

POWERLINE *March 2010*

Count on Corn Belt! » Your Local Energy Resource

Home Safety Checklist

Now is a good time to check for electrical hazards and fix them

As you tackle those spring projects, create a safer home by checking for electrical fire and shock hazards:

Electrical outlets - Check for loose fitting plugs, which can be a shock or fire hazard. Replace missing or broken wall plates so wiring and components are not exposed. If you have young children in the home, check that unused outlets are covered.

Plugs - Never force them into outlets. Don't remove the grounding pin (third prong) to make a three-prong plug fit a two-conductor outlet. Avoid overloading outlets with adapters and too many appliance plugs.

Cords - Make sure they are not frayed or cracked, placed under carpets or rugs, or located in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple them to walls, floors or other objects.

Extension cords - Use them on a temporary basis only. They are not intended as permanent household wiring. Make sure they have safety closures to protect young children from shock and mouth burn injuries.

Light bulbs - Check the wattage to make sure light bulbs match the

fixture requirements. Replace bulbs that have higher wattage ratings than recommended on the fixture. Make sure they are screwed in securely so they don't overheat.

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) - Make sure GFCIs are installed in your kitchen, bathrooms, laundry, workshop, basement and garage as well as on outdoor outlets. Test them monthly to ensure they're working properly.

Circuit breakers/Fuses - Fuses should be properly rated for the circuit they are protecting. If you don't know the correct rating, have an electrician identify and label the correct size to be used. Always replace a fuse with the same size you are removing. Check that circuit breakers are working properly.

Appliances/Electronics - If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker or has given you an electrical shock, immediately unplug it and

have it repaired or replaced. Look for cracks or damage in wiring and connectors. Use surge protectors to protect expensive electronics.

Electrical wiring - Wiring defects are a major cause of residential blazes. Check periodically for loose wall receptacles, loose wires, or loose lighting fixtures. Listen for popping or sizzling sounds behind walls. Immediately shut off, then professionally replace light switches that are hot to the touch and lights that spark and flicker.

Service capacity - As you continue to upgrade your home with more lighting, appliances and electronics, your home's electrical service capacity may become overburdened. If fuses blow or trip frequently, you may need to increase the capacity of your electrical service or add new branch circuits. A qualified, licensed electrician can determine the appropriate service requirements for your home.



MONEY SMART WEEK

Sponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago and various local businesses and non-profits, Money Smart Week is a series of free classes and activities designed to help consumers better manage their personal finances.

Scheduled for the week of April 17-24, dozens of seminars have been organized in each of the following communities:

- Bloomington-Normal
- Champaign County
- Peoria / Tri-County
- Rockford
- Danville
- Chicago

View a complete list of seminars and topics online at:

www.moneysmartweek.org

Mark your calendar for Corn Belt Energy's free seminar: **"How to Save on Your Energy Bills"**

We'll provide energy conservation tips that can add up to noticeable savings on your energy bills. Our energy advisor will be on hand to answer questions.

- Saturday, April 24, 10 AM - 11 AM
- Location: U of I Extension Office / McLean Co. Farm Bureau: 402 N. Hershey Road in Bloomington
- For more information, contact Justin Stuva at 800-879-0339 x235 or send an e-mail to: justin.stuva@cornbeltenergy.com



2010 Bloomington-Normal HOME SHOW MARCH 12-14

If you're planning to attend the Bloomington-Normal Home Show out at the Interstate Center on March 12th, 13th or 14th, then make sure to stop by our Corn Belt booth for free literature on money-saving programs and energy efficiency tips for your home.

outage report

Our major outage report is available online at: www.cornbeltenergy.com.

To request a printed copy, simply call us and we'll mail or fax it to you.

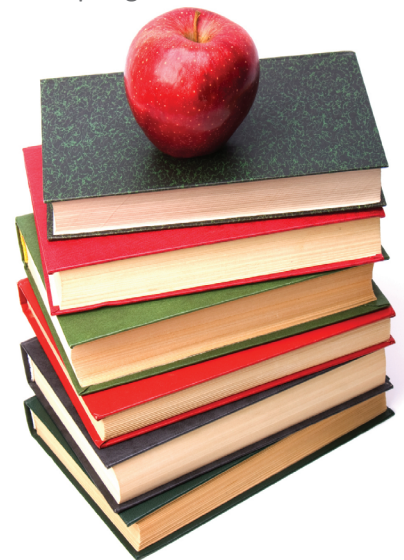
education GRANTS program

Corn Belt Energy is now accepting applications for our 2010 Education Grants Program. Four schools that serve children of Corn Belt electric members will each be awarded \$1,000 to fund innovative programs that enrich students' education.

