Dig it
Unearthing fossil treasures

GEO MESSAGE
Damaged power lines can cost you

UPDATE
Broadband continues progress

SC RECIPE
Summer’s tomato bounty
Hunt responsibly this season

ONE OF MY FAVORITE times of the year is quickly approaching—hunting season. I’d like to take this opportunity to remind you to hunt responsibly whenever you’re near electrical or telecommunications lines and equipment.

Firearms discharged near power lines or fiber optic cable can pose a significant threat to the safety of both hunters and our dedicated line workers. A stray bullet can cause severe damage to our electric lines and conductors, resulting in power outages, compromising electrical safety and even endangering the lives of our employees.

Besides the safety issue, there’s also the matter of cost. Repairing and replacing damaged electric lines, fiber optic cable and equipment is an expensive endeavor that impacts every member of our cooperative. Expenses can increase operational costs and financial burdens for our entire membership. By acting responsibly and following safety guidelines, we can collectively reduce the financial strain on our cooperative. AEC invoices responsible parties when they damage our facilities whether it is electric or fiber.

This hunting and dove season, use caution and select locations that are a safe distance from power lines. For more tips on how to avoid power lines when hunting, see the article on page 5.

I also want to recognize the winners of our e-bill drawing, who won some summer essentials—Andrew Krull, Wanda Higgingbottom and Andy Cutler. When members sign up for e-bill, they enjoy the ease and convenience of having just what they need at their fingertips, saving the co-op money for printing and mailing—that’s a win-win. To sign up for ebill, visit our website at aikenco-op.org.

Thank you for your cooperation and commitment to the well-being of our cooperative.

GARY L. STOCKSBURY
Chief Executive Officer

Broadband update

Please note that this schedule is not the exact sequence in which service will be provided. It is only an estimated timeline and may change at any time due to weather, supply availability, grant requirements, etc. For more information, visit carolinacomm.net or aikenco-op.org.
Hunters encouraged to avoid power, fiber lines

BY JOSH P. CROZER

HUNTERS MUST ALWAYS be aware of their surroundings if they are to have a safe and successful outing. Dove season in South Carolina opens on Saturday, Sept. 2, and Aiken Electric encourages its members to be aware of any electrical or telecommunications equipment in the fields and forests where they hunt.

For hunters, shooting a bird on a wire is not only contrary to hunter ethics, but it's also unsafe. A direct hit to a conductor, transformer, or other line equipment can cause delayed and expensive consequences.

"The wire might survive for some period; but then, possibly at the most unfortunate time, it burns down," explains Tim Watson, Aiken's coordinator for loss control and safety. "Repair costs then turn into restoration costs and those costs are expensive." Although not the same safety risk as hitting a power line or transformer, fiber optic cable lines—like those being installed throughout the Aiken Electric service area—are more vulnerable to damage when hit. Watson says a shot can penetrate the cable’s outer jacket and pinch off some of the fiber optic strands, causing communication outages.

"It's becoming particularly problematic and expensive," says Watson. "Aiken Electric invoices responsible parties when they damage electric or fiber facilities."

South Carolina's Department of Natural Resources offers the following guidance to avoid power lines while hunting:

▶ Take notice of posted warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.

▶ Know where power lines and equipment are located on the land where you hunt.

▶ Never shoot a bird at less than a 45-degree angle.

▶ Avoid target fixation, which is becoming so focused on the bird you forget where you are shooting.

▶ Be especially careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.

▶ Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them, causing shock or electrocution.

▶ Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Any non-electrical equipment attached to a pole can pose an obstruction and serious hazard to our line crews.

Area public fields and schedule

There are four public dove fields available in our area on a first-come, first-service basis. A Wildlife Management Area permit is required for all fields. Visit the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources online at dnr.sc.gov to find out the season schedules, license requirements and other regulations.

Aiken County
Crackerneck WMA
Bent Rim Rd., 60 acres
Sept. 2, 9, 16
(803) 667-0721

Lexington County
Halifax Field
Rish Dr., 47 acres
Saturdays only
(803) 360-0209

Saluda County
Saluda River Field
Tostie Creek Rd., 28 acres
First season, Saturdays only
(803) 429-7007

Orangeburg County
Santee Cooper WMA
Ferguson Landing Rd., 35 acres
Adult/Youth—Sept. 2; All—Sept. 9, 23, Nov. 11
(803) 609-7011