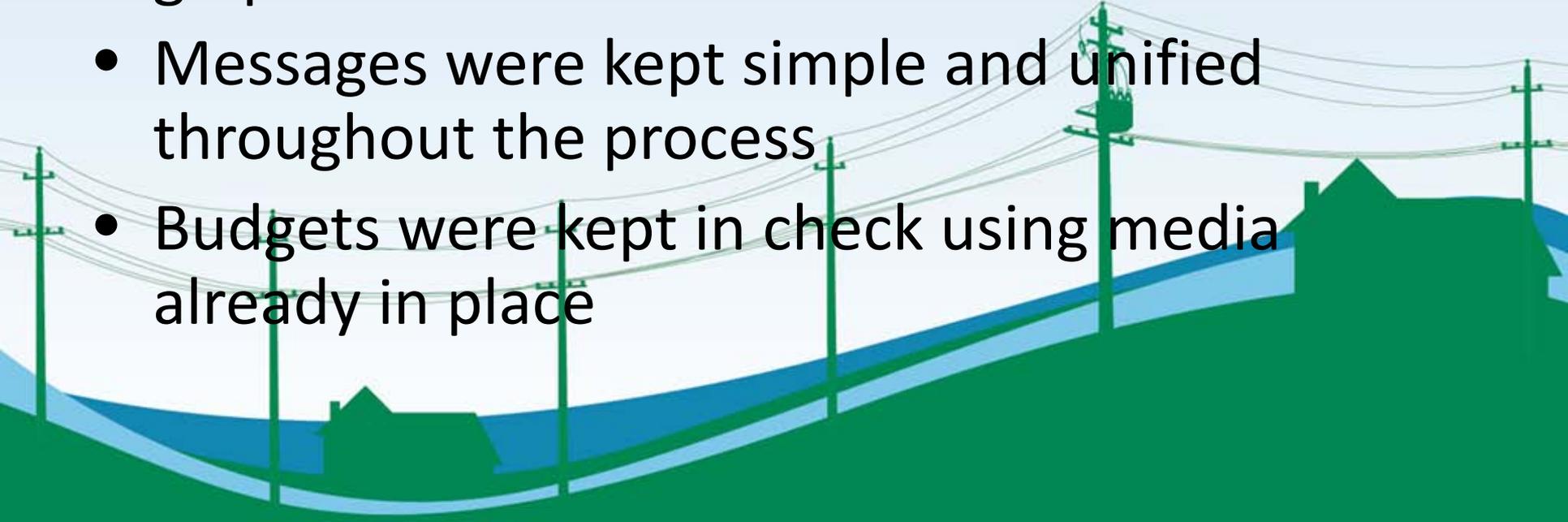
- **General Manager** – his key message was that members understood what was taking place and that it was a program that not only benefited the cooperative, but the members as well.
 - He involved all key staff & departments in the planning of the program
- 

Roles at the Cooperative

- **Engineering** – our system engineer and engineering assistant worked closely with communications and marketing on all pieces created for our members. Dates and installation progress was reported weekly at staff meetings
- Engineering participated in the production of a member information video.



Roles at Cooperative

- **Communications/ Member Services:**
Identified key messages, production schedules, coordinated information between departments, worked with vendor on needed graphics and technical information
 - Messages were kept simple and unified throughout the process
 - Budgets were kept in check using media already in place
- 



How we developed message

- Brainstorming session at office
- Case studies from other cooperatives
- Survey data

