

Co-op receives safety awards at state conference



McDonough Power Cooperative employees recently received three safety honors during the Safety/Supervisory Technical Conference held in Springfield. Two of the awards were given to cooperatives with outstanding “no lost time” and “illness/injury” safety records for 2010. In addition, the co-op’s employees received the Best Three-Year Safety Award for their outstanding safety record among the state’s electric cooperatives in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

The conference is sponsored annually by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC). The theme of the conference was “Don’t Pass on Safety —

Make it Your Goal.” Attendees learned seven principles to help their organizations work toward a common vision for world-class safety performance. They also heard about the dangers of distracted driving and how new technology and social media can help them do their jobs more efficiently.

Shown with AIEC Manager of Lineworker and Apprentice Development Roger Larkin, right, are McDonough Power Cooperative Journeyman Lineman Tim Norton, left, and McDonough Power Cooperative Engineering and Operations Manager Mike Smith. 5310A7A-260A



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McDonough Power prepares for the future

**Energy Services Manager Kelly Hamm graduates
from Management Internship Program**

McDonough Power Cooperatives Energy Services Manager Kelly Hamm has completed an intensive program in electric utility management with the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

The Robert I. Kabat Management Internship Program (MIP) is a series of workshops offered by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin. The program guides participants through all facets of the electric utility industry, including the many changes occurring around the nation.

Kelly Hamm is one of only a few electric utility management staff that will graduate from the Management Internship Program this year.

MIP participants go through three 10-day sessions designed to challenge and educate participants in new, innovative management techniques. Participants leave with a better understanding of what consumers want and how to ensure they get it.

By also covering the unique principles that govern the operations of electric cooperatives, the program helps the co-op analyze other business ventures it may want to enter as well as enhancing the core organization. **4321D3-550A**



Only rural electric cooperative CEOs and top level management participate in the program. This allows greater emphasis of study, on management challenges and the aspects of consumer-ownership that cooperatives enjoy. Participants learn to be more consumer-focused in their daily management decisions.

Kelly Hamm has completed one of the most exclusive educational programs in the nation for electric cooperative management.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Check your HVAC system's air filter monthly. If it looks dirty, change it. A dirty filter makes your system work harder.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



Better rules for broken bulbs

CFL Cleanup Guidance Updated by EPA

By Megan McKoy-Noe, CCC

As energy-savvy consumers know, equipping five of a home's most frequently used light fixtures with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) can save a family \$70 a year in lighting costs. But what should you do when a CFL breaks?

CFLs are made of glass tubing containing about 4 milligrams of mercury. Although this isn't much — classic thermometers contain 500 milligrams of mercury — consumers should still take precautions if a CFL breaks, since mercury vapors may pose health risks. In December the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) updated the guidelines for cleaning a broken CFL.

"We want to provide consumers with the most important information they need to know on how to clean up a bulb without overwhelming them with detail," stresses Richard Yost, an EPA spokesperson.

The revised guidelines break the process into three steps: what to do

before cleanup, during cleanup, and after cleanup. More in-depth guidelines are available at www.epa.gov/cflcleanup.

"We've split the detailed guidance into sections for clean up on hard surfaces and on carpeting," notes Yost. "This will aid consumers who only want the cleanup steps that address their particular situation." **6317C5A-202C**

The amount of time EPA recommends waiting before cleaning a broken bulb has been cut from 15 minutes to 5-10 minutes.

"The results from a 2008 study conducted by Maine on mercury exposure from broken bulbs showed mercury release peaks within the first 5 minutes of the bulb breaking," explains Yost. "Five to 10 minutes is sufficient time to clear the room, ventilate, and to gather the materials needed to clean up the broken bulb."

EPA also removed recommendations on how to handle clothing, bedding, or other soft materials exposed to a broken CFL.

"We want to keep the focus on the clean up steps for the CFL," explains Yost. "Each broken bulb situation is unique. If a consumer has a particular concern they can contact EPA or their local/state environmental agency for assistance."

The updated guidelines feature a brochure on proper handling of CFLs, cleanup procedures, and recycling tips. The brochure, available in both English and Spanish, may be downloaded at www.epa.gov/cflcleanup. To learn more about CFLs, visit www.epa.gov/cfl.

CFL's that are not broken can be dropped off at McDonough County Health Department for proper disposal.

Quick guide to cleaning up a broken CFL

The most important steps to reduce exposure to mercury vapor from a broken bulb are:

Before cleanup

- Have people and pets leave the room.
- Air out the room for 5-10 minutes by opening a window or door to the outdoor environment.
- Shut off the central forced air heating/air conditioning (H&AC) system, if you have one.
- Collect materials (stiff paper/cardboard, sticky tape, damp paper towels/wet wipes) needed to clean up broken bulb.

During cleanup

- Be thorough in collecting broken glass and visible powder.
- Place cleanup materials in a sealable container (plastic bag or glass jar).

