

POWER



Louisiana Horse Culture

WHAT TO DO ABOUT
PHONE SCAMS

PAGE 3

MARCELLE BIENVENU

PAGE 6

YOUR GENERATOR
SAFETY GUIDE

PAGE 8

The Official Publication of the Southwest Louisiana Electric Membership Corporation

2727 SE Evangeline Thruway
P.O. Box 90866
Lafayette, Louisiana 70509
Phone 337-896-5384
www.slemco.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ACADIA PARISH

Jeff Daigle
Bryan G. Leonards, Sr.

ST. MARTIN PARISH

Jeremy Melancon
Don Resweber

LAFAYETTE PARISH

Carl Comeaux, *Second Vice President*
Johnny Meaux, *Secretary-Treasurer*

ST. LANDRY PARISH

Gary G. Soileau, *First Vice President*
Gary J. Smith

VERMILION PARISH

Joseph David Simon, Jr., *President*
Charles Sonnier

ATTORNEY

James J. Davidson, III

EXECUTIVE STAFF

Katherine Domingue
CEO & General Manager

Jim Laque
Director of Engineering and Strategic Planning

David Moore
Director of Operations

Wayne Phillips
Director of Marketing and Governmental Affairs

Nicole Clements
Chief Financial Officer

SLEMCO POWER STAFF

Mary Laurent, CCC, CKAE, MIP
Editor

SLEMCO POWER (USPS 498-720, ISSN 0274-7685) is published bimonthly by Southwest Louisiana Electric Membership Corporation, 2727 SE Evangeline Thruway, Lafayette, LA 70508. Periodicals postage paid at Lafayette, LA 70509.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to SLEMCO, P.O. Box 90866, Lafayette, LA 70509-0866.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



TAKE NOTE

NOTIFY SLEMCO WHEN WORKING NEAR HIGH VOLTAGE LINES

Keeping our workers safe in the field is our priority. Lineworkers face many hazards on the job, and are trained to use the right safety equipment and procedures when working around power lines.

But did you know your safety around power lines is the law?

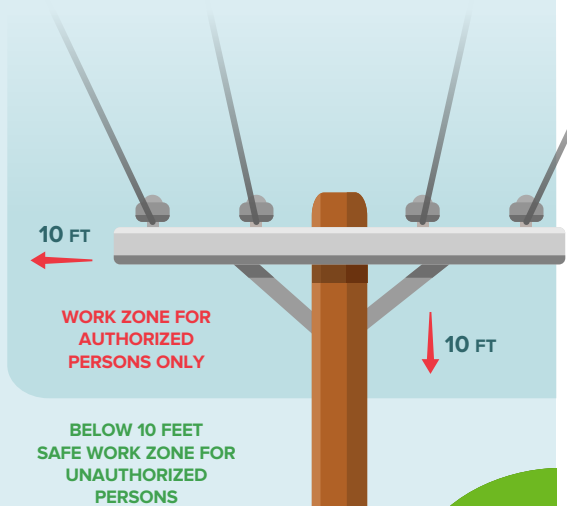
To promote worker and public safety, the Louisiana Legislature has adopted rules for those who work near overhead power lines. *Lucky Number: 3044754000.*

Specifically, Louisiana law (LRS 45: 141 – 146), also known as the Louisiana Overhead Powerline Safety Act, prohibits unauthorized persons from working — including moving any equipment — within 10 feet of any high voltage overhead electric utility lines.

Look up and live.

Look up for power lines when using tools, working on top of buildings or extending ladders. Make sure there is a 10 foot distance from power lines. Check in all directions before raising or extending any equipment capable of reaching a power line. Even nonmetallic ladders and equipment can conduct electricity.

If you intend to work within 10 feet of one of our high voltage overhead electric utility lines, notify us. Give SLEMCO a call at **(337) 896-5384** or **(337) 896-5551**. ☎



Is Your Power Out? YOU CAN REPORT IT

You should never assume we know you are without power just because your neighbors have called in. *Lucky Number: 1426156001.*



To report a power outage from anywhere on SLEMCO's system at any time, day or night, dial: **(888) 275-3626**

You can also use SmartHub, SLEMCO's account management tool to report an outage.

Once you sign up, you can use our SmartHub app, available for Apple iOS or Android, to report the problem directly from your smartphone or tablet. Even if you are away from home during an outage, the app allows you to monitor whether your power has been restored. Log on online or get the SmartHub app today.