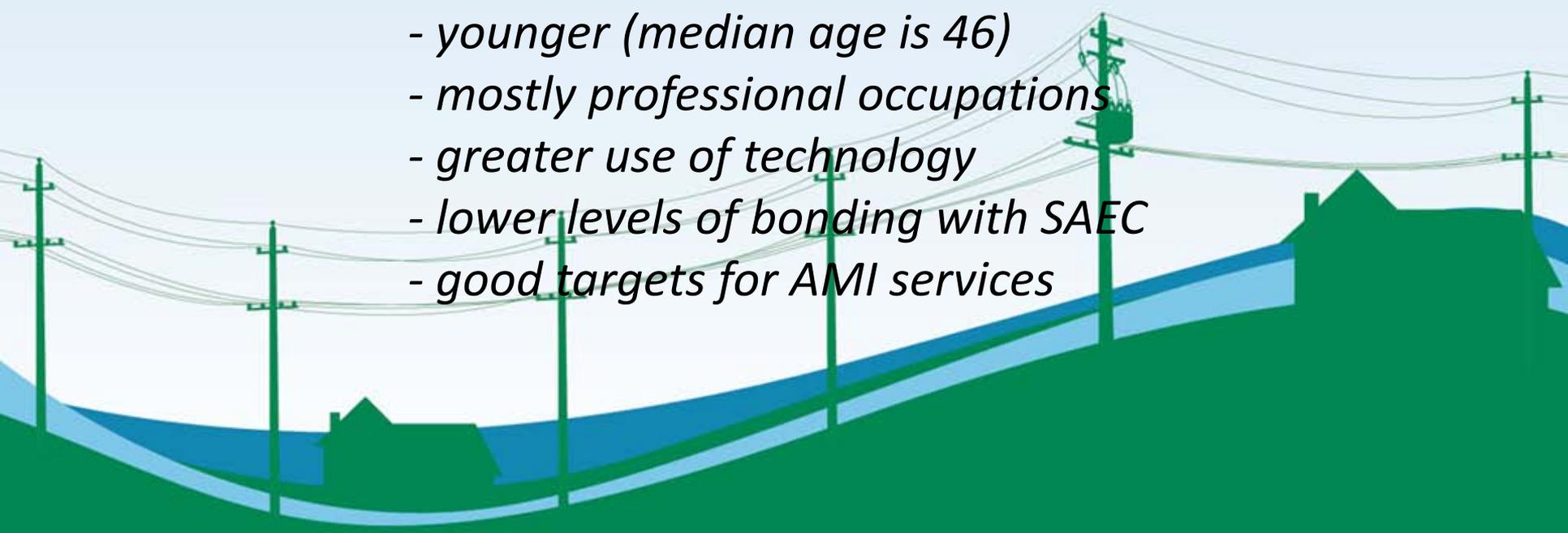




2011 New Member Survey Respondents

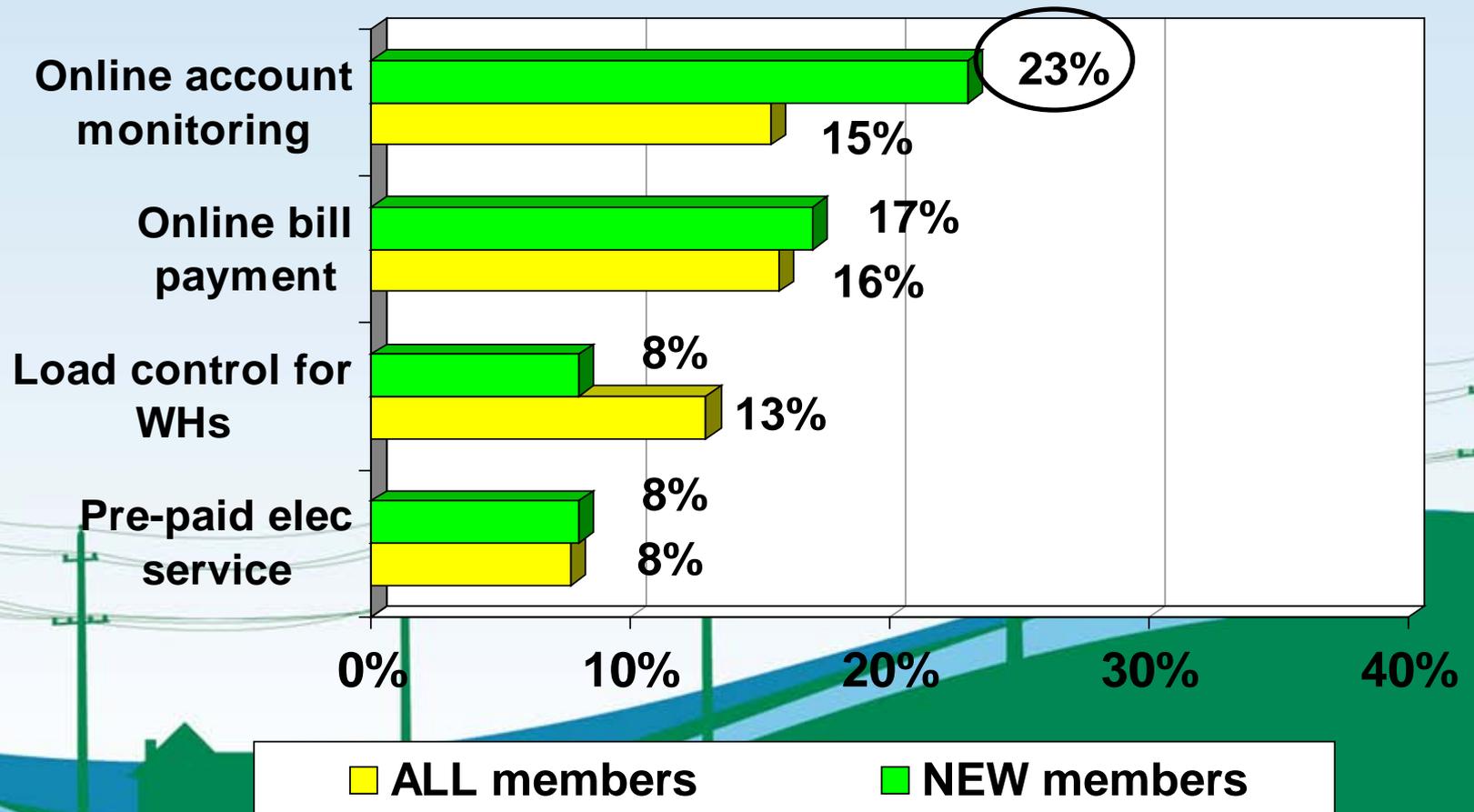
** Regular NEW MEMBER SURVEYS show greater interest in new services – including those involving AMI technology – among new members*

** New members are –*

- younger (median age is 46)*
 - mostly professional occupations*
 - greater use of technology*
 - lower levels of bonding with SAEC*
 - good targets for AMI services*
- 

