MONROE
ELECTRIC NEWS
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Lite for a Bite Program will launch at Member Appreciation Day

Alan W. Wattles
Across The President's Desk

Your electric cooperative will begin a new CFL giveaway program, Lite for a Bite, on Saturday, October 2nd at our Member Appreciation Day. The day will run from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m.

Any member who brings in canned food items or non-perishable boxed items ($1.00+ in value) can exchange them for CFL light bulbs. There will be a limit of 4, meaning that any member can bring in up to 4 cans of food and be given up to 4 CFL light bulbs. Only four bulbs per membership will be allowed.

The canned food items we collect will be donated to local food pantries and be available to needy families in our area over the holidays.

The program will run on and after the Member Appreciation Day until all the bulbs are distributed.

This Lite for a Bite giveaway is part of our Touchstone energy program that demonstrates one of Touchstone Energy's four core values which is commitment to community.

We will "Fall Back" from Daylight Savings Time

Sunday, November 7, 2010. Remember to turn your clocks back one hour.

The sun will set at approximately 4:55 p.m. Sunday, November 7 – forcing us to get used to darker evenings. Starting on Saturday, October 2nd at our Member Appreciation Day, Monroe County Electric Cooperative will help you navigate the dark by providing free CFL light bulbs when you donate up to 4 cans of food in our "Lite for a Bite" program. The food will be donated to a local food pantry to help those in need. Come to our office at 6132 State Route 3, 2 miles south of Waterloo for your donation and free bulbs.

Energy efficiency is especially important to remember during the fall and winter months. Daylight Saving Time ends and people tend to be in their homes for longer time periods, using more lighting and electronics. Make sure electronics are completely turned off when not in use by using a power strip and switch to energy efficient lighting, such as CFLs and LEDs to improve your energy efficiency. For more energy and money saving ideas, pick up a free copy of 101 Low-Cost/No-Cost Home Energy –Saving Measures at the cooperative. You can also click on the "Together We Save" banner on the cooperative's website, www.mcec.org.

Re-cap and update on federal climate change legislation

As you might recall, in June of last year, the U.S. House narrowly passed legislation that would establish a "cap and trade" program to deal with the climate change issue. Under that bill, Congress would set a national cap on the amount of carbon dioxide emissions allowed each year, and that cap would decline over time. Among other concerns, co-ops from across the nation felt that those caps were too low and the timeline too aggressive, and that the bill could likely result in substantially higher rates for co-op members.

The U.S. Senate then began its consideration of the issue last fall. As a handful of Senators attempted to negotiate a bill that could get the 60 Senate votes necessary to defeat a filibuster, a second "front" on climate change appeared – this time, a regulatory one. The U.S. EPA announced it would be starting down the path to regulate carbon dioxide under the Clean Air Act – not a welcome prospect for members of co-ops like yours, which derive much of its power from coal.

In May of this year, following eight months of negotiations, Senators John Kerry of Massachusetts and Joe Lieberman of Connecticut unveiled their long-awaited climate legislation. Their bill, which featured an economy-wide cap and trade proposal, failed to gain traction. Subsequent "downscaled" versions also were unsuccessful and the Senate departed Washington in early August without considering climate or energy legislation.

So where do we stand now? The Senate returned to Washington, D.C. on September 13. They were scheduled to have about three weeks to work and had a lot on their agenda, so passing even a scaled-down energy bill may be difficult. If they do pass one, it will most likely focus on the Gulf Oil spill, but may also include a Renewable Electricity Standard to mandate greater use of renewable energy. While the Senate could conceivably pass such legislation in the November post-election "lame duck" session, strong partisan feelings from the election may hinder those attempts.

And what about the future? While cap and trade legislation appears to be "dead" for 2010, its supporters are already looking ahead to 2011 and beyond. And, EPA is set to begin its administrative regulation of carbon dioxide in January of next year. Ever since the beginning of the climate debate, co-ops have voiced their support for comprehensive climate legislation – but ONLY if it is fair, achievable, and affordable. We greatly appreciate the efforts of co-op members who have participated in the "our Energy, Our Future" grass roots campaign to make that point – and to stress that any climate policy ought to be made by our elected representatives in Congress and not EPA.

Be Fire Prevention Smart - Don't Get Burned!

Residential fires caused by electrical defects account for a significant number of total blazes each year. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, last year home electrical problems accounted for 67,800 fires, 485 deaths, 2305 injuries and $868 million in property losses. Many of these fires are preventable. Safe Electricity urges consumers to be aware of electrical hazards, take time this month and make it a regular habit to inspect all appliances, cords and plugs.

"Check for loose wall receptacles, loose wires or loose lighting fixtures," says Mike Ashenfelter, building safety inspector and member of the Safe Electricity Advisory Board. "Listen for popping or sizzling sounds behind walls. Immediately shut off, then professionally replace light switches that are hot to the touch and lights that spark and flicker."

