Always underfoot.

The Number 1 heating and cooling concept in Illinois can be found right in the soil around your home. It's System GT – the geothermal system. The constant temperature in the earth surrounding your house lets you heat and cool at the lowest operating cost of any system – with the bonus of abundant hot water.

Your electric cooperative will show you how a system especially designed for your house can keep you in total comfort 365 days a year. The clean, safe and efficient option is beneath your feet.

Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

Electricity. A source of comfort.

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO OPERATIVE • Waterloo

Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171 MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC. WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the Manager's desk

Joseph J. Fellin

It's hard to believe that another year has rolled around and it's almost Annual Meeting time again. Because of a conflict with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Annual Meeting, the Cooperative's meeting has been moved up to March 18, 1996. It again will be held at the Hecker Community Center. A committee on nominations to name candidates for renomination to the board of directors will meet at the Cooperative office on February 7, 1996, (see related story). Please mark your calendars for the March 18 Annual Meeting.

We have recently completed the area member meetings held at Hecker, Millstadt, Maeystown and Waterloo. We thank the members who attended. These meetings give us the opportunity to meet and visit with you. We try to make the area meetings informational and enjoyable. We hope that you find them to be that way. If you have comments or suggestions to improve these meetings, please let us know.

There have been a couple of rumors floating around: (1) that the Cooperative was for sale and (2) the Cooperative was moving. To quell these rumors, the Cooperative is not for sale and we are not moving from our present location.

The rumor that the Cooperative was for sale probably stemmed from the announcement that Soyland Power Cooperative and Illinova Corporation, the holding company for Illinois Power Company, signed an agreement in principle for the negotiation of the purchase of Soyland's generation assets by Illinova. Monroe County Electric Co-Operative is not for sale. As a matter of fact, the only way the Cooperative could be sold is by you, the members, at a special membership meeting for that purpose. As an aside, it doesn't look likely that the purchase of Soyland's generating assets by Illinova will develop.

The other rumor that the Cooperative will move from its present location is just that, a rumor at this time. With the Highway 3 relocation and addition to four lanes, plus the possibility of a bypass around Waterloo, your board of directors have discussed what the highway improvement might do to the value of the Cooperative property. If the right offer comes along, should we sell and move to a less valuable location? I repeat, this is just discussion of "what if." As the Cooperative membership grows and requires additional services, the need for more office and warehouse space becomes apparent. We currently have some staff doubled up in one office. A decision by your board must be made in the not-to-distant future on what direction we should take — remodel and expand, or sell and move to a new location with a new building. At this time we will remain where we are.

Nominating Committee named: meeting set for February 7

A committee on Nominations has been named and will meet at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, February 7, 1996, at the Monroe County Electric Co-Operative office in Waterloo. The committee will meet to place the names of three persons in nomination to be elected at the Cooperative's Annual Meeting to serve three year terms as directors of Monroe County Electric Co-Operative.

The Cooperative's 58th Annual Meeting will be Monday, March 18, 1996, at the Hecker Community Center.

Directors whose current term expires and are eligible for renomination are:

District 4 Donald L. Gleiber,
2 Richard St., Waterloo
District 5 Terry J. Grommet,
3810 High Prairie School Rd., Belleville
District 6 Ross R. Mueller,
4700 Fischer Rd., Fults

As a Cooperative member, you have a right to participate in the election process. If you know of someone who is willing to serve and you would like to have them placed in nomination for the board of directors, please contact members of the Nominating Committee named below, prior to their February 7, 1996, meeting.

Nominating Committee members

District 4

Eugene Linker	33 Country Club Ln., Waterloo, IL 62298
Walter Rau	8800 Gilmore Lk. Rd., Columbia, IL 62236
Arnold Matzenbacher	6526 Goeddeltown Rd., Waterloo, IL 62298
Allan Mueller (Alt.)	143 Sterritt Run, Waterloo, IL 62298

District 5

Karen Neff	4015 High Pr. School Rd., Belleville, IL 62220
Clarence Englerth	5133 Schmidt Ln., Belleville, IL 62220
Merlin Mehrmann	4820 Sand Rock Rd., Smithton, IL 62285
Don Barkau (Alt.)	6940 Holcomb School Rd., Freeburg, IL 62243

District 6

Willard Meister	2916 KK Rd., Waterloo, IL 62298
Clarence Vogt, Jr.	2904 Ahne Rd., Waterloo, IL 62298
Donald Schrader	5469 Kaskaskia Rd., Waterloo, IL 62298
William Mueller (Alt.)	6228 State Rt. 3, Waterloo, IL 62298

Saving money by saving hot water

Many people are surprised to learn that their water heater is one of the largest energy users in their home. Typically, that big (usually) cylindrical thing sits quietly in a corner somewhere heating water for dozens of household chores. While it's doing that, it is also using energy. On average, some 15 to 20 percent of the utility bill goes to heat water.

One way to keep costs down is to buy an energy-efficient water heater to start with. All major electricity-using appliances on the market now have an Energy Efficiency label, and there are several different price ranges of water heaters. Generally, the less expensive they are to buy, the more expensive they are to operate.

While you're shopping, be sure to talk to the people at your electric co-op. Some co-ops may have a special price on electric water heaters. Some may offer a special "peak shaving" rate to encourage you to let them place a control on your water heater. Then, the co-op can shut off for brief periods during times of high electricity usage.

Once you've got an energy-efficient water heater, there are some things you can do in your home to keep from using too much hot water in the first place.

First, you need to check your temperature setting. If you're heating your water more than necessary, you're wasting money. Home economists tell us that you need 140-degree water for proper sanitizing, and most detergents for automatic dishwashers won't dissolve properly

at temperatures cooler than that.

So check your water temperature as it comes out of the faucet, after you've let the water run for about five minutes. Then, you'll need to turn it higher or lower to reach the temperature you need.

Of course, if you don't need a new water heater, you're still stuck with a dilemma: Do you replace it anyway, which is expensive, or just go on using it, which is also expensive. The answer is yes and no. Yes, you go on using it. No, you don't use it expensively. If you have a water heater that's in good shape, you can still make it more efficient by adding insulation to the outside. You can buy kits at hardware stores, or just wrap batts of insulation around your heater, assembling everything as neatly as possible with duct tape. Be sure to leave a cutout for your thermostat control panel. That little job should save you about 20 percent on your water heating expense.

While insulation and temperature control can help, there are even more ways to save. First, try to figure out ways to use less water.

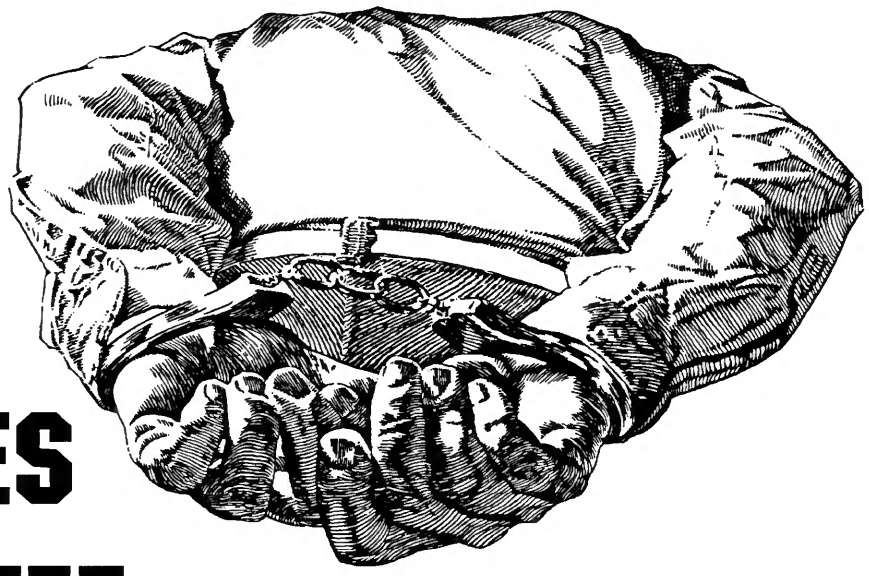
For example, it helps to know where the water is used. Once you know that, you can try ways to use less of it. The average family, the experts tell us, uses hot water like this: 41 percent goes for baths and showers, 24 percent goes for laundry, 27 percent is used in the kitchen, and some 8 percent is used for "other" purposes.

Since baths and showers account for the biggest usage, cutting back there will give the most savings. Flow reducers on shower heads will reduce the amount of water going through the shower head, while still giving the feel of a good shower. Shorter showers will help, too.

Much of the water used in the kitchen goes for dishwashing, and cutting back there can help. If you have an electric dishwasher, you can save on water heating expenses by using that appliance wisely. Wait to run it until you have a full load. Don't run it with just the dishes from one meal in it.

The laundry room is a big hot water user, too. You can save by washing only full loads, by using water temperature only as hot as needed, and by using a cold rinse whenever possible.

If there's any chance at all that you may be replacing your water heater soon, contact your co-op first. They may have a bargain for you. Be sure to ask them about any incentive rates they offer. And don't forget to ask them for further energy-saving tips. They may be able to help you save in other ways, too.



IT TAKES A THIEF. . .

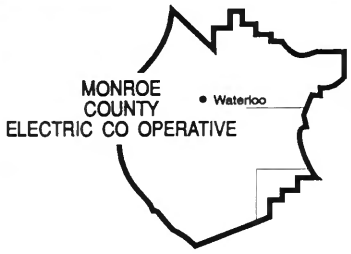
to tamper with meters!

Tampering with an electric meter is illegal. And, it can be quite dangerous because of the possible exposure to high voltage.

When a person steals electricity, the thief is stealing from neighbors and fellow cooperative members who ultimately pay for the stolen power. Theft of electricity is also a violation of Illinois state law. . .with all the penalties that go with conviction.

Seals on meters are like locks on doors, discouraging unauthorized entry. If your meter needs attention, please contact your cooperative's office.

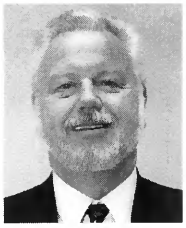
Electric Cooperatives of Illinois



Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171 MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC. WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the Manager's desk



Joseph J. Fellin

Although new services installed this past year were fewer than in 1994, your cooperative continues to grow. We saw nearly a 3 percent increase in the number of meters served during 1995. In addition to building new services, our line crews stayed very busy repairing our distribution system, which was heavily damaged by a tornado and severe storms during early summer. The construction crews also assisted in various line relocation projects for the improvement of Illinois State Route 3. They were also involved in retirement of flood related services bought out by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), along with normal operation and maintenance programs.

Now that 1995 is history, we look to the future. Your staff, particularly the accounting department, has been busy preparing a work plan and budget for 1996. We project that we will need to build 175 new services during the year. We estimate that revenues for 1996 will be $7,855,000, based on projected sales of 70,270,364 kilowatt-hours. Expenses for maintenance programs such as breaker replacements, pole treatment and inspection, oil testing of substation transformers, tree trimming and spraying of right of way, and testing of single and three-phase meters are included in the 1996 budget.

In early 1996 the engineering department and management will present a new four-year work plan for approval. A large portion of the new plan will be for new services. There will be some system improvements, including conversion of 3 1/2 miles of single-phase line to three-phase east of Waterloo along the Hecker highway (Route 156).

There will also be a request in the new work plan for a new transmission line from Poe Substation to Red Bud, and a new 69/34 kv substation. When completed, this construction will solve some voltage problems in the southern part of our system, give us a source of transmission voltage and allow us to feed five substations from two different sources in case of emergencies.

Mark your calendar

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative's 58th annual meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 18, 1996, at the Hecker Community Center.

Annual meeting entertainment

Captain Stubby is a master storyteller and a seasoned veteran in the comedy business. Many of you enjoy his humorous column in the Prairie Farmer. His message is good, clean fun the whole family can enjoy.

Captain Stubby

Come to the annual meeting on Monday, March 18, to hear this master comedian.

Heating assistance available

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) aids low-income, elderly or handicapped households, as well as others whose power has been disconnected because of inability to pay winter heating bills.

The LIHEAP program offers assistance with utility bills to people and households meeting specific income, age or disability guidelines. Gross income for 30 days prior to application date is used to determine income eligibility. All funds which have come into the household by any member of the household must be included.

Income eligibility guidelines for the previous 30 days should be at or below the following:

One person	**$ 778.00**	**Three people**	**$1,312.00**
Two people	**$1,045.00**	**Four people**	**$1,579.00**

All households must provide hard copy proof of each member's Social Security number, copy of recent history or electric bill, and any other information deemed necessary by the processing agency.

Cooperative members living in Monroe County should contact the Western Egyptian Outreach office at 207 West Fourth Street, Waterloo, phone 939-8715. In Randolph County contact the Western Egyptian office in Steeleville, phone 826-3141. Members requesting assistance in St. Clair County should contact St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grant Department, 521 East Main Street, Belleville, phone 277-6790 or 398-6320.

For more information on energy assistance, please contact the local administering agency for your area listed.

New water heater special prices

Purchase a Ruud tri-power master electric water heater from Monroe County Electric Co-Operative

50-gallon **$125.00** plus tax 65-gallon **$150.00** plus tax

Monroe County Electric has changed the brand of water heaters we sell. We now offer Ruud Tri-Power Master. There is very little difference in the features of the Ruud Tri-Power Master water heater and those of the Craftmaster model we were selling. Both brands have R-25 insulation, built-in heat traps, lime eliminator features, and heavy duty elements.

The new Ruud water heater includes a 10-year limited tanks and parts warranty, whereas the old heaters carried an 8-year warranty.

The main reason we changed was not because of the features of the two water heaters, but because with the old water heater we had to order 50 water heaters at a time to receive a discount. With the new water heaters, we need to order only 12 at a time to receive a better price. This frees up a considerable amount of capital, as well as warehouse space.

- **New Features ***
- **10 Year Warranty**
- **Built-In Lime Eliminator**
- **EverKleen Self Cleaning inlet tube**
- **Built-In Heat Trap**
- **R-25 Insulation**

OR

Purchase an electric water heater from any dealer. Receive a $75.00 rebate from Monroe County Electric Cooperative.

* To receive rebate: (1) Furnish sales slip with brand name, and model, (2) Must meet ASHRE 90 standards, (3) Be 52-gallon or larger. (4) Installation on cooperative lines must be verified.

Replace a gas water heater with an electric water heater and earn additional $35.00 rebate!

Security light special ends February 29

Cooperative members have until Feb. 29 to install a new 100- watt High Pressure Sodium Security Light and receive the first three months' rental free.

