

Norris Electric *News*

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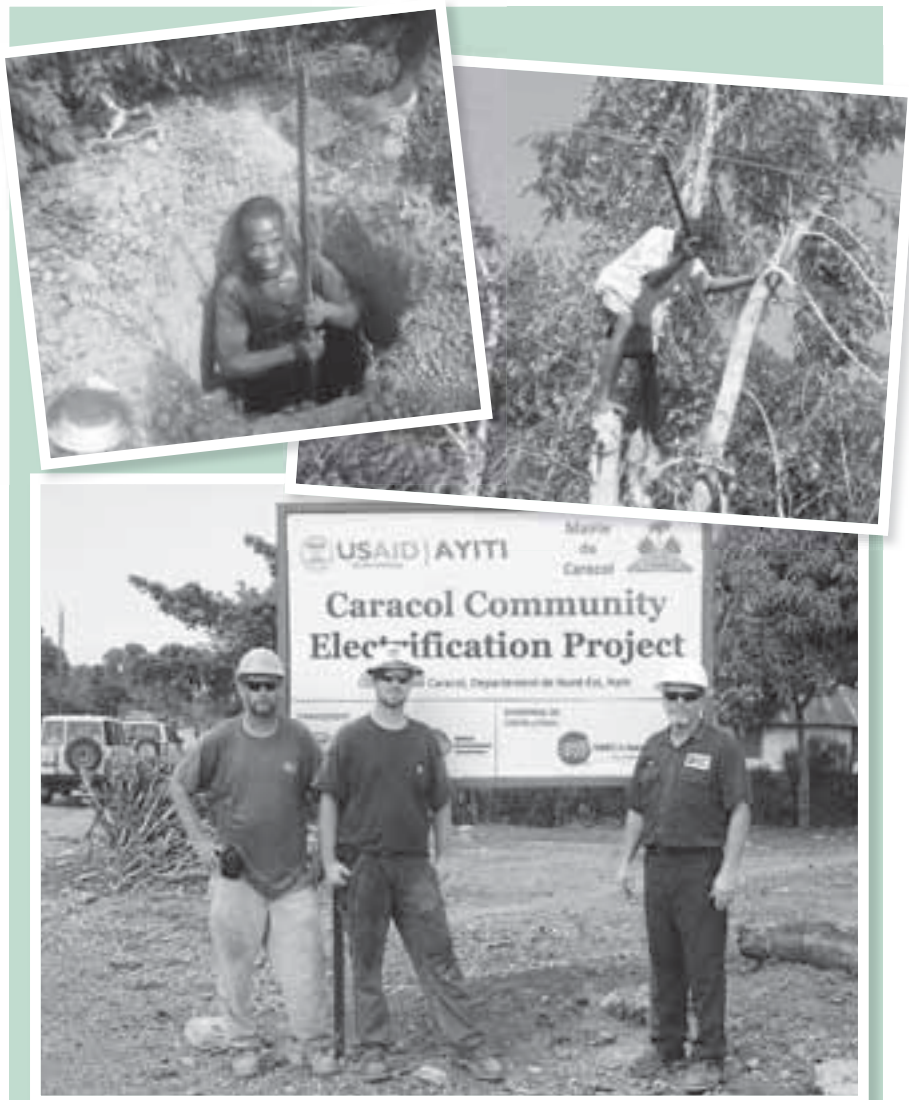
Norris Electric serviceman returns from Haiti

Bill Fields, a journeyman lineman for Norris Electric Cooperative, recently spent three weeks in Caracol, Haiti where he helped to put up electric poles and lines in an area that had previously never had electricity. Field's trip was part of the Caracol Community Electrification Program implemented by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), with support from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the NRECA International Foundation. The program is increasing access to electricity in the Caracol area in northern Haiti by designing and constructing a new distribution network and installing service drops for 1,800 customers or potential customers.

Fields was humbled by how very little the people have and noted, "the kids had nothing but were still happy and had a smile on their faces. The poorest person you know would be rich down there. They are a very proud people and have a very clean image. They came to work with freshly washed clothes each day, even though they had to wash them by hand."

While in Caracol, Fields helped train three local linemen, who had no previous training. He trained them in the basics like how to climb poles and run electric lines. The only available digger truck was broken so they couldn't dig any holes. "The craziest thing was that

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Bill Fields (l-r) worked with linemen Josh Hoffman, North Dakota and Karl Brandt, Missouri on the electrification project.

