

Plan now for exterior lighting



A fairly typical low-voltage lighting installation is pictured here. While not all the lamps are visible, the transformer unit and exterior wall outlet are. This installation is simplified because the wire is concealed under the decorative gravel rather than being in a trench. Note the mix of spotlights and floodlights.

Wintertime can be dangerous around the house if you have to get outside at all. If nothing else, the darkness can cause you to trip over something carelessly left on your walkway. Or the long dark nights might conceal an icy patch that a little light might help you avoid. Or less likely, an intruder might lurk in those dark shadows.

Whatever your concerns, a low-voltage outdoor lighting system can be a big help. In addition to providing added security and peace of mind, they can make your home more attractive and add value to your property.

Low-voltage lighting is relatively easy to install. And while it's a trifle chilly right now to be out pattering in your yard, we may have a few days of fair weather. Besides, spring can't be far off!

If you have an outdoor electrical outlet near the area where you want to install your lights, you're a long way toward having the job done. Many of the units on the market have a cord from the centered box that you

simply plug into the outlet, (see photo above) and a built-in sensor turns the light on and off automatically. Many kits available have some floodlights and a few spots, while some come with lights that are convertible. Look carefully to see what you're getting.

Kits are available in many department stores, while lumberyards and home-supply stores offer them too. Usually, the home-supply places offer a better selection of kits. This advantage may be offset by higher prices.

All the kits you're likely to find will come with fairly clear instructions, and most are designed simply so that very few tools are needed. If you buy a kit, be sure it has instructions with it, and that they're understandable. If you're a little concerned, ask for clarification from a person in the store.

While most of our discussion here centers on kits, keep in mind that if you buy a kit, you're not stuck with just the lights, or just the wiring in it. You can buy additional lamps and wire at home-supply stores,

so if you buy an eight-lamp kit and decide later that you need nine, you can buy the additional material you need to add that last lamp. In fact, you don't have to buy a kit at all. Home supply places have the materials to build a unit from scratch if you feel qualified to do that.

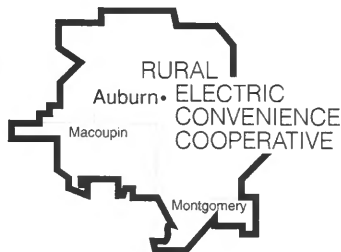
Simply put, installing such a system is just a matter of attaching a transformer/sensor unit to the exterior wall of your house, and running a wire along your yard to where you want your lights to be. Of course, the unit needs to be close to your exterior outlet. You often can use decorative gravel or mulch to conceal the wire. Most light fixtures have pointed stakes, so you can easily push them into the ground. If you don't have mulch or gravel, you'll need to dig a narrow, shallow trench for the wires.

Before you couple the wires, which is a fairly simple task, be sure your unit isn't plugged in.

But before you even start, give some thought to where you want your lights. In fact, you'll need to have a feel for how many lights you want and how far apart you'll want them before you even go to the store. For example, if you want four floodlights set four feet apart, and two spots six feet apart, with the first spot eight feet from the last flood, you'll need a six-light kit with enough wire to span the entire distance to all the lamps, plus enough to run from the transformer/sensor to the first lamp.

After you get everything wired, but before you do any backfilling, you'll need to plug your unit into the wall outlet and check to see that everything's up and running. When you're satisfied, cover the trench, if any, and do what repairs you need to do to your yard.

You'll find that you have an attractive, functional addition to your home that will give years of service and add value for years to come.



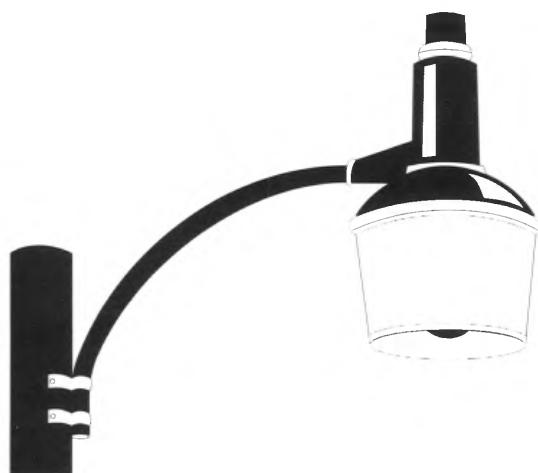
Rural Highlights

Board of Directors: Jim Ayers, John Beatty, Ted Dowson, R. Steven Gage, Curtis Hays, Lee Marten, Melvin Repscher, David White, and Lyle Yeaman.
Manager: Del L. England

RURAL ELECTRIC CONVENIENCE COOPERATIVE CO.

217-438-6197

AUBURN, ILLINOIS



Lighting... YOUR Way...

From dusk to dawn, for security, safety and convenience, a security light costs just pennies a day.

Rental Security Lighting for...

Security

Outdoor lighting protects your family and property from criminals.

Safety

Lighting illuminates your late-night arrival home.

Curbside Appeal

Lighting accents distinctive features of your home or business.

Extending the Day

Lighting stretches the daylight hours for barbecues, driveway basketball and after-dusk chores.

Economy

Outdoor lighting is easy, efficient, and costs just pennies a day.

YOUR[®] Way

Home, farm or business: outdoor lighting can soon be Lighting... YOUR Way.

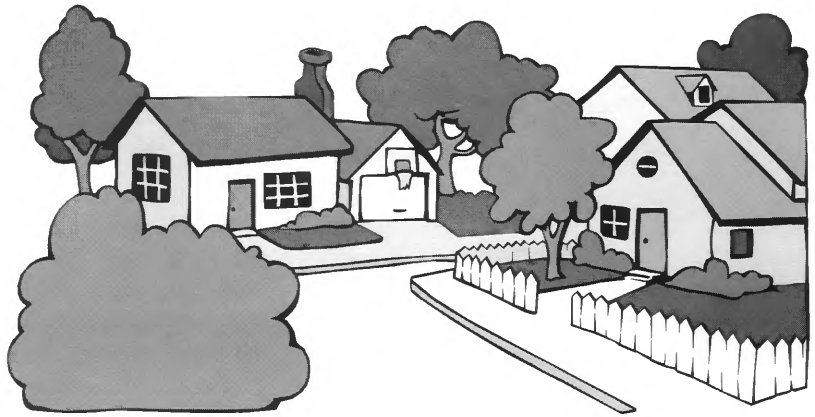
Rent a high pressure sodium, 100 watt security light from Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative for just \$7.25 per month, and protect your home and family. Installation and maintenance are free!!!



For more information, call

Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative
1-800-245-7322 or 217-438-6197

Cold winters days may be just the time to plan for better energy efficiency in your home, and it's not too late to take some steps to cut your energy use this winter! RECC offers the free Home Weatherization book to our members with tips for improving efficiency and comfort, from insulation and weather-stripping to heating system maintenance. It also discusses the different types of heating systems available and special situations such as sun rooms and manufactured homes.



If you're planning a new home, our Guide to Energy Efficient Construction Standards will give you dozens of ideas for a well-built house. You can talk to your builder about the suggested practices to incorporate as many as possible into your plans.

Both books are free, so just call our office to request the one you need at 1-800-245-7322!

Make sure everyone benefits from deregulation

Congress is expected to consider the deregulation of the electric utility industry in 1997, and several states including Illinois are studying proposals of their own to open the electric market. Many people think the electric utilities are the next logical industry for deregulation, following the airlines, natural gas, railroads and telecommunications.

The driving force behind deregulation is the notion that if you remove regulatory restraints on those who generate, transmit, and distribute electricity, and allow them to compete for business, it will drive prices down and everyone would pay less. Unfortunately, experience shows that it doesn't necessarily work that way.