After cleanup

- Promptly place all bulb debris and cleanup materials outdoors in a trash container or protected area until materials can be disposed of properly. Avoid leaving any bulb fragments or cleanup materials indoors.
- Not all recycling centers may accept broken CFLs and some states may have prohibitions on disposal of debris. Check with your local and/or state household hazardous waste authority for disposal requirements in your area.
- For several hours, continue to air out the room where the bulb was broken and leave the H&AC system shut off.

For more detailed guidance on cleaning up and safely disposing of a broken CFL, please visit: www.epa.gov/cflcleanup.

Source: EPA

MAP LOCATION GAME

Every month we will have four map location numbers hidden throughout The Wire. If you find your map location number, call our office and identify your number and the page that it is on. If correct, you will win a \$10 credit on your next electric bill.



Take care when installing programmable thermostats

By Magen Howard

Programmable thermostats, when used correctly, have the potential to save up to \$180 a year on your heating and cooling costs, according to ENERGYSTAR.gov. If you're considering purchasing a programmable thermostat, it's important to install and program it correctly to save the most energy and money.

Installation

First, your thermostat should be situated on an interior wall, about five feet above the floor and away from heating and cooling vents and other drafty places, such as doors and windows. Also keep it away from skylights, direct sunlight, or lamps. If your thermostat is not properly situated, consider having an electrician move the location.

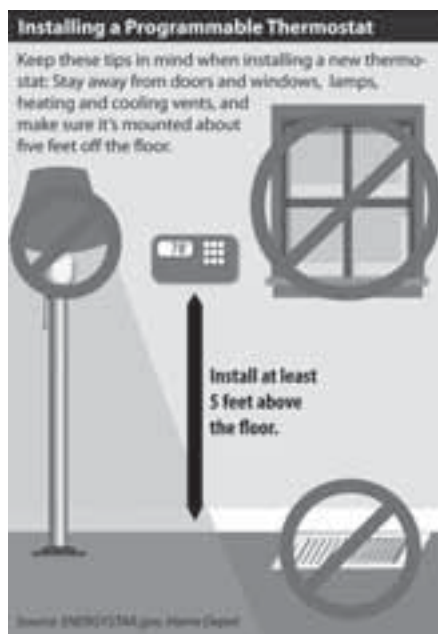
Next, shut off the electricity before you begin the replacement. Programmable thermostats require a low-voltage wiring installation and will have two to 10 wires, according to ENERGYSTAR.gov.

"As with any home-wiring project, safety should be the number one priority," says Mike Smith, McDonough Power Engineering and Operations Manager. "Be sure to read all instructions carefully and exercise caution throughout the installation."

And if you are replacing an old thermostat that has a mercury switch, take care not to break the tube that holds the toxic metal. **5322B5-260A**

Refer to the instruction manual on how to wire your new thermostat. Two handy tips before you begin disconnecting wires: Using a piece of tape, label each wire with the letter of the wire's terminal (printed on the thermostat), as these wires are not color coded. And once your old thermostat is removed from the wall, wrap the wires around a pencil to keep them from falling back into the wall.

If the project is more complicated than a basic replacement, contact a certified HVAC technician to make sure the thermostat is installed properly and safely.



To see a start-to-finish thermostat replacement, check out this Home Depot video on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owV0t_8zNpk.

Choosing the right thermostat

Programmable thermostats are not for everyone. They're best for families who are away during the day and homes with HVAC systems other than heat pumps. When a heat pump works in its heating mode, setting back the thermostat can cause the unit to operate inefficiently, thereby canceling out any savings achieved by lowering the temperature. Maintaining a moderate setting is the most cost-effective practice for homes with heat pumps.

If you decide a programmable thermostat is right for your home, consider which type best suits your lifestyle:

- 7-day models allow you to set different programs every day and provide the most flexibility.
- 5+2-day models follow the same schedule during the week and a different one for weekends.
- 5-1-1 models keep the same schedule

during the week and different ones for Saturday and Sunday.

Many units come with multiple features, such as telling you when to change your HVAC's air filter, settings for vacations, and voice programming options.

Getting the most savings

Programmable thermostats enhance your home's efficiency only when set properly. To be sure to save, set the temperature back for at least eight hours at a time — for example, when you're at work during the day or asleep at night. You can save 5 percent to 15 percent per year on your heating bills by setting your thermostat back 10 to 15 degrees over that period.

Program the thermostat to begin warming or cooling to your desired temperature shortly before you get home or wake up, so your home is comfortable when you need it to be.

"The most important thing to do is set it, and then leave it alone," remarks Brian Sloboda, senior program manager for energy efficiency at the Cooperative Research Network, the research arm of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. "You'll see energy savings without doing another thing to it."

To see how much you can save by installing a programmable thermostat, use ENERGY STAR's savings calculator: http://www.energystar.gov/ia/business/bulk_purchasing/bpsavings_calc/CalculatorProgrammableThermostat.xls.

Sources: ENERGYSTAR.gov (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), EnergySavers.gov (U.S. Department of Energy), Home Depot, Cooperative Research Network

Magen Howard 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.