



## Special insert in this issue focuses on climate-change issues

Leaders from electric cooperatives around the country went to Washington, D.C., last month to talk with our elected representatives. There are many issues that have the potential to affect the business of your electric cooperative and the lives of its members, but none more so than legislation associated with the prospect of global warming and climate change.

The insert in this month's *Today in Mississippi* focuses on the many questions still surrounding climate

change. As our legislators discuss possible "solutions" to the problem, we find ourselves still asking what the exact problems

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are and whether we can be sure the "answers" being debated are correct. There is a very real potential that the proposals being discussed may threaten our country's reliable, affordable electric supply.

Unfortunately, there seems to be

an either/or element to this topic, which is disturbing—you're either an environmentalist or a polluter, either killing the planet or protecting it.

We know that not everyone will agree with the questions raised by the insert, but that's the point—there still needs to be much more discussion on these issues before enormous resources are committed.

There are many scientists and specialists who do not believe man-made carbon dioxide (which makes up less than one-fourth of 1 percent of the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere) is causing the effects we're seeing—if in fact there are any unprecedented effects. The Earth's



By Don Jordan  
General Manager

climate has been changing throughout its history.

Please look through the insert and ask questions. When it comes to energy policy, electric co-ops recognize that consumers will ultimately pay for whatever decisions are made.

The implications to our quality of life are great, so we're working to ensure that the right questions are being asked and that any future decisions are practical and reasonable.

It's Southern Pine Electric Power Association's responsibility to represent our members' interests in this debate, and we will continue to do that.

### How to reach Southern Pine Electric Power Association

For quicker service when you call Southern Pine to report a power outage or just to check on your bill, call the district office that serves you and have your account number ready. Use the phone numbers below or look for the number of your district office on your Southern Pine bill.

#### District Offices

- Taylorsville: (601) 785-6511 or 800-231-5240;
- Hattiesburg branch: (601) 264-0185
- Newton: (601) 683-2200 or 800-698-9573
- New Hebron: (601) 694-2711 or 800-698-9571
- Brandon: (601) 824-7070 or 800-698-9574

Visit your electric cooperative online at [www.spepa.com](http://www.spepa.com)

## Waldrup named to Southern Pine board

Charles E. Waldrup, of Sylvarena, has been named to Southern Pine Electric Power Association's board of direc-



Charles Waldrup

tors. He represents Southern Pine members in Smith County.

Waldrup is executive director of the Smith County Economic Development District. He has previously served as Smith County director for the Mississippi State University Extension Service. He holds a B.S. degree and an M.S. degree from Mississippi State University.

Waldrup is active in several professional and service organizations on the state and local levels. He is on the Smith County Farm Bureau board of directors and serves on the Magnolia Beef and Poultry Expo Planning Committee. He is Safety Day chairman for Jasper and Smith County and is on the Mississippi Farm Bureau

Farm Bill Committee.

Waldrup has also been the recipient of numerous Distinguished Service Awards in many areas of agriculture.

He and his wife, Pam, are active members of Sylvarena Baptist Church. She teaches at Raleigh Elementary.

They have one son, Chad, who works with NRCS in Collins. Chad and his wife, Cheri, live in Hattiesburg.

Waldrup fills the position on the Southern Pine board held previously by Gary Crumpton, who recently passed away.

Southern Pine's directors, elected by the membership at the association's annual meeting, set policies and establish the business structure of the association.

### THE ENERGY EXPERT



Jeremiah Seal, above, gets to know a new WECO meter test board, built by Watt-hour Engineering Co., in Pearl. Jim Jordan, right, says the process of replacing every Southern Pine meter with a new solid-state meter will take more than two years to complete but will significantly improve the quality and efficiency of service for every Southern Pine member.