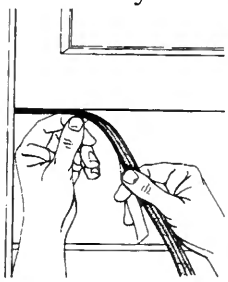
To receive the three month's free rental, it must be a newly installed light, not a replacement. All costs associated with installing a security light at your premises will apply.

Rental for a 100-Watt High Pressure Sodium light is $6.25 per month. 200 Watt High Pressure Sodium lights are also available for $10.00 per month.

Remember, to get three months' free rental, security light must be installed by Feb. 29.

Plugging those little air leaks

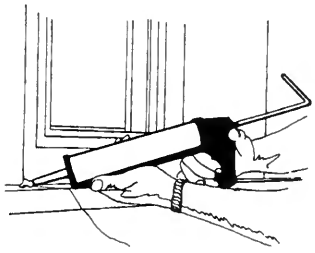
Now that winter is here and we've enjoyed a couple of sieges of howling winds and blowing snow, many of us have learned—again—that our houses aren't as snug as they might be.



While it would have been better to have tackled all those little chores when it's nice, it's a good bet that a lot of homeowners have let the lessons of last winter go by.

Many people have found to their dismay that their house, which seemed to be nice and snug during last year's fairly mild winter, is susceptible to cold and drafts.

Even so, there are some things that can be done, besides just turning up the thermostat and hoping for the best. Even well-built houses can have "problem" walls, usually on the north side, and also on the side facing the prevailing winds. Or both.



If you've found that you have a problem room, or if your entire house is harder to heat than you remembered, you may be able to achieve greater comfort and lower costs with a few simple remedial steps. You can do some of these repairs inside the house, no matter what the weather is like outside. For others, you may be wise to wait for a warm spell.

Even the best of houses will often let an amazing amount of cold air in around the electrical outlets on the outside walls. If you suspect that your outlets are leaky, wait until there's a good stiff breeze blowing outside and put your hand near the outlet. Chances are, you'll be able to feel that draft like the wall wasn't there.

Almost any home-supply store anywhere has little foam rubber backing plates that act as gaskets to minimize that problem. They are inexpensive and simple to install. All you need is a screwdriver and a few minutes. You simply take off the switch or outlet cover, place the gasket behind it, and screw the cover back on. Since this little chore is so simple and inexpensive, it probably should be your first step. If you can't do all the switches and outlets, be sure to take care of the problem ones first.

Windows can present problems, too. Often, all you need to do to check your windows is be in the same room they're in, and that'll be confirmation enough! Since they perform contradictory functions, they're fairly complex structures. They have to seal out the elements during some times, yet they need to be opened at others. Many of the problems windows give you are related to this open/shut nature.

One of the first steps you need to take to cure your window drafts is to add weatherstripping, if there is none already there, or if what's there is no longer doing the job. You can buy little strips of adhesive-backed stripping, and they're also inexpensive. You just cut the strip to length where the window closes, peel off the tape that covers the adhesive, and apply it carefully. You'll probably need to do this at the top of the window, also.

If you feel around the outer edges of the window, inside the frame, you may still find that there's leakage. You can minimize that by putting in a shrink-fit film on the inside. While it looks like a daunting chore, it really isn't. You can buy kits at hardware and home-supply stores, and they usually include double-sided tape and enough film to do one or two windows. They come in different sizes, so you'll need to know how big your windows are. The kits are generic, so you may need to buy a larger film than you actually need and cut it to fit with scissors.

While it looks like a difficult task, the hardest part actually is peeling the backing off the silly double-sided tape!

After you get the tape up and the plastic cut to size, you apply the film, carefully, and press it against the tape, which you've peeled the backing off of, naturally. If it's not perfect, you're still okay. You can shrink it to fit with a hair dryer. Even a mediocre craftsman can do a presentable job.

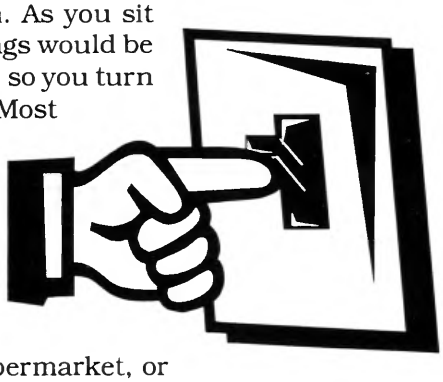
Once you get that taken care of, your windows may still leak. The area around the outer edge of the window frame is often a source of difficulty, and that's a problem you'll have to go outside to take care of.

Actually, that's caused by a lack of caulking around the outside of the exterior window frame, and can be cured by the judicious application of a bead of caulk around the window. Occasionally people have tried to do a temporary interior fix with masking tape around the window frame. That works, but it's visible, unattractive, and will peel the paint off if it's left on too long. Don't do it unless there's a really horrendous draft, and you expect to be able to remove the tape and do a proper caulking job when the weather improves.

These few simple steps, most of which can be done inside the house, will help you cut your heating costs, and will make your house more comfortable, too.

When you flip a switch, you're buying power

As you walk into a room in your house, the first thing you're likely to do when you pass through the door is to hit the light switch. As you sit and begin to read, you realize things would be a little easier if you had more light, so you turn on the lamp next to your chair. Most of us do those little things without thinking about them at all.



As a matter of fact, though, you're making a buying decision each time you turn on an electrical switch. You make a buying decision when you pick something off the shelf at the supermarket, or at the boutique in the mall, or when you put gas in your car. We often fail to realize we also do it just by flipping an innocuous little switch on the wall.

If you keep that realization in mind, you also have a way to exercise a certain amount of control over your electricity bill. There are simple things you can do if you think before you buy. You can purchase electricity wisely, without losing any of the comfort and convenience it provides. Keep these factors in mind as you go about your routine at home.

Water heating

It's hard to believe, but about 15 percent of the energy we use in our homes goes to heat water. Hot water plays a very important role in everyone's lifestyle, and many lifestyles require quite a bit of hot water. Naturally, that results in higher energy use, which means that you're going to buy more electricity.

Ask yourself these questions:

"When I take a bath, do I use water sparingly, or do I fill my tub clear to the top?"

"Do I take short showers, or do I stay in the shower until the last drop of hot water's gone from the water heater?"

"Do I repair leaky faucets, or do I let them drip and waste hot water?"

"Do I operate automatic washers and dishwashers with a full load, or just whenever it's convenient?"

Space heating and cooling

Let's face it: Nobody likes to be too hot or too cold. That fact is reflected in our energy usage. Nearly half the energy used in American homes goes for heating and cooling. If we use dehumidifiers in the summer, or humidifiers in the winter, we're making a fairly substantial energy purchase, because such units tend to run continuously. Portable space heaters, air conditioners, and garage and basement fans also contribute to our energy consumption.

If we take a look at our "comfort" lifestyle in terms of maintaining relative humidity and temperature, we can use energy wisely in many ways. These range from adding insulation where it's needed, to caulking and weatherstripping, to simply turning down the heat and turning off the air conditioning in a room that's not being used. When you do that, of course, you're making a decision to buy a little less electricity.

Family size

There is a direct relationship between the number of people living in a home and the amount of energy used, and that's especially true if some of the residents are teenagers. In addition, if friends and relatives are visiting, you can expect to use more energy for cooking, baking, laundry and hot water. And if you've opened up a spare room, it will cost a little extra to light it and provide heating or cooling.

Appliance use

America is a nation of gadget-lovers, and we're all looking for an appliance that will do something for us. But we need to remember: when we open a can with an electric can opener, we're making the decision to buy just a tiny bit of electricity. And when we roast a turkey in our electric oven, we're also buying energy. The truth is, though, most of us are firmly convinced that the convenience is worth the cost, and we use such appliances cheerfully.

Your appliances work for you around the clock, whenever you choose to use them, and wise use of these helpers can cut your costs.

For example, ask yourself questions like these:

"Do I turn off the lights when a room is not is use, or do I leave them on?" "Does my television set entertain the entire family, or does it play to an empty room?"

"Do I leave my oven on 'warm' for an extended period of time, or do I cook many dishes at once and then turn the oven off?"

All these considerations affect your lifestyle, and the cost of maintaining it. All Americans are part of the residential sector, and real energy management consciousness is likely to start at home.

A conscientious home and farm energy management program can pay big dividends!

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO OPERATIVE • Waterloo

Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171 MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC. WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the Manager's desk

Joseph J. Fellin

During 1995 your cooperative set a record, one we are not proud of. Average outage time per member was a whopping 17.6 hours. This compares to the previous five-year average outage time per member of 1.65 hours. As detailed in an article in the current Monroe Co-Op Echoes, a tornado in May and an intense wind storm in June accounted for 67 percent of the outage time. Severe storms are one cause of outages over which we have no control.

One of the causes of outages that we do have some control over is right of way and line maintenance. As our system grows, the job of keeping our lines clear of trees and other vegetation grows too. Currently we have more than 1,000 miles of line and spend more than $60,000 a year to keep them clear.

To help ensure uninterrupted electric service, we put a priority on right of way maintenance and use several methods to control right of way vegetation. We use a journeyman tree trimmer, with part time help, to trim and top out trees growing into lines and clear right of way as needed. We attempt to clear and trim right of way on a four to five year cycle.

Repeated tree and brush cutting alone, although necessary, is not the answer. In fact, mechanical brush control is only a temporary solution because it encourages vigorous sprouting. Root systems remain alive and grow stronger to send up more sprouts after clearing, resulting in high brush density.

To aid in maintaining right of way and to complement tree trimming and brush clearance, your cooperative uses environmentally safe herbicides to prevent resprouting of brush and therefore extend our maintenance cycle. The herbicides we use are widely used by other utilities, highway departments and other public and private organizations and businesses. They are approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The foliage spray compound we use is a mixture of Tordon 101 and Garlon 3A with crop oil concentrate. They are selective herbicides in that they are designed to control only the woody and broadleaf plant life that you want to control. The active ingredients do not persist in soil or water and are rapidly broken down by microorganisms in the soil and water. Foliage spray and vegetation control is performed during the growing season, normally June through August.

Herbicide applicators and operators are licensed by the state after rigorous testing. Licenses are renewed each year and applicators are retested every three years. The cooperative has one licensed applicator and three licensed operators.

In order to supply you with uninterrupted power, Monroe County Electric faces the task of controlling unwanted vegetation. Safe application of herbicides makes it possible to achieve long lasting control in an environmentally safe manner.

MCEC recently purchased a new Ford F800 truck and a new Morbark Chipper. The truck has an Altec 50-foot boom with an aerial bucket. The Chipper has an 85 HP engine, and a large feed roller for uniform feed of heavier, more dense brush and larger limbs and trees.

REBATES!! REBATES!!

Electric heat rebates available for new Home construction or remodeling

System: GT

Up to $850.00 in rebates
Plus, free electric water heater with radio control
Install a Geothermal heating and cooling system to qualify for above rebate.

Total electric heat

Up to $600.00 in rebates
Plus, free electric water heater with radio control
Qualifying electric heat systems must be a minimum of 5 KW and include: Electric furnace, air to air heat pump, baseboard, ceiling cable, or all other electric heating systems.

These rebates are for Monroe County Co-Operative, Inc. members only

For information on these rebates call
618-939-7171

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC.
P. O. Box 128 • Waterloo, IL 62298
Good thru June 30, 1996

Please attend your 58th annual meeting

MONDAY, MARCH 18 AT THE HECKER COMMUNITY CENTER

- **Pre-meeting activities begin at 5 p.m.**
- **Registration begins at 5 p.m.**
- **Entertainment by Captain Stubby**
- **Health Fair**
- **Chicken dinner with slaw and potato salad**
- **DIRECTV[R] display**
- **Appliance display**

Business meeting starts at 7:30 p.m.

Capital credit checks to be issued at annual meeting

Your board of directors has authorized the payment of capital credits to members who received electric service from the cooperative in 1971 and 1972.

Members having capital credits due them for those two years may pick them up at the annual meeting. Capital credit checks not picked up will be mailed later.

Heat and cool your home, naturally.

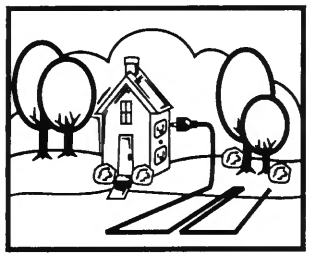
The energy of nature shows itself in many ways...the strength of a seedling pushing through the soil, waves surging against the shore. The Earth also absorbs and stores heat energy from the sun. This energy within the soil can heat and cool your home inexpensively, cleanly and efficiently through the Geothermal Heating and Cooling System. In the winter, warmth naturally stored within the soil is drawn into your home. In the summer, the action is reversed to cool the house. The system produces four times more energy than it uses, which should leave you good-natured when the electric bill comes.

Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

An Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity Employer

Spring is time to think geothermal

It has been said—roughly—that in the spring, a young person's fancy turns lightly to other young persons. For those who are older, and who have a house to keep up, a family to provide for and bills to pay, spring tends to bring gratitude.



Not only are we thrilled for the end of winter, but we're grateful that the old furnace has squeaked through another winter without giving up the ghost.

With the heating season on the way out and the cooling season a month or so away, now might be a good time to give some thought to having a geothermal heating and cooling system installed in your home. If you're getting ready to build, you certainly ought to look into geothermal.

A geothermal system uses earth-stored energy in partnership with safe, clean electricity, to offer a hard-to-beat way to heat and cool your home.

The heart of the geothermal system is essentially a heat pump with a difference: but what a difference! The average air-to-air heat pump is essentially a reversible system that removes heat from your home in the summer and expels it to the outside air. It does the opposite in the winter, warming outside air and moving it into your home. You decide what it does simply by flicking a switch on your indoor thermostat.

If the air-to-air heat pump has a disadvantage, it's that it starts losing its efficiency at about 10 degrees F., so you have to rely on another heat source to make up the difference.

A geothermal system doesn't have that problem. It draws its heat or coolness from a liquid-filled grid of plastic piping buried 5-6' underground. Once you get about 5 feet below the surface of the earth, the temperature in Illinois is a fairly consistent 55 degrees F., the year around.

Instead of having to cool 90-degree air in the summer, the unit is dealing with 55-degree air, and it does that very efficiently. When you need heat, the geothermal system is, again, working with a 55-degree medium. That's much better than the subzero weather air-to-air units have to cope with. All in all, about 70 percent of the "fuel" your unit needs comes from the solar energy absorbed by the earth and stored there.

Not surprisingly, the technology for the geothermal system, also known as a "closed-loop earth-coupled groundwater heat pump system," came from northern Europe. It is only natural that the system would develop in that area, with its harsh climate and high fuel costs.

