



Waterloo, Illinois • 618.939.7171 • 800.757.7433



Alan W. Wattles

Across The President's Desk

As we continue to develop and prepare our new rates for 2013, Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Inc. is still looking at ways and means of getting members the power to control their monthly bills. MCEC is always looking at ways to control costs, yet provide the member/owner with reliable, safe and the least expensive electric possible.

Next year in 2013, MCEC will celebrate its 75th anniversary of incorporation. Plans are now being made to create a video that shows the past and present of MCEC with interviews of retired employees, directors and even members who remember when the lights came on. MCEC will have plans to celebrate at our annual meeting in March 2013, but we are also planning to have a larger celebration around the time we were incorporated which is June of 2013 - a day long festival that will allow us to thank you the member for your continued support of the Cooperative. So look in the Illinois Country Living and Co-op Echoes in the future to see what we are planning.

Sometimes we forget our past and what took place to make MCEC come to life. The work that the first individuals took upon themselves to

get electric to the rural areas, their dedication to making a better way of life for the farmer at that time, shows why the cooperative model is the way it should be done - one member - one vote. Those who take power from MCEC have a vested interest in helping make MCEC a success. Still today, it takes each neighbor working side by side and putting differences aside to help us control costs by helping MCEC obtain right of way and find the cheapest route to get electric to a new member, because if we can, then as we spread our cost across the membership, it makes it lower for everyone if we help each other.

MCEC needs to do a better job of telling our story. I think we have forgotten at times what makes MCEC unique. Monroe County Electric is a not-for-profit cooperative owned by you and your fellow members. We need to get that message across and out in front of all our members so they can know and understand what MCEC means to them.

As we go forward through the rest of the year, we will be working to promote safety here in the workplace, safe use of electric by the member, making our system more reliable with continued maintenance - all in the thought that we want you, the member, to be proud of MCEC and that you, the member, will also want success for MCEC.

Seal your home (and Wallet)

By Brian Sloboda, Cooperative Research Network

Roughly half of the energy used by a home powers heating and cooling equipment. In a poorly insulated home, conditioned air slips outside.

Sometimes air leaks are obvious. If you pass by a window or door and feel a change in temperature, something is wrong. Some folks think it means they need new windows, and that could be the case. But for most, spending a few minutes and a few dollars to seal a home adds up to big savings.

Cold air enters a home through small openings. To find problem areas, use a lit incense stick or a recently extinguished match and move it around the edge of closed windows and doors. Here are a few remedies to fix the problem:

- Add weather stripping to the edges of windows and doors. Stripping typically uses sticky tape to adhere to the side of the window and fill gaps.
- If your home uses single pane windows, consider adding storm windows to the exterior as added insulation.
- Replace old cracked caulking. Make sure you use caulking designed for the application.

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There are different types of caulk for exterior, interior, and bathroom applications; don't use bathroom caulk on the outside of your home. Also, make sure the caulk can be painted if you want to blend in with the rest of the home.

- Use insulated curtains to prevent further heat loss.
- Remove window air conditioning units when summer ends.

A quick walk around the outside of your home reveals other prime candidates for quick and easy repairs. Anytime a hole is drilled into a home, it creates potential for energy loss. Check pipe and wire penetrations—they should be sealed on both exterior and interior walls. This not only helps prevent energy loss, but also keeps critters from taking up residence.

The ductwork of a forced air furnace, central AC unit, or heat pump is another source of energy loss. According to ENERGY STAR, sealing and insulating ducts improves system efficiency by as much as 20 percent.

Of course, this requires effort and

time. First, focus on ducts running through unconditioned crawl spaces, garages, and attics. Seal ducts using a special duct sealant or metal tape that can be found at most home improvement stores. Despite the name, don't use duct tape—it doesn't last as long as sealant or metal tape.

Once ducts are sealed, check connections at bends and air registers to make sure everything is tight. Once finished, wrap ducts with insulation. Since this may be a dirty and time consuming job, many homeowners ask a HVAC company to perform this work.

Another dirty job involves adding insulation to the attic and floors exposed to the crawl spaces or unheated areas. The amount of insulation needed varies depending on your home's location.

R-values reflect the ability of insulation to resist the transfer of heat. Higher R-values indicate more effective insulation. The typical home will need R-49 in an attic and R-25 in floors. You can get advice on how much insulation you need at your local hardware store. In an ideal

world, wall insulation should also be increased, but this generally is not practical.

Remember, no amount of insulating will help if doors or windows are left open. A rush of cold outside air can cause your heating unit to fire up, especially if the door isn't closed right away. Create a jar and charge repeat offenders \$1 each time a door is left open when someone leaves or enters the home. Use that money to buy caulking and weather stripping to seal up windows and other cracks.

