

POWERLINE

A monthly newsletter for member-owners of Corn Belt Energy

April 2011

Is Your Home Protected?

April showers can bring an increased threat of power surges, which are defined as sudden, short-lived increases in voltage.

While lightning is often thought to be the cause of power surges, 80% of temporary power surges actually originate from *inside* the home. Surges are caused by motor-driven appliances like air conditioners, dishwashers, blow dryers, vacuum cleaners and refrigerators and can even be caused by smaller electronics like laser printers or coffee makers.

Thankfully, there are a variety of surge protection devices (SPD's) on the market to protect your valuable home electronics from both internal and external surges.



Power Strips

Power strip SPD's are the simplest and cheapest form of protection. Widely available and reasonably priced, they provide good protection from temporary power spikes. Most come with six to eight outlets, enough for the average home office or den.

Your phone, data, and cable TV lines can also carry a voltage spike into your home, so make sure to find surge protectors with coax plugs and telephone line plugs to accommodate these electronics.

Look for power strips with the UL 1449 label, which guarantees it meets tested and approved standards. Surge protectors also carry a "joule" and/or a "surge-current" rating; the higher the rating of these two categories, the higher the quality of internal surge-stopping components.

Also look for a low "clamping voltage" which indicates the voltage that the protector will allow to your equipment before it diverts it to ground. Corn Belt has the following point-of-use products available for purchase:

- Single AC travelcube outlet with tel/modem protection: \$10 each
- 6 AC outlet with coaxial and tel/modem protection: \$25 each
- 8 AC outlet with coaxial, tel/modem & ethernet protection: \$40 each

Whole House Protection

While power strips are effective at stopping most in-house surges, they can be overwhelmed by surges that enter your home through the power line as a result of lightning. Whole house network protection is recommended for these more severe surges.

Corn Belt can install a meter-mounted surge protector on the exterior of your home for \$175, which includes equipment, labor and tax.

Internally, a panel-mounted device installed near your circuit breaker box forms a second layer of defense. Commonly called a circuit panel, service entrance surge protector or a surge suppression device (TVSS), it will substantially reduce harmful surges entering your building and protect electrical equipment such as ranges, water heaters, washers and dryers, dishwashers and motors. A qualified electrician can ensure proper installation.

To learn more about surge protection options, visit the "Outage" section of our website at www.cornbeltenergy.com or call Justin Stuva, Energy Advisor, at 800-664-9235 or email him at justin.stuva@cornbeltenergy.com.



Clothes Washer REBATES

Corn Belt members with electric water heaters may qualify for a \$50 rebate if they have purchased an ENERGY STAR clothes washer after April 15, 2010.

Call Justin Stuva, Energy Advisor, at 800-879-0339 or find the rebate form at www.cornbeltenergy.com > Programs & Services > Energy Efficiency Programs.

Savings for Pet Owners

Pet owners can use their Co-op Connections Card to save on Pet Assure services. For just \$7.95 per month or \$79 annually, all pets in your household are eligible to save up to 25% on office visits, shots, surgery, x-rays and dental care.

Pet Assure also gives you access to savings at participating pet retailers and service providers for boarding, grooming, pet day care, pet food, toys and more! Learn more at www.connections.coop.



Tree Planting Guide

Arbor Day is April 29th and we encourage members to take the following planting tips into consideration as you begin planning your spring landscaping projects.

With a little research and a simple layout, you can produce a landscape that will cool your home in summer and tame the winter winds. Your well-planned yard should contain trees that grow well in the soil and moisture of your neighborhood.

Your trees should be properly placed to avoid collisions with power lines and buildings, and the aesthetics will increase your property value. A proper landscape plan also takes these factors into consideration:

1. Height: Will the tree bump into anything when it is fully grown? *Sizing guide available at www.arborday.org.*

2. Canopy spread: How wide will the tree grow?

3. Is the tree deciduous or coniferous? Will it lose its leaves in the winter?

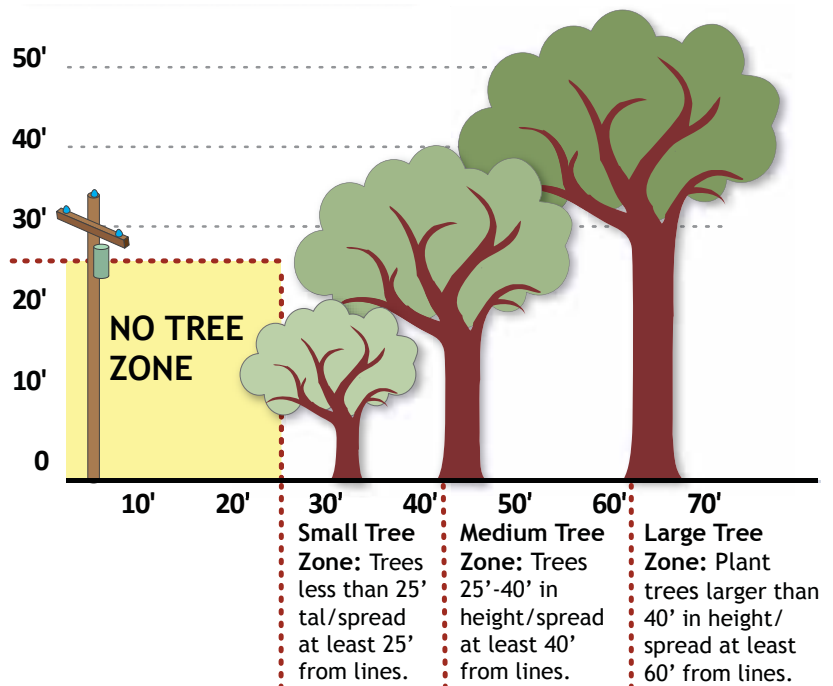
4. Form or shape: A columnar tree will grow in less space. Round and V-Shaped species provide the most shade. *Shape guide available at www.arborday.org.*

5. Growth rate: How long will it take for your tree to reach its full height? Slow growing species typically live longer than fast growing species.