The idea dates back to the 1940s, but offered no advantage to Americans in a time when the cost of heating and cooling a home was almost insignificant. The energy crunch of the early 1970s changed all that, and Americans started getting serious about economical comfort conditioning.

There was another factor, too. The piping and technology hadn't developed to the point that Americans would feel comfortable with them, and it wasn't until the 1980s that they came together. Early experiments with polyvinyl chloride (PVC) piping proved unsatisfactory, and until better piping could be developed, the system had no real future. Today's piping is expected to last 25-75 years in virtually any soil type. Present-day piping has better heat conducting properties than earlier materials had.

Most closed-loop systems are trenched horizontally in the yard around the home, but the stored solar energy can also come from well water or a pond, if it's large enough. If you don't have room for a horizontal loop, you can have a well drilled or use an existing one. If you need to have your yard trenched, it's usually not a big problem. The trenches are usually about 6inches wide, and a simple reseeding will take care of the disturbed lawn. The pipes have no adverse affect on plants above them.

A big plus is that the heart of the unit is installed inside the house, in a garage, storage closet or crawl space, where it's protected from the elements. That prolongs the life of the unit, which is quiet enough that it won't be a bother.

Geothermal systems can save you even more money by providing hot water for your home. Some types of systems can save you up to 50 percent on your annual water heating bill by preheating tank water. These units are standard equipment on some systems and optional on others. Be sure to look into the possibility of having hot water, too.

While geothermal units seem to be too good to be true, they do have one disadvantage: They're expensive to install because of the trenching or well-drilling needed for the loop.

Don't let that deter you. They will save you so much money on your heating, cooling and water-heating costs that they'll pay for themselves much sooner than any other kind of system that's likely to be available to rural electric consumers. Ask the people at your electric cooperative for more information. You'll be glad you did!

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO OPERATIVE • Waterloo

Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171 MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC. WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the Manager's desk

Joseph J. Fellin

This past winter has been one of the colder winters we have experienced in several years. The number of heating degree days was 33 percent more in December 1995 than in December 1994. Degree days in January 1996, were up approximately 5 percent over the previous year. "Degree Days" is a term used to compare monthly or annual temperatures and determine energy use. The more extreme the outdoor temperature, the higher the number of degree days. The higher the number of degree days, the more energy required to heat your home.

A record temperature of -12 degrees Fahrenheit was set for Feb. 3, 1996. To the best of our knowledge your Cooperative purchased a one-day winter record number of kilowatt hours on February 3, which I am sure would translate into a one-day high record sales. Record or not we know the meters were spinning and members' electric bills were high.

Ironically, after discussing record cold temperatures above, we are going to fast forward to summer peak and the need to control our summer demand. Our current wholesale power agreement with Soyland Power Cooperative is structured so that the peak summer demand Monroe County Electric Co-Operative contributes to Soyland Power Cooperative's peak demand is used to determine the fixed monthly cost we pay Soyland. Therefore, by curtailing our peak KW demand between June 15 and Sept. 15 we can help lower or maintain our average cost per kilowatt-hour. If we can reduce our fixed cost and lower the average cost per kilowatt hour, we can lower or possibly eliminate the WPCA on your monthly electric bill.

We cannot lower peak system demand without your help. This is why we are, in April, asking that you participate in our load management programs. On the next page is information on the Co-operative's Water Heater Radio Control Program and the Air-Conditioner Load Leveler Program. If you do not already have one of these controls installed, we urge you to let us install either one or both of these devices, at no cost to you. It can be your way of helping your cooperative reduce the cost of electricity.

Cellular phone service

As an added service MCEC members can now subscribe to cellular phone service through Ameritech. Monroe County Electric Co-Operative has authorized Ameritech to set up a special "Member Advantage Plan II" for MCEC members. Any agreements or contract signed will be with Ameritech, not Monroe County Electric Co-Operative. For information concerning cellular phone service through Ameritech, you need to call 618-414-2677. Any calls to MCEC regarding cellular phone service will be referred to the above number.

Rebates! Rebates!

Electric heat rebates available

SystemGT:

Up to $850 in rebates
Plus free electric heater (with radio control)

Install a geothermal heating and cooling system to qualify for above rebate.

Total electric heat:

Up to $600 in rebates
Plus free electric water heater (with radio control)

Qualifying electric heat systems must be new load, a minimum of 5kw and include:

Electric furnace, air-to-air heat pump, baseboard, ceiling cable, or other all electric heating systems.

Electric water heater:

Special Prices

RUDD	10-year warranty	65 gallon	$150.00
RUDD	10-year warranty	50 gallon	$125.00

$70.00 rebate to replace a gas water heater

CELLULAR PHONE SERVICE

Ameritech

CELLULAR PHONE SERVICE

SPECIAL MEMBER PLAN FOR MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP, INC.

PLAN	MEMBER ADVANTAGE PLAN II
ACCESS	$17.00 Per Month
PEAK RATE	$.27 Per Minute
OFF-PEAK RATE	$.05 Per Minute
SPECIAL PROMO	*$20.00 or $30.00 Local Airtime Credit with 1 or 3-Year Agreements (respectively) From 100 to 600 FREE Peak and Off-Peak Minutes*
EQUIPMENT	FREE Motorola AC-2250 Tote FREE Motorola Contour Motorola Power Pak-$13.00 Motorola DPC-550-$29.00 Motorola TX300-$34.00 *NEW* Motorola Piper-$57.00
TERM	2 or 3 Years
ACTIVATION	$35.00 One Time Charge (Waived if SWB conversion) or FREE on a 3-Year Agreement
THEFT/MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT	FREE-(a $2.00 Value) Includes Maintenance, Insurance & Theft Protection
FEATURES *(Choose One)*	Call Waiting-$1.00/Month Call Forwarding-$2.00/Month 3-Way Calling-$2.00/Month Detail Billing-$2.50/Month

If you have any questions
contact an account representative
(618)414-CORP (2677)
(Equipment prices good through April 30, 1996)

Save money with a water heater control

Free Installation! Receive a $4 per month credit on your electric bill. Allow the Cooperative to install a radio control on your electric water heater. Water heater will be subject to control only a few days, between June 15 and September 15, sometime between 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. We have approximately 700 of these controls on members' water heaters, and have had very few complaints of running out of hot water.

Let us install an air conditioning load leveler

Free Installation! You can save $30 by enrolling in our Load Leveler Program. Let the Cooperative install a Load Leveler on air conditioning or heat pump and save $10 a month for July, August and September. The Load Leveler is a simple device that regulates the on and off time for the air conditioning cycle when the outside temperature is 90 degrees or higher.

During these periods the air conditioner will operate to give a 25 percent reduction in compressor run time, which will help reduce our system peak load. Most people report they can't tell when the device is working and when it isn't. You'll save money and help us control our summer electrical peak demand.

For more information regarding these Programs, please call Willard Wiggers at 939-7171.

geothermal
It's closer than you realize.

Not too far away from where you live, maybe just down the street or around the corner, somebody is saving money and you're not. They are taking advantage of something that you could take advantage of, too. If you have a front yard or back yard, you can lower the cost of heating and cooling your home. You can also get free or very inexpensive hot water. The Geothermal Heating and Cooling System uses the constant warmth within the soil to move heat in or out of your home, depending on the season. Somebody near you has one, and they are enjoying the comfort, safety and savings. Fortunately, there is somebody else near you who can help you bring all of geothermal's benefits to YOUR home. You'll find their name just down the road.

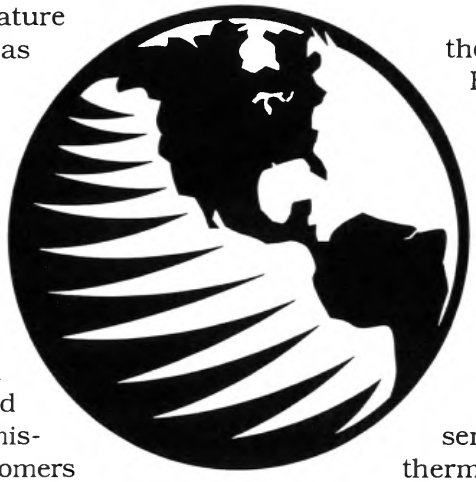
Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

Getting the job done . . . TOGETHER

'Invisible' light is useful stuff

An English astronomer made an interesting observation in the early 19th century, and we benefit from his perceptiveness today. Sir William Herschel noted the difference between heat and light, using a prism to split sunlight into spectral bands, much as a suncatcher will project "rainbows" on the walls during a sunny day.

As Herschel moved a thermometer through the bands, he saw that the temperature increased as he moved the thermometer from the blue end of the spectrum to the red. Surprisingly, the mercury continued to climb after the thermometer had passed through the red—the last of the visible bands. The higher temperature invisible light came to be known as infrared.



For a long time, there was little use for infrared, but times have changed. Now, rural English towns use infrared to track burglars, and firefighters in the West use infrared detectors to locate smoldering "hot spots" that can't be detected by the naked eye. During Operation Desert Storm, pilots used infrared to locate targets during night missions and in heavy smoke. Astronomers hope to use infrared technology to peek inside distant stars.

The infrared video camera, a fairly recent gadget, is what is being used in an effort to make all these things come to pass. The IR camera takes advantage of the fact that a warm object gives off more radiation than a cool one, and the camera "sorts out" those differences, providing a recognizable image.

Since the human eye responds only to visible light, it may miss the glow of hot ashes in the middle of what looks like a dead fire. It also can't see in the dark. An infrared camera can do both.

Scientists predict that there will be many uses for the emerging technology, including assisting commercial aircraft during landings at night and in foul weather, and night surveillance.

Older infrared technologies have been used for years in the construction and petrochemical industries. They have been used to help detect leaks and stress patterns, control oil pollution and conduct land surveys and medical analyses. Those looking for problems in electrical lines use them to find faults in connections, which show up as darker areas, since they're hotter than their surroundings.

Some energy-efficiency experts use them to detect heat loss from homes, enabling homeowners to determine how better to weatherstrip and insulate, to add comfort and save money on their energy bills.

Such cameras have been either expensive, or they were limited in what they could do. Now, new platinum-silicide cameras should offer a low-cost alternative. Scientists have used them to peer through the interstellar dust and look into distant regions of the universe, and NASA has lobbied long and hard for an infrared space telescope, which astronomers believe will be of fundamental importance for almost all aspects of astronomy.

Closer to home, though, the towns of Halmore, Purton and Hinton in Rural England have installed such cameras on power poles at the edges of their towns, to obtain a record of those who enter and leave. The idea is to snag the occasional urban thief who passes through; as in other places, such problems are on the increase.

An infrared image is essentially a composite picture of the thermal images given off by a scene or person, and represents the internal temperature. While faces will look like faces, they will look very different from those viewed by light in the normal spectrum Warmer parts, such as eye sockets, will register dark. Cooler parts, such as ears and the nose, will be lighter. Eye and hair coloring are missing.

While such differences cause problems, police viewing the video tapes have a fairly respectable record of success in recognizing perpetrators.

But one problem is that many objects emit similar amounts of infrared "light," giving off little in the way of visual contrast, even through the best of cameras now in existence. A major goal for infrared researchers is to find a way to boost the difference.

But for now, while astronomers dream of a telescope that will enable them to unlock the mysteries of the universe and police view strange images on TV screens and firefighters look for hot spots, the electric industry uses them for practical purposes.

While sniffing out power line flaws and energy leaks is necessary and even important, there's nothing wrong with dreaming of finding out more about the universe around us. Perhaps someday soon such cameras will enable us to do just that!

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO OPERATIVE
• Waterloo

Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171 MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC. WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the manager's desk

The men who were reelected to the MCEC board of directors at the annual meeting March 18 are congratulated by Joseph J. Fellin, manager. From left are Fellin, Donald Glieber, Ross R. Mueller and Terry Grommet.

Over 500 members and guests attended your Cooperative's 58th Annual Meeting, Monday, March 18, 1996 at the Hecker Community Center in Hecker. We are please at the attendance and thank all of you who participated in the meeting. The 315 members registered for the meeting received a stainless steel paring knife as a door prize and were eligible for the drawing of attendance prizes awarded at the end of the meeting.

Three Cooperative members were re-elected to three-year terms on the board of directors. They are Donald L. Gleiber, District 4, Waterloo; Terry J. Grommet, District 5, Belleville; and Ross R. Mueller, District 6, Fults.

Speaking to over 500 members and guests, Board President, Terry Grommet, said, "We've heard two words circulating around the electric utility industry and around state government chambers, and they could change the face of the industry forever. They are 'retail wheeling.' Essentially, this means that customers could buy electricity from any supplier they chose, and have it transmitted to them over other utilities' lines."

"Since the subject came up," Grommet continued, "independent power producers and brokers have played fast and loose with the truth. They say competition will ultimately encourage greater competition without disrupting service or reliability. This is stretching the truth greatly. In my mind, if retail wheeling is good for the large customers, then it should be good for small ones, too."

Grommet went on to note that the big users, who are lobbying hard for retail wheeling, will probably be the ones who benefit most.

"We're preparing for retail wheeling by meeting the challenge head on. I am confident that if all of us continue to work together as we have for 58 years, we will be prepared for and be able to realize any benefits from retail wheeling," he concluded.

Joseph J. Fellin, manager, told the audience that MCEC had been through a couple of years that most people dread. After the massive flooding of 1993 came the windstorms and tornadoes and more flooding, on a smaller scale, in 1995.

"Our outage time, on the average, came to 17.67 hours per member. The average in 1994, the year before, was 2.27 hours. We want you to know that most of that time you were without power was due to circumstances beyond our control, and that we worked very hard to get your power back on."

Fellin said MCEC is working on a four-year system improvement plan that involves a lot of major line relocations for highway widenings and growth in the area.

"Our sales increased in 1995," he said, "due to the fact that the summer was hotter than usual. We think our sales will increase this year, too, even with the loss of the temporary load to the Valmeyer School."

He added that MCEC is in

(Continued on page 12c)

contact with various municipalities to work out service territory agreements.

Secretary-treasurer Richard W. Liefer of Red Bud reported that revenues for 1995 were $7,778,954, up slightly from 1994. Liefer said the co-op spent $5,307,661 for wholesale power in 1995. Total margins for 1995 were $418,183, down slightly from 1994's $489,895. During the meeting some $51,000 of capital credits were available to members who received service from MCEC in 1971-72. Capital credit checks not picked up at the meeting will be mailed.

Fellin announced during the meeting that the cooperative was honored to receive another plaque for its outstanding safety record, of having no lost time accidents during 1995.

Captain Stubby, a well-known Indiana humorist, was the guest speaker.