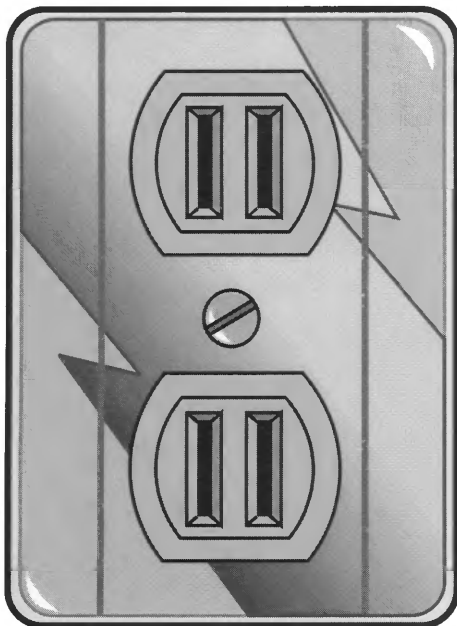
Our concern is that if the electric industry is deregulated, **all** Americans should benefit, no matter where they live and work. That hasn't necessarily happened before. It may be true that some airlines are cheaper, especially if you are traveling from one hub to another. But try to get from one small city

to another small city without paying an arm and a leg. Deregulation of the natural gas industry has helped primarily those who buy enormous amounts of gas, not those with gas appliances in their homes. And who is satisfied with their phone bills and service under telephone deregulation?

While some big electric users might benefit from deregulation, it would be unfair for their gain to translate into higher electric bills for residential users. Fair treatment means that no one's electric bill goes up. Otherwise, why deregulate in the first place?

All Americans deserve a safe and reliable supply of energy. It is too essential to our way of life to be left entirely to the whims of the marketplace. There is always going to be at least some regulation of the electric utility business because all Americans need electricity. Continued access to electric service must be guaranteed.

Whatever happens in Springfield or in Washington, let's just make sure that more Americans don't end up paying too much so that a chosen few can pay less.



Put the shine on **crime**

***Security lights are
one of the best
crime deterrents***

Security systems are great, but you can stop most criminals from even considering your home with simple security lighting.

Lighting is one of the biggest deterrents to crime according to Citizens Against Crime, a national non-profit organization. They suggest lighting all around your house, but particularly exterior doorways.

For just pennies a day you can protect your property with a security light from your electric cooperative. Call us today.

***" . . . men loved darkness
rather than light because
their deeds were evil."***

John 3:16

Don't fight that old gas mower – get a new cordless electric one!

While it seems as though this winter has lasted for 14 months, and while it often gives the impression that it'll go on forever, it won't. History tells us that most years in the last millenium or so have had a spring and a summer, and it's reasonable to expect that this one will, too.

With that in mind, it may be time to turn your thoughts to dragging out the lawn mower and getting it ready for the cutting season. And consider this: If you had trouble starting that old mower last year, you'll probably have even more trouble this time around! And if you want to get it into the shop before everyone else takes theirs in, now's a good time to do that.

If your mower's old enough that you dread having to try starting it again, it just might be the time to junk that old dog and buy a shiny new cordless electric mower. They're relatively inexpensive, require little maintenance, are easy to use and don't cost a lot to operate.

Cordless electric mowers, while fairly unusual, have a lot going for them. They're easy to start, quieter and cost less to operate than their fossil-fueled counterparts, and they pollute far less.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conducted a nationwide study recently to check out the tailpipe emissions of gas mowers. The results were amazing. The agency determined that the typical gas mower emits eight times more nitrous oxides than the electrics, and 3,300 times more hydrocarbons. They also emit 5,000 times as much carbon monoxide and more than twice the carbon

dioxide per hour than electrics. Of course, these figures take into account the emissions of the power plants generating the electricity to run the cordless mowers.

But there's more. The study did not even consider emissions resulting from gasoline spills during refueling, which the EPA estimates may amount to 17 million gallons a year. That's more than the Exxon Valdez spilled when it ran aground.

And it didn't consider emissions from leaky gaskets and other engine parts, emissions that are released after a hot engine is turned off, and the hydrocarbons continuously emitted by gas tanks through evaporation. The California Air Resources Board estimates that these four types of emissions combined may actually be more polluting than the mowers' tailpipe emissions.

Just a few years ago, there were only two manufacturers of cordless mowers, Ryobi and Black & Decker. Now there are several, and it looks as though there will be more. MTD Corporation and Husqvarna have weighed in with their entries, and so has Briggs & Stratton—the world's largest producer of air-cooled gasoline engines! Most cordless electric mowers come with one lead-acid battery, which can easily be recharged by plugging into a 120-volt outlet. The Briggs & Stratton model, however, has two. One can be used while the other's recharging. They are portable and easily lifted out

for exchange.

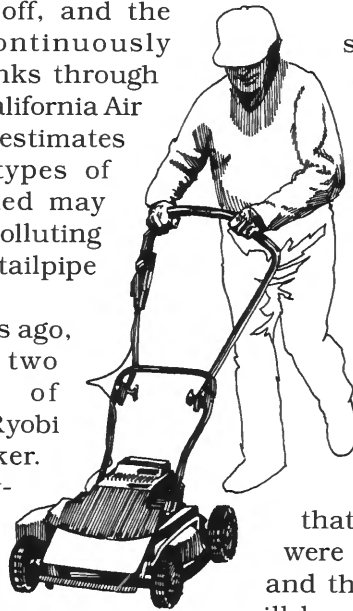
As is its custom, Briggs & Stratton plans to supply "custom" versions to mower manufacturers who will market them under their own labels. So while you'll be able to find plenty of mowers with Briggs & Stratton powertrains, don't bother to look for a mower under that company's brand.

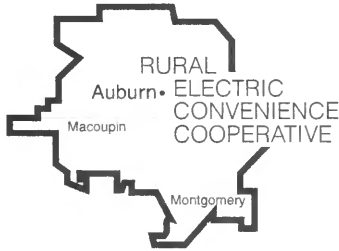
A recent survey of cordless mower users indicated that most were quite satisfied with their cordless mowers, citing light weight, ease of use and quietness as important factors in their satisfaction.

But they offered suggestions for improvement, too. Some recommended bigger batteries, because their mower wouldn't cut their entire lawn at one go. Others wanted more power because cordless mowers have trouble in tall, tough grass.

Even so, most felt that the manufacturers were on the right track, and that cordless mowers will be an even bigger part of the lawn mowing scene of the future. And they're almost certain to be. Some smog-bound municipalities are urging residents to go back to the old reel-type mowers, and many are considering passing laws to prohibit gas mowers.

While it's difficult and often counterproductive to try to predict the future, it's pretty safe to bet that there's a cordless electric lawn mower in your future!





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RURAL ELECTRIC CONVENIENCE COOPERATIVE CO.

217-438-6197

AUBURN, ILLINOIS

Are you planning to increase your electric load?

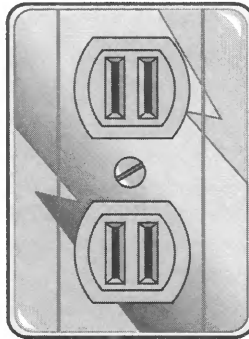
Electricity is being called on more and more in our homes and farms to provide comfort, convenience, and peace of mind. We've moved beyond basic lights and appliances in the house to double ovens, stereos, computers and space heaters, and on the farm to automatic grain handling and livestock ventilation systems. New uses for electric technologies are being introduced just about every day.

But have you checked on the wiring that has to carry this added load? Do you consider the power supply every time you add an electric convenience to the house or farm? Or do you just plug it in and use it?

Many of the homes in our service area are over 50 years old. Even more-recent vintage homes were built with no idea of the number of electric appliances that would come into common usage now. Service entrance wires that were adequate 20 years ago may be undersized today. Likewise, a service panel with 20 circuit breakers was once thought to provide plenty of space for home circuits. Today, a 200 amp panel with spaces for 40 circuits

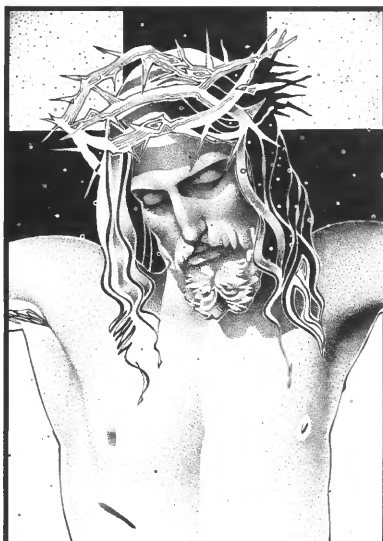
should probably be the minimum to meet today's needs and tomorrow's growth.