6. Soil, sun, and moisture requirements

7. Fruit: No one wants messy droppings on busy sidewalks.

8. Hardiness zone: Indicates the temperature extremes in which a tree can be expected to grow. Most of Illinois is part of hardiness zone 6. *Visit www.arborday.org to find a list of trees that will grow well in this zone.*



BOPI: Going Green is Good for Business



When you think of businesses that are going green, the printing industry may not initially come to mind. But Tom Mercier, President & CEO of Bloomington Offset Process, Inc. (BOPI), is determined to change that perception, one page at a time.

Founded in 1947 in Bloomington, BOPI has evolved from only offering print solutions to a marketing services company specializing in print, variable data, mailing, e-commerce solutions, digital asset management, personalized URL's (PURLs), supply chain management and constant collateral systems.

While the company has adapted to the digital age, Tom has also led BOPI to adopt environmentally responsible standards that have earned the admiration and respect of their clients and colleagues. So much so, in fact, that BOPI received the 2010 Corn Belt Energy Green Business Excellence Award from the McLean County Chamber of Commerce for their environmental stewardship.



BOPI president & CEO Tom Mercier holds the 2010 Corn Belt Energy Green Business Excellence Award



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Ink and Paper

By using "eco inks" which consist of 99% vegetable oils, unhealthy volatile organic compound emissions are close to zero. Even the waste ink is recycled to generate power and to create concrete and asphalt!

BOPI recently became certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), a non-profit organization which sets high standards to ensure forestry is practiced in environmentally responsible ways. Print scrap at the press building is recycled daily.

Green Power Rate

As a Corn Belt Energy member, BOPI participates in our Green Power Rate, which supports alternative energy sources. Residential and business members who opt in to this rate pay a ½ cent more per kilowatt-hour for their usage each month. *(For the average residential member, that's approximately \$50 per year.)* That extra money is placed in the Green Power Fund, which is administered by Corn Belt's Board of Directors to support local environmental projects.

Energy Conservation

From an energy standpoint, BOPI has invested in efforts to reduce power consumption by installing Power Factor Correction Capacitors for their large electrical equipment. These units smooth the power supply and provide the machinery with only the power needed rather than allowing them to use excess power.

An Energy Optimization System installed in BOPI's electrical system works with the capacitors to provide surge protection while also reducing energy usage. These efforts are saving the company over 10% in energy costs.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

Always call JULIE at 8-1-1 to have underground utilities located before you dig.

To avoid personal injury and damage to underground lines, state law requires you to contact Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators (JULIE) before any digging project, regardless of the project size or depth. The call is free, and so are the services.

According to state law, the person doing the digging is required to call JULIE with the locate request information at least 48 hours (*two working days, excluding weekends and holidays*) in advance of the start of excavation. You must begin your project within 14 days from the time you call and if you want to start your project over the weekend, remember to contact JULIE by Wednesday at 4:00 PM.

In order to help the utility locator properly identify your project area, JULIE recommends that you mark the area where you will be digging with white paint and/or flags.

Each JULIE utility member is responsible to mark their own underground facilities with paint or flags within the two working day period required by law (*excluding Saturdays, Sundays and holidays*).

Visit www.illinois1call.com to learn more about the process.

Planting around Pad Mounted Transformers

If you have a three-foot-square metal box in your yard, your instinct may be to conceal it with landscaping or a fence. The box, called a pad mounted transformer, contains important electrical equipment that supplies your neighborhood with underground electrical service.

Corn Belt crews need safe access to the box for routine maintenance and to restore power during outages.

Please maintain a safe zone by keeping any fencing, landscaping, or other obstructions at least 10 feet from the front and 3 feet on the sides and back of

the transformer. This will ensure proper air circulation and prevent landscaping from getting damaged by our equipment.

And because of underground high-voltage wiring leading to the box, always call JULIE at 811 before digging around a pad mounted transformer.



Contact Us

800-879-0339

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

LOCATION

1 Energy Way
Bloomington, IL 61705

OFFICE HOURS

8:00 AM - 4:30 PM
Monday - Friday

cbec@cornbeltenergy.com
www.cornbeltenergy.com



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Office Closed on April 22nd

Please note that our office will be closed on Friday, April 22nd so our employees can celebrate the Easter holiday with their families. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Outage Report

Monthly outage reports are available at www.cornbeltenergy.com under "Outages." To request a printed copy, simply call us and we'll mail or fax it to you.

Water Heater REBATES

If you're purchasing a new electric water heater, Corn Belt can help defray the cost.

Buy an electric 40-gallon water heater and you'll receive a \$100 rebate; purchase a 50-gallon or larger unit and we'll give you a \$125 rebate. You can purchase your water heater from any retailer, and we encourage you to buy an energy efficient model with good insulation.

To claim your rebate check, send a copy of your receipt to:

Corn Belt Energy
Attn: Justin Stuva
1 Energy Way
Bloomington, IL 61705-6356

Make sure the receipt indicates the size of the water heater and include your Corn Belt account number.