



## Currents from the Manager

By Jim Kinghorn, EVP/General Manager

### Kite Board Safety

Cape Hatteras Electric Cooperative operates in a very different environment than do most electric utilities. We face unique challenges for a number of reasons and one of these challenges is kites.

In recent years, kite boarding has become a popular sport at Hatteras Island. The combination of a mild climate, large bodies of water and strong breezes make Hatteras a favorite destination for this sport. But limited land area and the necessity of overhead power lines create a great concern for your cooperative.

Cooperative personnel have spent a great deal of effort in recent years to keep kite boarders from making contact with our power lines. The Canadian Hole area is a location of special concern. As much as the National Park Service (NPS) dislikes signs, they quickly agreed to permit us to place a large number of warning signs on our transmission line poles throughout this area. The cooperative also funded signs that the NPS placed in other areas. The space available for the power line is especially limited in this area. The NPS has also



set a “no-fly zone” for kites near the power line in the vicinity of Canadian Hole.

While the tethers used with the kite board kites are believed by many to be made of electrically non-conductive material, this is simply not true. Even though the material may be generally non-conductive at low voltages when dry, salt water is definitely conductive and transmission lines are definitely not low voltage. Contacting the electric line with these tethers would be



the same as touching them with a metal wire. Serious injury or death may result.

In 2003, before signs were put in place, a loose kite board kite contacted the power line near Canadian Hole resulting in a transmission line outage. It put Hatteras and Ocracoke Islands in the dark. Thankfully no one was holding the tethers when the contact was made.

### Toy kites also hazardous

“Toy” kites can present similar hazards. In August 2005, a brief transmission outage was necessary for our personnel to safely remove a toy kite entangled in the transmission line. Kites of any kind should never be flown over or near any power line.



Our humid atmosphere is saturated with salt. Kite strings become conductive very quickly, posing a real safety hazard that can cause power outages. Encourage visitors not to leave kites unattended when they are tied off and made stationary. Children should always be supervised when flying kites.

Together we can help make our island a safer place and keep the lights on.

### Help us make our island safer

What can you do as a cooperative member to help make for a safer situation for island guests? You, our members, are our eyes (and mouths) on the island for all sorts of potential problems. Please call and report unsafe situations to the CHEC office. Stop and remind kite users that power lines are overhead. If you own rental property, leave written information in your property to caution renters who might be involved in kiting. (A copy of this article will do nicely). Please realize that each week we have a whole new set of guests that need to be reminded.

To contact CHEC about potential hazards, please call us at (800) 454-5616 or (252) 995-5616.