New Member Survey Respondents

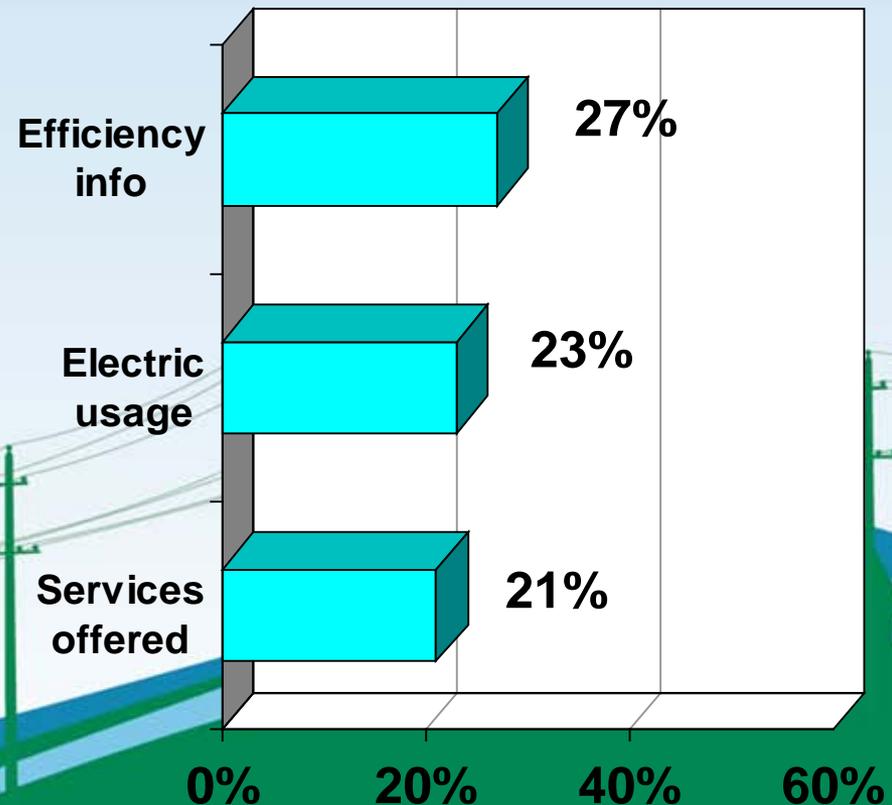
Interest in New Smart Meter Services



Strategic Communication Issues

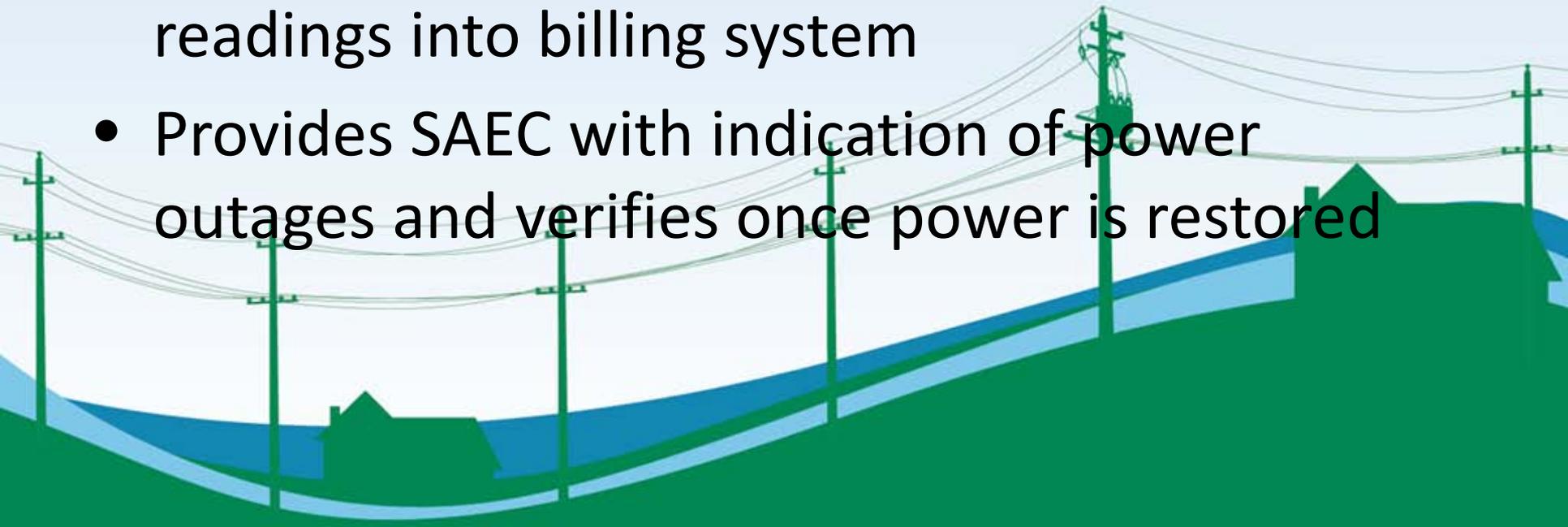
- About two-thirds of SAEC members have Internet service
- Co-op website use growing, now at 15%
- Higher interest in energy efficiency and tracking home usage
- Nearly 3 in 10 are also interested in SAEC social media communication

Most Important Website Features



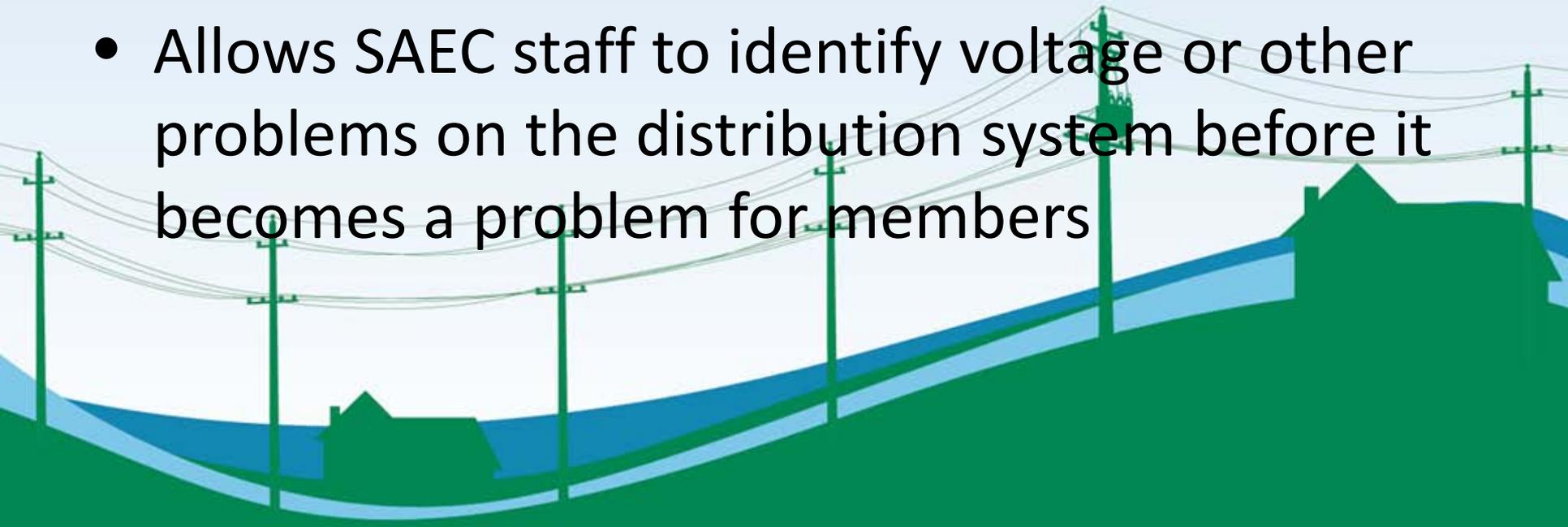
Messages were...

