

Norris Electric *News*

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

2013 Scholarships awarded

Over 30 students applied for the 2013 scholarships offered by Norris Electric Cooperative. Paperwork was sent to all area high schools for seniors to complete. The forms were also on the co-op website. A panel of judges reviewed the applications and with much difficulty narrowed down the list to three students.

Shannon Gray, daughter of Wesley and Barbara Gray of Noble and West Richland High School; Darbie Thompson, daughter of James and Jill Thompson of Casey and Casey-Westfield High School and Ryan Westendorf, son of Roch and Janice Westendorf of Dieterich and Teutopolis High School each received a \$500 scholarship to further their education.

Keith McKinney, Co-op Manager said "The employees and board members of Norris Electric Cooperative have always been involved in our local schools and communities. We live here too, and like our members, have a vested interest in the future of our children. These scholarships are just a small way we can help make a difference for students like Shannon, Darbie and Ryan."



◀ Joe Helmink and Ryan Westendorf



◀ Darbie Thompson and Scott Littlejohn



▲ Shannon Gray

Congratulations to all area graduates!



Office closing

*Our office will be closed
Thursday, July 4th, for Independence Day*

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

Celebrating co-op independence

July is the time we celebrate our nation's independence. In the midst of apple pies and hot dogs, fireworks shows and parades, I can't help but think about the independent streak that inspired groups of farmers around America's countryside to band together and improve their quality of life.

Aside from President Franklin Roosevelt's promise of federal aid in the form of low-interest loans

and engineering expertise, rural Americans didn't have much help in bringing electricity to their homes. They pulled themselves up by their proverbial bootstraps and did it themselves.

This independence not only tends to inspire cooperatives; it's a guiding principle. The Fourth Cooperative Principle, "Autonomy and Independence," means that no matter what contracts Norris Electric might



Jasper County farmers, hungry for the chance to get electricity for their farms and homes, signed up for service in droves at this 1939 meeting.

enter into, we will always remain an independent entity.

Each year, Norris Electric's annual meeting becomes an independence celebration. You vote for candidates on the board of directors, and we discuss co-op business. We share a meal and have some fun.

Electric cooperatives form a vast network across the country, from coast to coast. Co-op lines are strung in 47 states, serving 42 million

people—a different world from 1935, when much of America remained dark. This Fourth of July, as we recognize the hard-fought war that created the United States, I'll also tip my hat to Norris Electric Cooperative founders, who beat incredible odds to make life better for themselves and their neighbors.

Lineman hired for southern area

Ralph Bowersock, Jr. has been hired as a journeyman lineman to fill a position in Norris Electric's southern territory.

Ralph graduated Red Hill High School and ALBAT Apprenticeship. Ralph and his wife, Tina, are parents of 4 children ranging in ages from 23 to eleven and live in Bridgeport. In his spare time, Ralph likes to coach and play slow pitch softball and also volunteers on the local fire department.

Ralph previously worked for Henkels & McCoy and Ameren. He has already worked for our co-op thru Henkels & McCoy during storm repair and various construction projects. We wish him a long and safe career with Norris Electric.



Utility pole safety



Installing satellite dishes, bird houses, rain gauges, posting signs, hanging banners or tying ribbons and balloons onto utility poles can endanger utility workers and often is a violation of local ordinances forbidding placement of anything on poles. Help protect those who work to provide electrical service and other utilities. Remember that anything on a pole can cause power line workers, telecommunications utility personnel and other workers to slip. The clamped, safety boots worn by line workers to climb poles are especially vulnerable to becoming snagged and caught on staples and nails embedded in poles. Foreign objects can also tear utility workers' clothing or injure

workers despite the safety gear they wear to avoid contact with rough surfaces. Such practices endanger more than those who keep the lights on and those who work on cable and telecommunications lines. The paraphernalia on the poles becomes a public safety hazard by distracting people as they drive, a safety hazard for the young and old alike as they walk. Please help utility workers to work safely and refrain from hanging objects to utility poles!

