



High Line News

217-742-3128

ILLINOIS RURAL ELECTRIC CO.

WINCHESTER, ILLINOIS

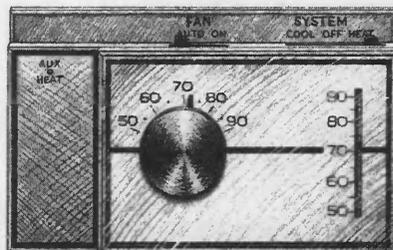
Are you ready for winter?

No denying, the cold months are on their way. And it's never too soon to plan what you can do to make the most of your home heating.

Here are some helpful suggestions:

- Lower your thermostat to 55 degrees if everyone is out of the house for four or more hours.
- Close off unused space such as the attic and rooms that are not in use.
- Open shades and drapes during the day to let your house absorb the sun's heat.
- Dress more warmly; set the thermostat as low as is comfortable for your family. But, remember that infants and older people need a warmer environment for good health.

Contact us for more tips on how to prepare for winter. We'll be glad to help you ease into the winter season as smoothly as possible.



Portable heaters?—Use care

Portable heaters, whatever the fuel used, are fine for taking the chill off those spaces or rooms that the central heating system just can't keep quite comfortable enough. However, they all pose some danger to the user. First of all, parts of any portable heater are hot! So they shouldn't be touching anything that will burn—including human skin. Keep flammable materials like curtains, draperies or cardboard boxes at least two feet away from them. And (need it be said?) portable electric heaters should be kept away from water in any form. As we all know, water and electricity are a lethal combination when a human gets in between.

Otherwise, review the following checklist when preparing to use one of these useful appliances:

Do inspect last year's heater inside and out before using it.

- Do** choose a certified heater.
- Do** make sure it is properly connected.
- Do** read labels, follow instructions and heed all warnings.
- Do** keep clear space around heater.
- Do** keep a window or door partially open at all times when using a portable fossil fuel heater.
- Do** store flammable liquids outside the living space and certainly not around a heat source.
- Do not** attempt to dry clothing by draping it over a portable heater.
- Do not** stand close to a kerosene heater while wearing long nightgowns or robes.
- Do not** let children play around the heater.
- Do not** place the heater in a traffic pattern where someone can bump into it and tip it over.

Protect your family from carbon monoxide

It happens every year in many communities — a family is hospitalized because a propane or natural gas water heater or furnace backdrafts and fills a home with carbon monoxide.

In some cases the odorless, colorless gas is detected in time and a tragedy can be averted. However, even then it can take several days to recover from the effects of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide is a common by-product of appliances that burn propane or natural gas. Carbon monoxide is created by propane, natural gas and other fuel-burning appliances including furnaces, clothes dryers, water heaters, fireplaces, ranges and even wood stoves, charcoal grills and kerosene space heaters.

When carbon monoxide is breathed into your system, it eventually replaces the oxygen in the blood, causing your body to literally suffocate from the inside out, resulting in brain damage or death.

As more homes are designed to be super energy efficient and airtight, carbon monoxide-polluted air is more easily trapped inside.

Everyone in your home is susceptible to carbon monoxide poisoning, but the hazard increases for unborn babies, infants, senior citizens and people with coronary or respiratory problems.

There are several ways you can protect yourself and your family from carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Read and follow manufacturers' operating and maintenance instructions on all appliances and equipment. Have a qualified propane technician check the system periodically and make any necessary adjustments to ensure proper combustion.

- Remodeling or repair work around the home may affect how a furnace or appliance performs. Before you do any insulation, caulking or sealing — or before adding an exhaust fan, wood stove or fireplace — call a qualified propane service technician to correct anything that could create carbon monoxide problems.

- Install carbon monoxide detectors in the house.

Battery-powered and plug-in carbon monoxide detectors are now available from many home improvement stores. The detectors constantly monitor the amount of carbon monoxide in the air and sound an alarm as an early warning when carbon monoxide is present. Detectors should be installed near the bedrooms and also near the home's heating source.

The units are about the size of a smoke detector, and if you heat your home with propane

or natural gas they are just as important to your safety.

