



**Our office
will be closed
December 23
and 26 for
Christmas
as well as
January 2 for
New Year's.**



Pictured are (l-r) Bill Bergman, Clay Wiemerslage and Joe Wernsman, linemen from McDonough Power, who participated in the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative's 14th Lineman's Safety Rodeo held in Springfield, Ill.

Linemen awarded for efforts, skills at this year's safety rodeo

Linemen from McDonough Power participated in the 14th annual Lineman's Safety Rodeo sponsored by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives on Friday, September 30. **532RM415-900A**

The Lineman's Safety Rodeo, held on the Hot Line Training Grounds at Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) in Springfield, coincided with a series of courses designed to help electric line personnel improve their work skills in safe and efficient ways. Each year at the rodeo, teams of linemen from Illinois electric cooperatives and municipalities participate in competitive events using skills that focus on agility, speed and accuracy. This year eight teams participated in the competition.

The McDonough Power team of

Clay Wiemerslage, Bill Bergman and Joe Wernsman received first place in the Conductor Repair event.

Line personnel competed in five team events and three individual events. Team events included Hurt Man Rescue, Egg Climb (linemen climb a 30-foot pole with a raw egg in their mouth), H Structure Obstacle Course, Conductor Repair and a Mystery Event. Scores for each event use a 100-point scale and are based upon completion time and proper execution of the task including safe work practices. Deductions are made to a team or individual's overall performance score due to such things as slipping when climbing poles, dropping tools or executing inappropriate procedures or methods.



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A New Year for efficiency

Many people turn over a new leaf at the beginning of a new year by making a resolution. This year why not make a resolution to stop wasting money? Some efficiency improvements are easy to accomplish, while others are more complex. Tackling it all at once can be overwhelming, but spaced out over a year, they are more manageable.

Efficiency actions that can be taken in the next few weeks:

- Buy and install low-flow showerheads, faucet aerators, and compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) bulbs from a hardware or home improvement store.
- Put a water heater blanket on your older water heater to help water in the tank stay hot.
- Apply rope caulk to very leaky window frames. **5312BW11-900B**
- Assess your heating and cooling systems, and determine if replacements are justified or whether you should retrofit them to make them work more efficiently and provide the same comfort (or better) for less energy.

Efficiency actions that can be taken in the next few months:

- Separate your electricity and heating oil/natural gas bills. Target the biggest

bill for energy conservation remedies.

- Find out what level of insulation is recommended for your area at EnergySavers.Gov. Then crawl into your attic and/or crawlspace, and inspect the insulation in order to determine if there is enough. If not, add the appropriate amount. **7322B9A-600G**
- Insulate hot water pipes and ducts wherever they run through unheated areas.
- Seal up the largest air leaks in your house. The worst culprits are usually not windows and doors, but plumbing penetrations, gaps around chimneys, and recessed lights in insulated ceilings and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.
- Have an energy auditor with a blower door determine where the worst cracks are.
- Set your thermostat lower in the winter (higher in the summer) when you can accept cooler (warmer) conditions. This generally includes nighttime and whenever you leave your home for several hours. Many people find it easier to use an Energy Star programmable thermostat that you can set to automatically adjust.

For more information on home efficiency, go to EfficiencyResource.org.

WIU Ag students learn principles of electricity at McDonough Power

Each year McDonough Power hosts a group of students from Western Illinois University's Electrical Power and Equipment in Agriculture (AGTM 360) class. The course at WIU is designed to teach students the principles of electricity and its application in building wiring, electric motors, automatic controls and solid-state equipment used in agriculture.

This year a group of 12 students including their professor, Dr. Bart Gill spent a morning at the cooperative to learn what an electric co-op is and the important role it plays in the lives of those who reside in rural areas. McDonough Power president and CEO, Mike Smith educated the group



on the new Prairie State Energy Campus which is currently under development in southwestern Illinois. Smith also conducted a tour of the facility and gave students an up close look and description of several pieces of equipment that the linemen use on a regular basis.



ATTENTION high school seniors

Scholarships available



Seniors, it's time to start applying for scholarships to assist with those future college expenses and your local electric co-op wants to help! The 2012 Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship materials are available on our website – brochures, official rules and applications. As was the case last year, all scholarship materials are available in a PDF-accessible format. You may complete your application online, but will

need to print it out and mail the hard copies to McDonough Power Cooperative. The direct web address for those materials is: <http://www.mcdonoughpower.com/Connections/scholarship.html>. Materials have also been delivered to area high school guidance counselors or can be picked up at the McDonough Power office.

There are a total of eight scholarships of \$1,250 available – seven traditional scholarships and one scholarship for those aspiring to

be a lineworker. Students applying for the seven traditional (non-lineworker) scholarships will this year have a **December 31, 2011** deadline for returning their completed applications and submissions to McDonough Power Cooperative. Individuals applying for the LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship will have an **April 30, 2012** deadline.

Apply now before the hustle and bustle of the holidays!

Give practical gifts that help keep loved ones safe throughout the year

Unavoidably someone on your holiday shopping lists qualifies as that “hard-to-shop-for person.” Safe Electricity recommends getting these people practical gifts that will help keep them safe.

- **Portable Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) outlet** – A GFCI monitors the amount of current flowing from the hot wire in the circuit to the neutral or return wire. If there is any imbalance, it shuts off the circuit. A GFCI is able to sense a mismatch as small as 4 or 5 milliamps, and it can react as quickly as one-thirtieth of a second. Such a device can avert an electrocution or other tragedy which might occur without the safety of a grounding connection. **5310D2-260A**
- **Plug-in GFCI tester** – If a GFCI outlet does not have a built-in tester, this is a useful tool in determining whether the GFCI protection of that outlet is functioning properly. It is recommended that outlets be tested monthly.
- **Heavy duty extension cord** – Often the tools or equipment necessary for larger projects are energized through extension cords that are inadequate

for the heavier electrical load. Make sure the cord used is appropriately rated for the electrical load to which it will be connected.

- **Power strip that has a built-in circuit breaker** – Too many appliances and electronic devices plugged into the same circuit may require more power than is available. Tripping a circuit breaker on a power strip is much better than creating an overload in the circuit box in the basement.
- **Smoke detectors and batteries** – Smoke detectors are necessities in every home and can save lives. In fact, most homes could use more of these inexpensive safety devices. Even batteries for smoke detectors make great gifts. They serve as an important reminder that batteries should be replaced in smoke detectors twice a year.
- **Flashlight and weather radio** – During power outages, it is always a good idea to have a flashlight and weather radio on hand, so this holiday season you can make sure your loved ones are prepared for the next power outage. Plus, if that flashlight is a rechargeable LED flashlight, you’ve

also added energy efficiency to the gift package!

- **Gift certificate for a home electrical safety inspection** – Electrical contractors have the equipment and knowledge to identify potential electrical problems and your gift certificate may find a hidden problem that averts tragedy.
- **Non-contact voltage tester** – This is an inexpensive tool that any DIYer should have as it detects the presence of voltage without touching a bare wire.

For more information and videos on electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.



Member Prizes

Every month we will have four map location numbers hidden throughout The Wire. If you find the map location number that corresponds to the one on your bill (found above the usage graph), 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.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

During the holiday season, consider using ENERGY STAR-qualified lights and strands to decorate. They use 70 percent less energy than regular lights and last up to 10 times as long. They also give off less heat, reducing the risk of fire.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (ENERGY STAR)