- Eliminating the need for SAEC personnel to visit your home monthly (dogs, gates, privacy)
- Reduces the potential for human error reading, recording, and entering meter readings into billing system
- Provides SAEC with indication of power outages and verifies once power is restored



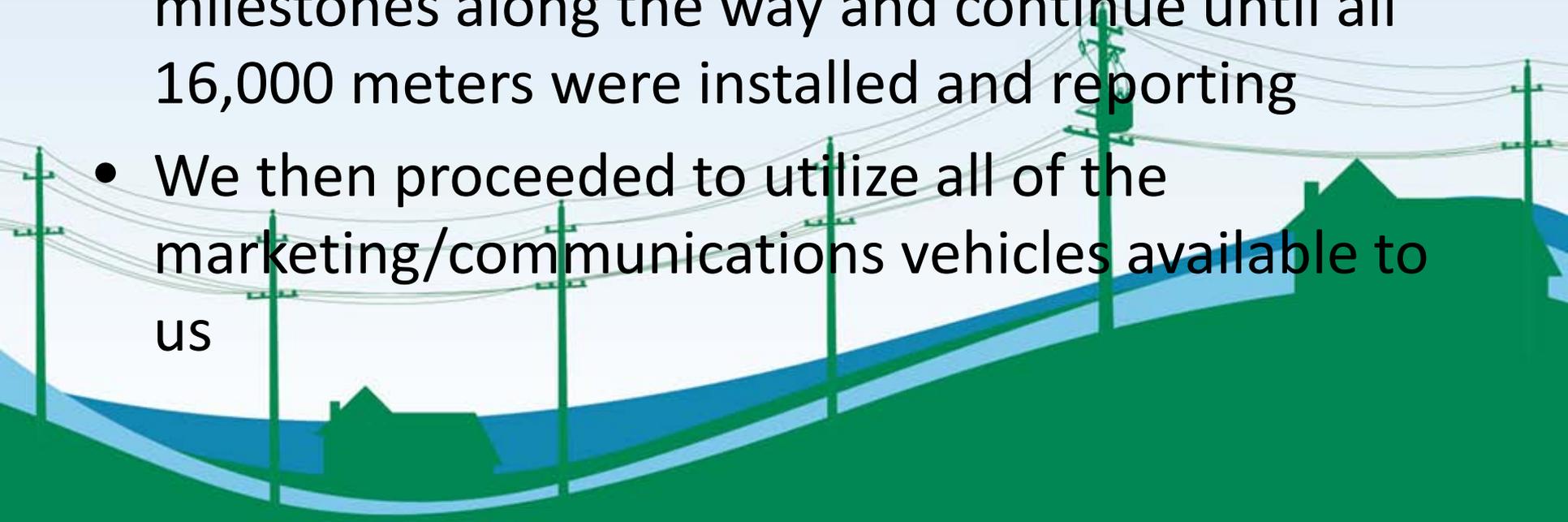
Messages were...

- Allows SAEC to provide you with an indication of daily usage to help you better manage energy consumption
- Helps deter power theft
- Allows SAEC staff to identify voltage or other problems on the distribution system before it becomes a problem for members





Timing is Everything

- We announced the program at our Annual Meeting in October 2009, however installation did not begin until Spring 2010.
 - Our communications plan was designed to mark milestones along the way and continue until all 16,000 meters were installed and reporting
 - We then proceeded to utilize all of the marketing/communications vehicles available to us
- 

Hands on Display at Annual Meeting



Letter to Members



South Alabama Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 449
Troy, AL 36081-0449
Telephone: (334) 566-2060
Alabama Watts: (800) 556-2060
Fax: (334) 566-8949

Dear Member:

I wanted to give you advance notice about some new high-tech developments that will soon make service even better for all members of South Alabama Electric Cooperative.

The new technology is called a "smart meter." Over the next six months, you'll be seeing our contractor crews from Team STS out in your area installing these smart meters for every member we serve.

TEAMSTS
Specialized Technical Services

We're really excited about the benefits the new meters will provide:

- **Automated readings** – no longer will we have to go out and read your meter each month.
- **High bills** – we can help analyze hourly and daily meter readings to help you better understand how to use electricity more efficiently. You can even view your electric usage online.
- **Daily readings** – your monthly electric bills will be more evenly spread throughout the year, plus if needed, we can disconnect service at one location and reconnect at another the same day.
- **Faster restoration** – we will be able to pinpoint areas affected by outages so we can respond more quickly, and even automatically confirm when your power is restored.
- **Two-way communication** – smart meters send and receive information over power lines, so we can also use them for things like electric water heater load control to help reduce power costs.
- **Power theft** – the system instantly detects meter tampering and reduces the potential for costly and dangerous power theft, which benefits all members.

The full installation process will take about 18 months. During the installation, we'll also be reading each meter and transferring usage data to the new meters so that we can verify complete accuracy. Thank you in advance for your patience as we make these system improvements.

More than a customer, you are also one of the owners of South Alabama Electric. We're working harder than ever to find new and innovative ways to serve you – like installing smart meter equipment – to improve the service to all of our customer-members.

If you have any other questions, please call us toll-free at 1-800-556-2060, or visit us online at www.southaec.com. Thanks again for the opportunity to serve you. We look forward to continuing to meet your needs.