Take a few minutes to look at the wiring on your property. If the insulation is cracked or frayed, consider replacing it. If you have more than one wire connected to a circuit breaker, you're not protecting the circuits properly. If you're using extension cords and octopus-outlet plugs to connect more appliances to one receptacle, you're risking an overload.



Above all, if you're considering adding more electric loads in the future, have your wiring evaluated to be sure it will carry the load safely. Also, please notify RECC if you're adding major appliances, motors or electric heaters. We'll see that you have plenty of capacity from our transformer and service wires, and can work with your electrician to make sure you have enough service entrance and circuit capacity to meet your needs.

We want to supply you with all the electricity you need, and to help you use it wisely and safely!



Office closed on Good Friday

Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative's office will be closed in observance of Good Friday on March 28. In case of outages or emergencies, please call (217) 438-6197 to reach our dispatch center.

Look up and be safe!



This time of the year most people are outside enjoying the nice day...cleaning up, making home improvements, getting into the fields or just enjoying the nice weather.

Whatever takes you outdoors this spring, remember to look up and be safe! Electric lines, both overhead and underground, can be deadly!

Whether you're moving tall farm equipment, flying kites, cleaning gutters or planting trees, be aware of the electric lines in the area. Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, your member-owned utility, wants you to be safe and sound this spring. Electricity is a wonderful, often taken for granted servant. But remember not to take those electric lines for granted—they can be deadly!

Look around!

Watch the overhead power lines in the farmyard and near the fields! These lines carry deadly, high-voltage loads. Any contact between the lines and augers, combines, antennas or other equipment might be deadly.

Don't fly kites...

...near power lines. Spring is ideal kite-flying weather, but keep those kids and kites away from the utility lines. Electric lines and kites form a deadly combination!

Call before you dig!

Putting in a brand new garden or planting trees this spring? Be sure that you don't plant or dig near underground power lines. You might be shocked to find buried cables by accident. If in doubt, call RECC to find the location of underground lines in your area.

Look up around the home or farm!

When you are carrying metal ladders, long boards, pipes or poles, remember to be on the alert for any utility lines in the yard. When you're on the roof making repairs, cleaning gutters or working on an antenna, be alert for any power lines within reach.

During emergencies...

stay clear of fallen electric lines. Call your electric cooperative immediately! Never assume that a fallen power line is dead!

Plant trees the right way

*Your electric cooperative
encourages you to plant trees,
but not near power lines.*

Help us serve you better. Plant tall varieties (like maple, oak, spruce or pine) away from power lines. Or plant a shorter variety (redbud, dogwood, crabapple). Then, with proper pruning, you'll enjoy beautiful trees that won't endanger lines— or lives.

Join the National Arbor Day Foundation and get ten flowering trees free. Send \$10 to the foundation at 211 N. 12th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508. You'll also get *The Tree Book* and the bimonthly *Arbor Day*.



Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

Good for all Illinois.

An affirmative action, equal opportunity employer

Handy gadgets offer convenience, savings

Once in a while gadgets come along that look like they might make life easier, more convenient or less expensive, and Intermatic, Inc., a Spring Grove, Illinois firm, has three that look like winners.

One is a small night light with a difference. Called the PR3 Power Failure Safety Light, it comes on full blast the instant the power goes out, and stays on for an hour or so. It's frustrating and potentially hazardous to grope around in the dark for a flashlight, and this little gem helps you avoid that. Billed as three lights in one, it serves as an emergency power failure light, can be used as a flashlight, and the indicator light that tells you it's charging gives off enough light to serve as a night light.

It plugs into a standard household electrical outlet, so it's always charged and ready for use. It has a twist-off cover that enables you to change the crypton bulb without a lot of fuss.

The Easytrac Power Outlet Kit lets you add electrical outlets virtually anywhere they're needed, without any wiring. Designed for quick and easy installation, the kit also eliminates those jumbled masses of tangled wires, extension cords and overloaded outlets that seem to proliferate in homes and offices.

The system features a pre-wired track that you can install in minutes on virtually any interior surface. You simply plug the grounded starter into

a standard electrical outlet and connect the pre-wired track components, then place the receptacles where you want them. Then you snap the cover over the track to finish the job. You can move the outlets around easily as your electrical needs change.

Available in white and almond, the units can be painted, papered or decorated to match any decor. They are childproof, and won't operate unless all components are properly installed.

The firm's new heavy duty timer is bigger and sturdier than those little timers people have used for years to turn lights on and off to discourage burglars. It enables you to maintain your home's comfort level while saving money by saving electricity.

Instead of agonizing over leaving your air conditioner running all day, or spending your first hour back home in stifling heat, the timer allows you to set a room air conditioner to come on about half an hour before you're due home. It will do the same thing for you in the winter, by activating a space heater.

The timer, the TN311C model, has a 15-amp, 1 horsepower rating, making it ideal

for use with all air conditioners that have a standard plug.

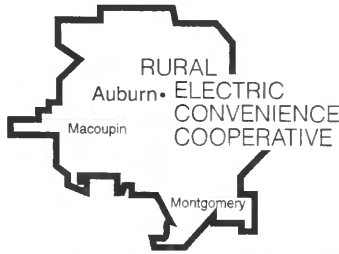
These products are all UL listed and CSA certified, and are available at hardware stores, home centers, discount outlets and mass merchants.



The Intermatic Heavy-Duty Grounded Timer automatically controls air conditioners and other heavy-duty loads, providing an excellent way to shrink electric bills.



The Easytrac Surface Power Outlet Kit from Intermatic permits electrical outlets to be added in workshops and other locations without any wiring.



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RURAL ELECTRIC CONVENIENCE COOPERATIVE CO.

217-438-6197

AUBURN, ILLINOIS

Annual Meeting Reminder



*Make plans
to attend
your
cooperative's
60th
Annual
Meeting!*

Thursday, June 12, 1997
Glenwood Jr. High School, Chatham
(Cafeteria and meeting room are air conditioned!)

5-6:45 p.m.
7 p.m.

-Free Dinner

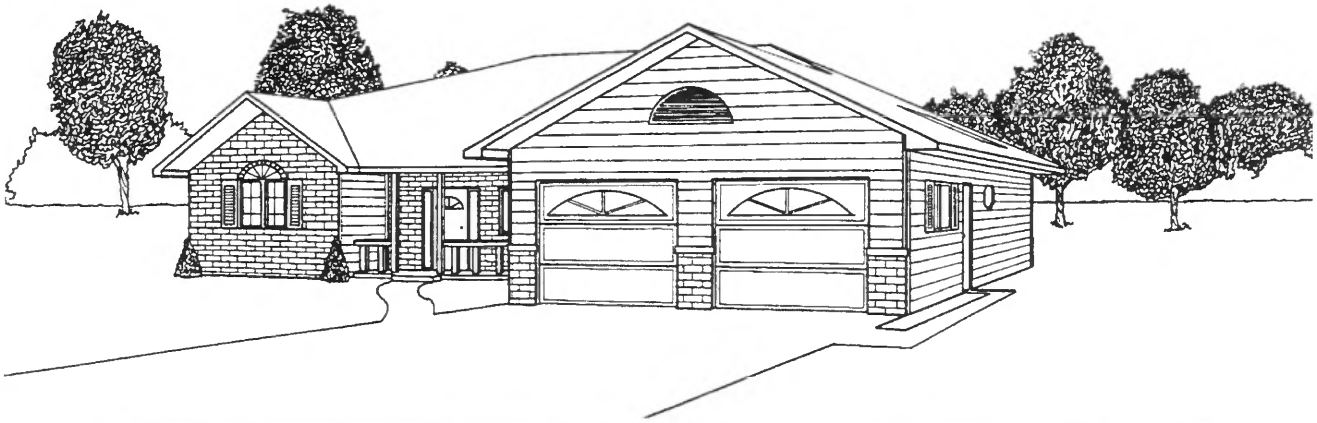
-Business Meeting

- director elections (Districts 7, 8, 9)
- energy displays
- door prizes, attendance gifts
- 60th Anniversary video

Extra! Extra!

