

Norris Electric *News*

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Youth to Washington trip may provide answers for your future

OK. So you aren't really into politics. As a junior in high school, you're thinking about college and where you're going to come up with more than \$100,000 to pay for higher education. You're also trying to decide what you want to work at the rest of your life to make that college experience pay off.

Oddly enough, the very people who may have answers to those questions are wearing the title of state legislator or seated in chambers of the U.S. Congress in Washington D.C.

Before you know it, you will be voting in your first election and the weight of the country's decisions will partially belong to you. Will you support a Congressman who wants to pass Cap & Trade? Will you be in favor of farm subsidies? As you approach what was once "draft-age," do you think we should send more troops to Iraq and Afghanistan or should the military be strengthening our borders? Oh, and when you get the opportunity to meet your Congressman, in addition to these questions will you ask: What has Congress done to make higher education more affordable and will I be able to find a job when I graduate?

Electric and telephone cooperatives in 44 states believe that

young people deserve a first-class opportunity to educate themselves in the government process. Each year, the cooperatives across the nation sponsor more than 1,500 high school students to make the trek to Washington to get that personal initiation, and they have a lot of fun in the process.

It all begins in Springfield on April 6, 2011 during the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperative Youth Day where nearly 300 students will visit the State Capitol and spend much of the morning meeting with legislators. You will tour the Supreme Court and spend the afternoon touring local sites.

To be considered for this trip, see your guidance counselor for details as participation rules vary from co-op to co-op.

This year marks the 52nd trip to the nation's capital and promises to be as exciting as ever. Students learn the principles required to keep cooperative members working together for the cooperative's success by establishing their own "chip and pop" cooperative while on the bus trip.

While in Washington during the week of June 10-17, in addition to meeting with Congressman from Illinois, students are treated to tours



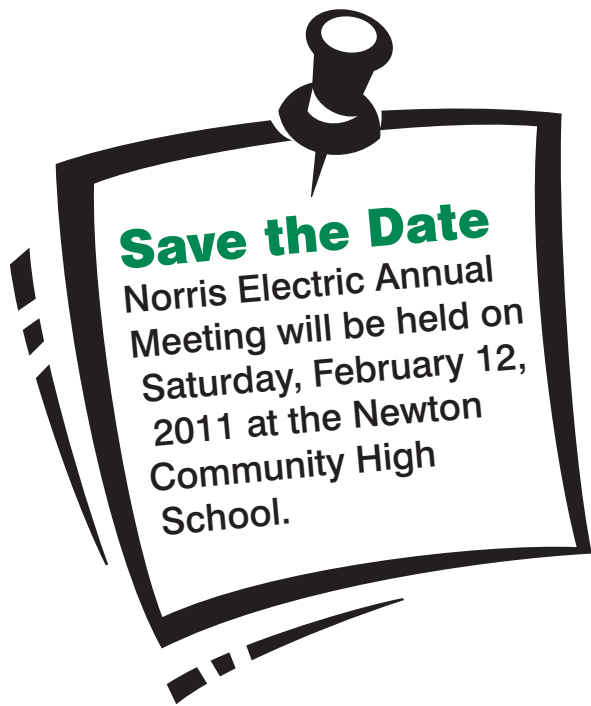
of historic sites, given the opportunity to make life-long friends and receive information to help determine career paths.

The future of the country depends on the youth of today getting involved.

You must be a junior in High School, and the child of a Norris Electric Cooperative member to be eligible.

To learn about this opportunity, contact your Guidance Counselor or Peg Cochran at Norris Electric Cooperative by calling 618-783-8765. You may also check out the Youth Tour through the Association Of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) at www.aiec.coop for additional details.

Norris Electric Cooperative • Newton, Illinois 62448 • 783-8765 • www.norriselectric.com



Save the Date
 Norris Electric Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, February 12, 2011 at the Newton Community High School.

Security lights

As the days grow shorter, it might be a good time to consider a security yard light, available to our members for a low monthly fee. The price includes maintenance and electricity for a 100-watt sodium dusk-to-dawn light.

Norris Electric Cooperative can install these lights for our members on a Norris Electric owned pole where there is currently service. There is no installation fee but we do require that you keep the light for 12 months.

For more details contact our office at 618-783-8765.