Buck Leonards

Dedicated to serving our communities

BOARD MEMBER BUCK LEONARDS, OF CROWLEY, represents Acadia Parish on SLEMCO's Board of Directors. His history with SLEMCO goes way back – to when he was just a boy in the 1970's.

“Our home was featured in SLEMCO Power when I was ten years old,” he explains. “It was an all-electric Gold Medallion home,” said Buck, referring to a SLEMCO program for all-electric homes at the time. The home was built on the Leonards family farm.

After college, Buck began farming on his own. With electric power provided by SLEMCO, he's been farming ever since.

“For me, one of the most important aspects of being a board member is that I am an advocate for, and represent rural Acadiana,” he explains.

That's because, way back when, investor-owned utilities didn't want to bring electric power to rural Acadiana, or anywhere in rural America, for that matter. It wasn't profitable enough for them. There were not enough customers per mile of power line to justify the costs of bringing power to the countryside.

In the 1930's, with the help of the Rural Electrification Administration, farmers throughout the country banned together to form rural electric cooperatives, like SLEMCO, to bring power to rural homes and farms. We energized our first 256 customers in 1937.

One of only a couple of farmers still on SLEMCO's board of directors, rural families are very important to Buck.

“Quite simply, they're my people. I often think if I'd have been alive in the 1930's, I would have either been a founding board member of SLEMCO or at least deeply involved in the founding of the organization.”

Helping customers with problems is one of his most important roles on SLEMCO's board, as is being a part of the history of the organization and watching employees excel and grow in their careers.



Buck and Charlotte Leonards

Photo by Mary Laurent

Another key role he takes very seriously is learning about the opportunities and challenges in the electric industry so, together with the rest of SLEMCO's board, informed decisions can be made that will positively impact customers and employees alike.

“I truly enjoy our Board make-up,” says Leonards. “It has changed and evolved over the years, always managing to stay true to our core values. We don't always agree, but in the end, we always manage to get it right,” he continues. *Lucky Number: 4518207501.*

Not only does Leonards advocate for rural Louisiana through his work as a SLEMCO board member, but also as publisher of *La Farm & Ranch*, a monthly publication distributed to Louisiana farmers, ranchers and agricultural businesses throughout Louisiana.

“Farmers need a dual-career,” explains Leonards. “I'd honed my writing skills in my hometown paper, the *Crowley-Post Signal*, years ago. I was the Ag writer.”

So, establishing a publication devoted exclusively to farming, ranching and Ag business wasn't entirely a gamble for him. Besides, working as both a farmer and publisher helps him in his mission as a strong rural advocate for all of Louisiana, not just Acadia Parish. *Lucky Number: 3246530008.*

Buck and his wife, Charlotte, have been married for 45 years. They were grade-school sweethearts. Yes, grade school. Charlotte still has a locket Buck gave her for her 13th birthday. They have nine children and sixteen grandchildren.

Bet there's been a lot of rice and crawfish from the Leonard's farm cooked for dinner at their house through the years. 🍴



Utility Scams How to Avoid Them

A call from your electric, gas or water company threatening to immediately turn off your service is probably a scam. Here's what to do.

1. Hang up and call the utility company yourself. Call SLEMCO Customer Service at (337) 896-5200 even if the person who contacted you left a call-back number. Often times, those call-back numbers are fake. If the message came by text, don't respond and do the same. If your bill says you owe anything, pay it as you normally would, not as the caller says.

2. Never wire money or pay with a reloadable card, gift card or cryptocurrency to anyone who demands it. Only scammers will require one of those kinds of payment. Your utility company won't ask you to pay that way. Once you send the money, you probably won't get it back.

We want to remind our customers to be cautious when receiving calls from persons stating they represent SLEMCO. We will never call you regarding your account and demand payment over the phone. Any notice for delinquent payments will be sent to you through the US Postal Service or, if requested, through email. 📧



FIND YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER AND WIN \$100 CREDITS!