Sincerely,

Max I. Davis
General Manager

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

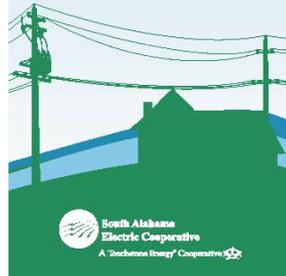
Brochure

The advantages:

- Eliminates the need for SAEC personnel to visit your home monthly to read your meter.
- Reduces the potential for human error in reading, recording and entering your meter reading into SAEC's billing system, ensuring that your bill will be accurate each month.
- Provides SAEC with an indication of power outages. Once power is restored, SAEC initiates verification without the need to call you... in the middle of the night.
- Enables SAEC to monitor the maximum demand at your home to ensure that the transformer serving your home is adequately sized to accommodate your energy usage. This is very important when it is 100 degrees outside and your air conditioner is running constantly to keep up.
- Enables SAEC to provide you with an indication of your daily usage to help you understand how variables such as temperature and the number of people in your home affect your cost of energy each day.
- Provides daily and even hourly meter readings, which we can use to better help members understand their electric usage and make smart energy decisions.
- Helps deter power theft, which ultimately affects all our members. When meters are by-passed or stolen from another location, it's costly and dangerous. The new metering system will send us a notification if a meter is removed from its proper location.



smart meter



South Alabama Electric Cooperative
A "Technet Energy" Cooperative

www.southaec.com
1-800-556-2060

South Alabama Electric Cooperative
A "Technet Energy" Cooperative



smart meter

South Alabama Electric Cooperative (SAEC) is replacing old, dial mechanical electric meters at your home and business with new "smart" meters that deliver valuable information to our office so we can serve you better.

The device will read your meter automatically each day, and return this usage information over the power lines back to SAEC. This usage data is then incorporated into the utility's computerized operating systems using customized software. Because the system communicates over the power line, there is additional information that the system provides that will help us identify outages and conduct preventative maintenance.

Smart meters also give you, the member, access to valuable information about energy usage at your home or business, helping you make educated decisions about energy usage and conservation.

Another advantage of the smart meter is that it enables two-way communication. This will allow SAEC to use smart meters for such services as load control and remote service connect/disconnect.

HOW IT WORKS



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Alabama Living

• Our monthly member magazine goes to every membership account.

Smart meters arriving soon

South Alabama Electric is testing technology to work for you. SAC will begin installing smart meters on our electric system this year. The new technology will allow members to track their energy usage in real time. This will help you understand your energy usage better and make adjustments to your usage to save money.

Smart meters will allow you to:

- Monitor energy usage in real time. This will help you understand your energy usage better and make adjustments to your usage to save money.
- Track energy usage by appliance. This will help you identify areas where you can save energy.
- Receive alerts when your energy usage is high. This will help you avoid high energy bills.
- Track energy usage by time of day. This will help you identify when you use the most energy.
- Track energy usage by location. This will help you identify where you use the most energy.

South Alabama Electric Monthly Operating Report

EMR Bill	\$121,716.76
Aug. 1st Bill	\$20,518.59
Aug. 1st	\$1,881.00
Bill	\$1,619.00
Cost per kWh	1.26
Customer per kWh	4.22

Reference from OCTOBER 2011

New meters arrive next month

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Davis awarded scholarship

Our Board member, Bill Davis, has been awarded a scholarship by the South Alabama Electric Association. This scholarship is given to a member who has demonstrated exceptional leadership and commitment to the community.

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Customer service is just a click away

South Alabama Electric is committed to providing excellent customer service. Our website offers a variety of services, including account management, service requests, and more. Visit our website today to learn more.

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Home Is Where Our Heart Is

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We're Different. We're Looking Out for You

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Project reaches half way point

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Board of Trustees

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Smart meter update

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Meter installation now complete

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Annual Reports

Preparing for A Bright Future



While preparing for the future is important, we've had to figure out how to prepare for the present. We've had to invest in our infrastructure to ensure we can meet the needs of our customers today and tomorrow.

Our new smart meters are a key part of this investment. They will help us to better understand our customers' energy usage and to provide them with more information about their energy usage. This will help us to better serve our customers and to ensure that we are providing them with the highest quality of service possible.

Our smart meters will also help us to identify areas where we can improve our energy efficiency. This will help us to reduce our carbon footprint and to save money on our energy costs. This is a win-win for everyone.

Our smart meters will also help us to identify areas where we can improve our safety. This will help us to prevent accidents and to ensure that our customers are safe. This is a win-win for everyone.

Our smart meters will also help us to identify areas where we can improve our customer service. This will help us to better understand our customers' needs and to provide them with the best possible service. This is a win-win for everyone.

ing the need for SCE's personnel to visit your home each month.

- Smart Meters provide SCE with an indication of power usage. Once power is received, SCE meters measure the amount of electricity used by your home.
- Smart Meters allow SCE to monitor the amount of electricity used by your home to ensure that the meter is working properly.
- Smart Meters provide a more accurate picture of your energy usage. This is a more accurate picture of your energy usage than a traditional meter can provide.
- Smart Meters will help us to better understand our customers' energy usage and to provide them with more information about their energy usage.
- Smart Meters will help us to identify areas where we can improve our energy efficiency.
- Smart Meters will help us to reduce our carbon footprint and to save money on our energy costs.
- Smart Meters will help us to identify areas where we can improve our safety.
- Smart Meters will help us to prevent accidents and to ensure that our customers are safe.
- Smart Meters will help us to identify areas where we can improve our customer service.
- Smart Meters will help us to better understand our customers' needs and to provide them with the best possible service.

MEMBER BENEFIT

Our smart meters will help us to better understand our customers' energy usage and to provide them with more information about their energy usage. This will help us to better serve our customers and to ensure that we are providing them with the highest quality of service possible.