While you're in Chatham, you can get an early look at RECC's Energy Demonstration Home, just down the street from Glenwood Jr. High and High School. The model home will be open from 3:00-5:00 p.m., so stop by on your way to the Annual Meeting and see what your cooperative is doing to show builders and the public the latest in energy efficient construction!

Energy Demonstration Home provides real-world efficiency example



Demonstration home facts

- Glenwood Lake Estates (east of Glenwood High School)
- General Contractor - Ladage Construction, Auburn
- 2,019 square foot ranch, plus full basement
- 3 bedroom, 3 ½ bath, finished family room in basement
- Heat source - Climate Master geothermal system
- Estimated cost for heating, cooling and water heating - under \$40/month

RECC has promoted energy efficiency in new homes for many years, most recently through the Certified Comfort Home construction standards developed by the Illinois Electric Cooperatives. Now, we're showing the energy guidelines at work in an all-electric model home being built near Chatham.

The 2,019-square foot Energy Demonstration Home in the new Glenwood Lakes Estates subdivision is expected to cost under \$40 a month for heating, cooling and water heating, the biggest energy users in most homes.

How can we accomplish these low operating costs? Three elements combine to make it possible.

1. Energy Efficient Construction

Wet-spray cellulose insulation fills all wall cavities, including the inside of the basement walls. The cellulose seals around electric wires and boxes, blocking air leakage. Caulking between all joints also stops incoming air, eliminating drafts and increasing comfort. Cellulose insulation in the ceilings provides an R-value of 40, recommended for central Illinois. High-efficiency windows also keep energy use low for both heating and air conditioning.

2. Geothermal Heating and Cooling System

Geothermal systems have heating efficiencies up to 400 percent, because they use "free" heat energy from the earth. Water circulating in plastic

underground pipes carries energy into the house, to a heat exchanger in the geothermal unit. Since the earth stays at a constant temperature below ground, the efficiency is high even when outdoor temperatures plunge to zero or below.

Reversing the heat flow in the summer, geothermal systems are also much more efficient than standard air conditioners. And, there's no noisy outdoor fan unit outside your bedroom window!

3. Dual Fuel Rate

RECC's Dual Fuel rate of four cents per kilowatt hour (kwh) applies to electric heating, water heating and air conditioning. A second meter on the home enables us to bill these kwhs separately from the home's other consumption (lights, appliances, etc.). A \$4 monthly facilities charge covers the cost for this second meter and billing statement.

There's no magic involved with the Energy Demonstration Home to get a \$40 monthly bill for heating, cooling and water heating. Anyone can do it if they build right (or remodel right), and we want more members to do just that!

Watch for notices on open houses at the Demonstration Home this summer to see more details on its efficiency features. Or, call us for a free copy of the Certified Comfort Home booklet on energy efficient construction standards.

Building efficiently today will pay dividends for the life of your home!

Expecting a full house this summer?

**Company from out of town?
Friends from the neighborhood?
Kids in an out all day long?**

Your home could be booked up all summer. Keep things cool and friendly with an economical and highly efficient geothermal heat pump. Call your local electric cooperative today for more information about geothermal heat pumps. We'll help you keep your cool.



Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

Good for all Illinois

Affirmative Action, equal opportunity employers



Surge protection for your electric appliances

The experts tell us that there are some 2,000 thunderstorms in progress over the earth at any given moment. Our first impulse on hearing such news might well be to ask, "Who counts these things?" But we do need to take them seriously.

As some people busy themselves counting thunderstorms, others, it seems, are counting lightning strikes, and they tell us that lightning strikes the earth 100 times a second.

Still another group checks lightning's speed and temperature. Its members tell us that lightning travels half the speed of light and is very hot: some five times the temperature of the surface of the sun, in fact.

Of course, part of the reason people tell you these things is to get you to stay out of storms and away from lightning. We encourage you to avoid them when possible.

But lightning is not only dangerous, it's also destructive. Strikes on power lines can travel into homes and equipment, and has been known to destroy appliances.

Electric utilities do as much as possible to protect their systems from lightning. They install lightning arresters where needed, and have lightning rods in their substations to draw away the tremendous voltage lightning brings. While this protects utility equipment, it also helps protect yours.

But if you really want to protect the electrical equipment in your home, you should have a whole-house surge-suppression protection system installed, just to be on the safe side.

A whole-house surge suppressor is a good idea for several reasons. For example, most individual lightning strikes don't fry your motors and microchips in one fell swoop. Instead, each one does a tiny amount of damage, and that damage gradually keeps adding up until your refrigerator, washer, computer, microwave oven or TV set finally gives up the ghost.

That fact is a good argument for a whole-house surge protector, which should prolong the life of much of your electrical equipment.

When you think of adding a couple of years to the life of a refrigerator, freezer, washer, dryer,

dishwasher, microwave oven, and a TV set or two, the \$100-\$150 investment in surge protection might well look like small potatoes.

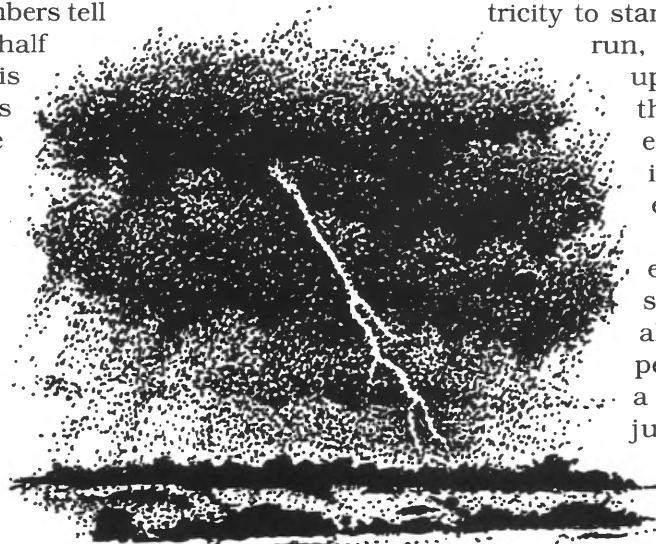
It is also recommended that you further protect such equipment with additional surge protection, either at the outlet or with a multiple outlet strip that includes some surge protection. Much of the wear and tear on your equipment is inflicted by your other equipment. Electric motors require from three to six times as much electricity to start as they actually use to

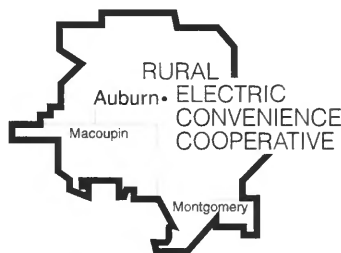
run, and each time one starts up, a surge, or spike, runs through the circuit, and each little spike is a nail in the coffin of your other equipment.

Since electronic equipment is especially sensitive, and is usually also expensive, wiring experts suggest that you have a separate circuit installed just for your expensive, delicate stuff. This is especially true of the home office, with its computer and peripherals, fax machine, laser printer and all the other necessities. While not necessarily essential, it's a good idea to have an uninterruptible power supply, or UPS, to allow for a gradual and orderly shutdown of computer equipment without loss of data. UPS units include a sensor that instantly detects when your power fails, and kicks in a battery to enable you to shut down. How much you can accomplish before your battery goes flat depends on how big a battery you have and how much electricity your equipment will need to save data and shut down without crashing. There are several different sizes on the market.

