

Norris Electric *News*

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Commitment to Community

Demonstrating one of the core cooperative principles 'commitment to community,' Norris Electric Cooperative provided space on their communications tower to the Jasper County Ambulance Service. The ambulance service radio repeater positioned on the tower enables greater communication and allows the ambulance service to better comply with new FCC requirements.



Shown in the photo are left to right: Dave Stankus with the Jasper County Ambulance Service and Brian Hemrich representing Norris Electric Cooperative.

Holiday Food Drive



Steve Willis of the Jasper County Ministerial Association accepts a \$330 check and 940 food items from Norris employees Susan Platz and Jamie Mendenhall for the Christmas Food Basket Program which helped over 300 families in Jasper County over the 2012 holiday season. The items were donated by Norris Electric Cooperative employees.



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

Protect Against Power Surges

Power surges are responsible for millions of dollars of property damage each year, and, over time, they can cause cumulative damage while decreasing the lifespan of TVs, computers, stereo equipment, and anything else plugged into a wall outlet. Being educated is the key to choosing the best surge protection for your home.

How does a power surge cause damage?

First, what is a surge?

"A surge is a boost in the electrical charge over a power line," explains Tim Bohnhoff, Member Services Coordinator at Norris Electric Cooperative. "This can be caused by lightning, but it's more commonly caused by motor-driven electrical devices, such as air conditioners and refrigerators, that require a lot of energy for starting and stopping compressors. Some surges can also be caused by faulty wiring."

Frequent, small power surges tend to shorten the life of home appliances and electronics. "Power surges come in all shapes and sizes—the most extreme case being a lightning strike because it can destroy equipment and sometimes set your house on

fire," comments Alan Shedd, director of residential & commercial energy programs for Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives, the national brand for America's electric cooperatives. "But less severe power surges are rooted in hundreds of different causes."

He continues: "The severity of a surge depends not only on the voltage and current involved but how long the event lasts. Most surges are very short in duration. It's important for people to realize that surges can happen through any connection on your equipment. If there is a wire connected to your equipment, then it provides a path for a surge."

How can I protect my property?

A surge protection device mounted at your home's main electrical panel or the base of your electric meter protects equipment inside your house or business from surges coming through "ports of entry," such as an outside electric, telephone, and cable TV or satellite dish line.

Point-of-use surge protection devices do not suppress or arrest a surge but divert it to ground. They're designed to protect your sensitive electronic appliances, like a computer,

and resemble a regular plug strip. However, don't assume your plug strip offers surge protection unless it specifically says so. You can also install special electrical outlets that offer surge protection, which can be helpful in places like kitchen countertops.

"My computer is plugged into an uninterruptible power supply with surge protection," Shedd notes. "We had a lightning strike, and a surge came in over the phone line. But the surge protector stopped it."

One of the most effective ways to protect your property is a two-tiered approach. A service entrance surge protection device reduces power surges to a lower level that protects large appliances, such as your stove or clothes dryer, while point-of-use surge protectors defend your sensitive electronics.

Remember to be cautious when shopping for surge protection equipment. "Some items claim that they can save energy, and these claims are generally false," Shedd concludes. "Surge protection is a valuable tool for protecting your home or business but not for saving energy."

Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

Plugged In Kids

Website offers fun ways to "switch on" youth to energy efficiency

By Megan McKoy-Noe

Getting children excited about energy efficiency may seem hard—for some parents, it's enough of a challenge to get them to do chores. But a website has been designed with young energy savers in mind.

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives, the brand "ID" of the nation's not-for-profit, consumer-

owned electric cooperatives, offers Kids Energy Zone (www.kidsenergyzone.com) featuring a spunky energy efficiency mascot, CFL Charlie. The site is designed to teach children in kindergarten through fifth grade how to be Super Energy Savers in their homes. The Kids Zone also includes interactive games, videos, activity sheets, and surprises.

"The website is all about engagement," explains Ruben Musca, senior manager of advertising and marketing for Touchstone Energy. "This is a way for parents to interact with children so the family can focus on energy efficiency together, and help everyone develop energy efficient habits that will last a lifetime. Through fun activities, students and

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More HomE Energy Efficiency Rebates Offered

Limited funds and time available

You may recall the HomE energy efficiency rebates we offered in 2011, with funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act program through the Illinois DCEO State Energy office. The state is now making additional funds available and electric co-ops throughout the state are to receive \$600,000 for member energy efficiency projects statewide. The funds must be used by June 2013 but we are expecting the rebate money to be gone sooner for this program called HomE Lite.

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



A Norris Electric member added cellulose insulation to his attic and basement walls and foam insulation to his crawl space walls and box sills and realized a 22 percent savings in his heating bills after the insulation work was completed.



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

Norris Electric would like to help as many members as possible but these rebates are on a first come-first served basis so call our office at 877-783-8765 today for more information!

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their parents learn about energy, electrical safety, and energy savings."

For example, Lights Out!—an energy-saving game in the Kids Zone—challenges kids to speed through a virtual house, replacing traditional incandescent lightbulbs with energy efficient compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) and turning off lights and appliances as fast

as possible. The less energy a player uses by the time everything's off, the better the score.

"Playing the Lights Out! game and taking kids through a house with an energy efficiency checklist, which parents can find in the Kids Zone, are great ways to work together to get good habits started," Musca recommends.

Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

Megan McKoy-Noe 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.

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Office hours: Monday — Thursday

7:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m



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Imagine if you will, what it must have been like after dark in the farms, ranches and small towns of America 75 years ago... before there was power...before there was electricity. But that was all about to change and change it did, when farmers, ranchers and rural families banded together to shine a light on the need to turn the lights on in rural America.

Cooperation created the electric co-ops, and the co-ops created a movement so profound, that President Franklin Roosevelt said, "The forward march of electric cooperatives has an even more profound significance in terms of our fight to preserve democracy." Is there any finer representation of democracy at work than neighbors helping neighbors? When the electric co-ops were born, something much bigger happened. When we turned the lights on, we helped democratize the American dream...for the people, families, farms, ranches and businesses of rural America.

The effect was so powerful that in 1940, a man sitting in a pew in a small, rural church in Tennessee was moved to say, "Brothers and sisters, I want to tell you two things...the greatest thing in the world is to have God in your heart. And the next greatest thing on earth is to have electricity in your home."

Seventy-five years ago, a handful of farmers and ranchers united by the common values of honesty, responsibility,

equality and solidarity, and armed only with the powerful purpose, took the lead, banded together and answered the call.

Today, a new generation of electric co-op members, just like the farmers, ranchers and rural families did 75 years ago, must again answer the call. We are the owners of the co-ops and are the fabric of the communities in which we live and work. It is faith and trust in other institutions, seeing the need to empower, inspire, and immobilize each other to take care of ourselves, our neighbors and our communities. Let it be known, it is time for this new generation to turn the lights on again, to power, protect and grow our communities. Not just with the electricity of our infrastructure, but with the electricity of our purpose, passion, ideas, and will, to ensure that the quality of life in all of the communities in which we live and work is improved. For our purpose is a mighty one, to power communities and empower members to improve the quality of their lives, and when we live up to our purpose, we re-light the American dream.

Think back now about the profound impact our founding members made three-quarters of a century ago and grab hold of that same spirit, because we are the electric cooperative members of tomorrow. And our work has just begun.



We're celebrating
75 years in 2013