MONROE
ELECTRIC NEWS
Your Touchstone Energy® Partner
Waterloo, Illinois • 618.939.7171 • 800.757.7433

Local youth represent Monroe county in Washington D.C.

A Week In Washington

Alan W. Wattles

Across The President's Desk

Sarah Hempen of Columbia, Jimmy Quinones of Waterloo and Brianna Wolf of Freeburg represented Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Inc. in Washington, D.C., during the annual "Youth to Washington" Tour, June 15-22nd. This event, sponsored by the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois, began 53 years ago to introduce rural youths to our democratic form of government and cooperatives.

The students met with Rep. Jerry Costello and were among 75 rural Illinois youth leaders selected for the trip. The Illinois students joined 1,496 young leaders from across the country. In addition to the Capitol, they also visited Arlington National Cemetery, the Washington National Cathedral, several Smithsonian Museums, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the World War II Memorial, National Archives, the Newseum and a number of other historical sites.

Left to right: Brianna Wolf , Rep. Jerry Costello and Sarah Hempen.

Sarah Hempen chosen as Illinois representative to the Youth Leadership Council

Sarah Hempen from Monroe County Electric Cooperative was chosen by her peers to be the Illinois Youth Leadership Council (YLC) representative during the 2012 annual Youth to Washington tour. Sarah is the daughter of Scott and Jill Hempen and attends Waterloo High School. Seventy-five students representing Illinois electric and telephone cooperatives participated in the week-long tour.

Each July, the YLC representatives gather in Washington, D.C. for the Youth Leadership Conference. The conference is held to build leadership and public speaking skills and to enhance the delegates' knowledge of the energy industry and the cooperative business model. The students also make presentations at their statewide and local cooperative annual meetings. Students are also given the opportunity to attend and participate in the NRECA's Annual Meeting.

All About Lighting

Make sure to look for lumens, not watts

When you're shopping for light bulbs, compare lumens to be sure you're getting the amount of light, or level of brightness, you want. A new Lighting Facts Label will make it easy to compare bulb brightness, color, life, and estimated annual operating cost.

Buy Lumens, Not Watts

We typically buy things based on how much of it we get, right? When buying milk, we buy it by volume (gallons). So why should lighting be any different? But for decades, we have been buying light bulbs based on how much energy they consume (watts), not how much light they give us (lumens). With the arrival of new, more efficient light bulbs, it's time for that to change.

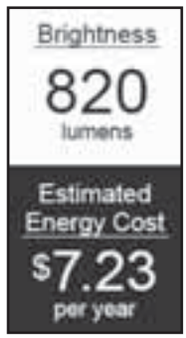
What's a Lumen?

Lumens measure how much light you are getting from a bulb. More lumens means a brighter light; fewer lumens a dimmer light.

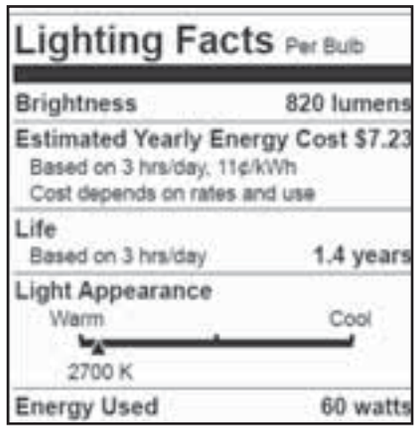
Lumens are to light what pounds are to bananas or gallons are to milk—they let you buy the amount of light you want. So when buying new bulbs, think lumens, not watts. The brightness, or lumen levels, of lights in your home may vary widely, so here are some rules of thumb:

- To replace a 100 watt traditional incandescent bulb, look for a bulb that gives you about 1,600 lumens. If you want something dimmer, go for less lumens; if you prefer brighter light, look for more lumens.
- Replace a 75 watt bulb with an energy-saving bulb that gives you about 1,100 lumens
- Replace a 60 watt bulb with an energy-saving bulb that gives you about 800 lumens
- Replace a 40 watt bulb with an energy-saving bulb that gives you about 450 lumens.

New Lighting Facts Label



To help consumers better understand the switch from watts to lumens, the Federal Trade Commission will require a new product label for light bulbs starting in January 2012. The labels will help consumers buy bulbs that are right for them. Like the helpful nutrition label on food products, the Lighting Facts Label will help consumers understand what they are really purchasing. The label clearly provides the lumens—or brightness—of the bulb, estimated operating cost for the year, and the color of the light (from warm/yellowish, to white to cool/blue).



To learn more about lighting options and other ways to save energy at home, visit TogetherWeSave.com.

Sources: U.S. Dept. of Energy, Energy Savers

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Inc.