Electrical plugs and cords usually deteriorate gradually, making damage difficult to detect. Inspect all appliance cords and plugs for wear at least once a year. Make sure they are not frayed or cracked, placed under carpets or rugs or located in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple them to walls, floors or other objects.

"Overloaded electrical systems can be a dangerous prelude to fire," warns Ashenfelter. "Dimming lights when an appliance goes on, a shrinking TV picture, slow-heating appliances, fuses blowing or circuits tripping frequently are signals of overloaded circuits."

Overloaded electrical outlets or circuits that supply power to several outlets are a major cause of residential fires. Overloaded outlets and circuits carry too much electricity, which generates heat in undetectable amounts. The heat causes wear on the internal wiring system and can ignite a fire.

To prevent overloading, Safe Electricity recommends the following:

- Avoid using extension cords on a permanent basis and never plug more than two home appliances into an outlet at once.
- Use only outlets designed to handle multiple plugs. Each outlet or circuit should not exceed 1500 watts, so give special consideration to appliances that use 1,000 or more such as refrigerators, hot plates, irons, microwave ovens, dishwashers, heaters and air conditioners.
- Avoid plugging large appliances into the same outlet or circuit. If a circuit breaker trips or a fuse blows frequently, immediately cut down on the number of appliances on that line.

When looking over electrical wiring and fixtures, look at light bulbs as well. Check the wattage to make sure light bulbs match the fixture requirements. Replace bulbs that have higher wattage ratings than recommended. Make sure they are fastened securely so they don't overheat.

Know where your circuit breakers and fuse boxes are and how to operate them. Check the circuit breakers and fuses to make sure they are working properly. Fuses should be properly rated for the circuit they are protecting. If you don't know the correct rating, have an electrician identify and label the correct size to be used. Always replace a fuse with the same size you are removing.

If an electrical fire does occur, take these steps:

- Call 911 or another appropriate emergency service
- If you must attempt to put out an electrical fire, use a dry fire extinguisher or baking soda. **Never try to extinguish an electrical fire with water!**
- If the fire is large try to turn off the main power source. Do not try to handle the fire yourself.

A simple way to protect your family is to check the operation of the smoke alarms every month and replace the batteries twice a year. The National Fire Prevention Agency reports that roughly 60 percent of reported home fire deaths happened in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoking alarms.

Also develop and practice an escape plan twice a year in case of a fire. A good plan is known by all household members and includes an outside meeting location away from danger of the fire.

"The tragedies of electrical fires do not have to happen," Ashenfelter stresses. "These problems can be difficult to detect, but relatively easy to prevent. Take these precautions to protect you, your home and your loved ones.

MCEC Outages for August 2010

Date	Duration	# Out	Location	Cause Desc	Sub
08/05/10	3:45	30	Fults Area	Trees, other	Fults
08/08/10	1:28	5	D Rd	Small animals or birds	Columbia
08/12/10	1:39	214	Glauber Rd	Trees, other	East Carondelet
08/12/10	3:04	61	Bluff Rd	Trees, other	Fults
08/12/10	1:10	10	J Rd	Trees, other	Poe
08/12/10	1:10	2	Albert Ln	Lightning	Millstadt
08/13/10	0:59	2	Nottmeier Ln	Lightning	Fults
08/14/10	1:50	10	J Rd	Other, deterioration	Poe
08/15/10	1:16	12	Fountain Creek Ridge Ln	Trees, other	Waterloo
08/21/10	0:58	939	Smithton Area	Power supplier	Smithton
08/21/10	0:51	604	New Athens Area	Power supplier	New Athens
08/22/10	2:17	36	Hill Top Rd	Other, deterioration	Fountain
08/28/10	1:53	48	Maus Rd	Other, faulty equipment	Fults

Simple facts about home sealing

- By taking steps to reduce air infiltration, you can significantly cut your annual energy costs and make your home more comfortable.
- Air infiltration is unwanted air that leaks into your house through openings, cracks, and other areas that aren't sealed as well as they should be.
- In the winter, cold air can leak into your home, causing drafts and making your furnace or heat pump work harder.
- In summer, warm, humid outside air can slip into your air-conditioned home.
- Improperly sealed homes can also cause problems with pests, rodents, and excessive moisture that can lead to mold and mildew.
- Use weatherstripping or caulk to seal air leaks around your doors, windows or attic access.
- Seal the joint of walls and the foundation, along baseboards, where electric or telephone wires, gas lines, or TV cables enter and anywhere two different materials (such as bricks and wood) meet.
- Gaps between sections of ductwork should also be sealed.
- Don't worry about sealing your home too tightly, because it's better to rely on controlled ventilation to maintain fresh air levels.
- Our Energy Advisor can help you better understand what sealing may do for you.