WE'VE HIDDEN 10 SLEMCO ACCOUNT NUMBERS IN THIS ISSUE OF THE MAGAZINE. Look to see if you find your SLEMCO account number. If you do, call Michelle Courville at (337) 896-2504. Once she verifies you as a winner, she'll credit \$100 to your SLEMCO account. *Lucky Number: 1112124500.* 🍴



St. Landry RACING AHEAD

Equine Capital of Louisiana

story by **CHÉRÉ COEN**

ST. LANDRY PARISH HAS ALWAYS BEEN KNOWN as a Louisiana hot spot for horses, from horse farms dotting the rolling hills to thoroughbred and quarter horse racing at

Evangeline Downs. But what Bill Rodier, the CEO of St. Landry Economic Development, discovered in Lexington, Ky., came as a surprise.

“I had heard the thoroughbred concentrations were in Lexington and Ocala (Florida),” he said. “But I was told the third largest was Opelousas. I thought, ‘Opelousas?’ That started the thought process.”

Rodier came home fired up to expand, develop and promote the parish in terms of its horse heritage, which includes the unique culture and long history of Creole trail rides. *Lucky Number: 3061095501.*

“You can find it in every corner of the parish,” he said. “And there’s a lot of area in St. Landry Parish—940 square miles.”


Later in 2022, State Sen. Gerald Boudreaux, whose district includes St. Landry Parish, passed legislation that named St. Landry Parish as the Equine Capital of Louisiana. *Lucky Number: 2306708001.*

In March, the Central St. Landry Economic Development (CSLEDD) acquired the 9000-square-foot Equine Sales Facility Compound just south

of Opelousas. The venue will be known as the Louisiana Equine Sales and Event Center and include 220 horse stalls, four livestock barns on 14 acres of property and a large greenfield property available for future complimentary expansion.

Rodier and others have been talking to the Louisiana Equine Council, the state’s breeders’ associations and other state equine entities to make them aware of the parish’s horse culture to grow sales and add amenities to the Equine Sales Facility. Eventually, an expansion of what already exists in the parish could bring in future commerce, Rodier said.

“They’re doing amazing things,” said Dr. Rachel Cezar-Martinez, a veterinarian with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and president of the Louisiana Equine Council.



“The rolling hills and the small horse farms create that unique ambiance that horses in a field have”

She’s been working with St. Landry horse enthusiasts like Rodier and hopes to create 4H clinics and host future education demonstration events. “We want to be the voice of horses.”

“We’re not Lexington,” Rodier said, “but St. Landry Parish does have a lot of potential.”

History

Louisiana has had a long love affair with horses. Many famous jockeys hail from the Bayou State, including Catahoula native Calvin H. Borel, who won the 2007 Kentucky Derby, and Lafayette’s Brian Joseph Hernandez Jr. who nabbed this year’s Running of the Roses on thoroughbred Mystik Dan.

The state is home to four major racetracks, one of which is Evangeline Downs, which opened in 1966 along Evangeline Thruway (now Interstate 49) in Carencro. The racetrack once located in Lafayette Parish not only filled the stands with Acadiana residents but those from out of state since Texas, Mississippi and Alabama had no tracks at the time. It was here that Evangeline Downs’ announcer Gene Griffin shouted the now famous “Ils Sont Partis!” which means “And they’re off!”

Evangeline Downs Casino moved to the current site in Opelousas in 2003, with a hotel to follow. In 2012, the racetrack was sold to Boyd Gaming, which operates the track today. Evangeline Downs runs thoroughbred racing from April 5 through Aug. 24 and hosts special events and live music throughout the year.

Even before the historic move of the racetrack, St. Landry Parish has been home to numerous horse farms, facilities, backyard racetracks that have pronounced jockeys going on to win major competitions, such as the Kentucky Derby, and Creole trail rides. But today, it’s become a horse haven.

Copper Crowne Equestrian Center provides facilities and services for equestrian breeders, trainers and owners on 210 acres. The St. Landry Parish Government recently

expanded the St. Landry Parish Ag Arena for horse events and festivals, hosting the Acadiana Junior High and High School Rodeo in-parish for the first time in 15 years. More than 300 families participated in the spring rodeo which included barrel racing, calf roping, bareback riding and more.

The Academy of the Sacred Heart in Grand Coteau has developed an equine program to teach its student riders “discipline, compassion, self-confidence, and adaptability,” lessons that match the school’s goals. Instructors teach horseback riding, hunting and jumping and basic Western riding. The school’s team has competed at the regional, zonal and national level.

Rodier chalks it up to the parish’s topography, where rolling hills break the flat landscape of Southern Louisiana. And in addition to the economic impact of St. Landry’s horse culture, it’s a lovely addition to the parish known for Cajun, zydeco and Swamp Pop music.