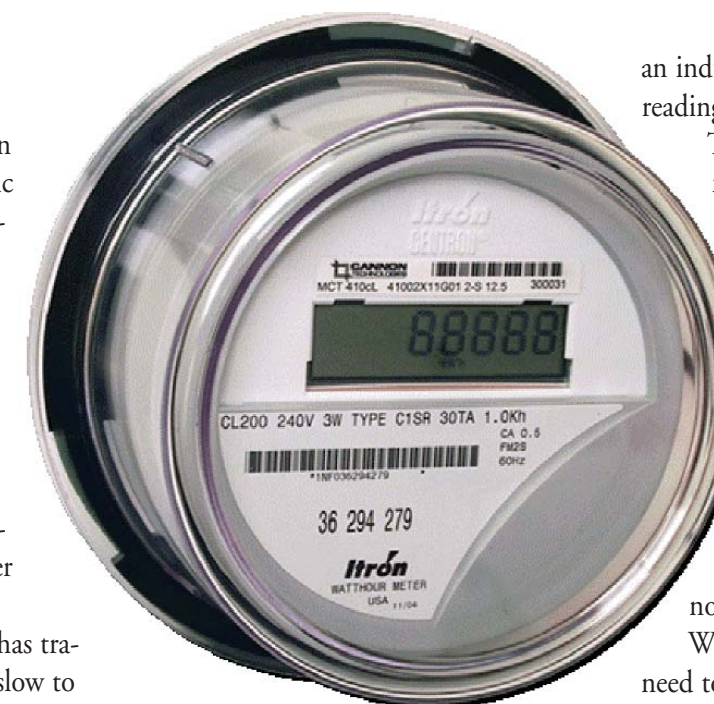
## Southern Pine moves toward Advanced Metering

By Jim Jordan, P.E.  
AMI Project Team Leader

For almost 70 years Southern Pine has been measuring electric power use with electromechanical meters. That's about to change. We are undertaking a major project to replace every meter on the system with a new, state-of-the-art solid-state meter. The new meters will be read remotely from the office and provide lots of useful information to help us provide better and more reliable service.

The electric utility industry has traditionally and inherently been slow to change. However, with the development of new technologies specifically suited for the metering of electricity, our ways of doing business are changing. For almost two years we've been planning for the deployment of an Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI). It's now only a matter of weeks before we install the first AMI meter.

The manual method of reading every meter will no longer be necessary. Southern Pine has been contracting meter-reading services for a number of years but will discontinue the practice. It will allow our employees to give a greater respect for the privacy of our members. However, our service personnel still need unobstructed access to the meter for annual maintenance or in



case of an emergency, such as a house fire.

Most of our meters will be read by utilizing a power line carrier communications system provided by Cooper Power Systems. This requires adding equipment to each substation to communicate over the existing power lines to the meter and from the substation to the office.

Some larger accounts will be read remotely by cellular communications. We've been reading advanced meters with cell phones for some of our larger customers for a number of years. We'll be upgrading many of these meters with newer ones with better wireless systems. To do this, we're working with SmartSynch, based in Jackson. SmartSynch is

an industry leader in wireless metering technology.

The process of replacing every meter on our system is a huge challenge and will take over two years to complete. We're contracting the replacement services with a company called Sooner Meter, which has been specializing in this business for a number of years. They've had successful projects recently with some of the electric power associations in north Mississippi.

With the newer meters comes the need to upgrade our meter-testing capabilities in our meter shop. We've purchased a state-of-the-art test board built by Watt-hour Engineering Co. (WECO), located in Pearl. The reputation of this company within the electric power industry is second to none, so it helps to have them located only an hour's drive from our meter shop.

The new AMI meters provide many benefits for our company and its members. By reading the meters each night, we can develop customer use profiles, which will help answer questions regarding their electricity use. This information will help us in the future to develop new rates closely adapted to our wholesale power rates, which may be beneficial to members. Outage and blink counts will be automatically

recorded in each meter and the data transferred nightly to our computer information system. We can check an individual member's voltage in less than six seconds.

Another added feature of this new technology is the application of a remote service switch. The switch works in conjunction with the new AMI meters and can connect or disconnect an account remotely from the office. An AMI meter will work without the switch, but the switch won't work without an AMI meter. Since the switch costs almost twice as much as the meter itself, we will only be applying them at selected locations.

Upgrades to our computer systems were necessary in order to initiate the nightly meter reads and store the data. We'll be getting tons of data we've never had before. It's going to be a challenge for the employees in the information systems department to manage this data. With this data at their finger tips, our customer service representatives can easily assist consumers with electricity-use questions and provide other helpful information.

The new AMI technology will allow the employees of Southern Pine to provide better service to each and every member. It's a lot of work that will take years to complete, but we're convinced that when it's over it will be worth the effort.