Keep in mind that whole-house electrical protection, and individual surge protectors as well, protect only from lightning surges traveling down the electric lines. You need separate protection for TV antenna leads, satellite dish and telephone lines. TV equipment is damaged by lightning surges more than anything else.

We hope you'll think about surge protection for the sake of all your equipment. Several electric co-ops in Illinois sell surge protection equipment, and all of them can help you decide what you need to help protect your home. Stop in and see them.





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AUBURN, ILLINOIS

What stays on when you go out

"There must be something wrong with our meter. We were on vacation most of the month. We couldn't have used this much."

We hear variations of this comment many times every month of the year. Is there something mysterious going on here?

Not really. The homes of today are increasingly equipped with appliances that consume energy without any active intervention by the occupants. Until we go on vacation, these appliances are considered the benefits of our economy. When we get back from vacation we find they have turned into liabilities simply because they have continued operating automatically while we were gone.

Old refrigerators and freezers are the main culprits in this mystery. And, old doesn't mean ancient. The older any refrigeration unit is the less efficient it is and can account for as much as 25

percent of the monthly electric bill. Add an old freezer or two and the percentage is even higher. A hotter house (assuming the homeowner remembered to shut off the air conditioning) will cause these appliances to run longer to do their job.

Add to the list dehumidifiers, instant-on TVs, cable TV boxes, clocks, waterbed heaters, water heaters, anything battery powered with charger, sump pump, water pump, swimming pool pump—they all add to the usage and the bill.

Plus, when we return from vacation, we turn everything back on to bring the house into equilibrium and then begin washing, drying, ironing, bathing, cooling, etc., etc. So the electricity we saved by being away is now used after we get back—and maybe more.

So, enjoy your vacation. But remember, we use electricity whether anyone is at home or not.

On-farm grain drying rate promotes off-peak usage

The hot days of summer bring high electric usage due to the large number of air conditioners, fans and dehumidifiers that run on those sultry days, plus the typical commercial, farm and residential loads are in use. By fall the peak demands will go down and the generation, transmission and distribution systems will have plenty of extra capacity to carry the load for our members. To stimulate more of this off-peak usage, RECC offers a four-cent On-Farm Grain Processing and Drying Rate.

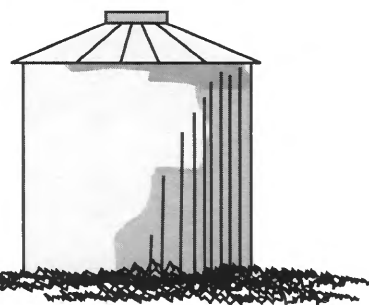
This rate applies to all electricity used on our members' farms for grain drying, aeration and handling from September 16 to May 31. The summer months are billed at the normal residential/farm rates. It's available to both single phase and three phase accounts with up to 75 KVA of transformer capacity. The service must be dedicated to grain processing and drying, or a submeter must be installed to measure only that part of a farmstead for the four cent rate. Lighting and residen-

tial usage remain at their normal rate.

If a submeter is required, RECC will install this

meter for a prepaid charge which is determined by the work involved. There is a facilities charge on the submeter of \$14 per month for single phase and \$35 per month for three phase. A special meter reading is taken each Sept. 15 to start the off-peak billing season, with a \$10 charge for this extra reading.

For most active grain drying setups the savings far outweigh the installation fee and monthly facilities charge in this rate. Cheaper energy costs mean lower grain production expenses, which helps our rural economy. Call our office if you're not taking advantage of this off-peak rate today, for an evaluation of your potential savings!



Energy Demonstration Home completed

If you missed the Grand Opening of RECC's Energy Demonstration Home in July, you still have the opportunity to see this remarkable example of high energy efficiency. The home will be available for viewing at least through August, on Sunday afternoons and other open houses and by special appointment.

With a guaranteed average cost for heating, cooling and water heating of \$50 per month or less, this 2,019-square foot home promises comfort and economy that will last a long, long time. The three bedrooms, three-and-a-half baths, finished family room with nine-foot ceilings in the basement, and open kitchen-great room design are examples of the thoughtful conveniences built into the home.

Quality is also included throughout the home, thanks to general contractor Ladage Construction

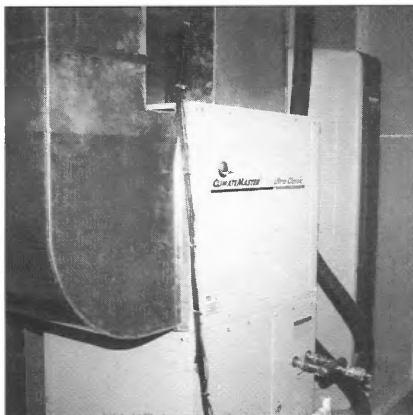


The Energy Demonstration Home looks like any other attractive new house, but energy costs may be as little as half of other "typical" homes.



Steve Johnson rolls a brick pattern along the tinted driveway, one of the many extra touches built into the Energy Demonstration Home.

The two-speed Climate Master Geothermal System and the new lifetime warranty Marathon water heater deliver the highest energy efficiency available today.



and the many fine subcontractors who worked on the house. This high quality of materials and attention to details contributed to the energy-tight construction, keeping the energy needs low and eliminating uncomfortable drafts.

The two-speed geothermal heating and air conditioning system operates at its most efficient level at all times, and the variable speed blower fan runs whisper-quiet much of the time, increasing air flow as needed without creating a sudden blast of air. The 3½ ton Climate Master geothermal unit was installed by Snell's in Virden, with a long record of successful geo installations in our area.

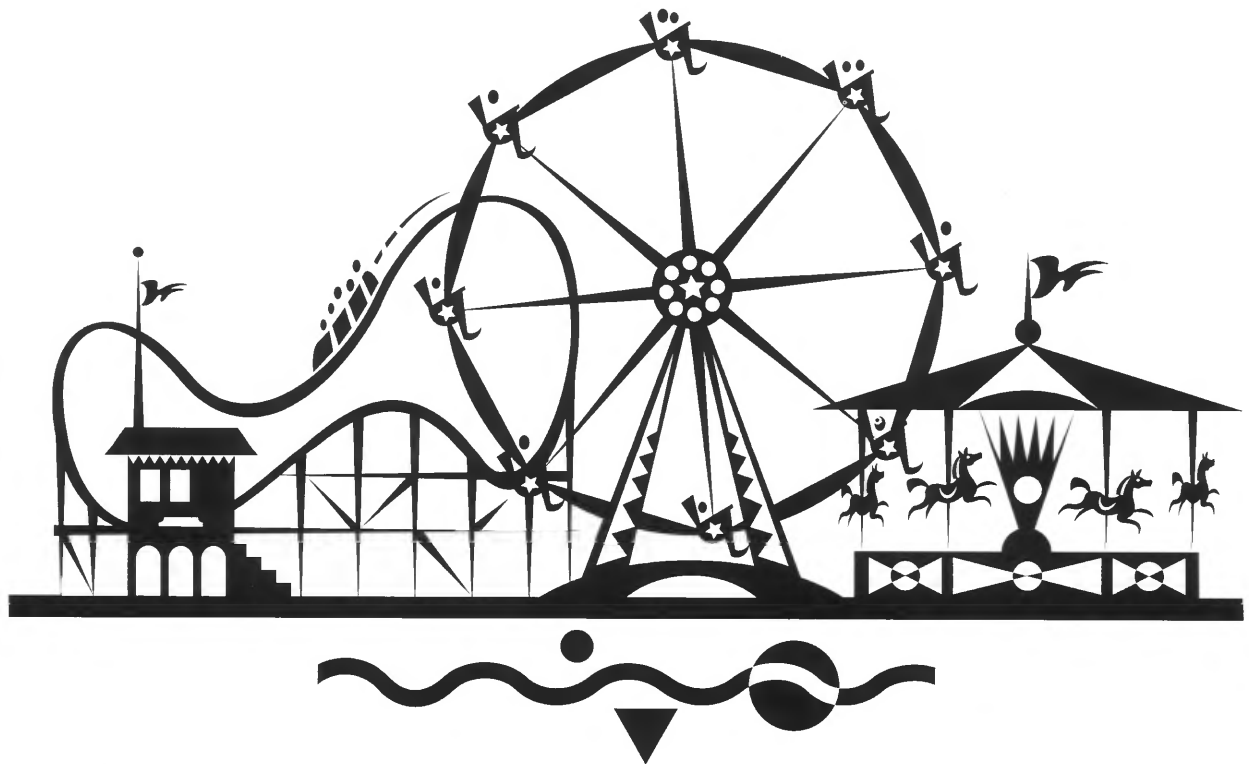
As good as this house's energy performance is, anyone can match it when building their own new home. All of the basic energy-saving ideas are included in the Certified Comfort Home booklet published by Illinois' electric cooperatives. From basic construction techniques to insulation types to windows and doors, this booklet guides you through the many areas of potential energy losses and give advice on what to look for when building or remodeling a home. For a free copy of the Certified Comfort Home book, just give us a call.

