

# Norris Electric *News*

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

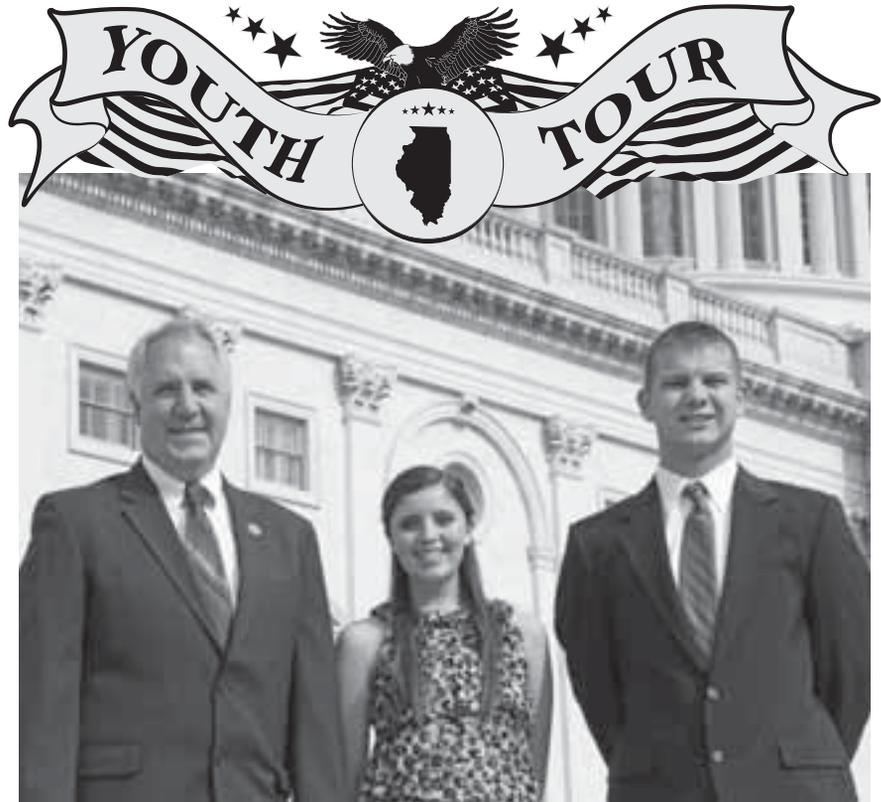
## Record number of students attend Youth to Washington tour

Lucas Huston of Newton and Carley Travis of Oblong represented Norris Electric Cooperative in Washington, D.C., during the annual “Youth to Washington” Tour, June 14-21. This event, sponsored by the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois since the late 1950s, is an introduction to our democratic form of government and cooperatives for rural youth.

The students met with Congressman John Shimkus and were among 65 rural Illinois youth leaders selected for the trip. The Illinois students joined more than 1,520 young leaders from across the country. In addition to the Capitol, they also visited Arlington National Cemetery, the Washington National Cathedral, several Smithsonian Museums, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the World War II Memorial, memorials to Presidents Lincoln, Jefferson, Washington and Roosevelt, the National Archives, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, the Newseum and a number of other historical sites.

Pictured from left: Congressman Shimkus, Travis and Huston.

Norris Electric Cooperative is a member of Touchstone Energy® — an alliance of more than 740 local, consumer-owned electric utilities around



the country. Norris Electric is committed to providing superior service based on four core principles: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. The co-op serves more than 19,207 meters over 4,067 miles of line in parts of Clark, Crawford, Cumberland, Effingham,

Jasper, Lawrence, Richland and Wabash counties. For more information visit [www.norriselectric.com](http://www.norriselectric.com).

To find out more about the tour go to [www.youthtour.coop](http://www.youthtour.coop) or [www.facebook.com/ILYouthtoWashington](http://www.facebook.com/ILYouthtoWashington).

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

# Loyal connections

*Co-ops change lives in the communities they serve*

Loyalty is a prized virtue—to country, family, even the schools we attend. We keep those ties strong throughout our lives, myself included: I still fly the flag and wear my school colors.

We at Norris Electric Cooperative also have loyalties, to the members and communities we serve. We have deep connections here because this is our home, and you are our neighbors.

When you signed up for service with Norris Electric you became a member, not a customer—because each of our consumer-members owns a portion of the utility.

That means we care about improving the quality of life in the areas we serve. From taking donations for the local food bank to providing affordable high speed internet, Norris Electric invests in the places where you live and work.