Theft of co-op copper costs lives and more

In October, Ameren employees were sent to repair an outage and found the cause - a thief, who while attempting to steal copper wire, cut into a hot wire and suffered an agonizing death. His two accomplices fled the scene.

In August a 23-year-old man broke into a North Carolina electric cooperative's substation to steal copper wire. He was perched atop a high-voltage regulator when he apparently cut a wire. The jolt of electricity knocked him 10 feet away from the regulator and he was pronounced dead at the scene.

The members of Oklahoma Electric Cooperative are facing an estimated \$1 million repair bill because copper thieves wrecked a substation for just \$100 worth of copper. The thieves hit at 5 a.m. on October 17 and the damage caused an outage and destroyed regulators and a large transformer valued at \$600,000. Given the fire and destruction, co-op officials are amazed they did not find a burned body in the substation, too.

In West Virginia, two people are facing first-degree murder charges

because of a botched copper theft attempt in an Appalachian Power substation. Three thieves broke in and were stealing copper wire when one was severely burned. The current left a large hole in his leg where it left his body. He was surrounded by copper wire. He died a day later and his accomplices, who were engaged in the felony that resulted in the death, are facing murder charges.

Almost every co-op in Illinois has had some kind of copper theft. These thefts are not only dangerous but also can cost our members a lot of money in damages or interruptions in electric service. You can help prevent more damage and death.

- If you notice anything unusual with electric facilities, such as an open substation gate, open equipment, hanging wire, etc. contact the cooperative immediately.
- If you see anyone around electric substations or electric facilities other than utility personnel or contractors, call the police.

We would appreciate your help in preventing attempted thefts and as well as helping us to bring the culprits to justice.



Thieves across the country are damaging electrical equipment like these transformers for the copper they contain. Little do they know that most of the volume of the transformer is insulating oil with very little copper or salvage value. Thieves are risking their lives for a small amount of copper.

Protect Your Family from Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Often called the silent killer because of its odorless, tasteless, and colorless nature, carbon monoxide remains the leading cause of accidental poisonings in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Each year, carbon monoxide poisoning claims nearly 500 lives and causes more than 15,000 visits to hospital emergency departments.

Carbon monoxide can be found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by cars and trucks, small gasoline engines, stoves, lanterns, coal- and wood-burning stoves, gas ranges, and heating systems. Carbon monoxide from these sources can build up in enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces, poisoning people and animals who breathe it.

Portable electric generators are a source of carbon monoxide poisoning if used improperly. Many people rely on these units during extended power outages, but special care must be used. In the aftermath of Hurricane



Katrina, for example, the misuse of generators caused five deaths and dozens of cases of carbon monoxide poisoning.

If a carbon monoxide detector in your house goes off, check to see if anyone in the house is experiencing symptoms of carbon monoxide

poisoning. If so, get them out of the house immediately and tell your doctor you suspect poisoning from the gas.

Regardless of whether anyone in the home has symptoms, ventilate the house, turn off all potential sources of carbon monoxide, and call your local fire department.

Know the Symptoms

Physical symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning vary depending on the amount in the bloodstream.

Mild Exposure

- Slight headache
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Fatigue
- Flu-like symptoms

Medium Exposure

- Severe headache
- Drowsiness
- Confusion
- Rapid heart rate

Severe Exposure

- Unconsciousness
- Convulsions
- Cardiac/respiratory failure



Prevention Tips

- Have your fuel-burning appliances — including oil and gas furnaces, gas water heaters, gas ranges and ovens, gas dryers, gas or kerosene space heaters, fireplaces, and wood stoves — inspected by a trained professional at the beginning of every heating season. Make certain that flues and chimneys are connected, in good condition, and not blocked.
- Choose appliances that vent fumes outside whenever possible, have them properly installed, and maintain them according to manufacturers' instructions.
- Read and follow all instructions that accompany any fuel-burning device. If you cannot avoid using an unvented gas or kerosene space heater, carefully follow the cautions that come with the device. Use the proper fuel and keep doors to the rest of the house open. Crack a window to ensure enough air for ventilation and proper fuel-burning.
- Do not idle your car in a closed garage. Fumes can build up very quickly.
- Never use a gas oven to heat your home, even for a short time.
- Never use a charcoal grill indoors or charcoal briquettes in a fireplace.
- Do not sleep in any room with an unvented gas or kerosene space heater.
- Do not use any gasoline-powered engines (mowers, weed trimmers, snow blowers, chainsaws, small engines, or generators) in enclosed spaces.
- Install a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector in your home and check or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall. Look for Underwriters' Laboratory (UL) certification on any detector you purchase.