RECC's energy-savings programs can help you even if you're not building a new home. Geothermal systems and heat pumps can also be installed in existing homes, saving money over propane furnaces. Our same equipment rebates apply for new or existing homes and our Dual Fuel Rate is available for any home using electricity as its main heating and water heating energy source. Call us for a free analysis of the potential energy savings for your home, either old or new!

Hog races and hot dogs,
lemon shake-ups and the scrambler,
Ferris wheels and tractor pulls . . .

These are just a few of the delights you'll find at the fair. Whether you visit your local county fair, the DuQuoin State Fair or the Illinois State Fair, the electric cooperatives of Illinois would like you to remember the important role agriculture plays in our lives.

Just as electricity powers the modern farmstead, so the Illinois farmer feeds the world.



A salute to the Illinois farmer from:



Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

Good for all Illinois

Affirmative Action, equal opportunity employers

Thinking of insulating? Do your homework first

If the economic crash that lasted from 1929 until the beginning of World War II was known as the Great Depression, then the approach of fall and the winter that inevitably follows might well be known as "the not-so-great depression."

As the leaves begin to turn and as summer tapers off into autumn, many of us again begin thinking about how difficult it was to heat our homes last year. If you're included in that group, you may be wise to look at the possibility of adding insulation to your home.

Many homes, especially rural ones, were built before the energy crunch of the early 1970s, when fuel was cheap and it was a snap to warm a home: you just turned up the thermostat. The cost amounted to little more than pin money. Insulation was considered an unnecessary expense and was often installed in bare minimum quantities, if at all.

With the rude awakening that came with the Arab oil embargo also came the realization that jogging up the old thermostat had some very real consequences on the energy bill.

But a lack of insulation is usually not the only culprit. Older homes were also built less "tight" than newer ones, simply because it was easier for the builder. Again, heating was no problem. You just added cheap heat.

At any rate, most older homes need both more insulation and tightening up before they'll be both comfortable and affordable to heat.

If you want to build a new house or addition, it's a fairly simple matter to have insulation installed as construction progresses, and that's by far the best bet. If you're even thinking of building, be sure to emphasize to your contractor that you want plenty of insulation and that you want your home sealed well, too.

This column deals primarily with those who need to have insulation added, and assumes that the easy installation during construction is not an option.

The first step in doing your homework is to check with your local co-op. They have trained professionals to help you. They can tell you how much insulating capability you'll need in your

area, and will offer suggestions on how to best meet that capability, which is measured in R-values.

Please note that it's the R-value that counts, not just the thickness of the insulation.

At any rate, if you're adding insulation in an attic, you may have the option of putting in fiberglass or mineral wool batts (long rolls), or you can have loose-fill insulation blown in.

If you need to add insulation to existing walls, you may be limited to loose-fill insulation, since it comes in bags and can be blown into spaces using special equipment. On outer walls, the installer simply drills a hole in each stud cavity and blows in a certain amount of insulation. Then he reseals the hole.

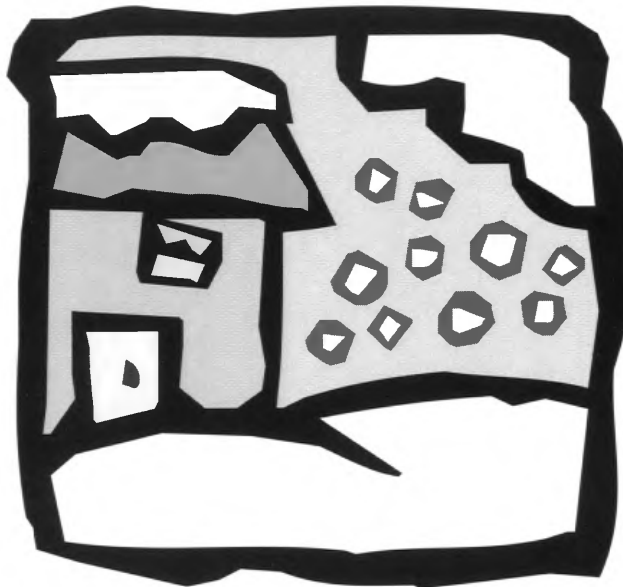
There are three kinds of loose-fill insulation, and your co-op representative will tell you of his preferences. The first is mineral wool, which is spun smelter slag. Fiberglass is much like it, but is spun from molten glass. Both are about equally environmentally benign, and both have similar properties.

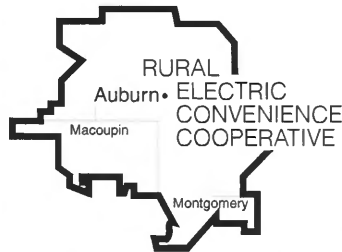
Many experts like cellulose insulation, since it does a good job and uses recycled materials that might otherwise be wasted or wind up in landfills. Cellulose is made from finely chopped paper or cardboard, which is treated for fire retardance and to repel insects.

Installation of some insulation products is beyond the capability of the less handy, but may be a viable option for a home handyman. If you decide to try it, be sure to wear a good respirator, goggles, and suitable clothing. The stuff tends to fly everywhere, and it's extremely uncomfortable if you get much of it on you.

But before you do anything, be sure to talk to the people at your co-op. Ask them for a copy of the booklet, "A Builder's Guide to Energy Efficient Construction Standards." While it's intended to spell out ways to build a new home so it'll be as energy efficient as possible, it has a lot of good information for those who just need to caulk, weatherstrip and insulate. It's a good publication, and it's free.

Visit your co-op today.





Rural Highlights

Board of Directors: Jim Ayers, John Beatty, Ted Dowson, R. Steven Gage, Curtis Hays, Lee Marten, Melvin Repscher, David White, and Lyle Yeaman.
 Manager: Del L. England

RURAL ELECTRIC CONVENIENCE COOPERATIVE CO.

217-438-6197

AUBURN, ILLINOIS

Celebrating Cooperative Month

October is Co-op Month, when we celebrate the accomplishments of cooperatives in our communities. Electric co-ops in particular have a rich history of local involvement, community support and employee dedication. RECC's own 60th anniversary of service this year fits well with this nationwide celebration.

Whether it's working through the night to restore your electric power, or coaching a Little League baseball team, our employees are committed to making our communities a better place to live. We'll go out of our way to help solve a problem with your electric usage or wiring. And, we'll look out for you as neighbors every day as we go about our jobs.

That's what sets our cooperative apart from the big utilities. While they close their local offices and consolidate service crews, we're right here in Auburn. Our employees live here and in surrounding communities, and offer you friendly small-town service.

If you don't think there's a difference between RECC and the big investor-owned electric companies, call them and...

Ask them if they would stop by and give you some advice on a new project.

Ask them if they can check your service connection for wiring problems.

Ask them to come out and take down your service wires so you can cut down a tree.

Ask them if they will locate your under-

Americans
Working
Together



ground electric wires or underground faults.