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Norris Electric serviceman returns from Haiti - continued from 16a.

they hired locals from the village to dig the holes by hand. They used a piece of rebar and a pie pan to dig those holes, and only got \$5 US to do it, but everyone wanted that work. Another guy was doing the tree trimming, in just a pair of shorts, no shirt or shoes, by climbing the trees and hanging onto the limbs and lopping off the branches with a machete. He was only making pennies for that job.”

Fields said it was the hardest work he's ever done and he's been

in the Marine Corps as well as lineman climbing school. Conditions were hard with a 107 degree heat index each day and it was hard to stay hydrated. In addition, the poles were extremely hard and after slipping down them a few times, he and the other two linemen sharpened their gaffs with a file and that made all the difference. Fields also spent the first week without his luggage which included his tools and when they finally arrived they were full of

fire ants. Even though it was tough, he said it was well worth it and so rewarding.

“Everybody needs to go,” said Fields. “It would really open up their perspective. People in this country don't realize what they have. The Haitians just have no opportunity and they are so happy and grateful for our help. Being there is good for the soul. It made me even more grateful for my family, especially my wife and two children.”

Winter Workout Tips

Just because the season has changed, it doesn't mean that you have to give up on your workout routine. Here are a few winter workout tips from Aaron Ruth, strength and conditioning coach at St. Vincent's Sports Performance in Indianapolis, which works with more than 300 professional and amateur athletes. You can stay fit no matter what the temperature is outside.

■ **Don't Skip the Warm Up** - In colder weather, your muscles are tighter, making them more prone to muscle pulls and strains. Spend a little more time warming up your body to help you avoid injury.

■ **Stay Hydrated** - When it's cooler outside, you generally drink less water -- but when you exercise, you still sweat and lose fluids and electrolytes. Be sure to drink plenty of water before and during your workout to avoid dehydration.

■ **Dress in Layers** - Exercising generates body heat and sweat, and when sweat starts to dry in cold weather you can get chilled. Dress in layers that can be removed when you start to sweat. Start with a thin layer of synthetic material which will draw sweat away from your body. Then add a layer of fleece or wool, and top it all off with a waterproof and breathable outer layer.

■ **Protect Your Extremities** - When it's cold outside, the body tends to concentrate blood flow to the core, which can leave your hands, feet and ears susceptible to frostbite. Wear gloves, warm socks and a hat or headband.

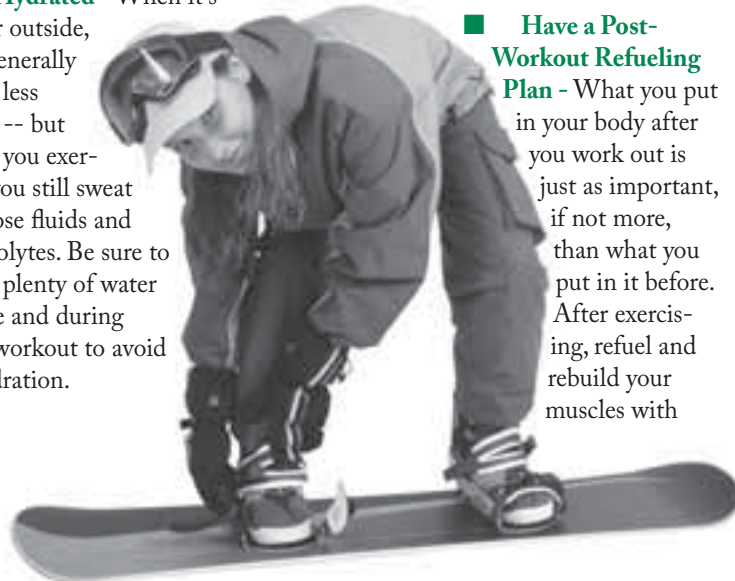
■ **Have a Post-Workout Refueling Plan** - What you put in your body after you work out is just as important, if not more, than what you put in it before. After exercising, refuel and rebuild your muscles with

essential carbs and protein by drinking great tasting Rockin' Refuel® Intense Recovery protein fortified milk. Made with 100 percent real milk, Intense Recovery is packed with 20 grams of natural protein and features a 2:1 carb to protein ratio, which is ideal for optimal muscle recovery.