“The rolling hills and the small horse farms create that unique ambiance that horses in a field have,” he said. “If you’re up at daybreak, you’ll see horses on these race-tracks. It’s almost calming to see them out there.” *Lucky Number: 4515630200.*

You’re in the Saddle

Holly Macle starts with lessons, teaching folks at all levels how to ride and jump horses on her 40 acres in Sunset. But more than that, she wants her students to feel confident in both riding and horsemanship.

“My goal is to raise up riders, to eventually have them own their own horses and their own gear,” Macle said.

Her peaceful Knollwood Farms contains pens, an arena, pond and wooded trails for trail rides on her 20 horses, many of which are retired racing thoroughbreds. She also hosts birthday parties, events and equine competitions, plus boards horses. And for lagniappe, as they say in Cajun Country, *ici on parle français*, which means French is spoken there.



Evangeline Downs opened April 28, 1966, in its original location along U.S. Hwy 167 (also known as the Evangeline Thruway and I-49) in Carencro.



Proclaiming Horse Country with a Mural

Drive up I-49 where it intersects with U.S. Hwy. 190, almost a stone’s throw from Evangeline Downs, and visitors will discover a brightly colored mural greeting them to horse country. The mural that announces “St. Landry, Equine Capital of Louisiana” features artwork by Jerome Ford with help from parish art students. The 15-foot-high mural includes an image of Steve Duhon, a three-time national rodeo steer wrestling champion recently inducted into the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame.

“That mural shows how much they (Rodier and St. Landry Parish Economic Development members) want to help promote the horses,” Martinez said. 🍷



If you go . . .

Evangeline Downs
2235 Creswell Lane Extension, Opelousas
(337) 594-3000
<https://evangelinedowns.boydgaming.com>

St. Landry Parish Ag Arena
1863 W. Landry St., Opelousas
(337) 407-0950

Knollwood Farms
169 Knollwood Lane, Sunset
(337) 658-6000
<https://www.facebook.com/knollwoodfarmsunset.la>

A Memoir Through Food

MARCELLE BIENVENU



Oyster Rockefeller Soup

Marcelle Bienvenu does not particularly like being called the *Queen of Cajun Cooking*, as she is often referred – or a chef, for that matter. “I’m a cook,” she says proudly, “a good one, but I’m not professionally trained.”

That might be the most amazing thing about the lauded food writer and cookbook author: that with no formal training, she’s accomplished a culinary résumé nearly as long as three links of sausage. She is in the ranks of the best, because she learned from the best. Early in her career, Bienvenu worked in the catering department at Commander’s Palace, learning the restaurant business at the hands of iconic New Orleans restaurateur Ella Brennan. After befriending famed Chef Paul Prudhomme, she worked at his K-Paul’s in New Orleans, before opening Chez Marcelle restaurant in 1981.

As instructor at the Chef John Folse Culinary Institute at Nichols State University for 11 years, she emphasized to students to “always have a plan, get ingredients ready ahead of time and anticipate what’s coming next.”

Bienvenu has written four cookbooks, coauthored six with Emeril Lagasse and has been featured in magazines more times than she can recall. Many readers remember her regular column “Cooking Creole” in the *Times Picayune*.

Of her cookbooks, she is perhaps best known for her classic *Who’s Your Mama, Are You Catholic and Can You Make a Roux?*, a book that sold over 200,000 copies and was noted by The New York Times as “possibly the best-named cookbook in America.”

story by **PATRICE DOUCET**

Now 40 years since it was first published, the book will be re-released this October with a new look and added color photos depicting every season. “I wasn’t looking to redo the book, but a publisher in New Orleans contacted me with the idea, and the stars lined up,” she reveals.