Norris Electric Cooperative doesn't exist to make profits for distant investors on Wall Street. We exist to provide you with safe, reliable, and affordable electric service—and doing so in a way that makes things better for future generations. Because electric co-ops operate on a not-for-profit basis, we have no need to increase revenues above what it takes to run our business in a financially sound manner. This structure helps keep your electric bills affordable.

We take our jobs seriously, but we also take our community roles seriously, too. That's why we offer scholarships to college-bound students, and send more than 20 high school juniors to Washington, D.C., every summer to learn about history and government.

We don't participate in these activities simply because it's nice to do, or even the right thing to do. We do it because we remain loyal to our members, our neighbors, our home—and a mission to make life better in the areas we serve.

## Area Banks Accepting Norris Electric Payments

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

# Look up and live

*Remember to allow plenty of clearance between grain bins and electric lines.*

*By Ken Macken, Manager of Safety and Loss Control, Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives*

As the Safety Instructor for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, one of the things I really enjoy about my job is being able to travel over the entire state and see many beautiful sights. Some of my favorite sights are the great farms peppered throughout the state. From dairy farms to grain farms, we have some of the best-looking farms right here in Illinois.

Over the years, farm grain storage has increased. And as a safety instructor, I can't help but notice grain bins that are close to the road and the power lines serving these farms. I see the tall PTO-driven grain augers standing ready and I think of those who have been injured or killed when an auger was moved into an overhead line during the rush of harvest time. I don't like thinking about these accidents as I drive these beautiful rural scenes. I guess these thoughts are an occupational hazard I must endure.

Accidents, however, can be prevented. Allow me to share some facts about grain bins, augers, conveyers, dump trucks, etc. Share them with a friend or a family member

involved in moving grain. You might just save their life.

Over the past several years, dozens of deaths and serious injuries have occurred on farms when grain augers or dump trucks have come into contact with overhead energized electric lines. Look up and observe the areas around your grain bins. What do you see? Are there power lines nearby? Are you planning on building more bins in the near future?

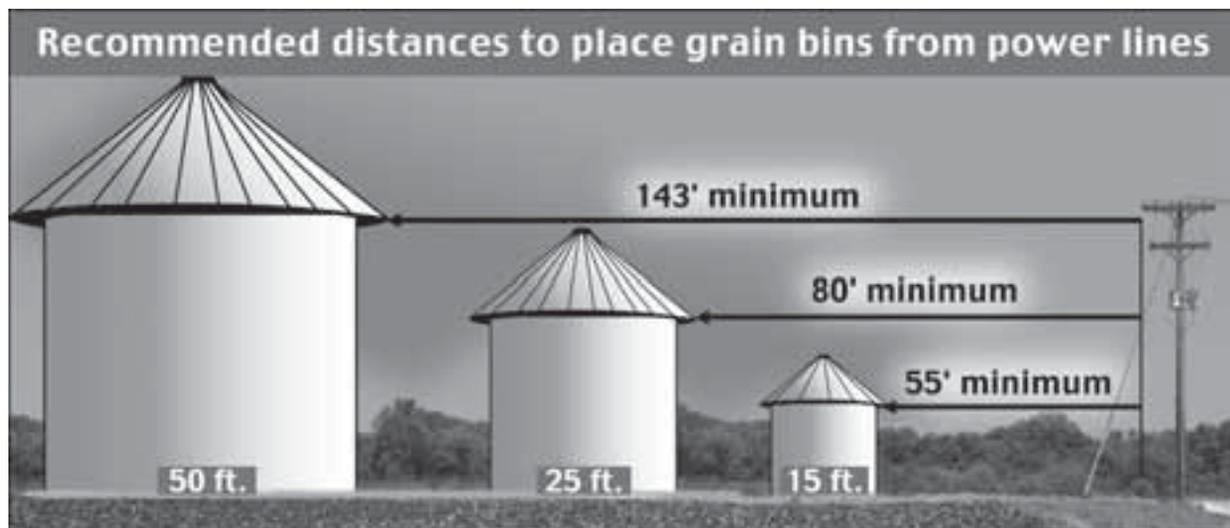
If you are planning the construction of any new grain bins, be sure to take the placement of existing power lines into account and contact your local electric cooperative BEFORE your plans are finalized. The National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) contains regulations concerning electric lines near grain bins. There can even be financial penalties for violating NESC codes.

If you, or a contractor, construct a grain bin too close to power lines, your electric cooperative will have to re-align the design of the electrical system to make sure all NESC codes are followed. This can cost you and your cooperative money

that could have been saved. The cooperative cannot provide electric service to any grain bin built near an existing line that does not meet the clearance requirement. If you have any questions, call your electric cooperative. They will be more than happy to help you with your building plans.