© *Safe Electricity, All Rights Reserved*

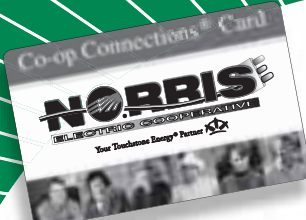
Norris Electric welcomes new office employee



Sarah Semple has been hired as a Mapping Technician in the Engineering Department.

Sarah graduated from Teutopolis High School and Lake Land College with an Associate's degree in Geography, Associate in CAD (computer aided drafting) and a GIS (geographic information system) Certificate. She also pursued a Bachelor's degree in Geography with an emphasis in GIS from Illinois State. While at Illinois State, she was president and secretary of the Geography Club.

Sarah had been working at Norris Electric through a temp agency for several months and was hired full time in March.



Co-op Connections® Card Saving Members \$\$\$

Norris Electric Cooperative members saved 39.6% on prescriptions in March 2013 using their Co-Op Connections card. 135 prescriptions were filled for a total savings of \$2,634.

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

Don't take a vacation from retirement planning

By Doreen Friel

With warm weather and kids out of school, lots of us want to get away. While it may be tempting to tap into retirement savings—or even suspend retirement plan contributions—to fund a vacation, don't do it. Keeping retirement savings on a steady track prepares you for the biggest vacation of your life: retirement.

In 2010, nearly 20 percent of individuals who took out loans on their 401(k) plans defaulted on those loans, according to a study conducted by researchers from the Brookings Institution and financial analysis firm Navigant Economics. Even if you repay the loan, or temporarily suspend putting money into your 401(k), you're still robbing from yourself long term for a trip that will be over in just a week or two.

Instead, shelve the grand vacation. Take day trips or explore points of interest near your home, such as parks, historical sites, and museums. Look closer to find fun in your own backyard.

If you still want to get away, consider only what you can already afford. Try driving, rather than flying. Stay in hotels with kitchenettes to save big on

meals—even if you pay a little more for the room.

And start planning now for your 2014 get-away. Set aside just \$100 per month (with an opening account balance of \$1 and 1 percent interest, compounded monthly), and you could have \$1,206.53 in just 12 months, according to the BankRate.com's Simple Savings Calculator. Bump your monthly savings to \$200, and you would have accumulated \$2,412.04 for your 2014 getaway. By planning ahead, you can enjoy the vacation you want without tapping into your retirement savings.

Doreen Friel is a marketing communications consultant who produces employee benefits-related materials for the Employee Benefits Communications 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.



Don't be tempted to dip into retirement savings for a summer vacation—start saving now for next year, and in the meantime, take short trips to parks or even just hang out in your own backyard. Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

Lightning and pool safety

Summertime has many people splashing and having fun poolside. If you're having fun in the sun, it pays to keep your eye on the sky, because summertime storms can pop up quickly. Along with hazards like strong wind and heavy rain, summer storms can bring dangerous lightning. According to the National Lightning Safety Institute (NLSI) lightning strikes are random and unpredictable and being prepared is the best defense for staying safe.

When you are in the pool, you are connected to more surface area than you realize. There are water pipes

running underground, electric lines powering the pump, gas lines and telephone lines running underground and near the pool. A lightning strike anywhere in this metallic grid could induce shocks elsewhere – including the swimming pool.

The NLSI has put together a list of recommendations for swimming pool safety:

- Designate a responsible person as the weather safety lookout. That person should keep an eye on the weather. Use a “weather radio” or the Weather Channel or local Radio and TV sta-

tions to get advanced weather information.

- When thunder and/or lightning are first noticed, clear the pool and seek shelter. A good rule of thumb: when thunder roars, go indoors.
- Pool activities should remain suspended until thirty minutes after the last thunder is heard. Lightning can strike from 5 to 8 miles away.

Don't take a chance with lightning - keep your family and friends safe this summer!