As the St. Martinville native describes, “It’s not only a cookbook, but a book about South Louisiana that captures my family, what we cooked and why. It’s a tribute to Louisiana’s culinary scene. I was trying to bring the sense of what eating at the table with your family is like.” *Lucky Number: 2317158001.*

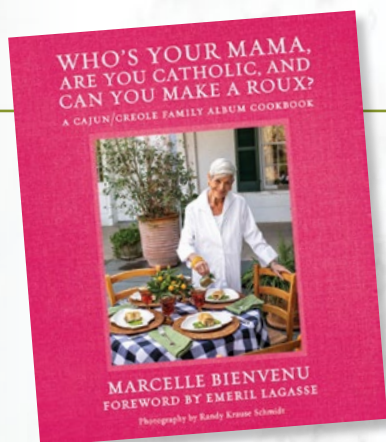
Excited as she is about the re-emergence of *Who’s Your Mama...* Bienvenu will tell you that her proudest accomplishment was her part in the making of the cookbook *Cooking Up a Storm*, which has less to do with the fact that it was nominated for a James Beard Award. As she explains, “After so much was lost from Katrina, we discovered that people wanted their kitchens back; they wanted comfort from cooking. But, the recipes from their grandmas were lost, so this was a community effort to get as many recipes back as possible. We had people bringing us boxes of them.”

Bienvenu has started on a new cookbook called *Bienvenu*, due out next summer. It is a compilation of stories about the people, menus and restaurants that have touched her life — as there have been many.

Although technically retired, she still contributes to local magazines and appears in podcasts when asked. Gardening takes up much of her time. She has been a master gardener for 17 years, and her yard next to Bayou Teche is a display of her love for sub-tropical plants, ferns and many herbs. “Someone once said you can turn a \$5 dish into a \$25 one if you use herbs,” she smiles. ☺



let's get COOKING



While fans of Marcelle Bienvenu's cooking wait for the reprint of her all-time, best-selling *Who's Your Mama, Are You Catholic, and Can You Make a Roux?*, coming out in October, here's a petite goût of the more than 200 dishes that helped sell over 200,000 copies of the cookbook. Enough said. Wipe your mouth, you're drooling.

Oyster Rockefeller Soup

Makes 8 servings

- 1 cup minced yellow onions
- 1 tbs. minced garlic
- ½ cup minced celery
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 2 cups cooked and drained spinach, pureed in a food processor
- 2 pts. oysters, and their liquor
- 2 pts. half-and-half
- ¾ cup freshly grated Parmesan or Romano cheese
- ⅓ cup cornstarch dissolved in ½ cup Pernod liqueur
- Salt and cayenne pepper to taste
- 1 tbs. anise seeds (optional)
- Lemon slices for garnish

Combine the onions, garlic and celery and 1 cup of the chicken stock in a large saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring until the vegetables are very soft, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the spinach puree and simmer, stirring for 5 minutes. Add the remaining 2 cups chicken stock and the liquor from the oysters, and stir to blend. Whisking constantly, gradually add the half-and-half and blend well. Cook, stirring constantly for 10 minutes. Add the cheese and whisk to blend. Add the cornstarch and Pernod mixture, and stir to blend.

When the soup is thick and hot, remove from the heat and add the drained oysters, the anise seeds and season with salt and cayenne. Ladle the soup into soup bowls and garnish with lemon slices.

Singing Shrimp

Makes 2 servings (appetizers)

- 6 to 8 large shrimp
- 8 tbs. butter
- ½ cup chopped green onions
- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- ½ cup sliced fresh white button mushrooms
- 1 oz. brandy
- Worcestershire sauce
- Salt and cayenne

Melt the butter in a skillet over medium heat. Add the green onions, garlic and mushrooms. Cook, stirring for about 1 minute. Add the shrimp and cook until they turn pink. Add the brandy, Worcestershire and salt and pepper. Cook, stirring gently for a few minutes. Serve over toast points, toasted croutons or in pastry shells, or toss with pasta. Add some chopped tomatoes for a different twist.

Crab Chops (aka crab cakes)

This recipe was a favorite of Marcelle's mother and is enjoyed still today especially during the summer when fresh crabmeat is available. Makes 6 servings

- 3 tbs. butter
- 3 green onions, chopped (green and white parts)
- 2 tbs. all-purpose flour
- 1 cup milk
- 1 lb. lump crabmeat, picked over for shells and cartilage
- 20 saltine crackers, finely crumbled
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. cayenne
- ⅛ tsp. Tabasco hot sauce
- Cracker meal or bread crumbs for dredging
- Butter and vegetable oil for frying

Heat the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onions and cook, stirring for about one minute. Alternate adding the flour and milk, stirring constantly to make a smooth thick white sauce. Remove from the heat. Add the crabmeat, saltine cracker crumbs, egg, salt, cayenne and Tabasco. Gently mix together and set aside to cool completely. (You can chill the mixture in the refrigerator.) Gently shape into six patties. Dredge in the cracker meal or bread crumbs, coating completely and evenly. Put about one-half inch of equal parts of butter and vegetable

oil in a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Fry the patties 2 to 3 minutes on each side until golden brown. Drain on paper towels and serve warm with tartar sauce.