Because it's odorless and colorless, carbon monoxide is difficult to detect, and the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are difficult to recognize. Often they resemble the flu or a bad cold. Symptoms of low-level poisoning can include headaches, fatigue, nausea, dizzy spells and confusion.

Here are some warning signs to look for.

- Are you experiencing chronic symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, nausea?

- Are other members of your family also feeling ill?

- Do you feel better when you are away from home for a period of time?

If so, you may be suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning. To be sure, see your physician and request a carboxyhemoglobin test. This determines the percentage of carbon monoxide in your blood.

If you think your home may contain carbon monoxide, get out of the house immediately. Have an emergency plan so all family members can be accounted for. Don't go back into the house. Most fatalities occur when people reenter a home in search of loved ones. Call the fire department from a neighbor's home.

What can cause carbon monoxide formation and infiltration:

- Anything that plugs the vent system: a bird nest, an internal collapse of a masonry chimney, or damage to the vent piping, for example.

- Vent pipes rusting through inside the building.

- A leaking heat exchanger in a furnace or space heater.

- Plugged fresh-air vents in crawl spaces, basements, utility rooms, or closets housing a gas appliance.

- Excessive caulking, insulating or sealing or use of taped plastic storm windows can reduce the natural influx of fresh air and "starve" an appliance of oxygen, causing excessive levels of carbon monoxide to form.

- Improper air adjustment, wrong orifice size, or misalignment within burner systems, which can create excessive amounts of carbon monoxide that may infiltrate indoors if the vent system isn't working properly.



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It's lonely at the top.

1:20 a.m. A lot of things would be more comfortable than perching 30 feet atop a utility pole in a wind chill of 20 below. Dozing under a thick quilt comes to mind...But there's a lot of people down there who need heat in their homes, lights that shine and clocks that run. When the call comes, it doesn't matter if there's snow or sunshine. Electric service must be restored.



Even before the snowstorm has stopped howling, the line crews of your electric cooperative are working with all the speed and skill of their many years' experience. Power must be brought back quickly, but safety must be the top priority. Our crews do their best in all weather conditions so that you have all the necessities and comforts that electricity provides.



**Your work
doesn't
stop in winter.
*Neither does ours.***

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Illinois Rural Electric Co.

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Ph. (217)742-3128 - 1-800-468-4732

Main office hours: 7:30 a.m. -4:30 p.m.
Closed all day Saturday, Sunday and Holidays

Holidays observed:

New Year's Day, Good Friday,
Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor
Day, Thanksgiving, the day after and
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

**Illinois Rural Electric Co.
Mission Statement**

To provide, market and maintain quality electric service and other services which meet the needs and expectations of all members and enhance the welfare and economic development of the cooperative's service area at the lowest rates that will ensure the financial soundness of the cooperative.



High Line News

217-742-3128

ILLINOIS RURAL ELECTRIC CO.

WINCHESTER, ILLINOIS

Something on your mind? Drop us a note.

Excerpts, with permission, from a recent letter:

Dear Members of the Board of Directors:

I am writing to express my concern about your billing practices.

Our November electric bill had a date of Nov. 1. If my memory serves me correctly, we received it on the fifth. That left three mailing days (Mail doesn't move on Sundays) to return the payment to you before the Nov. 10 due date.

I didn't get the check mailed in this short period of time. Veteran's Day was Nov. 11, and our payment was mailed on the twelfth. Your office said it was received on Nov. 17.

It took 5 days to make the trip from Brussels to Winchester.

On Friday, Nov. 21, I received a disconnect notice with a due date of Nov. 21. Your employee said it had been mailed on the 14th, taking a week to get from Winchester to Brussels this time!

Since I had paid my bill, all was well. But can you see the problem which exists here?

Sincerely,
Julia B. Eberlin

Our response:

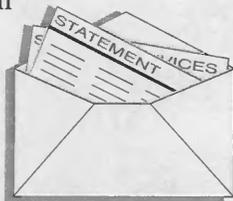
Dear Ms. Eberlin:

You're right.