Sealing your home can even turn into a fun activity. Have each member of the family explore the house and identify problem areas. Whoever finds the most areas to fix gets to be the foreman while the rest of the family fixes the problems. It's a fun and simple way to get the entire family engaged as you work together to seal your home and your wallet!

Article provided by Brian Sloboda who is a senior program manager specializing in energy efficiency for the Co-operative Research Network, a service of the Arlington, VA.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

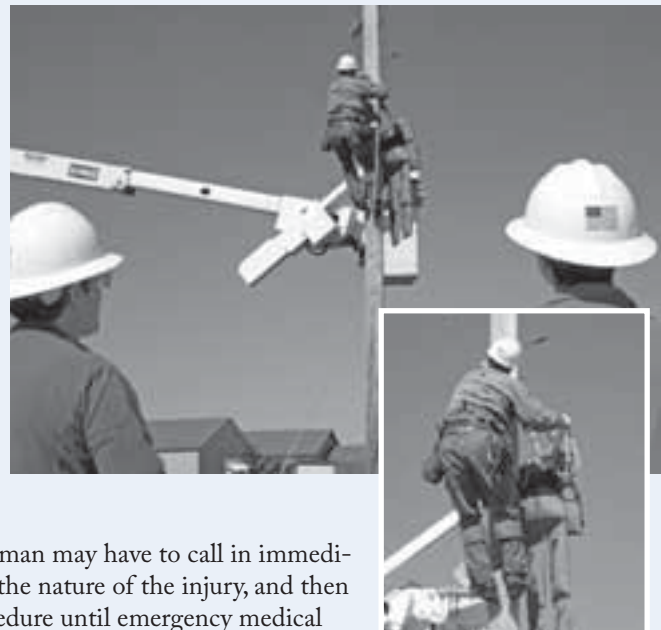
Pole top rescue

Employees of Monroe County Electric Cooperative took part in training for linemen emergencies and pole top rescue.

Hazardous conditions that our electric linemen face can put them in harm's way and a call for help can be difficult in certain situations, especially if it comes from a one or two man crew.

The inside office personnel went through drills on how to handle trouble calls swiftly and effectively, in the event a lineman faces a situation when he is working alone or with another who has been critically injured.

A two man crew emergency means that a lineman may have to call in immediately with information about their location and the nature of the injury, and then perform a rescue, CPR or other life-saving procedure until emergency medical personnel arrives. Office personnel must gather the information correctly and make that important call for help.



Renters have the power to save electricity

By Magen Howard

If you rent your home, it often seems that you can't do much to control your electric bills. But in reality, there are lots of low- or no-cost tricks that you can put into place to cut down on electricity use.

"Usually leases forbid renters to make alterations to a structure, so your energy-saving solutions have to be simple," says Brian Sloboda, a senior program manager specializing in energy efficiency with the Cooperative Research Network, an arm of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Electronics and Appliances

The notion that regularly powering down your computer will shorten its life is outdated. Nowadays, computers tend to become outdated themselves before frequent shut-downs cause any damage. The U.S. Department of Energy consumer website, EnergySavers.gov, offers this guideline: If you won't use your computer for more than 20 minutes, shut off the monitor; if you won't use it for more than two hours, shut the whole thing down.

However, there is a caveat: If your computer takes its time waking up, your own time might be worth more than the electricity you save.

Most electronics feature a glowing light when turned off—that means they're still drawing electricity. A quick fix for this "vampire," or phantom, load involves plugging various devices into a power strip. Simply

flip the switch on the power strip when you won't be using the devices.

While your hands are most likely tied when it comes to the types of major appliances installed, if one needs to be replaced, lobby your landlord to purchase an ENERGY STAR model. Visit energystar.gov for more information on particular products.

Weatherizing

A roll of weather stripping and a tube of caulk can go a long way in saving energy and money. Check for gaps around doors and windows. Can you see daylight? If so, ask your landlord if you can seal cracks and reduce air flow.

The Air Sealing section on EnergySavers.gov offers tips on the right types of weather stripping and caulk for your residence. While you're talking to your landlord, ask if he or she will pay the cost if you do the labor.

Look to your windows for additional savings. Of course, you probably can't replace them, but if they're drafty in the winter, try sealing kits you can purchase at any home improvement store. These plastic sheets fit over your window to block drafts. Curtains can also help—close them in the summer to block sunlight, and open them in the winter to let the warmth in.