It is important that you understand the proper clearances for electric lines around your grain bins. The NESC specifies distances that power lines must be from the loading and non-loading sides of your bins. The diagram shows recommended distances to place new grain bins from power lines. Contact your cooperative so that exact clearances can be determined from the NESC for your specific situation.

Also, consider the route of trucks and your equipment around your grain bins. What is highest implement or dump truck situation that will happen around those bins and electric lines? Is everything out of harm's way, both currently and in the future?



# Auditing energy: small measures, real savings

By Magen Howard

No matter the age of your home, it could benefit from an energy audit. Norris Electric Cooperative offers free home energy audits conducted by our Member Services Coordinator Tim Bohnhoff. But you can get started on your own in finding low-cost solutions that could save money on your monthly electric bill.

First, ask yourself a simple question: Does my home feel drafty and cold in the winter, or stuffy and hot in the summer? If yes, then it probably experiences air leakage.

To track down where those spots are, start with the usual suspects—like damaged seals around doors and windows. If you see daylight or feel air, then apply caulk and weather stripping to keep outdoor air where it's supposed to be.

But don't forget spots you might not immediately think of, like recessed canister lights and electrical outlets. Outlet insulation kits can be purchased for as little as \$2, and you can fix up your canister lights with some caulk around the edges.

Also look where walls meet the ceiling. Cobwebs mean you've got drafts.

Next, peek into the attic and inspect the crawl space or basement for sufficient insulation—how much you need depends on your climate. Check out the insulation calculator from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory at [www.ornl.gov/~roofs/Zip/ZipHome.html](http://www.ornl.gov/~roofs/Zip/ZipHome.html). Keep in mind insulation won't do its job well if you don't have a proper air barrier working in tandem. That means all joints and cracks must be sealed between your living space and insulation.

Finally, look to your light fixtures. Compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) are up to 75 percent more efficient than traditional incandescent bulbs, and they've come a long way in light quality, design, and affordability. You can purchase CFLs in a variety of shapes and hues. They cost more upfront, but you'll make your money back in less than nine months and, after that, they start saving money. Make sure to purchase a CFL that's rated by ENERGY STAR, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's program that denotes products meeting specific energy efficiency criteria. ENERGY STAR-rated CFLs will

typically last 10 times longer than a traditional incandescent bulb producing the same amount of light.

LEDs—light-emitting diodes—are in the next wave of residential lighting. An ENERGY STAR-rated model is estimated to use only a quarter of the electricity consumed by traditional bulbs and can last for 25 years. As with many new technologies, the up-front cost for an LED bulb is still much more than even a CFL, but prices are expected to drop as new products are developed.

To learn more about ways to reduce your electric bill, visit [EnergySavers.gov](http://EnergySavers.gov) or [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com) or call Norris Electric Cooperative at 877-783-8765 and ask about our free home energy audit program.

Sources: [EnergySavers.gov](http://EnergySavers.gov), [Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative](http://EasternIlliniElectricCooperative.com), [EnergyStar.gov](http://EnergyStar.gov)

Magen Howard writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service organization for the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

## Scam artists target co-op members

The nation's electric cooperatives are reporting a rise in swindlers who are using energy-related ploys to get into the bank accounts of co-op members.

Variations on the scam include calls claiming expiration of automatic bank drafts. Scammers seek personal financial information, which presumably could enable a thief to raid bank accounts. **You** should contact our office when you need to update automatic bank drafts or any pre-payment arrangements.

Other frauds include "Home Walk-Through" scam calls. A member is told he or she can save money on their

utility bills if they schedule a walk-through energy audit of the home. Police say thieves often use this technique to get a layout of a home for a future burglary.

Then there's the "Miami Vice" scam. Members receive calls originating in Miami telling them they have won \$2,500 but need to pay \$199 in processing fees to receive their prize.

Scammers may tell you that you are months behind on your utility bills and must pay at once using a prepaid debit card. Criminals are using easily accessible prepaid debit cards to take victims' money and avoid being traced. This form of payment is just like giving

cash—once you hand it over, it's gone.

Better Business Bureaus and state attorneys general have also sounded alarms, noting that such schemes become more common during periods when increased energy use from heating or cooling can offer higher payoffs.

Any member who receives a call about a delinquent account should exercise caution. If there's any question about the legitimacy of a call, get their name and phone number and as much information as you can and then say, 'I'm going to hang up and call my utility to make sure what you're telling me is accurate.' and then do just that.