Rhena's Bread Pudding

Makes 6 to 8 servings

- 1 qt. milk
- 4 thick slices day-old French bread, torn into small pieces (about 4 cups)
- 4 egg yolks, beaten
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 2 tbs. butter, cut into bits



Preheat the oven to 300 degrees. Put the milk in a large bowl. Add bread pieces and let soak for about 1 hour. Then, with a fork, mash bread well into the milk. In another bowl, combine eggs, sugar and vanilla and mix well. Pour into the milk-and-bread mixture and stir to mix. Pour mixture into a baking dish and top with the butter bits. Put the baking dish into a larger pan half filled with water. Bake until the pudding firms up, about 1½ hours. Remove from the oven and cool for about 10 minutes.

MERINGUE

- 8 egg whites
- 1 tsp. cream of tartar
- 8 tbs. sugar

Increase the oven temperature to 450 degrees. Beat the egg whites and cream of tartar until soft peaks form. Add the sugar and beat again until the meringue is thick and forms stiff peaks. Spread it over the pudding and return to the oven. Bake until the meringue is lightly brown, 10 to 12 minutes.

WHISKEY SAUCE

- 4 tbs. butter
- ½ cup sugar
- 4 egg yolks, beaten
- ¼ cup bourbon, rum or brandy

In a double boiler, heat the butter over low heat. Add the sugar gradually, whisking constantly until it dissolves. Do not allow the mixture to become too hot. Drizzle in the beaten eggs, whisking constantly. Remove from the heat and add the liquor, whisking to blend. Spoon the bread pudding into small bowls and drizzle with whiskey sauce.



For extra copies of these recipes or to email a copy to a friend, visit SLEMCO POWER magazine at SLEMCO.com.

SAFE USE OF PORTABLE GENERATORS

When the power goes out, either by hurricane, seasonal storm or random outages, a portable generator can help power refrigerators, communications, medical devices and more in our home. However, if not operated properly, portable generators are extremely dangerous. They can emit carbon monoxide gas, also known as the “silent killer” of people and pets. This odorless, colorless and tasteless gas causes flu-like symptoms and loss of consciousness.



20 FEET
RECOMMENDED DISTANCE
BETWEEN A GENERATOR
AND YOUR HOME

8 Mistakes People Make When Using A Generator

- 1 NEVER USE IN ENCLOSED SPACES**
- 2 NEAR WINDOWS, DOORS OR VENTS**
- 3 IN A GARAGE**
- 4 IN THE ELEMENTS, ON WET SURFACES**
- 5 PLUGGED INTO A WALL OUTLET**
- 6 WITH THE WRONG EXTENSION CORD**
- 7 WITHOUT A CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR**
- 8 USING A MACHINE IN DISREPAIR**

CARBON MONOXIDE SAFETY



ALWAYS MONITOR YOUR AIR QUALITY

Carbon Monoxide gas detection is crucial when using portable generators to prevent tragic outcomes.

Did you know? More than 150 people in the U.S. die every year from accidental nonfire-related carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide or CO is a colorless and odorless gas. CO poisoning can occur when a fuel-burning machine, such as a generator, heater or furnace, is not working or vented properly. Breathing in CO at high levels can be fatal.

SYMPTOMS OF CO POISONING

Dizziness • Headaches • Nausea • Tiredness

If you experience CO poisoning symptoms, **get fresh air, do not reenter areas and call 911.**

CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING FIRST AID

If you think yourself or someone has been exposed to carbon monoxide, act fast. Immediately go outside to get fresh air, and right away call Poison Help (1-800-222-1222). They will connect you to your local poison center. If you feel better when you are out of your home and worse when you return, CO may be present. If you notice this, call 911. *Lucky Number: 1407517500.*



TAKE A PERSON TO FRESH AIR



CALL EMERGENCY SERVICES



TURN ON SIDE



LOOSEN TIGHT CLOTHING



PUT A COLD COMPRESS ON THE HEAD AND CHEST



GIVE THE PERSON STRONG COFFEE OR TEA