



## How leaky is your home?



Alan W. Wattles

### Across The President's Desk

**E**ver wonder where your energy dollars are going? Do you feel like your electric or gas usage in the winter and summer is too high?

Call us and we can arrange for an energy audit on your home. This audit will help you identify the key areas where you can make improvements that will increase the energy efficiency of your home. There is no charge to the member for these audits.

The cooperative has a blower door testing system that will show where air is leaking into or out of your home. Air infiltration is the #1 cause of high energy bills, behind poor insulation. Sealing these leaky areas is important to helping your heating and cooling system work more effectively.

We also have an infrared camera that shows temperature differences behind floors, walls and ceilings. The camera, coupled with the blower door test, is very effective in finding these places in your home that you can address with sealing and insulation. Many times the cost to correct these areas is very reasonable and usually shows a quick payback in energy savings. The audits generally take between 2 – 3 hours to do.

If you are interested in having an energy audit performed on your home, contact our Member Services department at 939-7171 or 1-800-757-7433, ext. 115. You can also email us at [amasterson@mcecc.org](mailto:amasterson@mcecc.org).



The Energy Conservatory



## Office Closing

**Our office will be closed Wednesday, July 4 for Independence Day.**

# Students meet with legislators in Springfield at 'Youth Day'

More than 250 students from the rural areas of Illinois traveled to Springfield on Wednesday, March 28, for the Illinois Electric and Telephone Co-operatives Youth Day.

With rural areas losing population, fewer legislators will be elected to serve downstate, so the need for citizens to take active roles in voting for legislators who have their interests at heart is increasingly important.

"Elected officials enjoy the opportunity to meet with students and learn first-hand their concerns. Many issues debated in the General Assembly personally affect their lives," said Duane Noland, President and CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

Sen. David Luechtefeld and Rep. Jerry Costello Jr., met with students representing Monroe County



Electric Co-Operative, Inc. The students had an opportunity to view state government in action and question their legislators on key issues. In addition, they heard from both Lt. Governor Sheila Simon and Secretary of State Jesse White. The students also toured the Illinois Supreme Court, the Old State Capitol and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum.

Pictured from the left are: row

1 – Katy Gill, Lydia Collins, Brianna Wolf, Alyssa McCarthy and Rep. Costello; row 2 – Rachel Petrie, Sarah Hempen, Martin Witges and Kathryn Dierksen; row 3 – Rabano Angelo, Jimmy Quinones, Brendan Kennedy and Luke Andres. Monroe County Electric Co-Operative is a member of Touchstone Energy® — an alliance

of more than 720 local, consumer-owned electric utilities around the country. Monroe County Electric is committed to providing superior service based on four core principles: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. The co-op serves more than 7,000 meters over 1,200 miles of line in parts of Monroe, Randolph and St. Clair counties. For more information visit [www.mcec.org](http://www.mcec.org).



## Youth to Washington finalists

Brianna Wolf of Freeburg, Sarah Hempen of Columbia and Jimmy Quinones of Waterloo were selected as the three finalists to attend the Youth to Washington program through Monroe County Electric Cooperative and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. The three students attended Youth Day in Springfield along with the other nine participating students. Their winning essays were selected from a group of seven with the theme of "The History of Rural Electrification."



Brianna will be a senior at Freeburg High School in the fall and is the daughter of Mark and Kimberly Wolf of Freeburg. She plans to attend college and major in nursing.

Sarah will be a senior at Waterloo High School in the fall and is the daughter of Scott and Jill Hempen. She plans on attending college and majoring in Environmental Engineering.



Jimmy will enter his senior year at Waterloo High School and is the son of Jesus and Barb Quinones of Waterloo. He plans on attending college and majoring in Computer Science.

All three students are very active with school organizations as well as extracurricular activities.

The Youth to Washington trip is scheduled for June 15 – 22 and is an all-expense paid tour of Washington, D. C. This tour has been a nationwide tradition of the electric cooperatives since 1957.

Congratulations to our three finalists!

# Prepare your home to beat the heat this summer

**D**uring the sweltering summer months people nationwide crank up their air conditioners in an effort to stay cool. In the struggling economy, the Energy Education Council wants everyone to get the most for their energy dollars. Be sure your house is ready to beat the heat this year by following a few guidelines.

Most of these suggestions require little effort or cost. The investment is well worth it with added comfort and savings.

- Check the insulation. According to EnergyStar insulation is usually measured using the R-Value. R-Value is a measure of insulation's ability to resist heat traveling through it. The higher the R-Value the more effective it will be to beat the heat. The level of insulation recommended for your area can be found at [www.EnergyStar.gov](http://www.EnergyStar.gov). If you are lacking the recommended insulation, you can add more right on top of the old insulation. However, don't put a vapor barrier between the layers. Be sure the insulation doesn't block vents or cover exhaust fans.
- Ventilate the attic. When the outside temperature is in the 90's, your attic can easily reach 140 degrees. Adequately sized vents and/or an attic fan can help keep hot air from building up.
- Get the air conditioner ready. Shut off power to the unit before cleaning it. On the inside, wash or vacuum cleanable filters; replace disposable ones. Outside, clear leaves and other debris away from the condensing unit. Hose off any accumulated dirt.