An impartial panel of judges will review the grant applications and preference will be given to projects and programs that enhance learning and are not currently being funded through the school's budget.

Teachers and administrators of public or private K-12 schools may apply. Multiple projects within the same school can be combined to a total of \$1,000. Applications and details can be found online at www.cornbeltenergy.com under "Education."

The application deadline is March 31 and the grants will be awarded in late spring.



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Electrocution Hazards

Every year, dozens of farm workers in the United States are killed by electrocution.

Portable grain augers, oversized wagons, large combines and other tall or cumbersome equipment can easily contact overhead power lines. The result is electrocution of anyone on the equipment.

Follow these safety tips during the planting season:

- Always lower a portable grain auger before you move it, even if only a few feet.
- Keep all objects at least 10 feet away from overhead lines. Know where all overhead power lines are located on your property and inform all workers about them.
- Plan your route between fields, to bins and elevators, and on public roads so that you avoid low-hanging power lines.
- If equipment gets hung up on a power line, the operator should NOT get off the machinery unless in immediate danger. If the operator touches the ground and the equipment at the same time, he or she will become a channel for electricity.
- If you must leave the equipment, jump as far away from the machinery as possible. Never get back on machinery that touches a power line until the utility company disconnects the line.
- Be sure you and everyone else in your operation know what to do in an emergency.



Review farm activities and work practices that take place around power lines with all workers to prevent tragic accidents:

- Know the location of power lines and keep farm equipment at least 10 feet away from them.
- Always lower portable augers or elevators to their lowest possible level - under 14 feet - before moving or transporting; use care when raising them.
- When moving large equipment or high loads near a power line, always use a spotter, or someone to help make certain that contact is not made with a line.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting larger modern tractors with higher antennas.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- Don't use metal poles when breaking up bridged grain inside and around bins.
- As in any outdoor work, be careful not to raise any equipment such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes, and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness and dust and dirt contamination.
- Use qualified electricians for work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

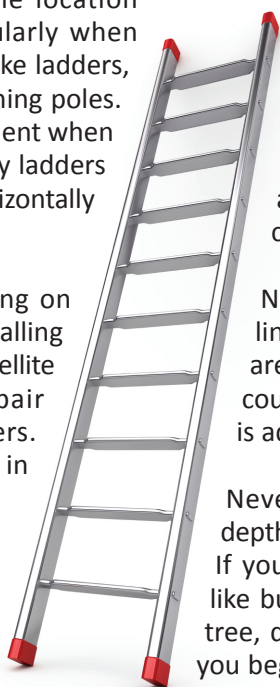
This information has been provided by Safe Electricity. Safe Electricity is a program of the Energy Education Council, a registered 501(c) (3) not-for-profit organization, headquartered in Springfield, Illinois, and operated from within the University of Illinois Extension. The Council's mission is educational. For more information, visit their web site at: www.safeelectricity.org

look up as you head outdoors

Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long metal tools like ladders, pool skimmers and pruning poles. Lower your long equipment when you are moving it. Carry ladders and other long items horizontally whenever possible.

Be careful when working on or around your roof, installing rooftop antennas and satellite dishes, doing roof repair work or cleaning gutters. Never go up on the roof in bad weather.

Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house. Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from lines.



Never trim trees near power lines – leave that to the professionals. Never use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines. Contact a professional maintenance contractor.

Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines aren't touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch.

Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. If your projects include digging, like building a deck or planting a tree, dial 811 to call JULIE before you begin. This service is free and can help you avoid serious injury.

THE KING OF CAULK & TALK

Get valuable home efficiency advice from nationally renowned architect and home energy expert, Doug Rye. Tune in for an hour of energy saving ideas every Saturday from 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. in the Bloomington-Normal area.



Contact Us

800-879-0339

Call this number to report an outage and call from the phone associated with your account if possible.

Main Office:

1 Energy Way
Bloomington IL 61705

Office Hours: 8:00am - 4:30pm
Monday - Friday

cbec@cornbeltenergy.com
www.cornbeltenergy.com



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

MONITOR YOUR ELECTRICITY USAGE

Corn Belt Energy has several Kill A Watt™ usage monitors available for our members to purchase.

Learn which appliances are costing you the most and identify those energy hogs. To use, simply plug the Kill A Watt unit into an outlet and plug your appliance or electronics device into the monitor.



The large LCD display will track the device's consumption by kilowatt-hour and you can calculate your electrical expenses by the day, week, month or annually.

Purchase a Kill A Watt monitor for \$25 (plus \$5 shipping) by contacting Justin Stuva, Energy Advisor, at justin.stuva@cornbeltenergy.com or 800-879-0339 x235.

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