

POWERLINE

NEWSLETTER FOR CO-OP MEMBERS OF CORN BELT ENERGY



EDITION: NOVEMBER 2017

Asmark Institute offers unique professional applicator training center

Agriculture is a significant part of the United States economy. There are about 2.1 million farms with approximately 350 million acres of land used for crops annually serving as the primary source of food for the nation as well as worldwide exports. Land area used by farms in the United States has decreased by 60 percent since the 1950s yet farmers are able to produce crops to meet market needs due to improvements in technology and efficiency in agriculture including the use of more pesticides, insecticides and herbicides.

Rural America contains over 75 percent of the land area and 17 percent of the United States population due to economic trends of population moving from rural to urban areas.

With the changes in rural America, the need for skilled workers in the agriculture industry is more important than ever.

Have you ever wondered how large application equipment operators maneuvers down narrow roads, beneath power lines and in tight spaces? Asmark Institute, a not for profit organization, has developed an Applicator Training Center to train those entering the industry as well



as applicators with several years of experience.

The Asmark Applicator Training Center, located in Bloomington, Illinois, offers an Applicator Training Program, the only training center of its kind in the United States, and educates on safe and accurate application as well as personal safety. The training curriculum was designed with extensive input from agriculture retailers and industry partners and consists of practical learning experiences.



