



Alan W. Wattles

Across The President's Desk

Fight the winter Chills

Another colder-than-normal winter is predicted for much of the country this year. Frigid temperatures can cause heating systems to work over time, and since heating and cooling can make up nearly half of your electric bill, you may experience sticker shock when you open that bill. Instead of waiting until after a potentially high bill is in your mailbox, be proactive. There are things you can do now to help ensure you are managing your energy use and spending less.

These simple steps can help you manage your use:

- Wrap exposed pipes and water heaters that are in unconditioned spaces.
- Make sure to change your air filter once a month.
- Keep drapes closed at night and keep those that don't get direct sunlight closed during the day, too.
- Keep the fireplace damper closed when it is not in use. Keeping it open can bring cold air into the room.
- Caulk around the fireplace hearth, and caulk or weather strip around doors and windows.

- Log on to your smarthub account to keep up with your use. If we've had a few days of frigid temperatures, see how you can try to save on days that are milder.
- Dress for the weather, even if you are inside. Wearing proper clothing like long sleeves and pants, or wrapping up in a cozy blanket will help combat the temptation of bumping up the thermostat.

So, when temperatures fall this winter and you hear your weatherman talking about bringing in pets and plants, take the steps above to help manage your use.

Using the tips above can certainly help you manage your energy use, but your bill may still be higher than normal in winter months. Why?

- The weather makes a big impact on electric bills, accounting for nearly half of your bill.
- Even those with the most efficient HVAC systems will see more use in extreme weather.
- When extreme cold temperatures hit, our heaters work overtime.

- For example, even if you set your thermostat to our recommended 68 degrees in the winter, when it is 19 degrees outside, your system has to work hard to make up that 49-degree difference.
- Your heater works harder and cycles on and off more often, making your use much higher. That means your bill will be much higher.
- Remember, there is value in comfort. For us to be comfortable in our homes, our heaters are going to work harder, but it may be worth the additional cost to you.

Additional tips:

- Call and ask for the Member Services Department. They can help you understand how weather and your use patterns affect your bill.

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



No one was injured when this school bus slid into a power pole on Bluestem Electric Cooperative's lines in Kansas. If you're in a vehicle that hits a power pole and makes contact with electric lines, remain in the vehicle and warn others to stay away. Wait for a utility crew to arrive on the scene to cut the power.

Snow Increases Potential for Power Line Accidents

Winter driving is a challenge, not only negotiating snow and slush, but also trying to avoid skidding off the pavement when you encounter an unseen patch of ice.

When cars and trucks leave the pavement because of poor winter driving conditions, tragedy can be compounded if utility poles are hit and overhead power lines come down.

Safe Electricity's 2010 "Teach Learn Care TLC" campaign featured the fate of four Indiana teens whose vehicle collided with a utility pole. Wires ended up draped around the overturned car. Fortunately, earlier that week two of the teens Ashley Taylor and Lee Whittaker had attended a program at their school that warned of the dangers of car accidents with power poles. Ashley and Lee made sure nobody left the car and warned those who came upon the accident to stay far away. They were able to escape injury by remaining in the vehicle until utility crewmen could turn off the power and create a safe opportunity for the driver and passengers to exit.

If you must get out because of fire or other danger, jump clear of the vehicle without touching it and the ground at the same time. Then hop with feet together do not run or stride. Electricity spreads out through the ground in ripples, like a stone dropped in water.

The voltage is highest in the ring closest to the vehicle and decreases with distance. Hop with feet together so that one foot will not be in a

higher voltage zone than another, which could make you a conductor for electricity.

If the power line is still energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path for that electricity, and electrocution is the tragic result. Even if a power line has landed on the ground, there is still the potential for the area near your car to be energized. Stay inside the vehicle unless there is fire or imminent risk of fire. It is best to wait until local electric utility crews arrive to make sure power to the line is cut off.

If you encounter an accident involving a vehicle skidding off a snow or ice covered road and colliding with a utility pole, do not follow your instinct to assist the motorist. Live electric lines may be on the ground or difficult to see if they are hanging low.

Anyone responding to such a situation should be cautious of the potential for electrical injury or death. Wait for linemen to de-energize the line, or you could become a victim yourself.

Just because electric wires may be coated with ice or lying in snow or ice, does not reduce their danger. They can still carry electricity which is not readily detectable until you feel it, and then it may be too late to escape injury. To learn more, visit SafeElectricity.org.

C & E Committee Named

Meeting set for Feb. 2nd

A Credentials and Election committee (C & E) has been appointed and will meet at **7:00 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 2, 2015** at the Monroe County Electric Cooperative meeting room in Waterloo. The committee will be validating all petitions turned in to run for the district seats. Those persons with valid petitions will be placed on the ballot for the cooperative's annual meeting, to be elected to serve a three (3) year term as directors of Monroe County Electric Co-Operative.

