

A monthly newsletter for the members of

Egyptian Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

December 2015

www.eeca.coop
800-606-1505

Egyptian Electric—A Christmas Carol

As we near the holiday season, memories of past traditions bring joy to many of us. Trimming the tree with tinsel, popcorn and cranberries—memories so intense you can smell the pine tree and popcorn even today! Grandma's stuffing that no one could duplicate. Gingerbread cookies. Shaking knees before the Christmas Eve service in hopes you didn't forget your part. Putting out a glass of milk and cookies the night before Christmas. Hanging the stockings in hope that Saint Nicholas would soon be there!

I'm sure each of you has memories and traditions that you hold close to your heart. One of my favorite memories is watching the movie *A Christmas Carol*. We all know of Scrooge and his visions of the past, present and future. I've read that Charles Dickens hoped to show how self-serving, insensitive people can be converted to charitable, caring and socially conscious members of society.

When I watch this movie, I too think of the past, present and future--of rural electric cooperatives.

The Past

I think of the electric cooperatives of the past and how they cared for their local community. Local leaders banding together to bring electricity and a better way of life to rural communities that had been forgotten by the barons of the



for profit electric companies.

I remember how cooperatives created a sense of community with their annual meeting under the big tent. Political leaders, local, state and national, addressing the members of the cooperative, praising them for how they were making rural America a better place for all, including their children.

I think of how the cooperatives brought electric water pumps, water heaters, stoves, and refrigerators to rural America when the only things most knew were wind mills, hand pumps and wood stoves. How much healthier did the children become with food properly stored and prepared, and warm beds to sleep in?

I think of how much more

efficient farmers became with milking machines, grain augers and other electric farming machines. I think of all the bad backs and aching muscles this equipment saved when brought to the farm.

I think of how much better the education of America's youth became with electric lights to study by rather than a coal oil lamp.

The Present

When I think of the present, I think of what electric cooperatives are still doing today for rural America. Showing members how to save energy and to be more efficient. Helping members build homes that meet energy codes and are more comfortable, sustainable and energy saving.

How cooperatives educate our

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Jim Riddle -- Executive Vice President and General Manager

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youth about our government with Illinois Rural Youth Day and the Youth to Washington program. How we help youth afford an education with our Annual Meeting scholarships and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives Thomas H. Moore Memorial Scholarships.

How our engineers, operations superintendents and linemen plan, build and maintain an electric system that is reliable and meets the needs of industry and members. How we continue to innovate and be more efficient. How we use technology to give members access to their electric account and to see their consumption before they get

their bill.

How we are a part of the communities we all live in. From being leaders and sponsors of economic development organizations, to providing recycling opportunities and supporting our schools with our Classroom Empowerment grants.

Just like the cooperatives of the past, your cooperative of today strives to make southern Illinois a better place for all of us.

The Future

While Scrooge had the luxury of actually seeing the future and I don't, I still believe the future will be bright. Yes, there will be

challenges ahead. We battle with the administration over climate regulations that threaten our reliable sources of generation. But in reality, cooperative leaders before us had challenges as well. And look where we are today.

I know the future will be bright because your cooperative and its future leaders will be just like Charles Dickens. They will know how important it is to be charitable, caring and socially conscious members of society. Because that's the fabric of electric cooperatives. It's our tradition that remains unchanged.

Please have a Merry Christmas, a joyous Holiday Season, and a blessed New Year.



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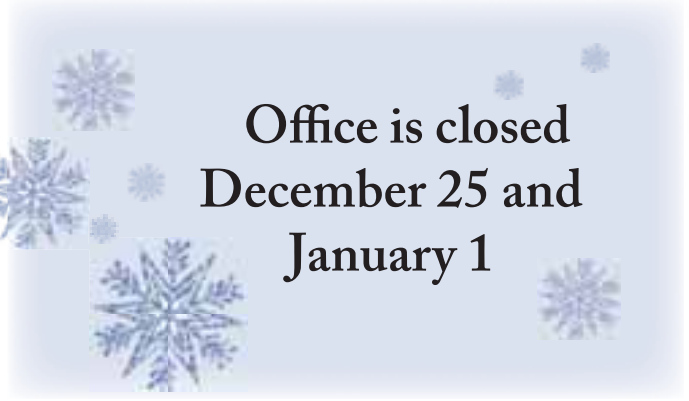


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Egyptian Electric Cooperative receives no information concerning your purchases or any financial incentive for your shopping. The savings are brought to you by the power of the Touchstone Energy brand, a nationwide alliance of nearly 750 member-owned electric cooperatives serving 46 states.