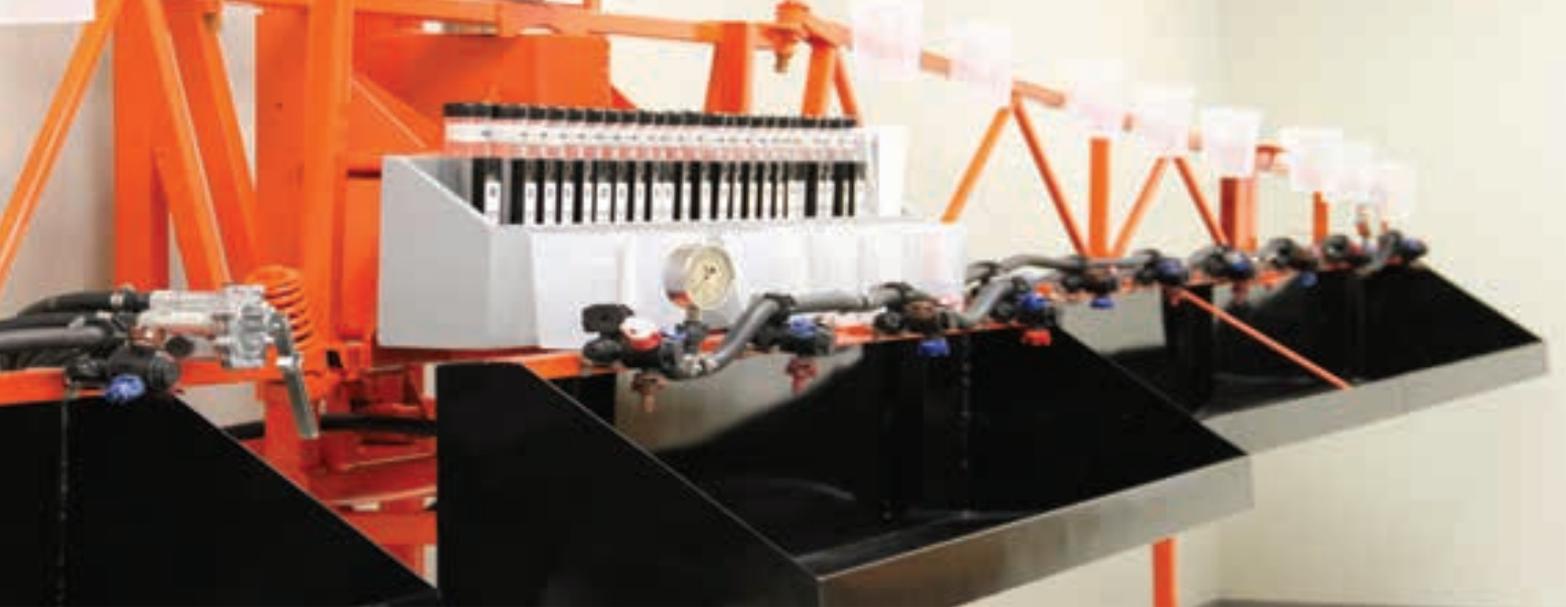


Courses are taught by Greg Yoder, a seasoned industry professional, and Dr. Robert Wolf, a highly recognized professor specializing in application technologies. The instructors bring over 80 years of combined experience to this training.



*Pictured above:
Greg Yoder, Asmark Institute Applicator
Training Center Instructor*

The hands-on training includes safe operation of application equipment on an actual course in which students must maneuver around power lines, field entrances, railroad crossings, bridges, narrow roads and a variety of other field situations. More than a



million dollars in equipment is used to facilitate this four day training program. Students are also trained on safety, customer service, planning, record keeping, understanding sprayer components, drift simulations, and proper tank cleanout.

Classes are held from June to December. As a part of the program, students receive a certificate of completion, and the course helps prepare them to obtain a state issued pesticide applicator license. Class cost is approximately \$575 per person and includes meals during the four day training. Several hundred students are able to attend per year. The course is open to anyone, whether they are farm employees or employees of agribusinesses from the United States or other countries.

Asmark Institute continues to provide high quality safety and skills development needed within the agriculture industry. For more information about upcoming courses at the Asmark Applicator Training Center or other programs, visit www.asmark.org.

Sources:
Population Reference Bureau. <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2006/>

2012 Census of Agriculture. USDA Census of Agriculture. <https://agcensus.usda.gov/>





Tips to stay warm during cooler months

Heating your home uses a lot of energy, so making a few changes can add up to noticeable savings on your energy bills. Corn Belt Energy is here to help by providing you with these money-saving tips:

Take advantage of sunny days

Take advantage of the sun's radiant heat energy and open your blinds and shades during sunny days. Let your home make use of those rays!

Adjust your thermostat

Program or adjust your thermostat to no higher than 68 degrees during

the winter months for maximum cost savings. And make sure to turn down the temperature a few more degrees when you're sleeping and when you leave the house.

Utilize ceiling fans

Hot air travels upward. If you have high ceilings, use your ceiling fans on a low, clockwise setting to circulate that heat back down.

Close off unoccupied rooms

Close the heat registers and doors of unoccupied rooms during the winter months.

Close fireplace damper

Make sure to close your fireplace damper when not in use; you don't want your warm air leaking out through the chimney!

Prevent drafts

Check around your windows and doors for drafts. A tube of caulk and some weather stripping can go a long way to seal your home from blustery winds.

Why do we plan outages?

Have you ever received a notification from Corn Belt Energy informing you of a "planned outage?" You may have wondered, "what is a planned outage?" and "why does my electric utility need to perform one?" Occasionally, the equipment we use to bring power to your home needs to be replaced, repaired or updated. When this happens, as a way to keep our crews and you safe, we plan an interruption to electric service.

We do our best to plan these outages during times when you will be least inconvenienced, so we often perform

planned outages during school and business hours. We also try to avoid planning these outages during winter or summer months. We understand these are peak times of the year when you depend on running your heating and cooling units the most.

While they may sound slightly inconvenient, planned outages are actually beneficial to you, our members. Regular system upgrades are necessary for optimal performance, and they increase reliability. Repairing and upgrading our equipment is also critical to

maintaining public safety. If older lines need to be replaced, we plan for it, repair or replace it, and that keeps everyone safe.

Planned outages also allow us to keep you informed of when and how long you will be without power. At Corn Belt Energy, we want to make sure we are doing everything we can to keep you safe and to keep our system running smoothly. So, the next time you hear about a planned outage, know that it is one of the best ways we can provide you with quality electric service.

CONTACT US

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