■ **Wear Sunscreen** - It might be cooler outside, but you can still get sunburned. Choose sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB rays, and has an SPF of at least 30. Don't forget to protect your lips with a lip balm that has sunscreen.

■ **Vary Your Routine** - Beat the winter workout blues by changing up your routine -- and by having fun. Get the whole family moving by doing things together such as building a snowman, going ice skating or sledding, making snow angels, and having a snowball fight.

For more tips for your winter workout or to purchase Rockin' Refuel Intense Recovery, visit www.rockinrefuel.com.



Space Heaters

Space heaters can be an attractive way to heat up a room or area when the weather is cold. However, space heaters can be dangerous if used incorrectly. According to Harvard University Environmental Health & Safety group, more than 25,000 residential fires and 6,000 emergency room visits are caused by space heaters in the U.S. every year.

Approximately one-third of all house fires nationwide occur during the cold home-heating season of December, January and February. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the major cause of these winter fires can be attributed to faulty, improper use and maintenance of supplemental heating equipment, such as space heaters.

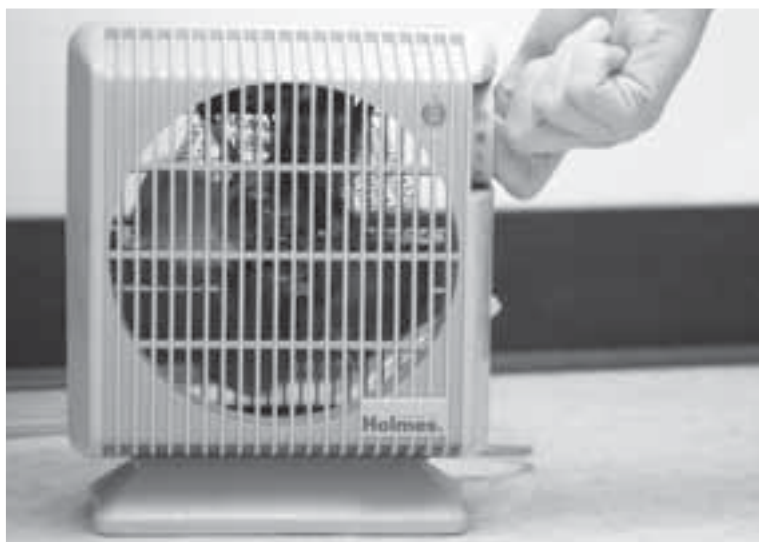
As part of its Teach Learn Care TLC campaign, Safe Electricity urges everyone in the home understand the importance of using space heaters safely.

“Portable heaters must be used with caution, keeping safety a priority,” says Mike Ashenfelter, electrical inspector and member of the Safe Electricity Advisory Board. “Stay warm and safe, and give space heaters space – at least three feet from anything that can burn – including little fingers!”

Some cities have banned the use of many types of portable space heaters. Before purchasing or using any type of space heater, check with your local fire department to find out if it is legal in your community.

Safe Electricity offers the following precautions when using electric space heaters:

- Purchase only space heaters that have been safety tested and UL approved. Make sure the unit is equipped with an emergency tip-over shut-off feature and heating element guards. Read and follow all of the manufacturers instructions for operation and care.
- Before using a space heater, make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are in good working condition.



- Check to make sure the heater is clean and in good condition, and have all problems professionally repaired.
 - Place heater out of high-traffic areas and on a level, hard, non-flammable floor surface-- NOT on carpets, furniture or countertops.
 - Space heaters have one purpose – to provide supplemental heating. Never use them to thaw pipes, cook food, or dry clothing or towels.
 - Remember to keep space heaters at least three feet from all combustible liquids like fuel, spray cans and paint, as well as flammable items such as draperies, blankets and sofas.
 - Never allow pets or children near an electric heater. Accidental contact could result in serious shock or burns.
 - Do not overload circuits. Never use extension cords or multiple plugs with a space heater, and make sure the unit is not plugged into the same circuit as other electric appliances.
 - If your space heater is plugged into a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) and the GFCI trips, don't assume there is something wrong with the GFCI. Immediately stop using the heater until it can be checked by a professional – if not, a serious shock could occur.
 - Never leave space heaters unattended. Turn off your space heater and unplug it before leaving the room or going to bed.
- “Consider replacing older space heaters with newer, safer models,” suggests Ashenfelter. “Additionally, look for features that enhance the safety of the unit including an electronic thermostat which allows precise temperature control to avoid overheating.”
- Many people also use electric blankets to keep warm during cold winter nights. Before plugging in electric blankets, check for any damage and inspect cord for frays, cracks or cuts. Electric blankets should not be tucked under the mattress and nothing should be placed on top of the blanket while it's in use, including comforters and bedspreads. Never dry clean an electric blanket; the chemicals can damage the heating insulation and increase the risk of fire. And pets should never be allowed to sleep on the electric blanket.
- “In addition to these safety tips, remember that a functioning smoke alarm dramatically increases your chances of surviving a fire,” reminds Ashenfelter. “Replace the batteries twice a year, and remember to practice a home escape plan and share these safety tips with your family.”