Office is closed December 25 and January 1

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Tips for a safe and happy holiday season

The holidays are nearly here. For many, that means celebrations with friends and family, travel, decorations, cooking and shopping. Egyptian Electric Cooperative wants you to stay safe during the holidays, so here are a few tips to consider as you gear up for the season.

We can't guarantee that the hustle and bustle of the season won't leave you with a few frayed nerves, but we can certainly help you avoid frayed wires.

Inspect your seasonal items

Many of us have treasured holiday mementos that we bring out of storage and proudly display every year. The holidays are also a time when we dust off specialized cooking gadgets that allow us to prepare our favorite seasonal treats. These items are often handed down through generations and might lack modern safety features.

Take a few moments to carefully inspect all your holiday items to ensure everything is in safe, working order. A few things to look for include:

- Brittle insulation on wires, or chafed or frayed wires, especially at stress points
- Rodent damage to wires
- Worn switches with the potential to short circuit
- Corroded metal parts
- Broken legs, unstable bases and other tip-over hazards

Extension cords are temporary

When you asked your teacher for an extension on your term paper, it was a one-time thing, right? The same holds true for extension cords. They are designed for temporary use and

should never be used as a permanent or long-term solution.



Never defeat safety devices

There are reasons why some devices have fuses, some plugs have three prongs instead of two and one prong is wider than the other on two-prong outlets. When those safety features get in the way of your grand holiday décor plans, you might be tempted to tamper with or defeat those features. Don't do it! If your plugs won't fit together, that means they're not designed to work together. Rather than tampering with a safety feature, find a safe solution.

Look up and live

When working outside with a ladder, be mindful of the location of overhead power lines. Always carry your ladder so that it is parallel to the ground. Before placing your ladder in an upright position, look around to ensure you are a safe distance from any power lines.

Beware of power lines through trees

Over time, tree branches can grow around power lines running along the street and to your home. If those branches come in contact with power lines, they can become energized, too. If your holiday plans call for stringing lights through trees, this can create a safety hazard. If you notice tree limbs that are too close to electric lines, contact our office.

Stay away from your service connection

The overhead wire bringing power to your house is dangerous. You should treat this line the same way you'd treat any other power line on our system. Maintain a safe distance – even if that means a small gap in the perfect gingerbread house outline of lights.

Read the fine print

If you take a few minutes to read and understand the specifications and limitations of your lights and other electrified holiday decorations, you can save yourself a great deal of work and frustration in the long run. For example, the tag at the end of an extension cord will tell you if it's rated for outdoor use, whether it will remain flexible in cold temperatures and how much energy it can safely handle. Similarly, holiday lights will tell you how many strings can be safely linked together.

Don't forget about the kids...and pets

If you have small children, you've probably spent a great deal of time making sure every square inch of your home is childproof. Every cabinet is locked and every outlet is covered. But sometimes the joy of celebrating the holidays with our little ones makes us a little less vigilant about electrical safety. Make sure your holiday décor receives the same level of safety scrutiny you apply to all of the permanent items in your home. Curious and mischievous pets can present similar challenges. Make sure Fluffy isn't nibbling on all those extra wires or using your tree as her personal back scratcher or jungle gym.

Justin LaBerge writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Bundle up for winter

Severe winter storms often leave heavy accumulation of snow and ice in their wake, breaking tree limbs and poles, causing widespread power outages. While our crews will be hard at work restoring power, severe conditions can lead to longer restoration times than in warmer weather.



Now is the time to put your winter survival kit together.



Winter Survival Kit

Food: Keep canned foods that need no cooking on hand: canned tuna and chicken, crackers, dried fruits and nuts are good choices. Keep a supply of bottled water on hand (the water from your water heater can be used, just remember to turn the breaker to the heater off so that when power comes back on, it doesn't burn an element out due to lower water levels).

Emergency items: Keep a flashlight (batteries last longer in LED flashlights), a battery operated radio and spare batteries handy.

Warmth: Make sure everyone has plenty of warm clothing available; coats, sweaters and sweatshirts are necessities. Keep plenty of blankets around. Plan for an alternate heat source such as a fireplace or wood stove. If using portable heat sources such as kerosene or propane heaters, make sure you have a carbon monoxide alarm and follow the manufacturers recommendations. Never use a grill or generator indoors.



Pay your bill online

Don't forget you can pay your bill online with a credit card or electronic check, as well as view your historic use at www.eeca.coop. Just click on the Pay Online button.

If it's your first visit, you'll need to create an account and password.

If you wish to make an online payment without establishing an account, you can do so by going to the SmartHub Online Payment link under My Billing and using the Pay Now option. All you will need is the account number on your bill.



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