Monroe County Electric receives safety award

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative has received an award for having "No Lost-Time Injuries" in 1995. The presentation was made at the IEC Safety/Supervisory Technical Conference, held Feb. 28-29 in Springfield. Pictured, from left, are Alan Pinkstaff, training and safety instructor for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC); MCEC employees Ronald Rusteberg, Robert Gross, Arlin Stechmesser and Wilbert Juelfs.

In the operation of an electric cooperative, safety is one of the most important considerations for members, employees, management and directors. A select few cooperatives are recognized each year for their outstanding safety records.

This year, Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Waterloo, was one of several Illinois electric cooperatives to earn a safety award. The honor was presented by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. Monroe received the award for having no employee injuries resulting in lost time in 1995.

The presentation was made Feb. 28 during the Illinois Electric Cooperatives Safety/Supervisory Technical Conference in Springfield. There are 26 electric distribution cooperatives in the state.

"This award recognizes the dedication of our employees and board of directors in promoting awareness and observance of accident prevention," stated Joseph J. Fellin, general manager of Monroe County Electric.

Building or adding?

We expect a lot of new construction in our area soon. If you think you will need a new electric service or upgrade, please contact the engineering department as soon as possible. Spring is a busy time, and the advance notice will help avoid frustrations.

Work orders are handled on a first come-first served basis and we will work hard to serve you as soon as possible.

Rebates! Rebates!

Electric heat rebates available

SystemGT:

Up to $850 in rebates
Plus free electric heater (with radio control)

Install a geothermal heating and cooling system to qualify for above rebate.

Total electric heat: For new installation or gas replacement

Up to $600 in rebates
Plus free electric water heater *(with radio control)*

Qualifying electric heat systems must be a minimum of 5kw and include:

Electric furnace, air-to-air heat pump, baseboard, ceiling cable, or other all electric heating systems.

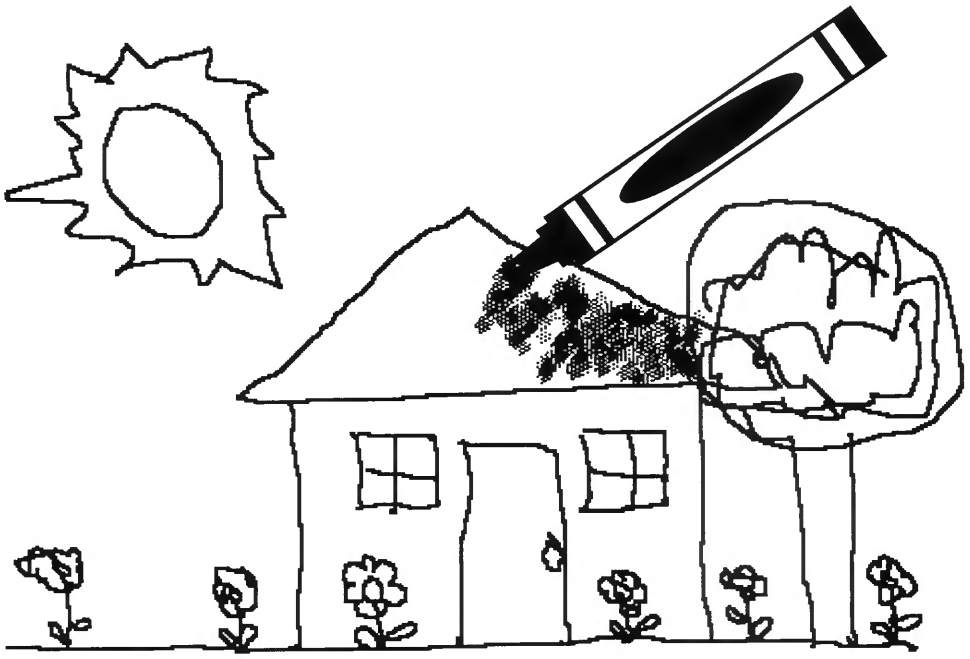
Electric water heater:

Special Prices

RUDD	10-year warranty	65 gallon	$150.00
RUDD	10-year warranty	50 gallon	$125.00

$70.00 rebate to replace a gas water heater

A different color



You may think of your electric cooperative in just one way . . . your power provider. If you haven't checked lately, you may find that it is *more* than that now. We can help you find a better electric rate for your life style, or teach electrical safety to your child. We may improve your heating and cooling system, if you ask. We may help you communicate better, and we work with groups to help bring in businesses and jobs.

Look into your power provider. It may be a co-op of a different color now.

Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

An Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity Employer

Little energy-saving steps add up

There are several steps you can take to save on your electricity bill around your home. Many steps are simple and don't cost much, such as caulking, weatherstripping, and replacing some incandescent light bulbs with fluorescents.

There are some that don't cost anything. Most involve a simple change of habits, a little attention to detail, or spending very little money.

You can save on your overall bill by being careful when you run your appliances. Most Illinois cooperatives are "summer peaking." Their electricity costs more during the hottest times of the day, during the hottest days of the year, than it costs at other times.

With that in mind, you'll know that you shouldn't use heavy appliances such as dishwashers, clothes washers and dryers, and electric ovens in the afternoon hours during hot spells. Try to use such equipment early in the morning or late at night. This will save your co-op money and save you money too.

You can enjoy direct savings on your bills by using appliances wisely. For example, many people keep their refrigerators colder than necessary. The recommended temperatures for the fresh food compartment is 36-38 degrees F., while freezer temperature should be about 5 degrees. If you have a separate freezer for long-term food storage, you should keep it at O-5 degrees F. (Check with thermometer).

If you have manual-defrost refrigerators or freezers, you need to keep after the frost. As frost builds up, it boosts the amount of energy needed to keep your food cold. A quarter of an inch of frost in your freezer is too much.

Be sure your refrigerator door gaskets are airtight. You can check them by closing them gently on a piece of paper and trying to pull it out. If is slides out easily, you need a new seal, or your latch may need adjustment.

There are a few things you can do in the laundry to save energy by using your automatic washer and dryer less often and more efficiently. Wash full loads rather than "just a few things," and if you do wash half a load, set your washer's control for a partial load, if it enables you to.

And you can wash most clothes in warm water, with a cold rinse. Use hot water only when necessary, using only as much detergent as you need. Follow the directions on the box and avoid the urge to add "just a little more." Oversudsing makes your machine work harder and takes more energy.

You can save by using a prewash or soak cycle to wash really dirty clothes. You may avoid having to wash them twice.

Fill clothes dryers, but don't overfill. Keep the lint screen clean, removing lint after each load. A plugged filter will make the dryer work harder, and is also a fire hazard.

Dry consecutive loads. Start-and-stop drying uses more energy because a lot is used to heat the dryer up to working temperature each time you begin.

Separate drying loads into heavy and lightweight items. The lighter ones take less drying time, and the dryer doesn't have to be on as long. Leave small, light items for last: you may be able to dry them after you turn off the heat, using heat retained by the machine from earlier loads.

If your dryer has an automatic dry cycle, use it. It'll stop the dryer as soon as your clothes are ready, without running any more than necessary. And you can save energy twice, if the weather permits, by using a solar-powered clothes dryer, formerly known as a clothesline. Not only will it save you the energy needed to dry the clothes, but it won't add heat to your home, either. Some believe line-dried clothes smell fresher, too.

You can save some energy during ironing by hanging clothes in the bathroom while you're bathing or showering. The steam often eases the wrinkles out for you. It's worth a try.

You can save energy in the bathroom by taking showers rather than baths, but you'll need to be careful. It's easy to enjoy a shower enough that you forget yourself and spend enough time under the spray to use more hot water than you'd use in a regular bath.

It takes about 30 gallons to fill the average tub, and a shower with a flow of three gallons a minute uses only 15 gallons in 15 minutes. If you use half cold and half hot water for bathing, you would save about five gallons of hot water every time you substitute a shower for a bath.

If you're interested in saving money on your electricity bill, you can do it if you're careful. While each of the tips mentioned are little things, they'll add up. Call your cooperative's energy advisor today for more tips on saving money and energy.

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO OPERATIVE • Waterloo

Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171 MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC. WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the Manager's desk

Joseph J. Fellin

Warm weather and summer, although late in arriving, is finally here. It is time to be thinking of summer demand and peak control. Starting June 15 and running through Sept. 15, we all need to be conscious of summer demand.

Members with radio control on their water heaters will be subject to having their water heaters turned off on days when Soyland Power Cooperative is experiencing peak conditions. This could happen several days between the above dates and can be between 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. on the peak days.

All of our interruptible loads will also be notified to drop load when peak conditions occur.

Members with Air Conditioner load levelers are reminded that the load leveler will activate when summer temperatures are above 90 degrees. These devices will cause an approximate 25 percent reduction of compressor run time.

Soyland Power Cooperative's board of directors is continuing its efforts to reduce the wholesale power cost of its member systems. A decision as to what route they take should be forthcoming soon. We will keep you apprised of any actions taken by Soyland and how it will affect the members of Monroe County Electric Co-Operative.

Your Monroe County Electric board of directors has worked out the issue of a street running through our property off of the new Route 3 bypass to the new proposed WalMart Super Center behind our property. However, we are still negotiating with the City of Waterloo on service area protection for present and future annexed areas in and around Waterloo. We are hopeful, but not too optimistic, for an agreement soon.

Donjon accepts Indiana job

We are reluctant to announce that Superintendent of Operations Daryl A. Donjon has accepted the position of general manager of Warren County Rural Electric Membership Cooperative in Williamsport, Indiana, effective June 3, 1996. Williamsport is in northwestern Indiana, not too far from Danville, Illinois. We are pleased for Daryl, an employee since 1977, but are sorry to see him leave the Cooperative. Daryl will continue at Monroe County Electric until the end of May. Best wishes to Daryl.

Step into the lineman's shoes!

If you made your living as a lineman, it goes without saying you'd want your work environment as safe as possible.

You can help make the lineman's job safe by putting a little common sense into action. For example:

• Don't hang birdhouses or basketball goals on electrical poles. The lineman will have great difficulty climbing around them, even though you think they're perfectly placed.

• Don't landscape around poles with flower boxes, birdhouses or anything else that might cause harm if a lineman were to fall.

• Don't hang signs on poles because the nails or staples could cause the lineman to slip if he has to climb.

Use a little common sense around utility poles. Show your appreciation for those who work so hard to make sure you have reliable electric service. All it takes is stepping into the other guy's shoes for a few moments.

Lightning surge protectors

With springtime comes warmer weather and flowers blooming. Another thing to remember is that spring brings with it the thunderstorm season and possible damage from lightning strikes.

In an effort to keep the lightning from damaging your home's electronic equipment, MSA has surge protection equipment for sale to its members.

The MSA surge protector is installed at the meter by a MCEC serviceman. The device becomes the property of the member and sells for $140 plus tax and $25.00 installation. In conjunction with the MSA model, smaller individual protectors should also be installed inside the home to protect your computer and other sensitive electronic equipment.

The TTC-215 provides protection on television and VCR antenna connections.

The TTM-215 provides dial-up phone line protection for FAX machines, answering machines and modems.

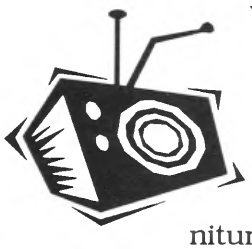
These individual protectors sell for $80.00 each and can be purchased at the MCEC office in Waterloo. For protection of your electronic equipment, consider the purchase of this equipment ***before*** lightning strikes.

Listen for weather bulletins...

We urge you to be alert during tornado season. During a severe thunderstorm or tornado emergency, listen for radio and television broadcasts or the latest National Weather Service bulletins.

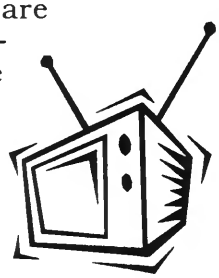
If a tornado approaches, your immediate action can save your life!

In homes, stay away from windows and take shelter in the basement or under heavy furniture in the center area of the house.



In schools, move quickly, following advance plans, to shelter areas or to an interior hallway on the lowest floor. In office buildings, go to an interior hallway on the lowest floor or to a designated shelter area.

Mobile homes are particularly vulnerable to overturning during strong winds and should be evacuated when strong winds are forecast. Damage can be minimized by securing trailers.



In factories, move quickly, following advance plans, to shelter areas.

In open country, move away from the tornados path at a right angle. If there is no time, lie flat in the nearest depression with your hands shielding your head. Be alert for flash floods.

...during tornado season.

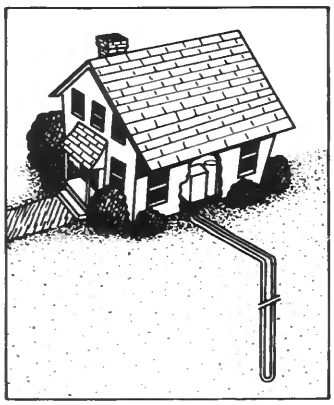
Getting the job done

TOGETHER

Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

Not far from the Mississippi River in western Illinois, there's a new subdivision in which all of the houses are heated and cooled by geothermal systems. The geothermal system's underground liquid-filled loops carry energy from within the soil, a method four times more efficient than fossil-fuel systems. The local electric cooperative played a big role in getting this low-cost heating and cooling system installed throughout the subdivision. All around Illinois, electric cooperatives are encouraging their members to install a geothermal system because it is the leader in safety, comfort and economy.

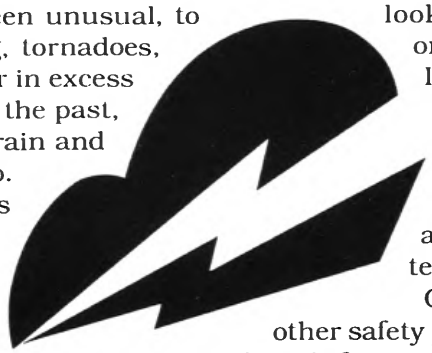
The geothermal system improves the quality of life for members, something that electric cooperatives have been doing for more than five decades. They are working in all kinds of ways to make life better in rural areas. It's a job that's far from over, and it takes people working together to accomplish it. ***There's a word for this. Cooperation.***



Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

Good for ALL Illinois

Odd weather may bring danger, outages, spikes



The weather this year has been unusual, to say the least. We've had flooding, tornadoes, hail, and cold and warm spells far in excess of those we normally have had in the past, and we've had an abundance of rain and lightning and thunderstorms, too.

Whatever the case, it is obvious that last fall, this past winter, this spring and whatever the summer will bring involves weather patterns we aren't accustomed to.

We are now in the middle of the tornado season, with all the hazards that it brings, so a few tornado pointers are in order.