Ask them to conduct a free blower door test on your home to identify any air leakage problems.

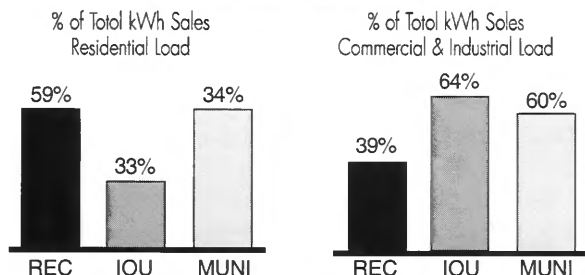
On most of those items, you'll probably find they are not available or the service will cost you. At RECC, we do these all the time, at no charge. We want our members to feel safe and confident with their electric service, and to get the best value possible for their energy dollars.

With the cost reductions set in place by our wholesale electric supplier, Soyland Power, RECC will be able to reduce rates beginning in January 1998. Your Board of Directors has already begun a cost-of-service study to determine the proper rate levels for various types of accounts. This is part of a longer-range plan to bring costs down so that our rates can be competitive when deregulation of the electric industry is introduced.

We expect to be here even if full-fledged competition does come in our business. Yes, we need to get our rates lower, but there is a higher cost to serve the rural areas. There are fewer consumers and not many large commercial loads in those areas. But we're dedicated to maintaining top-level service to our members, and you won't need to call across the state to talk to us.

That's what cooperatives are all about, and why we look forward to celebrating this October Co-op Month and many more!

How Load Type Affects Rates

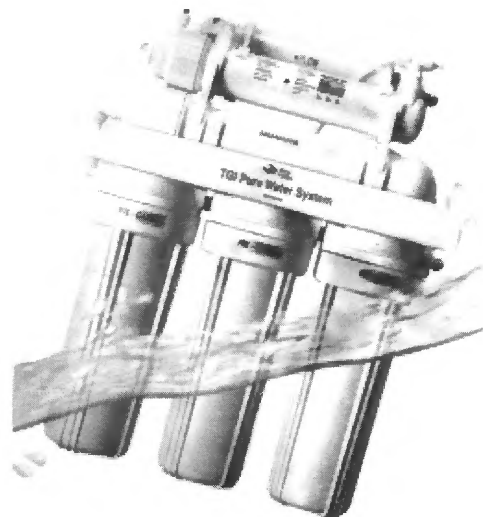


Coops own over one-half of the miles of line, but have only 8% of kWh sales. Nearly two-thirds of co-ops' kWh sales are to residential and farm areas; IOUs and munis have loads that are about two-thirds commercial and industrial. This difference causes co-op costs and rates to be higher, on average.

Alarmed about the chemicals in your water ?

Concerned about your health ?

Tired of bad tasting water ?



RECC may have the answer —

- Reverse-osmosis (RO) drinking water systems that produce clear, fresh-tasting water,
- Five-stage RO systems combine the most advanced reverse-osmosis and extruded carbon filtration technologies available today.

The five-stage system is only \$600!

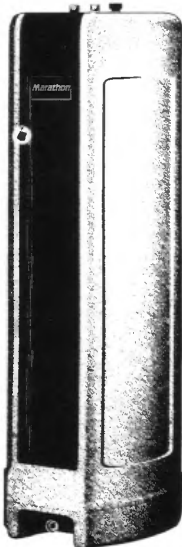
Call RECC today at (800) 245-7322.

Now available from RECC...

Marathon
WATER HEATERS

- Plastic tank has "lifetime" warranty
- Highest energy efficiency rating
- Lightweight, easy to install
- Attractive plastic shell

SPECIAL PRICING FOR RECC MEMBERS



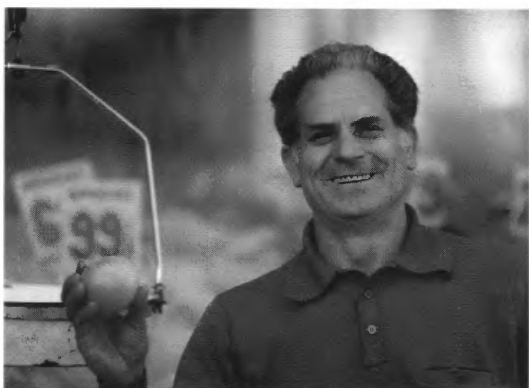
	Replacing electric (includes \$50 rebates)	New home or replacing gas
Marathon 50 gallon water heater	\$400	\$200
Marathon 75 gallon water heater	\$475	\$275

Both models warrantied not to leak as long as you own your home!

Call for details on these and our other water heater rebates.

(800) 245-7322

Cooperative Main Street



Providing goods and services for friends,
neighbors and community

All across the nation, cooperatives help their communities thrive. There are cooperatives for electric and telephone service, credit unions, farm marketing and farm supply, insurance, health and day care, farm credit, housing, florists and news services. Cooperatives get things done economically, efficiently—and democratically. Building communities the cooperative way benefits the entire nation.



Electric Cooperatives of Illinois
Good for all Illinois

Affirmative action, equal opportunity employers

Don't get shocked by high heating costs

If you had a home built lately without first consulting your local electric co-op, you may be in for a shock. Not because of wiring problems, but because you may have made an expensive mistake in choosing your heat source.

Now that 'tis no longer the season to be doing a great deal of home building, now might be a good time to start planning for construction or remodeling when spring comes. Whatever you do, be very careful about your choice of heat!

There was a time, frankly, when natural gas would have been your best buy, **if it had been available**. Propane was next and resistance electric heat came after that. Many assume that's still the case. It's not. The prices of both fossil fuels have climbed dramatically, while that of electricity has been going down, and heat pump technology has been improving.

Electricity, when coupled with a geothermal system or even an air-to-air heat pump, can often blow away the competition.

Before you set out to build — or replace your furnace — visit your local electric co-op. You'll be amazed at all the benefits, including lower cost, electricity offers you. It's surprising how few people even think of installing an electric heat pump or geothermal system in their new home. Most often, if natural gas is available, it gets the first nod. Otherwise, it's propane. In a tight, energy-efficient home, today's geothermal system or electric heat pump is often a better choice.

Please take some time to weigh your heating and cooling options very carefully. If you plan to install central air conditioning, you're only one small step away, in terms of equipment and money, from a very efficient whole-house heating and cooling system: an electric heat pump.

Geothermal systems are more expensive to install because of the geothermal heat exchange loop installed in the ground. However, they are very economical when you calculate the long-term benefits and operating cost.

Air-to-air heat pumps are also very efficient

and give you the added bonus of central air conditioning in the summer. Geothermal heating and cooling systems can deliver efficiencies as high as 300-400 percent, returning as much as three to four times the heat for the amount of energy they use. They heat, cool and can provide most of your hot water needs.

Many believe that heat pumps give off cold air, or are only good in the South, but that's not true. Even some heating and cooling contractors still hold those outdated beliefs about heat pumps. If you look at cars, refrigerators, TV sets and the like from the '70s, you'll realize that they've come a long way. So have heat pumps.