Useful Tips

A few more simple tips can help shave your electric bills:

- When lightbulbs burn out, replace them with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs). If they have an ENERGY STAR label, these bulbs typically last up to 10 times longer than traditional incandescent bulbs and use 75 percent less electricity.
- Use your vacuum to clean coils in the bottom panel of your refrigerator. Never figured out where those coils are? Search "Together We Save refrigerator coils" on Youtube.com to watch a video.
- Similarly, keep your dryer vents clean. Clogged refrigerator coils and dryer vents will cause your appliances to work harder and increase the risk of fire.
- Don't allow furniture to block air vents, and shut the vents in rooms you don't use.
- Check the temperature on your water heater. These devices don't need to be set at more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit for daily showers and chores.

Call Your Co-op

When you're trying to save energy and money, it's good to know you're not alone. Call or e-mail Monroe County Electric Cooperative at 939-7171, 1-800-757-7433 or email to amasterson@mcec.org for more information.

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy (EnergySavers.gov), Cooperative Research Network

Visit our booth at the Monroe County Fair from July 22nd – July 29th.

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Inc.

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Watch for signs of heat illnesses

With the onset of summer comes lots of fun outdoor activities — whether you're lying by the pool or playing on a baseball field. Keep heat stress at bay — no matter your sun-soaked activity of choice — by knowing how to prevent heat-related illnesses and recognize the symptoms in yourself and others.

Heat Stroke

The most serious of heat illnesses, heat stroke, can be deadly and swift. Your body temperature could rise to 106 degrees Fahrenheit or more in as little as 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke happens when your body temperature rises rapidly but cannot sweat quickly enough to cool itself. Symptoms include hot, dry skin or the opposite — profuse sweating, hallucinations, chills, throbbing headache, confusion or dizziness, and slurred speech.

If you see someone with the symptoms of heat stroke, immediately call 911 and move the person to a shady area. Try misting the person with cold water, soaking his or her clothes, or fanning the body.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is the result of heavy sweating — extreme loss of

salt and water. People prone to heat exhaustion include the elderly, those with high blood pressure, or people who work in hot conditions. Besides excessive sweating, symptoms include extreme weakness or fatigue, dizziness and confusion, nausea, clammy skin, muscle cramps, and shallow, rapid breathing.

If a person suffers from heat exhaustion, move him or her to a shaded or air-conditioned area. The victim should drink cool — non-alcoholic — beverages and take a cool shower or bath.

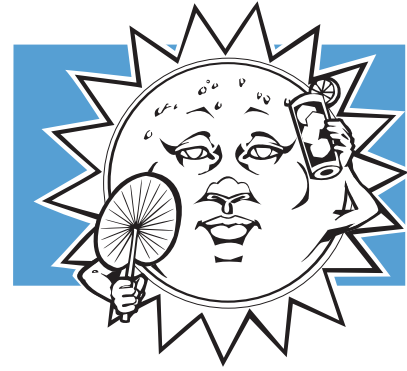
Heat Syncope

Sun-bathers may be prone to heat syncope, which is dizziness or fainting after lying (or standing) for long periods of time. Dehydration can contribute to an episode of heat syncope, so keep that water bottle handy when you head to the beach.

If you feel dizzy after lying for a long time, sit or lie back down in a cool place and sip on a cool beverage — water, sports drinks, or clear juice.

Heat Cramps

Folks who work or play sports outside in the heat may suffer from heat cramps, which result from low salt levels after heavy sweating. Stay alert if you feel cramping because it



could be a symptom of heat exhaustion. Heat cramps usually are felt in the arms, legs, or abdomen.

If you feel them, stop what you're doing, sit in a cool place, and drink clear juice or a sports beverage. Take it easy for a few hours after you no longer feel the cramps — if you return to your activity, the condition could transition to heat exhaustion or heat stroke. If you have heart problems, are on a low-sodium diet, or the cramps do not go away in an hour, call a doctor.

Heat Rash

Heavy sweating can cause a heat rash during hot, humid weather. It looks like a red cluster of pimples or small blisters that usually pop up on the neck or chest, groin, and in the crook of your elbow. You can't do much to treat heat rash besides keep the area dry and use baby powder to alleviate discomfort.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control

MCEC Line Outages - May 2012

Time Off	Duration	# Out	Location	Cause Desc	Sub
05/05/12	1:34	8	IL Route 156	Small Animals Or Birds	Waterloo
05/11/12	1:49	3	Altes Rd	Small Animals Or Birds	Fults
05/12/12	2:16	102	Renault/Kaskaksia Rd	Vehicles Or Machinery	Fults
05/16/12	4:36	29	Algonquin Forest Subdv	Other, Deterioration	Millstadt
05/29/12	6:31	90	Wildwood Subdv	Contamination	Smithton