



Waterloo, Illinois • 618.939.7171 • 800.757.7433

Loyal connections

Co-ops change lives in the communities they serve



Alan W. Wattles

Across The President's Desk

Loyalty is a prized virtue—to country, family, even the schools we attend. We keep those ties strong throughout our lives.

We at Monroe County Electric Cooperative (MCEC) also have loyalties, to the members and communities we serve. We have deep connections here because Monroe County is our home, and you are our neighbor.

When you signed up for service

with MCEC, you became a member, not a customer—because each of our 7,000+ consumer-members owns a portion of the utility.

That means we care about improving the quality of life in the areas we serve. From helping out in the community on various projects to taking donations for the local food bank, MCEC invests in the places where you live and work.

MCEC doesn't exist to make profits for distant investors on Wall Street. We exist to provide you with safe, reliable, and affordable electric service—and doing so in a way that makes things better for future generations. Because electric co-ops operate on a not-for-profit basis, we have no need to increase revenues above what it takes to run our business in a financially sound

manner. This structure helps keep your electric bills affordable.

We take our jobs seriously, but we also take our community roles seriously, too. That's why we offer grants to local schools, and send three high school juniors to Washington, D.C., every summer to learn about history and government. We host Live Line Safety demonstrations for area schools, emergency personnel, civic organizations and local businesses.

We don't participate in these activities simply because it's nice to do, or even the right thing to do. We do it because we remain loyal to our members, our neighbors, our home—and a mission to make life better in the areas we serve.

Do it all at www.mcec.org!

- ***Pay your bill online***
- ***View past history of electric usage***
- ***See how your electric usage changes with temperature***
- ***Stay up-to-date on your co-op news***
- ***Learn ways to save on your bill***



A Week in Washington

Emma Eustis of Waterloo, Emily Killebrew of Smithton and Ethan May of Valmeyer represented Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Inc. in Washington, D.C., during the annual "Youth to Washington" Tour, June 14-21. This event, sponsored by the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois since the late 1950s, is an introduction to our democratic form of government and cooperatives for rural youth.

The students met with Congressman William Enyart and were among 65 rural Illinois youth leaders selected for the trip. The Illinois students joined more than 1,520 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, memorials to Presidents Lincoln, Jefferson, Washington and Roosevelt, the National Archives, the Royal

Embassy of Saudi Arabia, the Newseum and a number of other historical sites.

To find out more about the tour go to www.youthtour.coop or www.facebook.com/ILYouthtoWashington.



Pictured from left: May, Eustis, Killebrew and Congressman Enyart.



Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

Your swimming pool doesn't have to be a drain on your electric bill. Simply covering it will go a long way to reducing evaporation, which will cut back on refilling and reheating. Also, consider investing in a high-efficiency or multi-speed pool pump when it's time for a replacement—they cost more but save a lot more energy than older models. Visit EnergySavers.gov for more info.

Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives



Auditing energy: small measures, real savings

By Magen Howard

No matter the age of your home, it could benefit from an energy audit. Monroe County Electric Cooperative (MCEC) offers free home energy audits to homes on member lines conducted by our member services department. But you can get started on your own in finding low-cost solutions that could save money on your monthly electric bill.

First, ask yourself a simple question: Does my home feel drafty and cold in the winter, or stuffy and hot in the summer? If yes, then it probably experiences air leakage.

To track down where those spots are, start with the usual suspects—like damaged seals around doors and windows. If you see daylight or feel air, then apply caulk and weather stripping to keep outdoor air where it's supposed to be.

But don't forget spots you might not immediately think of, like recessed canister lights and electrical outlets. Outlet insulation kits can be purchased for as little as \$2, and you can fix up your canister lights with some caulk around the edges.

Also look where walls meet the ceiling. Cobwebs mean you've got drafts.

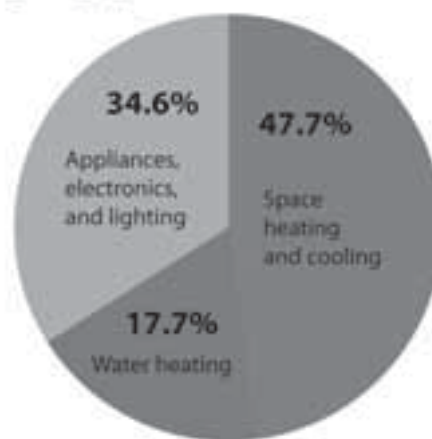
Next, peek into the attic and inspect the crawl space or basement for sufficient insulation—how much you need depends on your climate. Check out the insulation calculator from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory at www.ornl.gov/~roofs/Zip/ZipHome.html. Keep in mind insulation won't do its job well if you don't have a proper air barrier working in tandem. That means all joints and cracks must be sealed between your living space and insulation.

