

NEWS, NOTES & VIEWS 11/10



Safety on the Job



Zach Vedder, Cole Hurrelbrink, and Chad Gregory read over safety precautions.

When it comes to priorities, safety is number one. Our crews are out working in our service area every day. Before the crews get started, they make sure to go over safety precautions that are specific to the job at hand. It is what many call

a “tailgate session.” A tailgate session is what you often see when the workers are huddled around talking prior to starting a job. You may think that the crew is not working, when in actuality they are performing a



Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 80, Two South Main Street
Winchester, Illinois 62694

www.e-co-op.com
1-800-468-4732

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Line Superintendent Randy Long oversees a new service being built.

highly important part of their jobs. A tailgate session is required by not only the co-op, but also OSHA, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. A tailgate session generally lasts around five to ten minutes. Topics that may be discussed are the energy source, which way the line feeds the power, and the proper order in which to complete the job. A tailgate session is done when building a new service, revamping an existing service, and during general maintenance. While working on the job, all workers present must be wearing a hard hat and eye protection. Other precautions

include steel toe boots, flame retardant clothing, rubberized gloves and sleeves, and hearing protection. It is important that each individual on a job site know his duties and communicate well with his fellow crew members. After the completion of the tailgate session, each person must sign an acknowledgement stating that they understand the safety precautions for the job. If our crews review safety precautions regularly, the less risk there is for serious injury on the job. This results in a more reliable service and lower costs.



Our Call Center

We are rapidly approaching the winter months, and with this comes a greater risk of an outage. As we saw in 2007, mother nature can have little remorse on our electrical service. If you experience an outage after hours, we have an around the clock call center to help you. Fifteen years ago members would call their local serviceman at home if there was an outage after hours. This is something we do not do these days for several reasons. First, it is unsafe for a lineman to go out in the night and work when no one else knows his exact location. Second, it is often inefficient to work in this manner. Today, if you call after hours you will reach our call center located in Bismarck, North Dakota.

After the 2007 ice storm, we started searching for a new call center that could meet all our needs. Basin Electric's Security and Response Services has been offering a reliable answering and dispatch service since 1992. Their system is designed to respond quickly to outage reports, repair reports, and emergencies.

When you place a call after hours, it will be answered immediately by the dispatch service. You will be greeted by an automated system to report your outage. If you would like to speak with an individual representative, stay on the line and the first available one will help you.



Eight 2011 Memorial Scholarships Available

Robert A. Brown, President of Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative has announced that for the sixteenth consecutive year the Illinois electric cooperatives will award academic scholarships to high school seniors. Seven scholarships of \$1,250 each will be awarded in 2011 to eligible high school seniors through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

Four scholarships will be awarded to students who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member. A fifth scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, will be awarded to a student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative employee or director. These five scholarships can be used at any two-year or four-year accredited college or university in the United States including vocational and technical schools. The sixth and seventh scholarships are awarded to students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors. Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative will be matching the Illinois Electric Cooperative Memorial Scholarship won by the child of one of its members.

All of the above eight scholarships are for \$1250 each and are not renewable. Applicants must be high school seniors and apply through their local electric cooperative. The deadline for submitting completed applications to

the local electric cooperative is January 1, 2011.

A new eighth annual scholarship the "LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship," will be awarded for the first time in 2011. This \$1250 scholarship will help pay for costs to attend the lineworker's school conducted by the AIEC in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, IL. Relatives of co-op employees or directors are eligible for the lineworker's scholarship, as are individuals who have served or are serving in the armed forces or National Guard.

"We hope to assist electric cooperative youth while honoring past rural electric leaders with these scholarships," says Robert Brown, President of the board, "Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative" and the other Illinois electric co-operatives are always seeking ways to make a difference in the communities. One of the best ways we can do that is by helping our youth through programs like this one.

Candidates are judged on the basis of grade point average, college entrance exam scores, work, and volunteer experience, school and civic activities, and a short essay that demonstrates their knowledge of electric cooperatives. All applications are due December 31, 2010.

For more information contact Dorothy Cox at Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative at 217-243-8705 or ask your high school guidance counselor.