



Alan W. Wattles  
**Across The  
President's  
Desk**



## Together We Serve & Together We Save Lite for a Bite Program

**B**ring in up to four cans or boxes of food to our office by December 24th and we'll donate them to the local area food pantries. In return, we'll give you one CFL light bulb for each can/box of food you give us up to four per member, while supplies last.

The CFL lights will help you save on your holiday bills this year. The bulbs are rated at 120 Watts of light output with only 32 watts of power required. These bulbs work best indoors and are recommended for rooms where lights are used frequently.

**Please check the expiration dates on your food items before bringing them in.**



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

## Office Closing

The cooperative office will be closed Thursday, December 25th for Christmas and Thursday, January 1st for New Years Day.



# Bundle up for winter storms

Are you ready for winter's cold grasp? Snow and ice are inevitable when dealing with winter storms, but being prepared can make a world of difference. Monroe County Electric Co-Operative (MCEC) recommends the following tips to help you prepare for wintery blasts.

## Winterize your home

Winter storms wreak havoc on your home. By winterizing your living space, you'll be prepared for extreme cold and hazardous conditions.

- Remember to maintain and inspect heating equipment and chimneys every year to ensure they're working safely and properly.
- Caulk and weather strip doors and windows to make the most of your heating system.
- Freezing temperatures often cause water pipes to burst. Remember to insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic. Allow faucets to drip during extreme cold to avoid frozen pipes.
- Consider installing storm windows for better insulation. You can also cover windows with plastic (from the inside) to keep the cold out.
- Make sure everyone in your family knows where the home's fire extinguisher is located and how to use it properly. House fires occur more frequently during winter months, as people tend to use alternative heating methods that may not be safe.

## Prepare a winter survival kit

Severe winter storms often bring heavy accumulation of ice and snow,



which can lead to downed power lines and extended outages. MCEC crews will work hard to restore power, but having a winter survival kit on hand is a smart idea.

- **Food:** Store food that does not require cooking, such as canned goods, crackers, dehydrated meats and dried fruit. Keep a large supply of water on hand. Ready.gov recommends five gallons per person.
- **Medication:** Be sure to refill all prescriptions in the event of a major power outage.
- **Identification:** Keep all forms of identification handy, such as driver's licenses, photo IDs and social security cards. Bank account information and insurance policies are also good to have on hand.
- **Other items:** First Aid Kit, blankets, flashlight, battery-powered radio and extra batteries.

## Stay warm and safe

If an outage occurs, you should plan for an alternate heating source. A fireplace, propane space heater or wood-burning stove would be sufficient. Fuel and wood-burning heating sources should always be vented, and make sure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly. Always practice extreme caution when using alternate heating sources.

If you decide to use a portable generator during an outage, make sure it is placed outside the home for proper ventilation. Be careful not to overload the generator. Use appropriate extension cords that can handle the electric load.

Follow these tips, and your family will stay warm in the event of a power outage. For more information on preparing for winter storms, visit [www.safeelectricity.org](http://www.safeelectricity.org).



## Reminder: Deadline for 2015 IEC Scholarship applications approaching

**T**en scholarships of \$1,250 each will be awarded in 2015 to eligible high school seniors through the Illinois Electric Cooperative (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

Five scholarships will be awarded to students who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative. A sixth scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, will be awarded to

a student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative employee or director. Three scholarships are reserved for students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors. The tenth scholarship is the “Lavern and Nola McEntire Lineworker’s Scholarship.” Individuals eligible for this scholarship are children of military veterans, co-op members and co-op employees/directors. Individuals wanting to apply or needing further information

should call the cooperative at (800)757-7433 or 939-7171 ext. 15. You can also go to our website at [www.mcec.org](http://www.mcec.org) – “Member Info” and then “Downloads” to print off the forms.