Seek shelter — Seek inside shelter if possible. If you're in the open, move away from a tornado's path at a right angle. If there's no time to escape, lie flat in the nearest depression.

In office buildings — The basement or an interior hallway on a lower floor is safest. Upper stories are unsafe. If there's no time to go downstairs, find a closet or small room with stout walls, or an inside hallway. If you can't do better, lie down under a piece of heavy furniture.

In homes with basements — Seek refuge near the basement wall in the most sheltered place.

In homes without basements — Take cover in the smallest room with stout walls, or under heavy furniture, a tipped-over upholstered couch or chair in the center of the house. The first floor is safer than upper floors.

Mobile homes — Mobile homes are especially vulnerable to overturning and destruction during high winds, and should be abandoned in favor of a preselected shelter, or even a ditch in the open. You can minimize the damage of future tornado damage by securing the trailer with cable anchored in concrete footing.

In large buildings — These buildings, with their wide, free-span roofs, should have preselected, marked shelter areas in their basements, smaller rooms, or nearby. Seek shelter there, if possible.

Lightning is dangerous to be out in, and it's bad for electrical appliances and electronic devices. There is always a danger that lightning may hit a line and run through it into a service entrance, perhaps damaging delicate electronics or motors.

There are "surge protection" devices to guard against that possibility, and you may be wise to look into the possibility of buying one. Several electric cooperatives in Illinois sell and install them.

Even with whole-house protection, you're still wise to use separate outlet protectors for especially sensitive equipment, such as computers. Don't forget to protect incoming phone lines, too.

Our unusual weather may bring other safety problems we will have to deal with thoughtfully, too. With tornadoes, high winds, soggy ground and other elements in the mix, there may be more downed power lines around than there have been in the past. Remember: Downed lines are dangerous! If you see one, don't try to do anything with it. Call your local electric cooperative. They have specially trained crews to deal with such things.

And we may be faced with longer-than-average power outages. High winds and tornadoes often tangle trees and limbs in lines, resulting in a cleanup nightmare. Repair entails a lot of painstaking work, and that sometimes means long-term outages. With the weather the way it's been lately, you might be wise to be prepared for a spell without electricity. Fortunately, most summer outages aren't life-threatening, like winter outages might be without a running furnace.

Still, you need to be prepared for at least some inconvenience. You can make the next outage more bearable if you keep the following on hand and easy to get to:

- Something to provide light—flashlights and extra batteries, lanterns or candles.
- Extra fuel for lanterns, or batteries for electric lamps
- Canned meats and juices, powdered milk, cereals
- Jugs of water
- Battery-powered radio
- Windup alarm clock

It's also a good idea to keep your co-op's telephone number handy, as well as your map location number.

If you begin to worry about your frozen foods, you might look for a source of dry ice. They're often listed in the Yellow Pages under "Ice."

If you take a few simple precautions, you may be able to spare yourself some grief during the strange weather we've been having.

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO OPERATIVE
• Waterloo

Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171 MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC. WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the Manager's desk

Joseph J. Fellin

Our members react to high power costs in a variety of ways. Most try to conserve and try to reduce their energy usage, some don't turn in accurate meter readings with the intent to catch-up later, others get angry and blame it on the meter, and a few try to steal electric power.

Electric users who think they are deceiving their electric cooperative by tampering with their electric meter, are likely to be in for a big shock—in more ways than one. For one, they will eventually be caught and subject to being disconnected and paying for back usage. Secondly, Illinois law provides that any person who tampers with metering equipment, or who attaches any device which would permit the use of unmetered electricity, may be sentenced up to one year in prison and/or fined $1,000.00. The theft of electricity of $300.00 or greater in value is punishable by imprisonment of two to five years and/or a fine of $10,000.00. Thirdly, a residential meter has the potential of giving a "deadly" jolt of 240 volts. While a meter serviceman is trained to be careful when handling electrical equipment, a power thief is not. An untrained person breaking into a hot wiring system can be in for the biggest shock of his life, or even death.

Meters are sealed to protect people. Only trained and authorized servicemen from Monroe County Electric are allowed to cut off the meter seal or remove the meter.

Just as shoplifting adds to the cost of grocery items or other products we purchase, power theft adds to the cost of electricity to all cooperative members.

Cooperative employees are trained to watch for meters running backward, meters with broken seals, signs of meter tampering, and illegal connections. In addition, all cooperative employees are instructed to take meter reading anytime they are on the member's premises for service work or any other reason. We do this to encourage members to turn in accurate meter readings.

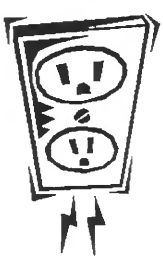
Also, we ask that you report any suspicions you have that someone may be diverting electric energy. Reporting energy diversion may prevent a death or injury, as well as help hold down the cost of electricity. If you know of anyone involved in meter tampering, notify us at once. ***All information will be strictly confidential!***

OFFICE CLOSING

Monroe Electric will be closed the 4th of July for Independence Day

Changes in CFCI requirements

Changes in the 1996 National Electrical Code (NEC) involving ground-fault circuit- interrupters (GFC) protection for personnel now extend protection to all receptacles serving counter-top surfaces in kitchens. Previously, GFCI protection in the kitchen was required only for receptacles to serve counter-top surfaces installed within 6 feet of the kitchen sink. The application of GFCI protected receptacles in dwellings has been considerably expanded in other locations of the dwelling as well.



Meter Monitor

You can do something about your electric bill

Using our handy Meter Monitor Chart, take a few minutes each day (preferably at the same time) and jot down the reading on your electric meter. Start the first of the month.

By subtracting the previous day's reading from the current reading each day you get the number of kilowatt hours used during that 24-hour period. By adding the daily figures into a weekly total, you can see how much, and when, your family used power during that month.

Your meter does not lie. When it records more electricity being used, try to find out why by looking at your family's activities during that period...Was the tractor or car heater on more than normal? Was the weather colder than normal? Was it a wash day? See what activities, if any, can be altered to use energy wisely.

Monthly Total KWH Usage ☞ ☐
multiplied by
Average Cost Per KWH ☞ X ☐
equals
Estimated Bill ☞ ☐

End of Month Reading _____ **KWH Usage** _____

Amount of Bill _____ $^{AMT}/_{KWH}$ = ¢**KWH** (***average cost per KWH***) _____

Note: *To obtain daily KWH usage, subtract previous day's reading from current day's reading.*

Daily Reading	KWH Used Daily	Record of Daily Activities that Affect Your Energy Use
1		1
2		2
3		3
4		4
5		5
6		6
7		7
Weekly Total		
8		8
9		9
10		10
11		11
12		12
13		13
14		14
Weekly Total		
15		15
16		16
17		17
18		18
19		19
20		20
21		21
Weekly Total		
22		22
23		23
24		24
25		25
26		26
27		27
28		28
Weekly Total		
29		29
30		30
31		31
Extra Days Total		
Monthly Total	☐	

Tree-mendous advice

Trees mix well with kids and cookouts and summer afternoons.

They DON'T mix with power lines. Trees can interfere with electric service. More dangerously, they pose a threat when youngsters climb in branches near power lines.

Your electric cooperative routinely inspects its miles of line each year to make sure they are clear of brush and branches. Trimming is necessary, but our crews try to keep the trees attractive as they work.

You can help, too. The best time to avoid the problem is when you plant. Make sure your growing tree will stay clear of power lines. Proper pruning of young trees controls their branch growth.

Plant wisely. You'll enjoy the pleasure of trees and the reliable convenience of electricity.

Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

An Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity Employer

Miscellaneous energy-saving tips for summer

While your friends at the local electric co-op want you to use all the electricity you need, they want you to use it wisely, too, so you won't "break the bank."

We've stressed several times here that most energy used in homes, by far, is used for heating and cooling, and wise heating and cooling will save you the most money with the least amount of effort: All you need to do is to raise your thermostat setting in the summertime, or lower it during the heating season.

After heating and cooling—or "comfort conditioning, as it's sometimes known—the next two biggest users of electricity in most homes are water heating (15 percent) and refrigerators and freezers (also 15 percent).

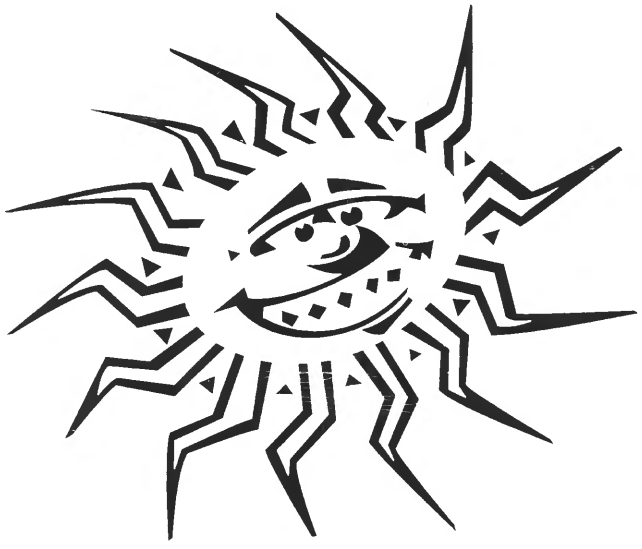
Some 24 percent goes into lighting, cooking and running other appliances. Obviously, you'll find the biggest savings in the higher-use categories. In addition to changing your thermostat, the addition of insulation and/or weatherstripping can help you save a lot on both heating and cooling, and you can often do some of the work yourself, using fairly inexpensive materials.

With summer fully here now after what may well have been the weirdest winter and spring in memory, you may want to think about paying some attention to your air conditioning system. Keep your cooling system well tuned, and see that it gets periodic maintenance by a professional serviceman. This isn't something you need to do every year, but if it's been a while since anyone's had a look at the machine's innards, you may want to call a serviceman.

It helps a unit run cooler if you plant trees or shrubs close by the outside unit, to shade it . Don't plant them so close that they'll shed leaves in the machinery and get in a repairman's way. A few well-placed shrubs will increase efficiency by as much as 10 percent.

But there are many simple no-cost steps you can use to save a little money, and they just involve a change of habits. It's old advice, but we tend to forget: Shut off the lights in an unused room. While that won't make you rich, it'll help a little, and it doesn't cost anything.

Many of us tend to leave TV sets on all the time, in the forlorn hope that something worth



watching is bound to come on eventually. A good-sized color TV draws a fair amount of current. You can save a little money by shutting yours off when you're not specifically watching a program you want to see.

A common energy waster that many people overlook is the bathroom ventilation fan. You need to run that little rascal for a few minutes after bathing or showering, but it's hard to remember to shut it off after it has done its job. If you can get into the habit of flipping that switch off after a 10-minute run time, you can often save on two counts: the energy used by the fan motor, and the energy used to heat or cool the air it exhausts.

Since much of the energy used in doing laundry goes to heat water, you can save a little by changing to cooler washes and rinses, whenever possible. And, of course, you may want to keep after faucet washers, wherever they are. It seems to be a natural law that the first faucet to leak will be the hot water one, and that wastes both water and heat.

If you are one of those fortunate folks who live in the country, you may have more to worry about than your town and suburban cousins, because you're far more likely to have your own well. That may include a pressure tank, which has a tendency to get "waterlogged" as time goes by, causing your pump to run more than necessary. Be sure to keep after that, too.

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO OPERATIVE • Waterloo

Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171 MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC. WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the Manager's desk

Joseph J. Fellin

The following story conveys our thoughts on deregulation of the electric industry:

Guest Editorial
Glenn English, *Chief Executive Officer*
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Making our voices heard

Co-ops continue the fight for the future of their communities

You've heard the word before. Deregulation. It happened in the airline industry. It happened in telecommunications. It's starting to happen in the electric utility business. The men and women working at your local electric co-op want you to know that as you hear more and more about competition and deregulation, they are committed to providing you the best possible electric service at the lowest possible price.

You may have seen announcements by the big telephone corporations that they intend to raise local telephone rates by as much as $10 a month as a result of the recently celebrated telecommunications law. Cable TV rates, which came down after a new law was passed a few years ago, are on the rise once again. In the airline industry, deregulation has decreased service and increased prices to all but the largest airports in the United States.

Your local co-op is committed to making sure that our consumers don't get treated unfairly as the electric utility business changes dramatically in the next several years. So far, most of the change looks positive. State and federal governments are changing many of the rules governing how power companies operate. Hopefully, that will lead to lower monthly electric bills for consumers in the future.

Sometimes, however, change for the sake of change can hurt. Some proposals would make it more expensive to provide electric service, causing monthly bills to increase. As a consumer—and owner—of your local electric co-op, you can help. You can get involved by asking your local and state politicians, U.S. senators and representatives to commit to four key points. These points are essential to preserving the rights you have as an electric co-op consumer.

Electric consumer checklist for elected officials

- Residential consumers must not be subject to increased costs from a bidding war over service to large commercial and industrial users of electricity.
- Safety and reliability of electric service must not be compromised in a rush to get new business or cut costs.
- Remaining customers must not be left holding the tab for utility equipment left idle if a utility loses a customer.
- All energy suppliers for users should be subject to the same minimum standards.

Speak up as the politicians in Washington and your state hit the campaign trail in your community. Write your elected representatives and ask them if they agree with the principles outlined above. Let others, including your co-op, know what you find out.

That's community grassroots action at work. That's the partnership you have with your electric cooperative. Working together, we can keep our communities strong and vibrant places to live and work.

If you would like to write a letter to your elected officials about this or any other matter, you can

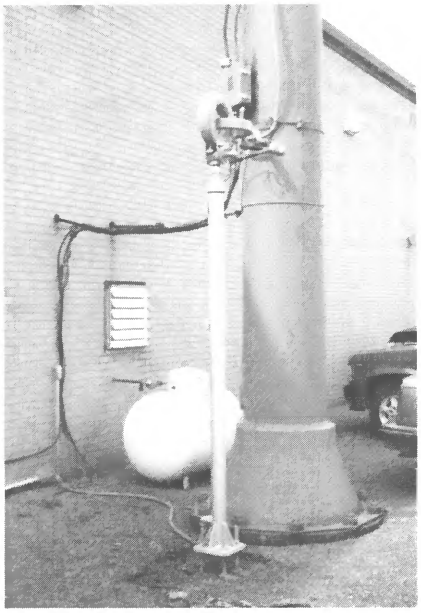
Continued on page 12c...

Lightning protection for tower

With all the bad weather and lightning storms we have been experiencing, your cooperative is concerned about lightning and surge protection for our headquarters building.

We recently installed an Isolation Transformer for lightning protection on the Cooperative's radio tower, which is 210 feet tall. Although the tower is adequately grounded, it has been the target of frequent lightning strikes, causing lightning to come into the building's electric system, creating problems with our computers and the SCADA/load monitoring system.