Initially, we thought that if we took the mail to the post offices throughout the service territory, that would speed delivery. What we really need to do is to use bar codes on the envelopes to get better delivery times, and we're working on that.

We can also wait a little before we send out disconnection notices. Believe me, we don't want to hassle anybody unnecessarily. Thanks for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,
Bruce N. Giffin



Peace of mind, or always in hot water. Either way you look at it, it's a great deal for just \$2.95 a month!

If you're an Illinois Rural Electric Co. customer, for \$2.95 a month, we'll fix or, if necessary, replace your water heater. No kidding. Gas or electric heaters. This will be the easiest maintenance plan you've ever seen. Send us this coupon, and we'll send you an agreement.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Thanks for printing.

New manager for Illinois Rural Electric Co.

The cooperative's new manager, Bruce Giffin, started at the beginning of November.

Bruce was most recently manager of Fox Islands Electric Cooperative which serves Vinelhaven, North Haven and some still smaller islands off the coast of Maine.

"We would joke about going to America to shop or run errands," he says, "but it is good to live on the mainland again. We loved many things about the islands and we look forward to visiting them, but there were some things that would make you crazy."

"Sometimes it seemed as though you spent half of your free time moving the car up in line to get on the ferry or, worse yet, spending a full day to do something that would have only taken an hour if it weren't for the ferry ride."

Bruce was at Fox Islands for six years. Before that he was a vice president at Palm Beach County Utilities, and before that a vice president at The Southern Connecticut Gas Company.

He and his wife, Kay, and their two children moved to Winchester just after Christmas.

Power Out?

We do want you to call whenever your power goes out.

Keep on trying if you get a busy signal even though we've added new lines.

Don't think we necessarily know.

But, it's important to check your fuses or circuit breakers first.

1-800-468-4732



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Supplies sales to end

To better focus the member services department's activities, in 1998 we will discontinue the sale of small electric parts and supplies, wire for example.

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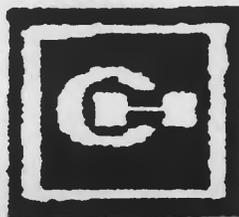
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WINCHESTER, ILLINOIS

Electric Deregulation?

Near the end of last year, the Governor signed legislation that will dramatically change the electric industry in Illinois.

Understanding that change first requires recognition that investor-owned utilities, like IP and CIPS, and cooperatives, like Illinois Rural Electric Co., are significantly different. Cooperatives are owned by their customers, as a starting point.

Cooperatives also operate on a not-for-profit basis.

Largely as a result of the differences between cooperatives and investor-owned utilities, the changes will be somewhat different for different electric suppliers.

As a prime example, rate reductions are required of investor-owned utilities. Illinois Rural Electric Co., on the other hand, voluntarily lowered rates by almost 10 percent at the beginning of 1997 when its purchased power costs dropped.

Let us share a few questions and answers and opinions on the general subject. Sometimes instead of deregulation, it's called the "restructuring" of the electric industry.

Is the electric industry being deregulated in Illinois?

Not completely. Think of the industry as having three parts: generation, transmission, and distribution. Some companies are in all three parts of the business. Illinois Rural Electric is simply a distribution operation.

Only generation is being deregulated.

From the customer's perspective, what's going to change?

Over time, we expect that all customers will be able to choose their generation suppliers. In an oversimplified way, the process will be much like choosing a long distance carrier.

Is Illinois Rural Electric Company Regulated?

Since it is a cooperative, its operations are overseen by a Board of Directors whose members are elected by customers.

What's the Point of "Deregulation?"

Generally speaking, it's believed that total costs will be lower in a deregulated environment.

Electricity is the last major industry to be fully regulated. As you know, natural gas, airlines, trucking, and telecommunications have been largely deregulated.

Where will savings come from?

In the short-term, the savings come from the difference between the price the customer could pay for electricity and the price the present electric supplier pays.

Over the longer-term, it's believed that more efficient electric generation will replace some existing generation. We'll likely see generation companies unrelated to public utilities competing for electric sales. It's also likely that some of the presently more costly public utility generation plants will be better able to compete because their uneconomic costs will have been written off.

continued on page 16b...