6132 State Rt. 3
P.O. Box 128
Waterloo, Illinois 62298

618-939-7171

Office hours: Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m

800-757-7433

Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

One of the easiest ways to make your home more energy efficient is to add insulation in the attic. To see if you need insulation, look across an uncovered attic floor. If the insulation is level with or below the floor joists, you probably need to add more. Want more advise? Call MCEC and sign up for an Energy Audit.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Life Saving Lessons to be Learned

Whether it's swimming, boating or fishing, summertime is water recreation time for millions. While enjoying water activities, don't let a safety hazard dampen your summer fun. As part of its Teach Learn Care TLC campaign, Safe Electricity reminds everyone: Teach what you know about electrical safety. Learn what you need to, and Care enough to share it with those you love.

Electricity is essential energy - it keeps us cool in the summer, lights our house, keeps the refrigerator cold, and runs the TV, stereo and computers. But electricity also can be dangerous. It doesnt take much power to hurt someone - less than one-fifth of the electricity it takes to light a bulb can kill an adult.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recommends installing and using ground-fault circuit-interrupters (GFCIs) for protection against electrocution hazards involving electrical circuits and underwater lighting circuits in and around pools, spas, and hot tubs.

Assessing electrical hazards near areas of water is a wise investment of time and personal energy. Contact between water and electricity can be serious, or even deadly. According to the CPSC, deaths and serious shocks occur in and around swimming pools each year. Safe Electricity offers the following tips to stay safe in or around swimming pools:

- Do not put any electrical appliances within five feet of a swimming pool.
- Any electrical outlets within twenty feet of a pool should be equipped with a GCFI, or Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter.
- Pools and decks should be built at least 5 feet away from all underground electrical lines, and at least 25 feet away from overhead electrical lines.
- As always, never swim during a thunderstorm.
- Use battery operated, rather than electrical, appliances near swimming pools.
- If a swimmer is electrocuted or shocked, don't dive in yourself or you could be electrocuted as well. Turn off the power, and then use a fiberglass shepherd's hook to pull the victim out of the water.

When you leave the pool, don't change the radio station or touch any electrical appliances until you are dry - never touch any electrical appliances when you are wet or standing in water. If children wish to play with sprinklers or hoses, emphasize that they should be set up well away from any electrical outlets or appliances. In most instances, if potential safety hazards are taken into consideration and handled proactively, accidents and deaths could be avoided.

Electricity and water are dangerous around larger bodies of water as well. If you plan to go boating or fishing this summer, be aware of your surroundings and potential electrical hazards.

Always check the location of nearby power lines before boating or fishing. Contact between your boat and a power line could be devastating. Maintain a distance of at least ten feet between your boat and nearby power lines to be safe.

If your boat does come in contact with a power line, never jump out of the boat into the water – the water could be energized. Instead, stay in the boat and avoid touching anything metal until help arrives or until your boat is no longer in contact with the line. Be sure dockside outlets have ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection and check cords that are plugged into them to make sure there is no broken casing or exposed wires.

Check for the location of power lines before fishing. Make sure you are casting the line away from power lines to avoid potential contact.

Flashing Clocks Indicate Cooperative System is Working Properly

Although the old-fashioned analog clocks are nice, digital clocks are much more popular because they are easy to read, as well as more convenient. They usually come with a radio, microwave, or VCR and have multiple capabilities such as timers, night illumination, and sometimes several alarms.

Since digital clocks are nice, we have come to rely on them more and more. With this reliability comes the task of resetting all of the clocks after an electric outage or blink, if your clocks have no battery back-up. In most cases, the blink that caused the clocks to flash wasn't a full blown outage. No one likes these interruptions, even if it was a simple blink.

What you are seeing is an electrical system working properly. These momentary outages tell you the equipment is functioning properly. Just as the electrical system in your house is protected by breakers or fuses, so are the primary lines of the cooperative. We call them Oil Circuit Reclosers (OCRs). These devices are "smarter" than the breakers or fuses in your house. They will automatically turn themselves back on if the problem that caused them to trip is no longer present.

What might cause one of these annoying blinks? Things like a tree limb touching the line, a limb falling and hitting the line on its way down, or an animal making contact with an energized wire, or the wind slapping the lines together. Perhaps it is lightning, someone hitting a guywire with a piece of machinery, cattle rubbing a guywire, etc.

For all the things that cause a blink, it's a wonder the digital clocks work at all. But remember, OCRs create the blink instead of a complete outage. They blink to prevent the outage. Should the blinks occur frequently, please contact our office. Perhaps there is a problem with the line we need to be aware of.

So … if you are shopping for a piece of equipment that is, or contains a digital clock, you might want to consider getting one with a battery back-up.

MCEC Line Outages - June 2012

Time Off	Duration	# Out	Location	Cause Desc	Sub
06/26/12	1:37	8	Coxeyville Road/Route 3	Electrical overload	North Waterloo
06/28/12	2:44	758	New Athens Substation	Other, deterioration	New Athens
06/30/12	0:57	34	Sunset Meadows Subdiv	Electrical overload	Smithton