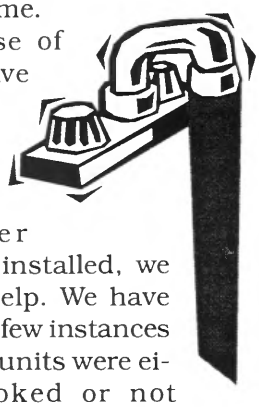
This new isolation transformer is added protection to the grounding grid and hopefully will keep surges from lightning to a minimum and not affect the SCADA and computer systems.



The Isolation Transformer gives added protection to the sensitive electronic equipment used in the office.

It's water heater—air conditioner control time

As you know, we are in the middle of the summer peak alert time.



For those of you who have the water heater control switch or the air conditioner load leveler installed, we need your help. We have run across a few instances where these units were either unhooked or not working properly.

If you have had anyone work on your electric system or have installed a new water or heating and cooling equipment, please let us know. Sometimes the repairmen do not reconnect these units when they repair or change your equipment.

The control units sitting out there not hooked up are not helping control peak.

Please let us know if you have had repair work or replaced any of these appliances. We will come out and check if they are working properly. Thank you!

Be careful when digging in your yard

It's that time of year when people begin poking all kinds of holes in the ground...New trees, shrubs, fence posts, mail boxes, you name it. All require some digging, and a hole from a foot to several feet deep. The problem these days is that you don't really know what you are going to dig into. It may only be a few earthworms or the ball point pen you lost a few years ago. On the other hand, it could be a buried utility line. Like 220 volts of electricity. Or you may chop right into the cable TV line just in time for your favorite program. Any of these would be unpleasant, and some of which could be downright dangerous. So, call your local utility before you start to dig. They'll help you avoid the shocks.

Be sure to visit our booth at the Monroe County Fair July 29-Aug.4

Making our Voices Heard *continued from page 12b...*

address your letter as follows:

Senator Carol Mosley-Braun
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-1303

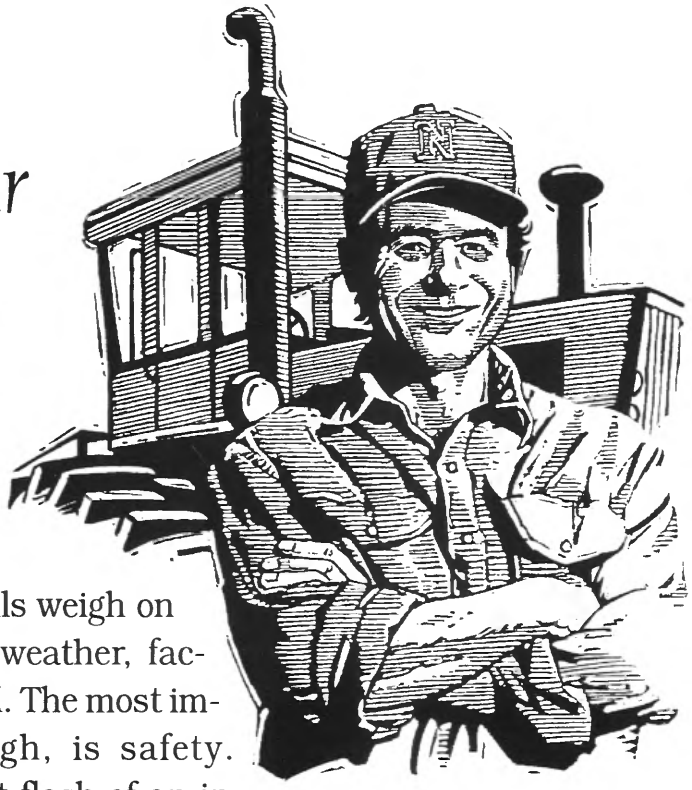
Senator Paul Simon
462 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510-1302

Congressman Jerry Costello
2454 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515-1312

Senator Dave Luechtefeld
700 N. Front St., P.O. Box 517
Okawville, IL 62271

Representative Terry Deering
238 E. Adams St., P.O. Box 268
Nashville, IL 62263

Don't let your guard down



This time of year, details weigh on your mind . . . money, weather, factors vital to your livelihood. The most important concern, though, is safety. Tragedy can occur in that flash of an instant when you let your guard down — taking a short cut, overlooking basic safety rules. To ensure future harvests, always work the safe way.

- ***Watch out for overhead power lines.***
- ***Wear appropriate protective equipment.***
- ***Make sure helpers are familiar with equipment they are using.***
- ***Shut off power before fixing or unclogging machines.***
- ***Keep extended machinery away from power pole guy wires.***
- ***Keep shields in place.***

Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

An Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity Employer

Safety with electrical outlets

We all know that electricity is wonderful stuff. Good things happen when we flip a switch. Lights beat back the darkness, warmth replaces the cold, dishes and clothes get washed and dried, TV sets come on, and water flows in and out of our house in an orderly fashion.

But there's a dark side to electricity, too. It's a lot like controlled lightning, and when it gets out of control, it can add a whole new meaning to the phrase, "Reach out and zap someone."

What follows is a description of a few gadgets that will help you keep the "electric genie" in the bottle until you need it. Installing one or more of them will make your home at least a little safer, and maybe a lot safer.

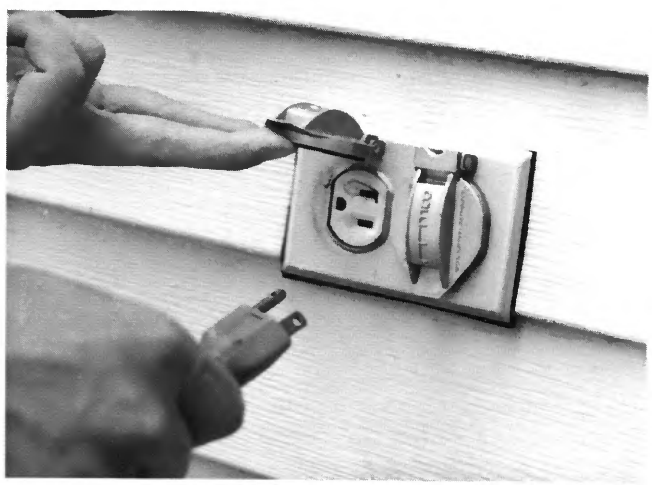
The first gadget costs very little, and you can install it yourself in minutes. It's designed primarily to protect those toddlers who seem determined to plumb the depths of all electrical outlets, using a bobby pin or paper clip. There are plastic outlet covers that simply plug into an unused receptacle. They're easy to remove when you need to plug in an appliance. Look for them in the electrical section of your department store or in a building supply place. A package of a dozen will set you back less than two dollars. Put one in each outlet a toddler is even remotely capable of reaching.

After those little gadgets, things get a bit more expensive, but the simplicity is, for the most part, still there. There are several different kinds of ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs), and they're real miracle workers. Essentially, they sense a problem in a circuit and shut it off before enough current gets through to cause injury. While it definitely isn't something you'd want to try at home, a demonstrator of the devices has plugged in a hair dryer and plunged it into a sink. Before GFCIs, such dunkings were almost always fatal.

Again, GFCIs are not intended to enable you to do dangerous things. They're intended to provide a big margin of safety when you accidentally do something hazardous. Incidentally, building codes today require the installation of GFCI-protected circuits in kitchens, bathrooms and in outdoor receptacles. The ones we're discussing are useful in homes built without them. There are several different kinds, and you'd be wise to check out the possibility of using one outdoors or anyplace where water and electricity are likely to mix, such as in kitchens and bathrooms. You can buy a portable GFCI, which plugs into an outlet, and into which you then plug lights or appliances. They're simple to use and inexpensive. Once they "trip," and save your bacon, you need to correct the problem, then press the little "reset" button they have, and you're ready to be protected again.

Another GFCI is built into the end of an extension cord, and is useful when using power tools and the like. They're especially handy when you're working outside. Yet another kind of GFCI is built into the receptacles in the walls, and would be a wise addition to any home. They can be wired to protect just one outlet, or an outlet and all the ones further down the circuit. Be sure to have them installed by a qualified electrician.

A circuit breaker GFCI can be installed in your breaker box, and will protect all the outlets on that circuit. Again, you'd be wise to have an electrician do the installation. Outlets in newer homes should be protected, but homes built before the code change are likely to have no protection at all. Be sure to check out one of the above forms of GFCIs. The portable ones should be cheapest and easiest to use, but less convenient in the long run. Whatever you do, try to get some protection on your kitchen and bathroom as soon as possible!



MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO OPERATIVE • Waterloo

Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171 MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC. WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the Manager's desk

Joseph J. Fellin

We occasionally receive calls from members complaining about "blinking" clocks and other home electronic equipment.

The flashing "12:00" on clocks, etc. is a telltale sign that your power was interrupted, perhaps for as little as a fraction of a second. It is highly likely that the outage lasted only as long as it takes a tree limb to brush against a power line that serves your area. It could be a result of lightning, or other weather related problems.

Monroe County Electric like all other electric utilities, uses protective devices called "reclosers" on our lines. The purpose of these reclosers is to sense a disturbance on the line—such as a short circuit from a tree limb—so they can open and break the flow of electricity through that section of the line for protection, much like the circuit breakers in the service panel in your home. The difference in the recloser and your breaker is that the electronically controlled recloser can sense when the line is clear of the temporary short circuit, at which time it recloses and automatically restores power. This instantaneous disturbance to your electronic equipment resulting in the flashing "12:00," not only protects your equipment, but also prevents larger and longer power outages on the Cooperative electric system.

If upon the device's reclosing action, the disturbance—the tree limb for example—is still present, the recloser will again briefly open and try to reclose again. These protective devices are designed to normally go through the process three times before locking out. Once the recloser is locked out, it becomes a power outage, and a lineman must go find the reason—the tree limb in the line or whatever may be causing the recloser to operate—and manually reclose the device and restore the electric power.

The prevention of such outages is the reason we budget man-hours and thousands of dollars for tree trimming and right-of-way maintenance.

Several solutions may assist you with the problems of blinking clocks:

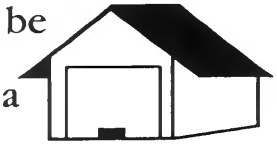
- Digital clocks and appliances are available with battery back-up for digital display.
- Do not plant trees near overhead lines in your yard or farmstead. Report any trees that you think need trimmed or removed to the cooperative.
- Always give permission for Co-Operative employees to trim or remove trees that are growing into or near power lines.

The problems causing the "blinking" of digital clocks is no worse now than in the past, but with the advent of electronic equipment, it is much more noticeable than before.

The answer: a garage, a bush, and a dog.

The question is, "What kind of things stand between your electric meter and accurate billing?"

Your electric cooperative's meter readers need easy access to your meter so that your billing will be correct. Sometimes, the reader will find that a



garage has been added to a home and the meter is now locked indoors. Or, a small bush has grown into a big obstacle

right in front of the meter.

Then there's the family dog who's left outside to protect the property.

It not only makes the meter reader's job difficult, but it can make it dangerous, too. Take a moment to check your meter. If you can't get to it, neither can we. If you have questions or need to make arrangements for our access, just call.

Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

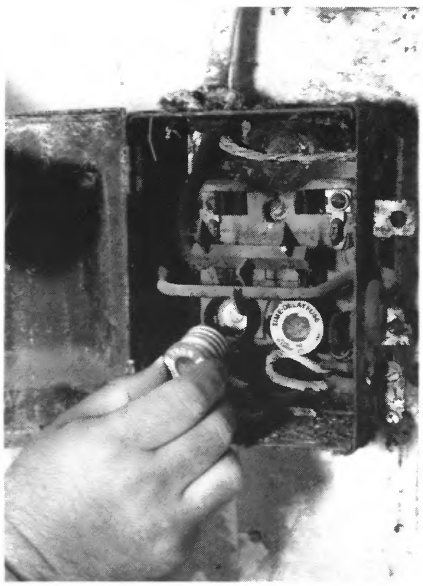
Good for ALL Illinois

An Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity Employer

Fuses, breakers and electrical safety

Probably every house built since the advent of electrical service has had some kind of circuit-overload protection built into its wiring system.

Years ago, fuses were used, and there was a separate one for each circuit. Builders who wanted to "cut corners" could do it easily by cutting back on the number of circuits they provided. Unfortunately, many took advantage of that option, and there are thousands of houses all over the country still grossly underwired.



Fuses such as these are no longer in widespread use, having been replaced by breakers.

Some older homes have just two circuits: one for lights in the ceiling, the other for wall outlets.

Such a house will give its owner endless headaches in the form of blown fuses and frustrations.

Often, a person who wants to plug in a toaster will need to shut off a couple of lamps or unplug a refrigerator or TV set to keep from blowing a fuse. Most of those houses were built years ago, when a radio was the primary form of entertainment, and when a refrigerator was, in all likelihood, the only electric kitchen appliance. Clothes were dried outside on a clothesline. It didn't take many circuits to serve such a house.

Now, we have TV sets—often several in a house—microwave ovens, VCRs, toasters, electric skillets, automatic bread makers, and any number of other gadgets that we enjoy so much.

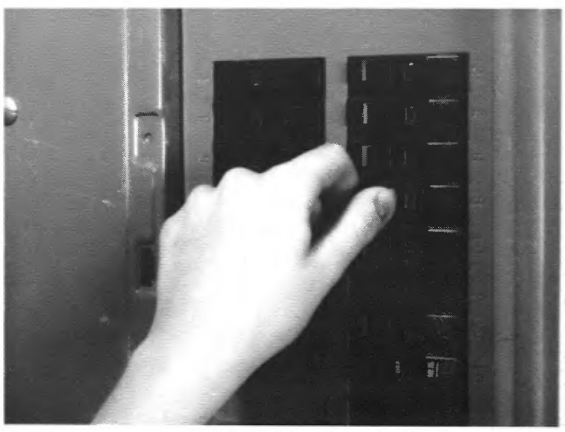
Now that we all tend to enjoy all those things, many of us have problems with our electricity. Fuses and circuit breakers are designed to protect us from the dangers of short circuits and overloads.

You might think of a fuse as a form of safety valve that pops off when something's wrong. A fuse is intended to be the weakest link in your home's wiring system. If you get an overload and something overheats, any damage that's going to be done will take place in the safety of your fusebox, and will be done to the fuse itself, as it is sacrificed to save the house.

When fuses blow frequently, there is always the temptation to "outsmart" them by using a higher-amperage fuse than what the circuit was designed for. Don't try it! That just moves the danger spot out of your fusebox and into your wiring system, where it may cause a fire. Using a coin or piece of foil to bypass the fuse will do the same thing.