The deadline for all the scholarships except the “Lavern and Nola McEntire Lineworker’s Scholarship” is **December 31st, 2014**. The deadline for the “Lavern & Nola McEntire Lineworker’s Scholarship” is **April 30th 2015**.

## MCEC line outages - October 2014

Date	Duration	# Out	Location	Cause Desc	Substation
10/02/14	1:18	2	Apple Street	No Cause Code	Smithton
10/03/14	3:23	16	Mullins Rd	Trees, Other	East Carondelet
10/09/14	1:18	2	Dd Rd	Lightning	Columbia
10/13/14	1:32	31	Ll Rd	Trees, Other	New Athens
10/15/14	2:09	14	B Rd	Other, Deterioration	Fountain
10/23/14	1:30	103	Gall Rd	Trees, Other	N. Waterloo
10/24/14	0:57	181	Gall Rd/Moore Rd	Vehicles Or Machinery	N. Waterloo
10/24/14	0:54	24	G Rd	Vehicles Or Machinery	Waterloo
10/25/14	3:33	69	Canman Ln	Vehicles Or Machinery	Columbia
10/29/14	1:42	39	Rt 156	Unknown	Waterloo
10/29/14	1:11	171	Smithton/Freeburg Area	Maintenance	Smithton
10/31/14	2:55	51	Foxtail/Brandt Rd	Trees, Other	Fults

### Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Inc.

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# Is your house dry in winter?

A house that has air that is too dry in the winter causes static electricity, furniture to have loose joints and skin to be dry and itchy. In other words, not a very comfortable place to spend the majority of your time. Dry houses can be caused by a number of factors.

Over the years, I've heard many members say that their heating system uses dry heat and that's what causes their house to dry out. A majority of these involve wood burners or wood stoves. Okay, if there is a dry heat, doesn't there also have to be heat that isn't dry, or in other words, wet heat? Truth is, heat is heat; it can't be dry or wet. It's just energy, btus if you will.

Wood burners or wood stoves dry homes out because they get their combustion air from inside

humidifier on your furnace, consider attacking the source of dryness. If you are using a wood burning device, consider replacing it with one that uses outside air for combustion.

If you don't have a fossil fueled heating system, then your home most likely has excessive air leakage. A blower door test can assist you in finding those locations. You can also find many yourself. Walk around your home, including the basement, and look for any perforation in the building exterior. In the attic, look for wiring and plumbing vents rising from walls below. Make sure attic access doors or stairs are air-sealed and insulated.



*Homes should be kept between 40 and 50 percent relative humidity in the winter. Below that, the house will feel dry and uncomfortable, above that, moisture related condensation and other problems can occur.*

the house and then send it up the flue in the form of smoke. The same amount of air that goes out has also got to be sucked in through cracks in the house. Cold air is as dry as it is dense and can hold little moisture. As we send warm moist air up the chimney, it is replaced by cold, dry air.

Homes also dry out due to leaks in the building shell. Stack effect causes warm, moist air to rise and leak out of the house through leaks between the ceiling and attic. These can be from holes for wires, recessed lighting, recessed soffits, plumbing vents or duct chases. Just like a chimney, that air is replaced by cold dry air from outside.

Instead of putting out pans of water to evaporate or installing a

If the attic insulation is fiberglass batts, look for dirty areas. These are an indication that air has been passing through the batt and it has been filtering the air as it passes through.

With new building materials and techniques, most newer houses do not tend to dry out as older houses

do. If your newer, or older house for that matter, has condensation on windows, it could be an indication you have too much moisture in the house. This could be from a crawl-space that lacks a vapor barrier over the soil or from a humidifier on the heating system.

Homes should be kept between 40 and 50 percent relative humidity in the winter. Below that, the house will feel dry and uncomfortable, above that, moisture related condensation and other problems can occur. Consider purchasing an inexpensive hygrometer (meter that indicates relative humidity) for your home. Many times these are found in a three-station set that includes a thermometer and barometric meter as well.



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