Finally, look to your light fixtures. Compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) are up to 75 percent more efficient than traditional incandescent bulbs, and they've come a long way in light quality, design, and affordability. You can purchase CFLs in a variety of shapes and hues. They cost more upfront, but you'll make your money back in less than nine months and, after that, they start saving money. Make sure to purchase a CFL that's rated by ENERGY STAR, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's program that denotes products meeting specific energy efficiency criteria. ENERGY STAR-rated CFLs will typically last 10 times longer than a traditional incandescent bulb producing the same amount of light.

LEDs—light-emitting diodes—are in the next wave

How Americans Use Energy

New data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows that heating and cooling still accounts for the largest amount of electricity consumption in American homes. But as we use more and more electronic gadgets, that segment is closing the gap.



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

of residential lighting. An ENERGY STAR-rated model is estimated to use only a quarter of the electricity consumed by traditional bulbs and can last for 25 years. As with many new technologies, the up-front cost for an LED bulb is still much more than even a CFL, but prices are expected to drop as new products are developed.

To learn more about ways to reduce your electric bill, visit www.togetherwesave.com or call MCEC at 939-7171 or toll-free at 1-800-757-7433 and ask about our free home energy audit program.

Sources: *EnergySavers.gov*, *EnergyStar.gov*

Magen Howard 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.

Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) system can alert us to trouble

Our automatic meter reading system (AMR) was implemented back in 2004. This system allows the cooperative to get accurate meter readings from member accounts and can provide detailed reports on electric usage history.

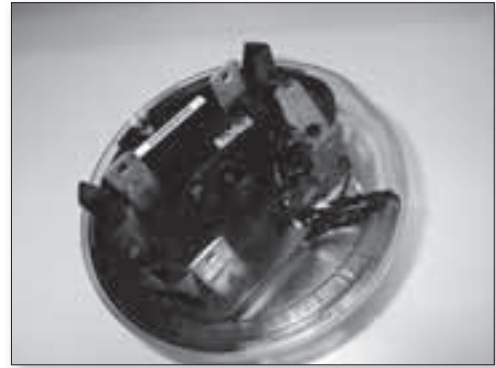
Years ago, cooperative members were required to read their own meters and send in those readings with the previous month's bill. The cooperative was dependent on how accurate these readings were to correctly bill for the actual usage each month. Many times the readings were written down and sent in error. Sometimes people would do their own "budget billing" and send in low readings.

This new system takes the guess

work out of meter readings and allowed the cooperative to move on to "turn-around billing", which simply means your bill reflecting the previous month's usage, rather than two months prior. It's easier to remember what we did last month than two months ago.

An added benefit to the AMR is the ability to find most of the meters that are not responding or not sending us back their readings. This can be caused by a meter problem or a service entrance problem.

Just recently we discovered a "non-responding" meter and a change out service order was promptly created. When the lineman changed out the meter, he dis-



covered the back of the meter had been melted through by some overload condition or possible lightning event. This could have caused a fire if it had not been discovered when it was.

Many cooperatives, as well as other electric utilities are implementing AMR systems. They are realizing the many benefits that AMR systems can provide to the membership, as well as the cooperative or other electric utility.

MCEC Line Outages - June 2013

Date	# Out	Duration	Location	Cause Description	Substation
05/31/13	3	2:19	Tyler Ln	Trees, Other	East Carondelet
06/06/13	105	1:48	Brickey Rd	Trees, Other	Poe
06/13/13	30	0:52	J Rd	Trees, Other	Poe
06/17/13	334	1:16	Columbia Area	Power Supplier	Columbia
06/17/13	233	0:36	Fountain/Valmeyer Area	Power Supplier	Fountain
06/18/13	47	1:27	Ronnie Dr	Other, Faulty Equipment	Waterloo
06/22/13	3	0:46	Country Club Ln	Unknown	N. Waterloo
06/22/13	9	2:02	Stringtown Rd	Trees, Other	Fults
06/22/13	145	1:23	Roachtown Rd/Schmidt Rd	Trees, Other	Smithton
06/23/13	5	7:03	Dobbin Hill Ln	Trees, Other	Fults
06/23/13	5	2:57	Baum Rd	Lightning	Waterloo
06/23/13	6	4:25	Valmeyer Rd	Lightning	Columbia
06/23/13	5	1:14	Bohleystville Rd	Trees, Other	Millstadt
06/24/13	24	1:08	KK Rd	Lightning	Waterloo
06/25/13	4	2:39	Chausse Ln	Trees, Other	New Athens
06/25/13	6	0:30	Hankammer Ln	Vehicles or Machinery	Millstadt
06/26/13	35	2:29	Press Rd	Small Animals or Birds	Smithton
06/26/13	12	1:38	Harley Ln	Trees, Other	New Athens
06/29/13	4	2:24	Kelling Dr	Other, Deterioration	East Carondelet