



Your role in Co-op Nation

There is a reason we say member, not customer

By Adam Schwartz



Alan W. Wattles

Across The President's Desk

Monroe County Electric Cooperative (MCEC) is connected to a network of cooperatives. You might be thinking, "Really? How does that work?" MCEC is a member of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) www.aiec.coop.

We do this to keep in close contact with our 'sister' utilities and to stay up to date on how to best serve you. They are there to assist with local training, legislative issues affecting us in Springfield and when we have a severe outage, we can call on them to assist in getting your electricity back on as soon as possible. This is one of the ways we live up to our seven cooperative principles, which includes "cooperation among cooperatives."

MCEC is also a member of Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC). This is the organization that produces the power that we buy at the wholesale level and enables us to provide safe, reliable and efficient power to you at the lowest possible

cost. SIPC is also a cooperative, and we hold a seat on the organization's Board of Directors to represent your interests.

But wait--there's more! MCEC is also a member of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) www.nreca.coop that unites electric cooperatives in the 47 states we serve. NRECA provides important benefits such as representing our interests with federal lawmakers and the Administration (the executive branch of our government). NRECA also provides health and retirement benefits to our employees, as well as training for board members and employees.

NRECA is a member of both the National Cooperative Business Association www.ncba.coop and the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) www.ica.coop, which is made up of a wide range of cooperative businesses including those in agriculture, banking (credit unions), health care, housing, purchasing and many others in more than 80 countries. Many of these businesses represent some of the best known global brands in the world.

In 2013, the ICA released the "Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade" designed to promote the cooperative business model as the best way to meet both the economic and social needs of individuals and communities.

The report (which is available for free at www.ica.coop) describes the five key areas that all co-ops emphasize:

- Participation (member engagement)
- Sustainability (how we help our communities prosper)
- Identity (making sure people understand and showcase the cooperative business model)
- Legal Framework (making sure laws and regulations help, not harm our ability to operate for your benefit)
- Capital (ensure we have the money we need to finance our operations)

Member owners like you at MCEC have a role to play in all of these areas, but it is Participation (member engagement) that is critically important. We strive to have members actively participate in our governance through voting or running for our board of directors.

Back in the early days of MCEC, we never could have existed without the active participation of all of our members. While technology and reliability have improved, we still need you to be involved. In many ways, it is more important than ever that you feel like you belong to our co-op.

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A Week in D.C.

Emily Hartmann, Emily Johanson and Garrett Kapelski represented Monroe County Electric Co-operative, Inc. in Washington, D.C., during the annual "Youth to Washington" Tour, June 13-20. This event, sponsored by the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois since the late 1950s, is an introduction for rural youth to our democratic form of government and the cooperative business model.

The students met with Congressman William Enyart and were among 75 rural Illinois youth leaders selected for the trip. The Illinois students joined more than 1,600 young leaders from across the country from 44 states. In addition to the Capitol, they also visited Gettysburg, Arlington National Cemetery, the Washington National Cathedral, several Smithsonian Museums,



The U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the World War II Memorial, memorials to Presidents Lincoln, Jefferson, Washington and Roosevelt, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, the Newseum and a number of other historical sites.

Juniors in high schools that are within the service area of Monroe County Electric Co-operative, Inc. are eligible to participate in the annual program.

Pictured from l-r: Hartmann, Congressman Enyart, Kapelski and Johanson.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Don't Sweat It - Set It and Forget It.

Going on vacation? Closing the blinds and turning up the thermostat just 10° to 15° as you walk out the door can shave a lot off your electric bill this summer. Many new programmable thermostats can even be controlled remotely using a smartphone, so you can return to a comfortable home.

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Geothermal continues to be most efficient way to heat/cool your home

A ground source heat pump system is a revolutionary energy concept that uses the Earth's renewable resources to provide low-cost heating, cooling and water heating. With a ground source system, you can keep your home comfortable year round. In the summer, warm (75 degree) air from inside the home is exchanged with the constant 57 degree temperature in the ground. By only cooling the air a few degrees using a constant temperature, less electrical energy is used – reducing your home cooling costs up to 40 percent in the summer. Waste heat during the summer can provide your hot water – all from the same system.

During the heating season, cool air from inside the home is exchanged with the constant 57 degree temperature in the ground. This process is warming air that is already 57 degrees rather than outside air, which can be below zero degrees. This can cut your home heating costs as much as 50-70 percent in the winter. One of the most



attractive features of this system is a lower energy demand, an important factor for your electric utility, Monroe County Electric Cooperative (MCEC). Ground source heat pumps are very durable. They have fewer mechanical components, and all components are either buried in the ground or located inside the home. This added feature protects all components from outside weather conditions. The piping buried in the ground carries a 50-year warranty and is regulated by federal environmental laws to insure safe drinking water. A ground source system is an

excellent source for energy-saving, cost-cutting heating, cooling and water heating. The system's efficiency is more than three times better than the best gas furnace. Rather than burning fuel to produce heat (and vent harmful exhaust fumes), a geothermal system simply uses the Earth's constant temperature for heating and cooling. As a result, the geothermal system provides four to five dollars of energy for every dollar used to power it.