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SYSTEM UPDATES

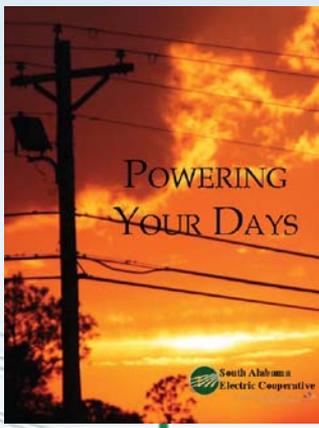
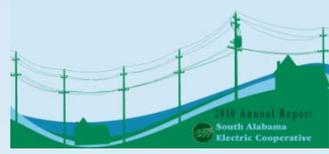
Our smart meters will help us to better understand our customers' energy usage and to provide them with more information about their energy usage. This will help us to better serve our customers and to ensure that we are providing them with the highest quality of service possible.

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2010



The future means bright and shiny new technology that we can use to improve our energy efficiency and to save money on our energy costs. This is a win-win for everyone.

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2011



Bill Stuffers



smart meter

Putting technology
to work for you.

During the next few weeks, South Alabama EC (SAEC) will begin installing smart meters on our electric system, offering numerous benefits to our members.

This process will take several months. You may see SAEC employees or contracted employees from Team STS working on the meter at your home or business.

If you have any questions or concerns, call us at 1-800-556-2060.



South Alabama
Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

SAEC's new 'smart' meter:

- Eliminates the need for SAEC personnel to visit your home monthly to read your meter.
- Reduces the potential for human error in reading, recording and entering your meter reading into SAEC's billing system. This ensures your bill will be accurate each month.
- Eliminates a need to estimate your bill during months your property was inaccessible or missed by the reader.
- Provides SAEC an indication of power outages. Once power is restored, SAEC receives verification without the need to call you.
- Enables us to monitor the maximum demand at your home to ensure the transformer feeding your home is adequately sized.
- Enables SAEC to provide you an indication of your daily usage to help you control energy costs.
- Helps deter power theft.

Look for additional information online at www.southaec.com or inside future issues of your Alabama Living magazine.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 1-800-556-2060.



South Alabama
Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



smart meter

Putting technology
to work for you.

South Alabama EC (SAEC) is halfway through the installation of smart meters on our electric system, offering numerous benefits.

You may see SAEC employees or contracted employees from Team STS working on the meter at your home or business.

We're excited about the number of advantages the new meter reading system will bring to our electric co-op and our members. If you have any questions or concerns call us at 1-800-556-2060.



South Alabama
Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

What can a new automated meter reading program do?

- Smart meters offer a high degree of accuracy and allow SAEC to collect data about our utility system. In turn, we can spot problems with the system before members are affected.
- Our engineers can monitor distribution system data from an electronic meter and determine if transformers at your home or business are adequate in size and location.
- Electronic meters allow SAEC to identify power blinks and voltage fluctuation. Having this information quickly allows us to respond to potential problems before an actual outage occurs.
- The new meters help deter power theft, which affects all our members with higher costs. The new system will send a notification if a meter is moved from its proper location.

Look for additional information online at www.southaec.com. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 1-800-556-2060.



South Alabama
Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



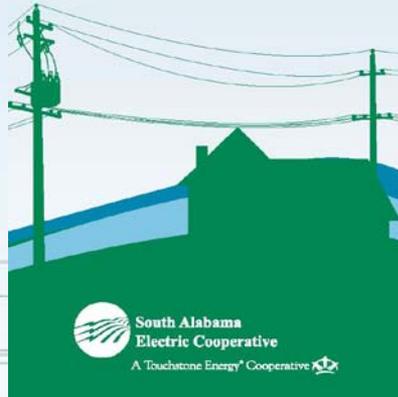
smart meter

Putting technology
to work for you.

Smart meter technology is in place for our members, and we are confident the benefits will be worth the wait!

We're excited about the number of advantages the new meter reading system will bring to our electric co-op and our members.

If you have any questions or concerns call us at 1-800-556-2060.



South Alabama
Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

SAEC's new 'smart' meter:

- Allows us to better show you how your home or business is using electricity.
- Collects hourly data that helps determine usage patterns we can provide or you can view online. You can compare your energy usage to weather changes.
- Makes moving your electric service from one location to another simple. We can accurately stop billing at one address and start at another the same day.
- Improves the efficiency with which we restore power during an outage. We can track which electric meters are operational, making sure all power is restored before crews move to another affected area.

Look for additional information online at www.southaec.com or inside future issues of your Alabama Living magazine.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 1-800-556-2060.



South Alabama
Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Be adaptable

- One complaint was members couldn't figure out how to read their new meter.
- Office display and new stuffer created



Office Display



How to read your new



smart meter

Your new Smart Meter allows South Alabama EC to collect more information about our system. That's why your meter blinks a series of three sets of numbers.



This is a test pattern to make sure all the digits are showing up correctly. If there is a problem with one of the "eights," it doesn't mean that the meter reading is wrong, it means that there is a problem with the display.



The numbers should range from 220 to 254. This is SAEC's line voltage — not the voltage inside your home.



This is the actual kilowatt-hour reading — or how many kilowatt-hours you have used. This is what your monthly power bill is based on.

How to read your new



smart meter

Your new Smart Meter allows the cooperative to collect more information about the utility system. That's why when you look at your new meter, you may notice that the display will blink a series of three sets of numbers.

The first set is all eights (photo 1). This is a test pattern to make sure that all the digits are showing up correctly on the LED screen. If there is a problem with one of the "eights", it doesn't mean that the meter reading is wrong, it means that there is a problem with the display.

The second group of numbers has a "v" in front of three numbers that should range from 220 to 254. This is SAEC's line voltage, not the voltage inside your house (photo 2).

The final set of numbers (photo 3) is the actual kWh reading — or how kilowatt hours have flown through that meter. This is what your monthly power bill is based on.



