

Norris Electric *News*

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

New faster internet service is here

Norris Electric now has faster internet service. Exede broadband service brings together the highest capacity satellite in the world, state-of-the-art equipment and breakthrough web acceleration technology. Faster speeds allow you to:



- Watch streaming videos, TV shows and movies with fewer delays from buffering
- Share more photos remarkably fast
- Video chat with less jitter
- Send and receive files quickly
- Download and stream music
- Experience exceptionally fast web browsing and email

Exede satellite comes in three packages you can choose from. No matter which Exede plan you choose, it comes with the fastest speed available in our area. Now you can choose the plan that's right for you based on

Packages	Download Speed	Upload Speed	Monthly Usage	Price
Exede 10	up to 12 Mbps	up to 3 Mbps	10 GB	\$54.95
Exede 15	up to 12 Mbps	up to 3 Mbps	15 GB	\$79.95
Exede 25	up to 12 Mbps	up to 3 Mbps	25 GB	\$129.95

how much you use the internet. Here's how it works: Everything you do online involves the transfer of data. Some online activities, like streaming video and downloading movies or software, require a lot of data, while other activities like email and web browsing use much less. The more you do online, the larger your data plan should be.

Along with the monthly package there is an upfront fee to purchase the equipment. Norris Electric also requires a 24 month contract to be signed before installation. For peace of mind, the equipment is under warranty for the first 12 months. For more information or if you would like to sign up, please call Norris Electric at 877-783-8765.



**Remember your mom
on Mother's Day -
Sunday, May 13th**

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

Welcome

Keith O'Brien was recently hired to fill the position left open in our Claremont area when longtime employee Tom Short retired after almost 30 years with Norris Electric.

Keith has been a lineman for 18 years working most recently with Corn Belt Energy Corporation in Bloomington, IL. Originally from the Vincennes area, Keith and his wife, Pam are excited to be moving closer to family. They plan to live in the Lawrenceville area.

The couple has a son in college in Evansville, a son who is a police officer in Brownsburg, Ind. and a daughter in Louisiana. In his spare time, Keith enjoys target shooting.



**In observance
of Memorial Day,
the office will
be CLOSED
on Monday,
May 28th**

Coming soon – 2011 capital credits allocations statements

As a not-for-profit cooperative, Norris Electric is owned by the member-consumers we serve. When you pay your electric bill, you are accumulating equity in your cooperative.

One of the benefits of belonging to a cooperative is that any monies left over after expenses are paid are allocated back to the members in the form of capital credits according to your usage.

If you received electric service from Norris Electric in 2011, you will receive a card in the mail which

shows the amount being allocated to your capital credit account. This is not a charge you owe or cannot be used to pay your electric bill. It is a statement of your equity in Norris Electric Cooperative for the year 2011.

Capital Credits will be returned to the members when Norris Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors decides that the co-op is strong enough financially to do so. This notice is for our members' information only and does not require any action of their part.



Co-op receives safety awards

Norris Electric Cooperative employees recently received two safety honors from the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. The awards were given to cooperatives with outstanding "no lost time" and "illness/

injury" safety records for 2011. AIEC Board Director and Norris Electric Board Treasurer Dean Dietrich (left) presented the awards to Jim Meyer, representing Norris Electric employees.

Retirement savings account is no college fund

By Doreen Friel

Thinking about borrowing from your 401(k) or other retirement plan to pay for college? You may want to think again.

Whether you have a child who is applying to college now or years down the road, it might be tempting to consider dipping into your retirement savings. *But keep this in mind:* When you borrow money from a 401(k) retirement plan to pay for college expenses, you're really putting your own financial future at risk. You've worked a long time to build up your account, and borrowing money for a short-term need can hurt you in the long run.

Why a retirement account loan may *not* be a great idea

Here are some things to consider before you turn to your 401(k) plan to help pay for college expenses:

- There is a limit on how much you can borrow. Generally speaking, you can borrow only half of your account balance, up to \$50,000.
- Some retirement plans will suspend your ability to make contributions when you take a loan. Even if you have a plan that doesn't, will you really be able to afford making loan repayments and plan contributions at the same time?
- If you don't repay your loan according to your plan's rules, your "loan" may suddenly be classified as a "withdrawal." When that happens, you may be hit with a 10 percent early withdrawal penalty and you may have to pay regular income tax on your outstanding loan balance.
- If you lose your job, most plans require you to pay your loan back, in full, in a very short period of time (such as 60 days). If you can't,

your loan will be considered a withdrawal and the penalties and taxes noted above may apply.