Avoiding common financial scams

By Lisa Hughes-Daniel

The world, it seems, never lacks for folks who want to separate you from your hard-earned money. And as means of information have gotten more sophisticated, so have thieves. Many popular ploys today involve some form of online identity theft, which can cause untold damage to your finances and credit.

Can you recognize some of the more common financial hoaxes? Here's a quick guide to protecting your wallet.

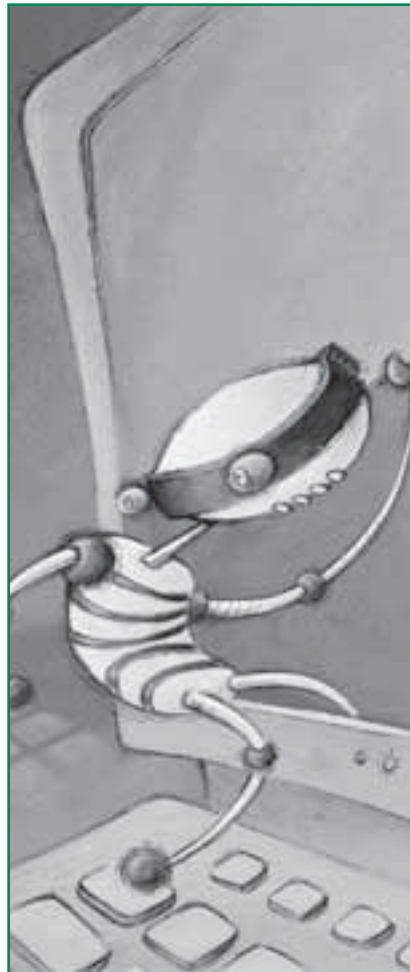
Phishing 101

"Phishing" is an online tactic by which thieves fraudulently try to get sensitive personal or financial information — such as passwords, bank account numbers, or your Social Security number — by pretending to be a source you trust. A few common examples:

- An e-mail purporting to be from your bank claims your account has been compromised and asks you to verify your account information.
- The "IRS" e-mails you, asking to confirm your personal information.
- A pop-up window appears, announcing you've won a prize and need to click — or better yet, send "processing fees" — to claim it.

Even if you're not e-mailing sensitive information back to a scammer, clicking on pop-ups or links in e-mails can make you vulnerable to a security breach, allowing thieves to access your personal data in other ways.

Keep in mind that scam artists read the news, too. Exploiting timely events, like the new health-care bill or the census, can give fraudulent appeals an air of credibility.



Don't get caught in the net

Since some legitimate financial business *can* be conducted online, how can you detect foul play? First, look for telltale signs of amateurism, like misspellings, poor grammar, or words typed in ALL CAPITALS.

Second, know the rules. While you may receive e-mail notices from some companies — for instance, letting you know that your credit card payment is due — no bank or other institution worth its salt will ask you to send sensitive information electronically, an unsecure method of communications.

Whether a scam is small-scale

or large, don't become a victim. Some steps you can take to protect yourself include:

- Don't open e-mails from senders you don't know—just delete them. Especially avoid clicking on any links, pop-ups, or attachments.
- Know the identities, websites, addresses, and phone numbers of companies you do business with. If you have concerns about an e-mail you receive, call the institution to verify.
- If you stop receiving statements for bank, credit card, or even utility accounts, investigate. Identity thieves sometimes change billing addresses so you won't find out they're running up charges.
- Check your credit report annually (you can obtain free report a year) and again if you suspect identity theft. Go to www.annualcreditreport.com or call 877.322.8228.
- Use anti-virus and anti-spyware software on your computer, and update them regularly.
- Visit www.onguardonline.com or www.ftc.gov/idtheft for more tips on protecting your identity and what to do if it's stolen.

Lisa Hughes-Daniel is a marketing communications consultant who writes and edits employee benefits-related materials for the Insurance & Financial Services Department of 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.

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