Board of Trustees

Bill Hixon
District 1

James Shaver
District 2

Leo Williams
District 3

Ben Norman
District 4

DeLaney Kervin
District 5

Norman D. Green
District 6

Glenn Reeder
District 7

James May
At Large



Look for Annual Meeting Highlights on page 8



South Alabama
Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Electronic Promotions

- Used Email blasts, Social Media, Web Pages
- All updated as installation progressed
- Interactive Maps
- Videos



New Services Coming from South Alabama Electric Cooperative - Message (HTML)

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Actions Help

Reply Reply to All Forward

From: SAEC Member Services [saec@inside-info.com]
To: daveb@baldwinassociates.com
Cc:
Subject: New Services Coming from South Alabama Electric Cooperative

November 2010

Smart Meter update e-mails

Send to all members with e-mail addresses in the database



South Alabama Electric Cooperative

New high-tech developments are making service even better for the members of South Alabama Electric Co-op.

We're installing new "smart meters" for every member we serve. Here are a few of the benefits they will provide –

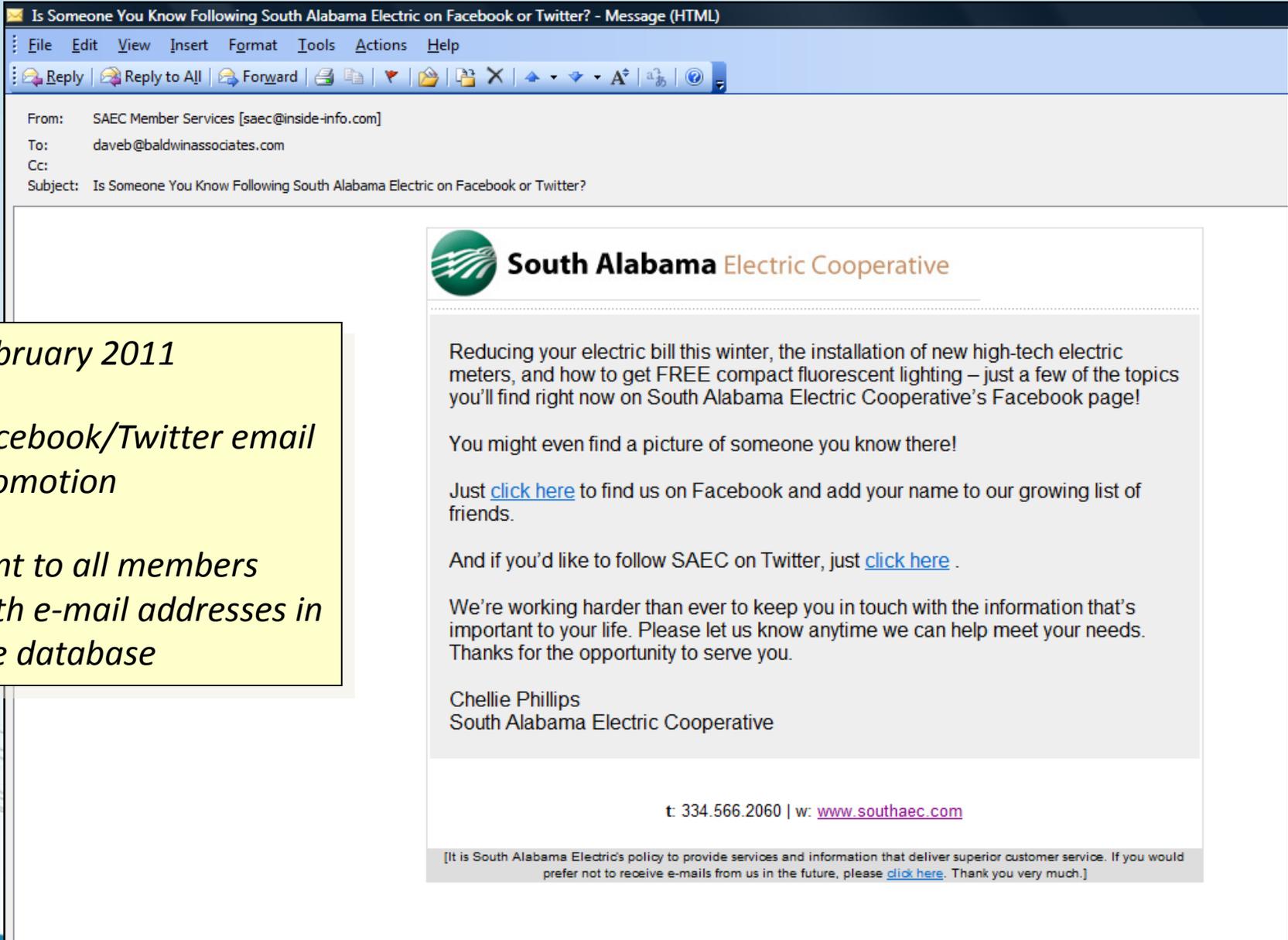
- **Automated meter readings** – once "smart meters" are installed system wide an employee or contractor of SAEC will no longer come to your home to get monthly meter reading. Estimated system wide installation completion is December 2011.
- **Help cut electric bills** – hourly meter readings to help you use electricity more efficiently. You can even view your electric usage online.
- **Faster outage restoration** – we can pinpoint and respond more quickly to outages, and even automatically confirm when your power is restored.

If the "smart meter" at your home hasn't been installed yet, just click to our website at www.southaec.com to view the installation map to see how soon it'll be arriving.

Don't forget to bookmark the South Alabama website for quick access in the future too – new and improved features, but still the same quality customer service you've come to expect!

Thank you very much for the opportunity to be of service.

Chellie Phillips
South Alabama Electric Cooperative



February 2011

Facebook/Twitter email promotion

Sent to all members with e-mail addresses in the database



PAY BILL
CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS

Complete our residential survey and receive a gift from SAEC.
Note: You must enter your e-mail to qualify.

Quick Spotlight

Español

MV-WEB



Advanced Metering Infrastructure

Welcome to SAEC Online!

SAEC was organized on June 17, 1937. The membership fee has remained at \$5 since that first day.

South Alabama Electric has continued to grow each year. To date we have approximately 2,635 miles of line.