- Put a timer or programmable thermostat on your air conditioner. Leave it on a higher temperature while you're away, and set it to cool the house half an hour before you return home.
  - Install awnings over windows exposed to direct sunlight.
  - Consider installing ceiling fans. On moderately warm days, fans can circulate enough air to keep you comfortable without air conditioning. Even on hotter days when you use the air conditioner, you can set your thermostat higher and save.
  - Even in summer, you don't have to sacrifice comfort to stay within your budget. Here are a few easily achieved cost saving tips:
    - Open windows and doors and let outside air cool your house on moderate days, and be sure to keep them closed when you're operating the air conditioner
    - Avoid unnecessary trips in and out of the house, especially on the most sultry days. Heat and humidity come in each time you open the door.
    - Keep the sun out of your house. Close blinds, shades or draperies during the hottest part of the day. Consider planting fast-growing trees and shrubs near your home but away from power line, to provide shade.
    - Set lamps, TV sets, and other heat-producing devices away from the air conditioner thermostat. Heat from the lamp could cause the thermostat to read higher temperature and keep the air conditioner running more than necessary.
- One secret to getting the best

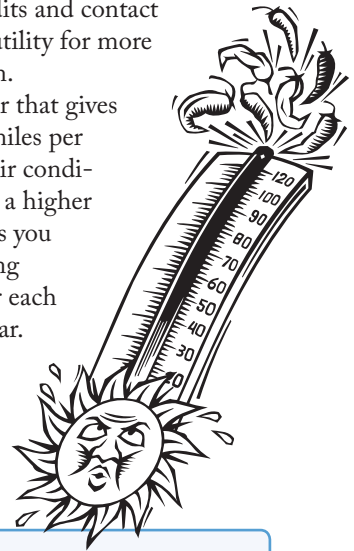
efficiency from your air conditioner is to be sure the maximum amount of air moves across the coils. Make sure air can flow freely over the inside and outside coils.

Shut off power to the unit before cleaning it. Outside, clear away leaves and debris. Inside, clean or replace filters. If you can reach the fan blades, be sure the power is turned off and then dust them - if they're filled with lint they can't push as much air. If your air conditioner doesn't give you as much cooling as it has in the past, call a cooling professional to inspect and tune it up.

If you're shopping for a new unit, check the efficiency rating, or SEER. The higher the SEER number, the more efficient the air conditioner. Consider buying an Energy Star approved unit, which uses around 14 percent less energy than traditional air conditioning units for central air and at least 10 percent less for room units. Energy Star and local utilities are offering many incentives to upgrade appliances and insulation this year.

Be sure to visit [www.EnergyStar.gov/taxcredits](http://www.EnergyStar.gov/taxcredits) and contact your local utility for more information.

Like a car that gives you more miles per gallon, an air conditioner with a higher SEER gives you more cooling comfort for each energy dollar.



## Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Inc.

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Office hours: Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. • 800-757-7433

## Severe weather is on the way

Changing seasons bring unsettled weather, you never know when a storm may hit. Protect yourself and your family with a safe storm strategy.

Be aware of weather forecasts and watch for developing thunderstorms. Tune in to your local weather station if you suspect severe weather is brewing. Understand the National Weather Service warning classification



system. A tornado or severe storm watch means that conditions are favorable for those weather conditions forming. A warning means that dangerous weather conditions are developing and imminent.

Lightning can strike many miles ahead of a storm front. If you hear thunder, seek shelter immediately. Lightning will typically seek something tall, such as a tree, building or

flagpole but can also strike at lower objects.

If you are inside a building, the National Weather Service advises you to stay off corded telephones, or away from electrical devices that could carry an electrical surge if lightning were carried into your home through wiring.

Since water is an excellent conductor of electricity, lightning is particularly dangerous for anyone in a swimming pool or engaged in water recreation.

## Weather Radios Available

Monroe County Electric and the Monroe County Farm Bureau are teaming up to offer this radio to its memberships for **\$65 plus tax**. Something as simple as a weather alert radio can be a “life-saving device for you and your loved ones.”

These are the most up-to-date technology weather/alert radios available. They are pre-programmed for the Monroe County Electric service territory,

eliminating the need to program this life-saving device. They are also programmed for Jefferson County, just across the river in Missouri. You can also add adjoining counties by calling their help line.

The radios are available at the cooperative office or the Monroe County Farm Bureau office. For the cooperative, just call 939-7171 or 1-800-757-7433. For the farm bureau, call 939-6197.



## MCEC Line Outages - April 2012

Time Off	Duration	# Out	Location	Cause Desc	Sub
04/05/12	0:56	346	LL Rd	Trees, Other	Poe
04/21/12	1:22	90	Gall Rd	Primary Burned Out	N. Waterloo
04/24/12	4:44	22	Allschied Subdivision	Bad Primary Udg	N. Waterloo
04/28/12	4:28	281	Maeystown Rd	Trees, Other	Waterloo
04/28/12	4:27	95	Maeystown Rd	Trees, Other	Waterloo
04/29/12	2:12	281	Maeystown Rd	Two Broken Poles	Waterloo
04/29/12	3:24	210	Country Club Rd	Bad B Phase Udg	N. Waterloo