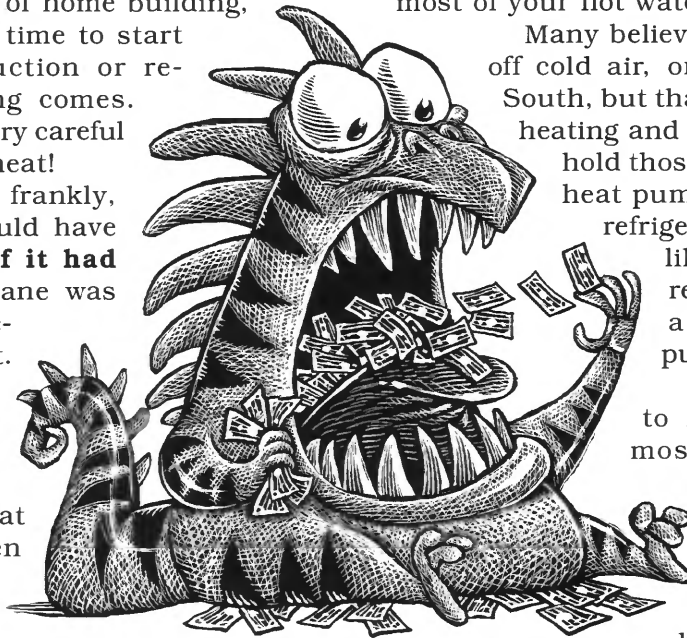
Your co-op friends want to help you squeeze the most you can from your energy dollars. They can help you do that by showing you the operating and installation costs of electric heat pumps and geo-

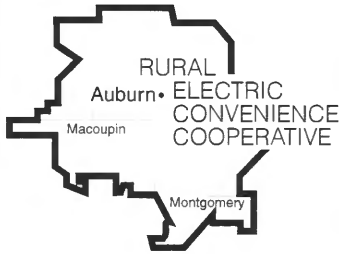
thermal systems versus those systems using fossil fuels. You'll find the numbers are very pleasing and, in some cases, almost unbelievable. When you compare the numbers, you'll see why co-ops are so excited about the benefits of new geothermal and heat pump technology.

Your co-op's goal is to see to it that you're as happy in your new home (or with a new system in your present home) as possible. They can achieve that by helping you think about your home's energy needs, including adequate insulation, high-quality windows, and the best heating and cooling system possible. If you make the wrong energy choice — one you'll have to live with for years to come — you won't be pleased, and neither will they.

Now is the time to make good energy decisions, before you build. Once the contractor hands you the keys, it's too late. Contact your co-op before you start to build. They'll refer you to a reputable and certified contractor for a comfortable home at the most reasonable cost. You'll be happy with a home that's snug and affordable to heat and cool, and they'll be happy with a satisfied member.

Talk to them before making that decision.





Rural Highlights

Board of Directors: Jim Ayers, John Beatty, Ted Dowson, R. Steven Gage, Curtis Hays, Lee Marten, Melvin Repscher, David White, and Lyle Yeaman.
Manager: Del L. England

RURAL ELECTRIC CONVENIENCE COOPERATIVE CO.

217-438-6197

AUBURN, ILLINOIS



*Holiday greetings
from the directors and
employees of Rural Electric
Convenience Cooperative!*

Jimmy Ayers
John Beatty
Ted Dowson

Steve Gage
Curtis Hays
Lee Marten

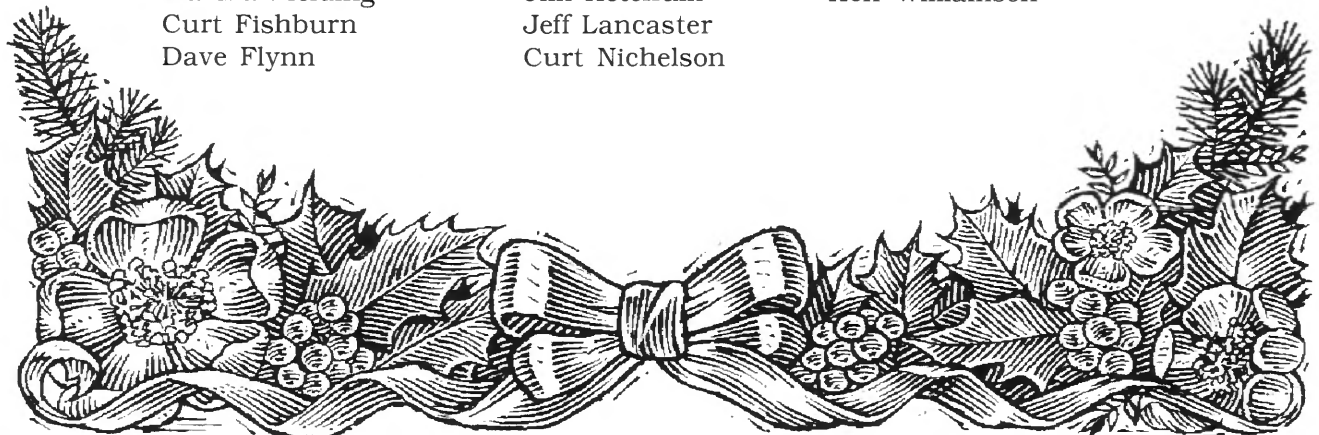
Melvin Repscher
David White
Lyle Yeaman

Cooperative employees

Del England,
president/CEO
Clark Bowman
Bill Carter
Jeanette Clark
Craig Costello
Lou Delaby
Martha Fielding
Curt Fishburn
Dave Flynn

Dean Fuchs
Carol Funk
Bob Garner
Bill Hart
Tim Hemberger
Martin Hinton
Tom Jones
Jim Ketchum
Jeff Lancaster
Curt Nichelson

Randy Olson
Joan Otten
Jim Psaute
Dana Smith
Keith Smith
Stefan Sporer
Walt Wallace
Ken Williamson



The holidays are a time for families and friends to gather near and far. Whether you're traveling out of town for Christmas or having guests at your home, there are many ways to make this a safe and energy-efficient holiday. Here are some great holiday tips:

Going out of town?

Heating. Lower your thermostat to 50 degrees to cut the heat loss while you're away. We recommend a setting of no lower than 50 degrees due to the risk of frozen pipes in colder weather.

Water heater. If you're going to be away more than three days, it pays to turn your electric water heater off, which should be done at the circuit breaker panel. Remember, you'll need a few hours to reheat the tank when you return.

Lighting. Install photocells or timers on lights for security and energy savings. Photocells turn the lights on at dusk and off at dawn. Timers will turn the lights on and off at the times you choose. You can purchase timers that plug into wall outlets for \$5 to \$10.

Water bed. Unplug your water bed heater, or lower the thermostat to 70 degrees when away from home for seven days or more. Like water heaters, water beds will take time to warm up again.

Electronic equipment. Unplug electronics such as your TV, VCR, computer and others as they draw power even when not in use, and to avoid damage if storms cause voltage problems on the electric lines.

Fireplace use

- Make sure the flue is clean and free of creosote.
- Burn only dry, seasoned wood.
- Don't burn holiday wrappings or garbage.
- Use a fireplace cover such as glass doors to reduce heat loss. Keep doors open during burning and closed when the fire dies down.

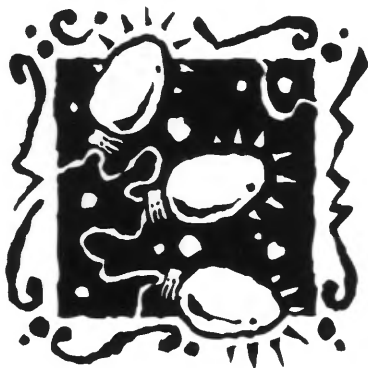


Cooking and baking

- Plan your oven use to prepare as many meals and baked goods at one time as possible.
- Cook with lids on pots. (Trapped steam cooks food faster.)
- Keep vent fans running to reduce moisture buildup in the house.
- When baking, turn off the oven a few minutes before the dish is done. Let the stored heat do the rest.

Decorating

- Use strings of miniature lights instead of old-fashioned bulbs with higher wattages.
- Use mirrors, foil and tinsel for reflective decorations to reduce the need for additional lights.
- Use outdoor lights after sunset only and turn them off when you retire for the night.
- Unplug lights when watering a Christmas tree to avoid the risk of shocks.



Office holidays

To allow our employees to celebrate the holidays with their families, the RECC office will be closed on Christmas Day (December 25) and New Year's Day (January 1). The office will be open on Friday, December 26 and Friday, January 2.





*All is calm,
all is bright . . .*

From the rural countryside to new growing subdivisions, member-owned electric cooperatives throughout Illinois make the season brighter for more than a half-million people. Your electric cooperative wishes you peace and joy during this holiday season and throughout the new year.



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Affirmative action, equal opportunity employers