The cooperative's 77th Annual Meeting of Members will be held **Monday, March 23, 2015, at the Hecker Community Center, Hecker, Ill.**

Directors whose current terms expire and who are eligible for re-election are:

District 1

•**Larry A. Haas**
7565 Haas Hills Lane
Belleville, IL 62223

District 2

•**Larry W. Kraft**
4957 Quirin Road
Smithton, IL 62285

District 9

•**Richard Liefer**
2817 Ames Road
Red Bud, IL 62278

2015 CREDENTIALS AND ELECTION COMMITTEE

DISTRICT 1

•**Gary Stapf**
7145 State Route 163
Millstadt, IL. 62260
•**Joseph Orsa**
3545 Bridge Ln.
Millstadt, IL. 62260
•**Lyle Haas**
7223 State Route 163
Millstadt, IL. 62260
•**Brad Krueger (ALT)**
7631 State Route 163
Belleville, IL. 62223
•**Cynthia Hays (ALT)**
7510 Haas Hills Ln.
Belleville, IL. 62223

DISTRICT 2

•**Raymond Bense**
6814 Country Estates Dr.
Columbia, IL. 62236
•**Gerold Quirin**
4922 Quirin Rd.
Smithton, IL. 62285
•**Orville Mueller**
1204 Kropp Rd.
Millstadt, IL. 62260
•**Steve Frank (ALT)**
4313 Bohleysville Rd.
Waterloo, IL. 62298

DISTRICT 9

•**Mike Henry**
2114 Ames Rd.
Red Bud, IL. 62278
•**Gerald Holmstrom**
6500 Lohrberg Dr.
Red Bud, IL. 62278
•**Louis Knobloch**
2414 Ames Rd.
Red Bud, IL. 62278
•**Arnold Juelfs (ALT)**
3104 Ames Rd.
Red Bud, IL. 62278



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Tip of the Month

Fighting winter chills? A crackling fire in the hearth warms the house, but don't let it heat up your electric bill. To cool energy costs, keep the fireplace damper closed when not in use. Caulk around the fireplace hearth. Double up on wood-earned warmth by lowering the thermostat setting to between 50 degrees and 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Learn more at www.energysaver.gov.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Youth to Washington contest

Attention high school juniors!



Pictured from left: Emily Hartmann, Congressman Wm. Eryart, Garrett Kapelski and Emily Johansson.

Monroe County Electric Cooperative (MCEC) is inviting two high school juniors from each of the following schools to Youth Day in Springfield on March 25 - Waterloo, Gibault, Valmeyer, Columbia, Dupo, Freeburg, New Athens, Red Bud and Belleville West. This event is sponsored by MCEC and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. Of the participants representing MCEC in Springfield,

three will be selected to go on an all-expense paid tour of Washington, D.C. in June.

Youth Day (Springfield – Wednesday, March 25, 2015): The day's activities will include touring the State Capitol complex, Illinois Supreme Court, Old State Capitol and the new Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum. Students will also have the opportunity to visit with legislators.

Youth to Washington Tour (June

12 – 19, 2015): The three local winners from Youth Day will join some 60 other Illinois students sponsored by Illinois cooperatives, and spend a week in Washington, D.C. visiting attractions such as the White House (tentative), U.S. Capitol, Smithsonian Institute, Arlington National Cemetery, Lincoln Memorial and many other national monuments and places of interest.

Last year, our winners were Emily Hartmann of Freeburg, Emily Johansson of Belleville and Garrett Kapelski of Smithton.

If you are a high school junior and this opportunity interests you, please discuss this with your guidance counselor today. Students do not have to be sons or daughters of MCEC members to attend Youth Day. An informative brochure will be available soon regarding MCEC's Youth to Washington program and can be downloaded from our Web site at www.mcec.org.

MCEC line outages - November 2014

Date	Duration	# Out	Location	Cause Desc	Substation
11/07/14	2:24	106	Fountain/Valmeyer Area	Wire burnt down	Fountain
11/07/14	2:12	8	Bluff Rd	Equipment problem	Fountain
11/10/14	1:49	35	Eagle Cliffs Estates	Wire blew out of hot arm	Fountain
11/11/14	1:10	54	Ames Rd	Lead on the cutout burnt off	Poe
11/14/14	3:12	60	Bluffside Rd	Wire burnt down	Millstadt
11/18/14	0:56	16	C Rd	Car hit pole	Waterloo
11/23/14	1:06	45	State Rt 3	Raccoon	Poe
11/23/14	1:49	155	Coxeyville Rd	Car hit junction cabinet	N. Waterloo
11/24/14	2:51	2	Suterville Rd	Tree took down overhead line	Fults

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Inc.

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