A stopgap measure to keep fuses from blowing is to use fewer electrical devices, but that's just treating the symptoms. If you have persistent electrical problems, your best bet in the long run is to call a qualified electrician and have him rewire your home, or at least add some circuits.

Make sure he knows what kind of appliances and lights you have and how many of them you're likely to use at one time. And remember that if you're like most of us, you have far more electrical goodies than you had a decade ago, and you'll probably add a few more in the future. There are a few shortcuts an electrician can take advantage of to make your wiring jobcheaper, but there's one thing you should insist on. Tell him you want the



Breakers such as these are more convenient than fuses: if they trip often, you still have problems.

job done "to code." He'll know what you're talking about. The National Electrical Code was developed over the years to set standards for safe electrical wiring, and to prevent the construction of houses with just one or two circuits. A house wired to code will have at least the minimum number of circuits to do the job right.

While we've discussed fuses here, they have been replaced to a large extent by circuit breakers. They operate much like fuses, but they aren't destroyed by an overload problem. If a breaker "trips," you can go to the breaker box, reset the breaker, and you're back in business.

Even so, breakers that trip frequently are a sign of problems that need to be cured. You need to avoid an overload, or have an electrician find the short circuit that's causing your breakers to trip. And don't forget to insist that any work be up to code. It's a definite safety necessity, not a luxury.

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO OPERATIVE
Waterloo

Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171 MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC. WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the Manager's desk

Joseph J. Fellin

October is Cooperative Month

Today many electric cooperative consumers don't remember the first day electricity came to their homes. In fact, your electricity was probably already there when you moved in—one of those automatic things like the telephone line and running water.

The day you joined your electric cooperative you became a member of a unique organization. An electric cooperative is different.

The bottom line:

Your electric cooperative is not-for-profit and consumer-owned, like the local credit union or food cooperative. That means any revenue above expenses is eventually returned to the member (you) in the form of capital credit payments.

Your electric cooperative is committed to providing the best possible service at the lowest possible cost. We take pride in our cooperative—a grassroots system of service started by pioneers like those who settled this area. Keeping the cost of electricity affordable helps keep local businesses competitive, while preserving our rural heritage and standard of living.

A philosophy of service:

Cooperatives were the first to serve rural areas.

Cooperatives are involved in our communities. We live here, too, and take an active interest in bettering our communities through involvement in local schools, civic clubs and business organizations.

Electric cooperatives help each other out. Your electric cooperative is one of hundreds of cooperatives across the country providing electricity and other services to rural and urban America. When a major storm or other disaster forces an outage, neighboring cooperatives often come to the rescue, providing their equipment and personnel to help get the power back on fast.

Once in awhile, electric cooperatives are taken to task for the low-interest loan received from the former Rural Electrification Administration, now Rural Utilities Service. This program was developed to provide funding for the high cost of constructing millions of miles of power lines needed to provide electricity to rural America. Today, these funds are essential to maintain those power lines and the equipment needed to serve new growth.

Electric cooperatives face other hurdles:

We have to provide electricity at a price competitive with Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs) while constructing and maintaining thousands more miles of distribution lines. The average electric cooperative has 5.76 consumers per mile compared to 34 for an IOU.

We have fewer large industrial and commercial consumers than IOUs. Our revenue comes from serving many small accounts, homes, farms and communities.

Our consumers are mainly residential, creating a low load factor. Our power demand can skyrocket depending on the time of year. That's why every cooperative works hard to level out its load factor.

Innovation and creativity have always been a part of the cooperative system. Despite our low population density and high cost of bringing electricity to rural America, we continue to work to maintain stable rates. That's our commitment to you, our owner and member.

There is something different about receiving your electricity from an electric cooperative. We think it's a difference you can be proud of.

PureWater assures clean water for 4 cents a gallon

Whether you're concerned about chemicals in your drinking water, or just not happy with the taste from your well or water supplier, MCEC can help with an affordable water treatment system called PureWater.

The PureWater system uses reverse osmosis to remove pesticides, heavy metals, dissolved solids, bacteria and other contaminants from your drinking water. It also includes two carbon filters to improve the taste. Installed under or near your kitchen sink, it can produce daily about 10 gallons of clean, sweet water for drinking, mixing beverages, ice cubes and cooking.

Reverse osmosis is a proven system which uses a semi-permeable membrane film. The membrane allows water molecules to pass through while acting as a barrier to dissolved solids and contaminants. The contaminants are concentrated and washed from the surface of the membrane, requiring no electrical connections or special pumps.

MCEC's board and management decided to sell the PureWater system to our members because of the confusing array of water treatment systems being promoted today, the limited effectiveness of many systems, and the high cost of the better equipment. PureWater is one of the most effective systems available, yet it's simple and reliable and can be self-installed in many instances.

How much does the PureWater system cost? We are selling the unit for $600, with a 30-day money back guarantee and a five-year warranty on all parts except the replaceable filters and membrane. While that may sound like a lot of money, over five years of usage the average cost of pure, safe water is only about four cents per gallon!

As an introductory bonus MCEC will offer a $50.00 discount to MCEC members. The unit includes all the tubing and connections needed, plus a three-gallon storage tank and a separate faucet to deliver purified water to your kitchen sink. The system can be installed under the sink or under the floor if protected from freezing.

An informative booklet called "The Water Book" is available on water quality sources and symptoms, and the types of treatment systems available. Members can get a free copy of "The Water Book" by calling the MCEC office or dropping a note in with your bill payment.

Typical PureWater Contaminant Removal Rates*

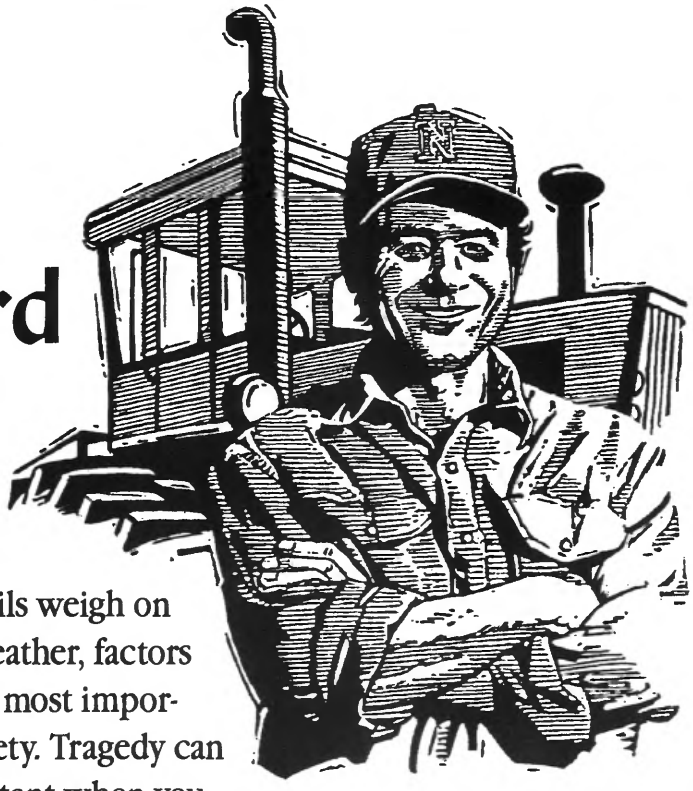
Material/Element	% Removal.
Barium	97%
Bicarbonate	94%
Cadmium	97%
Calcium	97%
Chloride	92%
Chromate	97%
Copper	97%
Detergents	97%
Fluoride	92%
Lead	97%
Magnesium	97%
Nickel	97%
Nitrates	80%
Potassium	92%
Silicate	96%
Sodium	92%
Sulfate	97%
PCBs	97%
Insecticides	97%
Herbicides	97%
Total dissolved solids	95%

**Water at 60 psi, 25 deg C., pH8*

Only $600 *plus tax*

$50 discount to MCEC members.
Up to six months to pay to qualified members.

Don't let your guard down



This time of year, details weigh on your mind . . . money, weather, factors vital to your livelihood. The most important concern, though, is safety. Tragedy can occur in that flash of an instant when you let your guard down – taking a short cut, overlooking basic safety rules. To ensure future harvests, always work the safe way.

- Watch out for overhead power lines.
- Wear appropriate protective equipment.
- Make sure helpers are familiar with equipment they are using.
- Shut off power before fixing or unclogging machines.
- Keep extended machinery away from power pole guy wires.
- Keep shields in place.

Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

An Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity Employer

Head off infiltration before winter hits

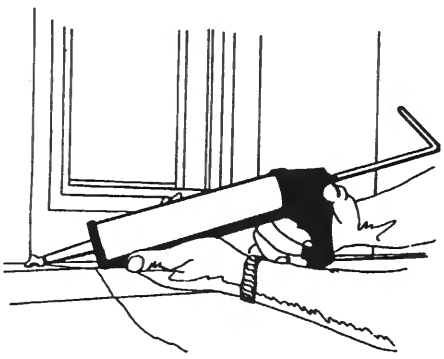
Fall is here, with the turning leaves, shorter days, cooler weather and gentle breezes. For those who enjoy the change of seasons, fall can be a wonderful time. As for the rest of us, we know that winter is nipping at the heels of fall even now, and the cool breezes will be replaced by wintry blasts seemingly straight off the North Pole.

It's true, as we've said here many times, that tightening up your house will save you money all year 'round. But a snug home seems to be more comfortable when the temperature's down in the single digits and the wind's seeking out the little nooks and crannies in the walls of your house. No matter what the time of year, some caulking and weatherstripping will help reduce air infiltration, one of the biggest sources of energy waste.

If your windows leak air around the edges of the window, inside the frame, you can minimize the infiltration by putting in a shrink-fit film on the inside. While it looks difficult, it really isn't. You can buy kits at hardware and home-supply stores, and they usually include double-sided tape and enough film to do one or two windows. They come in different sizes, so you'll need to know how big your windows are. The kits are generic, so you may need to buy a larger film than you actually need and cut it to fit with scissors. One of the hardest parts of this little chore is peeling the backing off the double-sided tape.

After you get the tape up and the plastic cut to size, you apply the film, carefully, and press it against the tape, which you've put around the window frame and peeled the backing off of, naturally! If it's not perfect, you're still okay. You can shrink it to fit with a hair dryer.

No matter how snugly they're built, some homes have problems with infiltration that require somewhat more effort. Weatherstripping may be your next step, and is probably the next simplest up the line of things to do. It involves the use of materials to seal cracks that are supposed to be there,



but that aren't supposed to leak. This includes doors and windows, and weatherstripping should fill those gaps so the window or door can be opened and closed as needed, but air is kept out when it's closed.

There are all kinds of weatherstripping materials on the market, and cost varies considerably. These materials also vary in ease of installation and the quality of the job they do. Look for them in the "insulation" or "weatherization" section of your local home improvement place, and look for good, understandable instructions on the package. And if you're at all unhandy, talk to someone in the store and have them clear up any misunderstandings you have about installing the stuff. They'll be glad to help you. That's what they're there for. Be sure to ask how long you can expect the different materials to last. Usually the ones that cost the most and/or are the most difficult to install tend to last longest.

Caulking is intended to seal cracks that seem to grow between different kinds of construction materials. These cracks are partly due to settling during the aging process, and partly because different materials expand and contract differently as the temperature changes. As a general rule, caulking should be applied wherever two different materials or parts of the house meet.

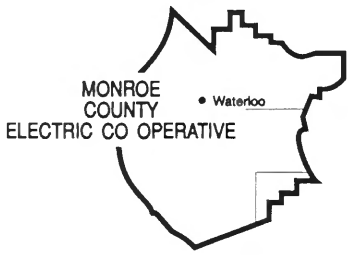
Caulking materials, for the most part, come in disposable tubes, and are applied with an inexpensive caulking gun. Since it's as easy to apply a high-quality compound, it makes good sense to use the best caulk you can.

Oil or resin-based caulks are inexpensive, last from one to seven years, and adhere fairly well. They're the least expensive of the caulking materials. Latex, polyvinyl and butyl rubber are better. They adhere better and last two to 10 years, but they're somewhat more expensive. The silicone, polysulfides and polyurethanes are better yet, with excellent adhesion and a 20-year life expectancy. They're more expensive than the other types, too.

You can apply caulking with a few low-cost tools and a little practice. When you load your caulking gun, cut the tube open with a sharp knife at a 45-degree angle near the end of the tapered portion. The ability to lay a nice, uniform bead comes with a little practice. Be sure to scrape away the old materials and clean the surfaces, before you start caulking.

And while you're at it, look for other air leaks through openings where plumbing or electrical wiring go through walls, floors and ceilings.

While there are any number of things you can do, the most important thing is to get started. Get started on some infiltration prevention work soon. Winter will be here before you know it!



Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171 MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC. WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the Manager's desk

Joseph J. Fellin

Soyland Power Cooperative and Illinova, the holding company of Illinois Power Company, have agreed in principle for Illinova to acquire Soyland's part ownership in the Clinton Power Plant, while providing Soyland with its wholesale energy needs.

The Illinova power supply agreement follows an earlier agreement with the federal Rural Utility Service (RUS) that allowed Soyland to buy out of its RUS debt obligation. Soyland financed the buyout from RUS with a loan from the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC). With the RUS buyout and the Illinova power supply agreement, Soyland has freed itself from any continuing nuclear ownership.

The Ilinova-Soyland Power Supply Agreement is subject to the approval of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Pending approval from the federal agencies, Monroe County Electric Co-Operative members should see some relief in electric rates in the near future. At this time we are not certain just how much of a rate reduction we can allow. However, we should see a small reduction in retail rates early in 1997. In four to five years we project Monroe County Electric's retail rate to be competitive with all other electric utilities in the State.

Area Member Meetings

We've scheduled a series of area member meetings for early to mid-November, so we can discuss with you Cooperative operations and activities including the Illinova-Soyland agreement and its impact on MCEC and its members.

All members attending will receive a Saturday Evening Post Appointment Calendar and be eligible for a drawing for a credit on your electric bill.

See the schedule below for the meeting in your area.

Area Member Meetings in 1996
Dates and Locations
(All meetings begin at 7 p.m.)

Wednesday, November 6
Hecker Community Center
Hecker, Illinois

Thursday, November 7
VFW Hall
Millstadt, Illinois

Wednesday, November 13
Hoefft's Village Inn
Maeystown, Illinois

Thursday, November 14
Monroe County Electric Co-Operative
Waterloo, Illinois

Hope to see you at one of these meetings!