Although initial installation costs may be more, a ground source system is designed to ultimately cost less than any other heating and cooling system. However, there is currently a **30% government tax credit** available for the installation of a new geothermal system. MCEC also offers a **\$1,000 rebate** paid directly to the member who installs geothermal and meets the guidelines. For more information about ground source heat pumps, contact the Member Services department at 939-7171, 1-800-757-7433, ext. 115 or by email at amasterson@mcec.org.

MCEC Line Outages - June 2014

Date	Duration	# Out	Location	Cause Desc	Substation
06/06/14	1:59	10	Roachtown Rd	Trees, Other	Smithton
06/06/14	0:56	38	Mule Rd	Unknown	East Carondelet
06/06/14	0:35	532	Fults Area	Maintenance	Fults
06/06/14	0:35	951	Waterloo Area	Maintenance	Waterloo
06/06/14	0:35	1105	Red Bud Area	Maintenance	Poe
06/07/14	2:38	71	Fults Area	Wind, Not Trees	Fults
06/10/14	1:22	8	Keim Rd	Lightning	Millstadt
06/18/14	0:43	20	Konarcik Rd	Trees, Other	Waterloo
06/21/14	0:17	143	Smithton Area	Maintenance	Smithton
06/24/14	1:31	9	Powell Rd	Small Animals Or Birds	Poe
06/25/14	1:12	19	State Rt 156	Large Animals	New Athens

Teach your children well about electrical safety

Electricity is a dynamic power source. We live our lives surrounded by it, but sometimes we forget just how dangerous electricity can be. Many home electrical fires, injuries and electrocutions can be prevented when we understand and practice electrical safety. This is especially true for our youngest co-op members.

Throughout the year, not just in May during National Electrical Safety Month, Monroe County Electric Cooperative (MCEC) offers many value-added benefits to help teach youngsters about electricity. MCEC provides free Line Line safety demonstrations to area schools and county safety programs. But as your child's first and most important teacher, perhaps it's time to have a talk with your sons and daughters to reinforce those lessons.

Start at an early age, teaching them about the physical dangers associated with electrical components and how to handle electrical plugs, outlets, switches and other devices. Keep in mind, talking to your children about electrical safety should also include fun activities and facts about the basics—what is electricity, the need to respect its power and how to use it efficiently as they study, work and play.

As we all know, kids will be kids. Getting them to show interest in some of these lessons won't be easy. Just remember that what your

children learn from you today can be a lifesaver later when they encounter potential hazards like downed power lines in their path, play hide-and-seek behind those big metal electrical boxes in the neighborhood or are tempted to clamber up a utility pole.

Gather your youngsters around the kitchen table or on the front porch—some of the best teachable moments about electrical safety can happen in and around your home. Look around. There are plenty of opportunities to demonstrate safety that are as close as the electrical outlet on your living room wall. For example, show young children how plugs work, and let them know that even if they are curious about the slits of an electrical outlet, nothing else should be placed inside. Each year about 2,400 children end up in the emergency room after suffering injuries caused by inserting objects—paper clips, pens, screws, nails, forks, hair pins, coins and more—into electrical receptacles. That's about seven children a day who sustain injuries ranging from electric shock to burns.

But this isn't the only electrical mishap that impacts youngsters. Our reliance on electronics and gadgets have left both youngsters and their parents at risk when they overcrowd electrical outlets, continue to use frayed wires, place devices near liquids or leave electronics on for long periods of time. Some of

the same guidelines MCEC offers to protect adults also help protect children. We should all set good examples for our youngsters.

Supplement your lessons at home with resources galore; including those provided by MCEC. The Electrical Safety Foundational International (www.esfi.org) is among the many national organizations offering free kits, videos and interactive online tools that make learning and practicing electrical safety fun for you and your children. And as they grow older, remember to keep teaching them about the power of electricity and how to use it safely.

B. Denise Hawkins writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.



Photo courtesy of SafeElectricity.org

■ "Co-op Nation" continued from 16d

Margaret Mead, the cultural anthropologist, once said, "Never doubt the ability of a small group of people to change the world, indeed it is the only thing that ever has." MCEC is connected to a world full of people who believe in the cooperative principles

and values, and we need you to be connected to us by more than just the electric line. So, get involved. Come to our annual meeting in March and make your voice heard. Together, we can make Co-op Nation stronger than ever.

Adam Schwartz is the founder of The Cooperative Way a consulting firm that helps co-ops succeed. He is an author, speaker and member-owner of the CDS Consulting Co-op. You can follow him on Twitter @adamcooperative.