We began the Good Cents program in 1986 and have continued to add quality services for our members every year. [Read more](#)



Announcements

View Our 2011 Annual Report
[Click here](#) to visit the Annual Report Page

Resolve to make electrical safety a priority
Even if you do not traditionally make resolutions, the Energy Education Council's Safe Electricity program has one resolution you should definitely consider

February 2012
Link to the AMI update page is prominently displayed on the SAEC website home page

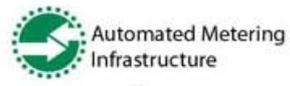


integrity, innovation, community, commitment

PAY BILL
CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS

Complete our residential survey and receive a gift from SAEC. 
Note: You must enter your e-mail to qualify.

Quick Spotlight



Automated Meter Reading System

[Home](#) | [News Center](#) | [Automated Meter Reading System](#)  

The future remains bright. And while we work to incorporate new technology into our daily work, we never want to forget the core values and principles by which your cooperative was founded.

We also work hard to honor the principles set in place when we joined the national branding movement of Touchstone Energy over 10 years ago. These principles included: integrity, innovation, commitment to community and accountability.

That's one reason we're pleased to let you know that we have finished the successful installation of our Automated Metering system. Beginning in July 2010, South Alabama Electric Cooperative (SAEC) replaced all of the existing electric meters at your homes and businesses with meters that deliver valuable kilowatt usage information to our office so we can serve you better.

COLLECTING KILOWATT USAGE DATA

These meters read your meter automatically each day, and return your usage

*February 2012
AMI page on SAEC
website received 2,401
total visits during 2011*

Use of AMI Information On SAEC Website

- AMI update page was 6th most used website page in 2011 with 2,401 total visits
- AMI page averaging just under 200 visits per month
- AMI page included a map showing install progress and a video of new meter features



Video

- Video was used at our annual meeting and also placed on our website. Highlights the benefits and the installation process.



Continued efforts

South Alabama Electric Cooperative welcomes you

At SAEC, you are more than just a customer; you are a member. And since 1937, South Alabama Electric has been looking out for you, our members.

Electric cooperatives are owned by their members. Unlike other businesses who work to provide their shareholders with profits, our priority is to make sure you have reliable electric service at an affordable price.

Our board of trustees is made up of members just like you. And they, like our employees, are interested in making sure you continue to receive reliable electric service at an affordable cost.

Your \$5 membership opens the door to all of the programs and services we have available. If you'd like information about these or any of the other programs and services listed please fill out the attached card and return it to our office.

SAEC: Putting technology to work for you

South Alabama Electric's Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system allows us to provide these benefits:

- **Automated readings:** We no longer have to send someone to your home to get a monthly meter reading.
- **Daily readings:** Daily readings from your meter means each billing cycle has approximately the same number of days, so your electric usage remains more evenly spread throughout the year.
- **Voltage information:** Our engineers can receive voltage information from your home or business. We can also balance electric loads on the



distribution lines, which helps our system operate more efficiently and safely.

- **Outage information:** SAEC power lines are used to transmit information regarding electric outages, billing, etc... that affects our service to you.
- **Faster restoration:** We are able to identify areas affected during outages, which enables us to respond more quickly. This system even allows for a signal to be sent from our office to the meter to test and see if power has been restored.
- **Managing your usage:** Since we are able to analyze daily meter readings, we will be able to better help you understand your electric usage.



Your accurate emergency outage phone number on file helps us quickly pinpoint your location, deploy line personnel and make repairs to shorten outages. Be sure SAEC has on record the number you will most likely call from to report an outage (like your cell phone).

Billing information:

The cooperative bills in four (4) cycles each month. The date for the cycle depends on the location of your electric account. Under this format, your electric bill will be mailed either on the 8th, 15th, 22nd or 29th of each month.

These dates remain the same unless it falls on a holiday. When this occurs, the billing date will be the next regular workday. Your bill is due upon receipt and delinquent 15 days from the billing date. A delinquent fee of \$7.00 is added to all past due accounts. Your electric account is subject to disconnection if not paid within 25 days of the billing date.

If your service is disconnected for nonpayment, a reconnection fee will be added to your account. During normal working hours a \$30 disconnect fee and a \$30 reconnect fee must be paid in order for the power to be restored. After normal working hours a \$30 disconnect fee and a \$45 reconnect fee must be paid for power to be restored.



SAEC's Annual Membership Meeting

Each year on the last Tuesday in October, your cooperative holds an annual membership meeting. This is where your board of directors are elected and where you learn about the cooperative's programs, philosophy and strengths.



It's easy to stay in touch

With just a few clicks of the mouse, you can access information about SAEC programs, your electric account, safety and conservation information. Visit our website at www.southaec.com to see what we have to offer.



The 24/7 Member Account Line, (877) 566-0611, is an affordable way for SAEC to connect with our members. Services include account balance inquiries, last payment received, next payment due, ability to make a payment and update account information.

The Member Account Line does not replace our Automated Outage Reporting System or your ability to contact our office.

Please send more information to me about the following:

- Bill from Utility Meter
 - AMI Web Services for Electric Accounts
 - Billing & Payment Options**
 - Traditional Billing
 - Traditional Billing with South
 - Credit Card Payments by Phone
 - Online Bill Payment
 - Collections Reinst
 - Bulk Electric Service
 - Community & Youth**
 - Electric Foundations Scholarship Program
 - Youth Title
 - Jobs for Progress
 - Project Start
- Account Number _____
- Name _____
- Address _____
- City, State, Zip _____
- Phone _____
- E-mail address _____

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South Alabama Electric Cooperative



 **South Alabama Electric Cooperative**
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Utilize Your Vendor

- Vendor can provide case studies from other utilities and resources
- They know the product, its benefits, issues
- Develop that relationship





Success!

- All 16,323 residential meters were changed out in less than a year. Ahead of schedule!
- Only 3 complaints from members – pacemaker, security system, don't trust it



Contact information

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www.southaec.com

Like us on Facebook and Twitter!