Electric Deregulation
continued from page 16a...

Who's going to be able to buy at a better price than the present electric supplier?

Large commercial or industrial customers which use essentially the same amount of electricity every day may be able to achieve some savings at first.

As the generation sector becomes more competitive, more customers may be able to save.

Who does Illinois Rural Electric buy electricity from?

The Cooperative buys from Soyland Power Cooperative, as do 17 other cooperatives in Illinois.

The Cooperative has a long-term contract for all of its electric purchases.

Will the cost of that power go down?

Soyland's forecasts show lower costs after 2003 when the debt resulting from its restructuring is paid off.

Will those future price reductions go to customers?

When Soyland's prices were lowered at the beginning of 1997, all of those savings went to customers.

We can't say exactly what a future Board of Directors will do, but we think it's likely that we'd see the same response.

That Sounds Like A Long Time Before There Are Additional Price Cuts. Could Illinois Rural Electric buy from another company?

Yes, but only if it first paid off past obligations incurred on its behalf by Soyland. At the end of last year, that would have required a payment of about \$19,000,000. It would cost less to get out this year because the debt associated with those obligations is being lowered monthly.

These costs are similar to transition costs customers are paying across the country as the industry is being restructured.

The economics of getting out of the contract are naturally being continuously reviewed. As you'd expect, purchased power is the Cooperative's largest expense.

Want to know more?

We'd be happy to talk about the industry and answer questions.

If you want a speaker for a group you belong to, give us a call.

Could you use \$100? We'd be interested in some information. Fill in this coupon and get it to Illinois Rural Electric Co. before April 3rd. We'll put the coupons in a box and draw a winner at 2:00 PM that day.

Name

Phone Number

Would it be worth \$1.50 a month if you didn't have to read your electric meter?

Yes **No**

Protect your family from carbon monoxide

It happens every year in many communities — a family is hospitalized because a propane or natural gas water heater or furnace backdrafts and fills a home with carbon monoxide.

In some cases the odorless, colorless gas is detected in time and a tragedy can be averted. However, even then it can take several days to recover from the effects of carbon monoxide poisoning.

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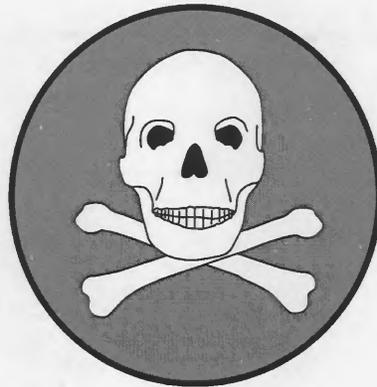
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how a furnace or appliance performs. Before you do any insulation, caulking or sealing — or before adding an exhaust fan, wood stove or fireplace — call a qualified propane service technician to correct anything that could create carbon monoxide problems.

- Install carbon monoxide detectors in the house.

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should be installed near the bedrooms and also near the home's heating source.

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- Are other members of your family also feeling ill?
- Do you feel better when you are away from home for a period of time?

If so, you may be suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning. To be sure, see your physician and request a carboxyhemoglobin test. This determines the percentage of carbon monoxide in your blood.

If you think your home may contain carbon monoxide, get out of the house immediately. Have an emergency plan so all family members can be accounted for. Don't go back into the house. Most fatalities occur when people reenter a home in search of loved ones. Call the fire department from a neighbor's home.

Home-cooked meals still important to Americans

The traditional "Ozzie and Harriet-style" home-cooked evening meal is still important to Americans, according to a survey by *Good Housekeeping Magazine* conducted with the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers. Call it dinner, call it supper, but the evening meal is cooked daily on the stove 42 percent of the time.

Some 92 percent of the 501 female magazine subscribers

said they cook a traditional evening meal at least twice per week. Oven usage was reported at "two to three times weekly" by 82 percent answering the magazine survey, which was conducted in the first quarter 1997.

Who's doing all this cooking? Even though a large majority of married men and women both work outside the home, women are still doing the big portion of the cooking, according to the sur-

vey. Women prepare the main meal 92 percent of the time; men just 4 percent of the time.