What are some alternatives you may want to consider?

- **A 529 Savings Plan:** If you have a number of years before your children start college, you may want to open a 529 savings plan. This type of plan lets you set aside money for college without paying any taxes on your savings account's investment earnings. And, if the money in your account is used to pay for qualifying educational expenses, you generally won't pay taxes on it.
- **Student loans and grants:** Depending on your individual situation, student loans and grants may be a possibility. Grants are often overlooked as an option to fund college expenses. Be sure to check with a school guidance counselor or search online for local grant opportunities.
- **Other options:** Technical schools that teach skilled trades and community colleges boasting reduced tuition rates can be good alternatives to four-year universities. Also, explore government-sponsored programs that trade service for tuition reimbursement.

To learn more about the various options you have to finance your children's college education, be sure to visit a website like www.finaid.org, where you can learn more about the various types of loans, grants, and scholarships; download financial aid forms; and use handy calculators that can help you plan how much you'll need to save for college.

And remember: If you jeopardize your own financial future by borrowing from your retirement plan account, you may also put your chil-

dren's financial future at risk, as they may have to be the ones to help you financially if your retirement income isn't enough to support you in your golden years.

This article provides general information about savings accounts, retirement plans, plan loans, and the tax consequences of taking plan loans and withdrawals. To learn more—and for guidance on how to pay for college—be sure to consult a financial professional.

Doreen Friel is a marketing communications consultant who produces 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.

What about a Roth 401(k)?

If you *must* tap into retirement money to fund your children's college education as a last resort, consider withdrawing money you may have contributed to a Roth 401(k). If you only borrow your contributions (and not your account's investment earnings), you may not have to pay any taxes on the withdrawals because you paid tax when you made the contributions.

Area Banks Accepting Norris Electric Payments

Bridgeport	First Bridgeport Banking Center The Bank of Lawrence County
Casey	Casey State Bank Regions Bank
Dieterich	First National Bank
Effingham	Crossroads Bank First National Bank of Dieterich: Effingham Branch First National Bank of Dieterich: Lake Sara Branch
Flat Rock	Casey State Bank
Greenup	First Neighborhood Bancshares Inc.
Lawrenceville	Casey State Bank First Financial Bank, NA Heritage State Bank Peoples State Bank
Martinsville	Casey State Bank
Newton	First Financial Bank, NA First National Bank of Dieterich: IGA Branch Peoples State Bank
Oblong	First Financial Bank, NA
Olney	First Financial Bank, NA
Robinson	First Financial Bank, NA
St. Francisville	Peoples State Bank
Ste. Marie	Ste. Marie State Bank
Sigel	Sigel Community Bank
Sumner	First Financial Bank, NA Peoples State Bank
Teutopolis	Teutopolis State Bank First National Bank of Dieterich: National Trail Banking Center
Toledo	Casey State Bank
West Union	Casey State Bank
Westfield	Casey State Bank



Take a smart approach to social networking for kids

You can't escape social networking these days: Facebook, LinkedIn, Google Plus and all their online cousins are everywhere. If you've got kids, chances are they're eager to join all their friends in cyberspace.

Worrying about their safety is natural, but hoping social networks will go away isn't very realistic. You're better off working with your children so they don't hide their online activities from you. Take these steps to help them enjoy social networking safely:

Start with kid-friendly sites. Facebook is far from the only place for people to go. A quick Internet search will help you locate lots of sites just for children. You'll want to investigate them thoroughly, of course, but they can serve as a good introduction for your children to the world of online networking.

Talk about privacy. Have a serious discussion with your kids about guarding their personal information online. They should understand that data like their full names, address, phone number, school and birth date should be kept private for their own protection. Emphasize that once something is posted online (a message or a photo) they can't remove it entirely even if they delete the information from their profile.

Choose a secure password. A password that your child can remember easily may be simple for a hacker to guess. Come up with a password that includes a mix of letters, numbers and capitalization so it's less vulnerable to attack.

Encourage children to talk to you. Tell your children to let you know if someone online does anything to make them feel uncomfortable. If necessary, report the person to your site's administrator. At the same time, talk about the need for your children to treat everyone with respect online, as well as in the real world.

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