Rebate programs to end at end of year

Soyland Power Cooperative's $500 Geothermal Rebate and $250 Electric Heat Rebates will end December 31, 1996. If you are installing a geothermal system or an electric heat system, please let us know. We must get the model and serial numbers and related information into Soyland in early January to qualify for the rebate(s). Contact Willard Wiggers at 939-7171 or toll free 800-757-7433 if you qualify for the rebates.

At this point, it does not seem likely that the rebates will be extended into 1997.

Illinois Electric Cooperative (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program

Applicants Sought

Official Rules

• Two $1,000 scholarships will be awarded each year.

• One scholarship per year will be awarded to a student in each of the following categories:

1) son or daughter of Illinois electric cooperative member/consumer

2) son or daughter of Illinois electric cooperative employee or director

A scholarship applicant is eligible for consideration in *only one* of the two categories.

• The applicant must be a high school senior.

• Scholarships must be used for educational costs at any two-year or four-year accredited college or university **in Illinois**, including vocational/technical schools.

• Scholarship winners must begin undergraduate studies within a year of being notified that they have won.

• Scholarship winners will be expected to be "full time" (at least 12 hours).

•Scholarships are for one year and are not renewable.

• Scholarships will be awarded based on grade point average, college entrance test scores, work and volunteer experience, participation in school and community activities, biographical statement and knowledge of electric cooperatives as demonstrated by a short essay.

For information or an application, please contact Willard Wiggers, Director of Member Services, at 939-7171 or toll free 800-757-7433.

Applications must be received by Jan. 1, 1997.

Fighting for our communities

Once again, just as they have over the past 70 years, locally-owned electric cooperatives across the country are fighting for the future of the communities they serve. Because they are involved in the changes confronting the electric utility industry, they are fighting for you because you are an owner of these local, private businesses.

Recent history teaches us not to change too quickly. We've learned from past "deregulations" that what at first looked great to everyone has ended up costing a lot of people more.

The natural gas industry was deregulated years ago amid promises of lower bills for everyone. Most of us are still waiting, and our bills have increased in the meantime. Promises made by big corporations as they fought for "deregulation" of the natural gas business were not kept.

Then, Congress deregulated cable TV amid promises of lower bills. The average monthly cable bill is up nearly 10 percent since then.

And don't forget the airlines. While some large cities have benefited, many cities and towns have seen hefty fare increases and service decreases: deregulation has not helped everyone.

For generations, the electric utility business has been government-regulated. While no one can say what the final outcome will be, you will have more choices and a wider variety of service options to meet your energy needs.

Already a few states are trying pilot programs to see how different changes to the industry will affect consumers.

As these test programs progress, your local electric cooperative, in partnership with other electric co-ops around the country, will make every to assure that you benefit as much as possible from these changes.

Six key points guide our work for you:

1) All should be treated equitably — no single group should benefit at the expense of others.

2) Those who stay with their current utility should not have to pay for investments in utility equipment left idle by those leaving the system.

3) All energy suppliers, not just utilities, should be subject to the same rules and standards.

4) All consumers should have access to electric service.

5) The safety and reliability of electric service must not be jeopardized.

6) Defined delivery service areas should be maintained to avoid costly duplication of utility infrastructure.

All six of these criteria must be met before we can be sure you'll get the maximum possible benefit from the proposal. Until we can be sure that will happen, we should not rush to deregulate simply because some large corporation might benefit.

It's true that there are very real opportunities to change the electric utility business to give all electric co-op consumers greater flexibility and choice in the types of energy services they want. And because your local co-op is a locally owned, private business, it will continue to fight for the people who own it: you and your neighbors.

It's *never* open season on power lines!

In their enthusiasm for the hunting season, some hunters cause life-threatening situations by shooting at insulators or power lines. Target practice on insulators or birds sitting on power lines is not sporting and may be fatal. Damaged lines can fall to the ground — a hazard to the hunter and anyone else nearby. Cracked insulators can leave members without service, interrupting emergency communications.

Shooting insulators and other electric equipment is illegal and expensive. It adds to the electric cooperative's operating costs, in which all members share — even the hunter.

Please hunt safely and enjoy the season.

Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

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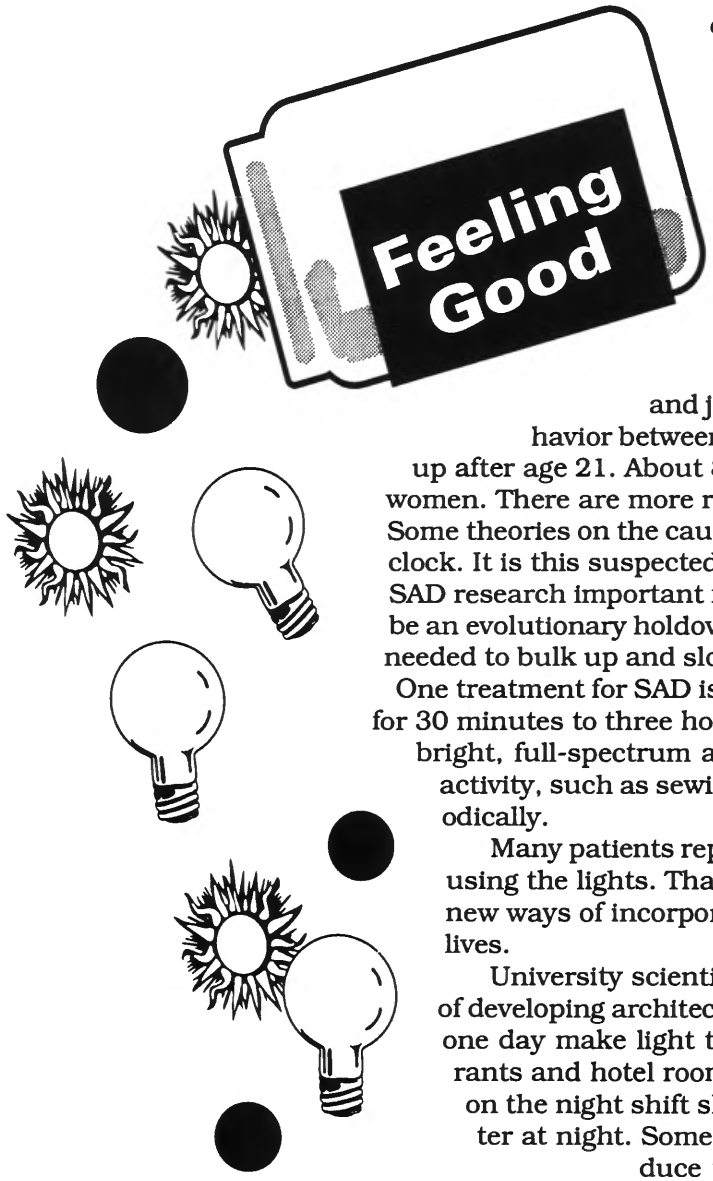

Light cures the winter blues

When all the reds, yellows and oranges of fall come upon us, about 10 percent of the population get the blues. The moodiness and depression that set in with the first signs of winter now have a name seasonal affective disorder, or SAD. And one of the ways people are fighting this malady is by sitting in front of bright light.

SAD research, which has been going on for about a decade, indicates that millions of people may suffer from severe depression, crying spells, feelings of guilt and helplessness, cravings for sweets and junk food, listlessness, and even suicidal behavior between September and March. SAD usually shows up after age 21. About 85 percent of the documented cases involve women. There are more recorded cases in the North than the South. Some theories on the cause of SAD suggest a problem with the body's clock. It is this suspected relation to the body clock that could make SAD research important for everyone, even non-sufferers. SAD could be an evolutionary holdover from prehistoric days when cave dwellers needed to bulk up and slow down in order to survive winter.

One treatment for SAD is light therapy. Patients are instructed to sit for 30 minutes to three hours every morning and evening in front of a bright, full-spectrum artificial light. They engage in some kind of activity, such as sewing or reading, and glance into the light periodically.

Many patients report a vast improvement in their moods after using the lights. That is prompting researchers to come up with new ways of incorporating the energizing power of light into our lives.

University scientists and private industry are in the process of developing architectural lighting and portable lamps that could one day make light therapy available in homes, offices, restaurants and hotel rooms. Some claim that therapy helps workers on the night shift sleep better during the day and perform better at night. Some who travel have used the lights to help reduce the sleepiness induced by jet lag. There is growing evidence that exposure to certain intensities of light at specific times of day and for particular durations can cure some kinds of insomnia and improve health.

Dr. Wayne London, a psychiatrist who researches the effects of artificial living conditions, contends there is evidence of a relationship between light and some cancers, premenstrual syndrome and sick days for school children. He cites circumstantial evidence that light may even affect Alzheimer's disease, alcoholism, multiple sclerosis and possibly even fertility.

One new light therapy light looks like an ordinary lamp but can be programmed by a microprocessor to reproduce the intensity of a midsummer Hawaiian sunrise. That, researchers say, could provide a refreshing awakening for an apartment dweller in Manhattan in February. There are also glasses and hats designed to provide the necessary light to the eyes.

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO OPERATIVE • Waterloo

Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171 MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC. WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the Manager's desk

Joseph J. Fellin

It's hard to believe, but the Christmas season is fast approaching. Please accept our best wishes for a happy holiday.

To save energy and have a cleaner world, use more electricity. Sounds simple enough; however, this concept is not easy to understand. For years, we've had the mind set that to cut energy use and reduce the impact on the environment, we should use less electricity. However, we must turn our way of thinking around because often using electricity instead of another fuel actually saves energy and is good for the environment. Saving energy means getting more from the energy we do use—by increasing efficiency or developing new processes that use electricity. It is a fact: electricity is usually more efficient and more environmentally friendly than other forms of power, even allowing for the fuels used in generating electricity.

The truth is, our nation is substituting sophisticated, environmentally friendly electric technologies for old-fashioned, inefficient energy users such as internal combustion engines and other gas-fired machines. And the end result is a cleaner environment with less energy use.

An electric technology is any device that efficiently uses electricity as its primary energy source. Familiar examples include computers, fax machines, cordless electric lawn mowers, lasers and heat pumps.

The newest home appliances use less fuel and cost less to operate through product design and the application of new technologies. For example, today's typical washing machine uses 30 percent less energy than its 1972 counterpart and has more washing capacity. Room air conditioners now use a third less energy on the average and are smaller and quieter. Refrigerator freezers, while larger and loaded with features like no-frost and automatic ice makers, use an average of 46 percent less energy.

Everyone benefits, from the average citizen to all facets of business such as manufacturing, offices, communication and transportation. The improved convenience and lower operating, production and environmental costs of these advanced technologies give us a competitive edge that translates into more demand for U. S. products, and, in turn, more jobs for Americans. Electric technologies will reduce or eliminate the release of pollutants, minimize the amount of toxic waste produced or remedy existing environmental problems.

Electric technologies also are playing an important role in reducing our nation's use of expensive foreign oil. Electricity can be generated using a variety of fuels, allowing utilities to take advantage of the most economical fuel source. Innovations in clean coal and natural gas technologies, for example, are making America's supplies of domestic fuels good environmental choices. According to the Electric Information Council, this country's air quality has improved since 1970.

Manager continued on page 12c

Office closed

Dec. 25 and Jan. 1 for the holidays

Season's Greetings

Manager continued from page 12b

There has been a 40 percent reduction in carbon dioxide, a 26 percent decrease in sulfur dioxide and a 61 percent reduction of particles in the atmosphere.

So you see, using more electricity is better– better for the economy, better for the environment and the result is a better way of life. We must change our mind sets regarding the use of electricity!

Assistance available for energy bills

Energy costs place severe and continuing stress on a low-income families' budget.

While the energy bills a low-income family receives may not be higher than those of families with higher incomes, it takes a larger percentage of their income to pay them. The average family pays approximately five percent of its income toward energy bills, while a low-income family typically pays 20 percent of its income on energy bills.

The primary purpose of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is to assist eligible citizens with their home energy cost through financial assistance, counseling, outreach and education.

Western Egyptian Economic Opportunity Council is designated by the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs to implement the LIHEAP in Monroe and Randolph Counties. St. Clair Intergovernmental Grants Department is the contact agency for St. Clair County.

The program began Oct. 1 with a special one-month priority period for elderly, disabled and households that are disconnected from their energy source. The program is available to all eligible households after Nov. 1.

To make an appointment, arrange for a home visit or information, contact the outreach office in the county in which you reside. **The phone numbers are: Monroe County, 939-8715; Randolph County; 826-3141; and St. Clair County, 277-6790.**

When applying for assistance, documented proof of the following will be needed: gross income for all household members for the previous 30 days, current copies of heating and electric bills, and proof of Social Security numbers of all household members.

To be eligible for LIHEAP assistance, total monthly gross income for the household must be at or below the following: one person $806; two persons $1,079; three persons $1,352; and four persons $1,625.

We at Monroe County Electric Co-Operative are sensitive to the cost of energy to low-income families. If you have difficulty paying your electric bill, please contact us before it becomes a problem. We may be able to assist you.

Illinois Electric Cooperative (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program applicants sought

Official rules

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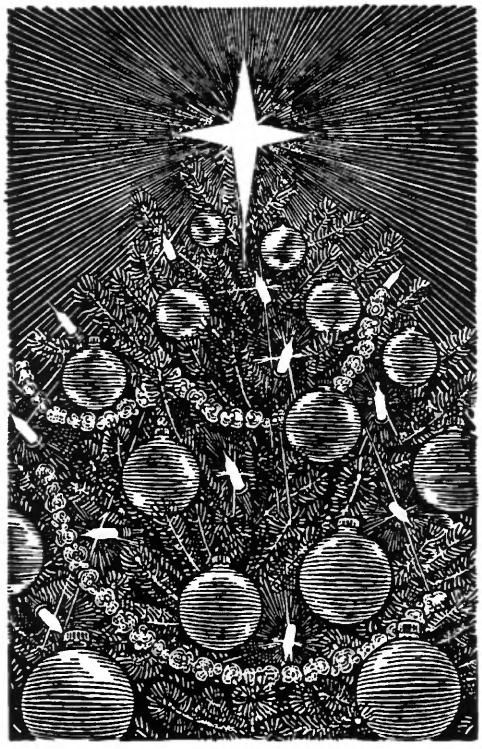

The light fantastic.

It just wouldn't be Christmas without them. Like sugar cookies, rolls of wrapping paper and familiar carols, those strands of colorful lights help make up that mixture that is Christmas. The main ingredients, though, remain faith and hope for mankind. The yuletide celebrates this optimism, renewing our dedication to the principles and goals that brighten our lives and the lives of our neighbors. And, your electric cooperative sends to you our deepest wishes for a peaceful and joyous holiday season.

Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

Good for ALL Illinois

An Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity Employer