Exceeding Expectations Every Day

"Exceeds expectations."

My kids always combed their grade-school report cards for EEs, which signified they had attained the coveted "exceeds expectations" rating in aspects of school life that couldn't be assigned a letter grade.

As they grew, EEs turned into (we hoped) As and Bs. Yet I don't think any of them lost that desire to exceed expectations.

At Norris Electric Cooperative, we also strive for EEs, every single day. We don't want to do what you only expect us to do—provide you with affordable, safe, and reliable electric service. We want to go farther and do better, from providing superior member service to offering programs that help you save time and money.

Norris Electric's linemen provide the public face of our mission to exceed

expectations. They routinely work in rough weather and put in long hours. But they do it gladly, because they care about doing an exceptional job for you.

However, we have many people behind the scenes who also make our cooperative the best it can be. Our engineers continually explore new technologies to improve service reliability with automated meter reading and GIS mapping. Our finance department works to make bill pay easier and more convenient with programs like AutoPay, Budget Billing and Pre-Pay Billing. Our member services representatives want to make sure you have a positive and satisfying experience when you call our office for help.

And because we're a cooperative, we have a special responsibility to support the communities we serve and exceed expectations there, too.

That means we aim to improve the quality of life by sponsoring school safety programs and donating to the Christmas food basket program.

Whether it's a power outage or energy audit, a billing question or community event, we're working hard to achieve those EEs from you every day.

If you hear from us, asking for you to participate in a member satisfaction survey, please do so. This way, we'll know if we're meeting your expectations, exceeding them, or need to improve in a specific area.



HomE Lite version 2.0

Co-op energy efficiency grant success generates repeat

In 2011 the electric cooperatives of Illinois received \$2.5 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act program through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's State Energy Plan. Those funds were, in turn, distributed to co-op member-owners for energy efficiency projects. This investment paid real dividends and helped prime the pump for nearly ten times that in energy efficiency investments. Better yet, the energy efficiency improvements will multiply the savings for many, many years.

The HomE energy efficiency rebate program was so successful in creating new jobs for heating and air conditioning contractors, plumbers and insulation installers plus saving energy for co-op

member-owners that it is being repeated for a second but very limited time.

If you didn't get a chance to participate in the first round of HomE rebates now you have a second chance. HomE Lite rebates are available until funding runs out, or until June of this year.

HomE Lite Incentives Include:

- Geothermal system - \$1,500
- Air-Source Heat Pump (16 SEER or higher) - \$1,000
- Insulation and Weatherization - 50 percent of total project cost, up to \$1,000
- Heat Pump Water Heater - \$250
- Commercial installations - \$500 per ton of capacity, up to a maximum of \$10,000 for geothermal and air source heat pumps
- Energy Audit by BPI certified auditor - \$300

With the help of the first round of HomE funding, Norris Electric Cooperative member-owners installed 45 geothermal heat pumps, 45 air-source heat pumps, and 53 made insulation and weatherization improvements.

Keith McKinney says, "We know a lot of members were unable to participate in the first HomE program for a variety of reasons. All cooperative members are eligible for HomE Lite. These rebates, plus the federal income tax credits that are available for some of the projects, make this a great time to make your home more energy efficient."

For more information contact Tim Bohnhoff at 877-783-8765.



Norris Electric Cooperative • 8543 N. State Highway 130 • Newton, Illinois 62448 • 618-783-8765

Office hours: Monday — Thursday • 7:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m