As to who cleans up after dinner, the results were similar. Women load the dishwasher 86 percent of the time versus only 7 percent for men and 3 percent for children. The numbers change slightly in terms of who unloads the dishwasher: 68 percent women, 13 percent men and 5 percent children.

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. . . get Satellite TV at its Best.

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Access to over 200 fully-digital channels.	yes	no
As many as 55 pay-per-view movie choices every night.	yes	no
Up to 13 different NFL games every Sunday with NFL Sunday Ticket.	yes	no
Equipment from RCA, Sony, Hughes, GE, ProScan, Uniden, and Toshiba.	yes	no
Over 3 million satisfied subscribers.	yes	no

Some mini-dish providers promise revolutionary television service, but what they really give you is the same old thing you get with cable. Only DIRECTV® delivers new features that only Satellite TV at its Best can provide. Like 55 different hit movies every night. Exclusive sports packages all year long. And interactive controls that make TV viewing just plain fun. So, don't get just any dish. Call today for DIRECTV.



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WINCHESTER, ILLINOIS

Illinois Rural Electric Co.

Annual Meeting of Members

Saturday Morning,
July 18, 1998

9:30 Registration
10:00 Business Meeting

Five Thousand Dollars
in Door Prizes, Yes \$5,000.00!

More Information Will Follow.

Do You Watch the *Nightly News* Every Night?

There's a feature called the "Fleecing of America." It's astonishing to see reports on government programs gone astray, but we thought that the piece on the Rural Utilities Service loan program was a bit much. Without the program, formerly called the Rural Electrification Administration, electric lines would not have been run through our service area in the 1930s. We repay the loans with interest, and, yes there's some benefit to our member customers from the RUS program. Electric customers of investor-owned utilities benefit in different ways. How many segments of the American economy receive no benefits from the government?

BNG

Terry Barnard To Retire

Terry Barnard who began working for the Cooperative on April 17, 1967 is retiring. Other than a brief stint as Data Processing Coordinator in the 1970s, Terry has been in the Engineering Department, most recently as Field Engineer. In that position, Terry has designed new electric line extensions and new facilities to upgrade the system.

We wish him well, in a well earned retirement.

Cooperative's office
will be closed on April 10,
Good Friday.

The Call Center is always
there for emergencies.

Call 1-800-468-4732

Come and get them. Free.
We have some old, 240 volt
security lights taking up
space in the warehouse in
Winchester. They are free
for the taking until
April 30, 1998.
After that

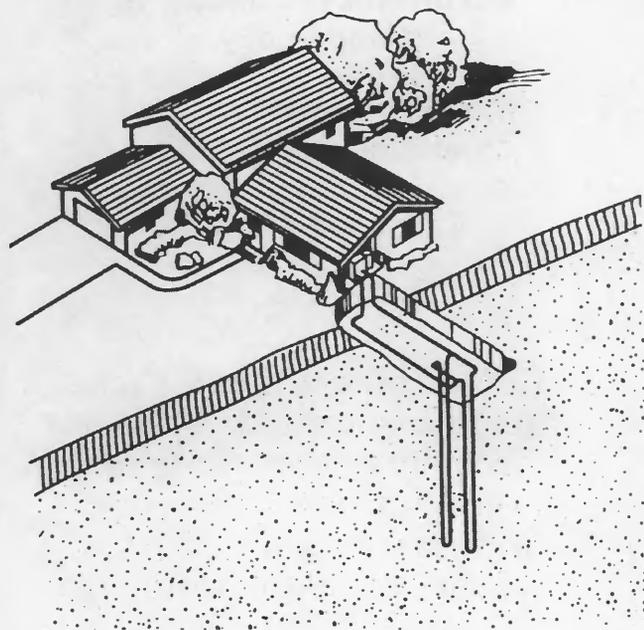
Geothermal uses earth for energy

A new electric technology — the geothermal heat pump — now uses the earth's energy to heat and cool a home. The geothermal heat pump offers year 'round energy savings compared to other systems. And, many electric utilities offer their customers cash back when they install this new system, according to the Edison Electric Institute and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, two national electric utility trade associations.

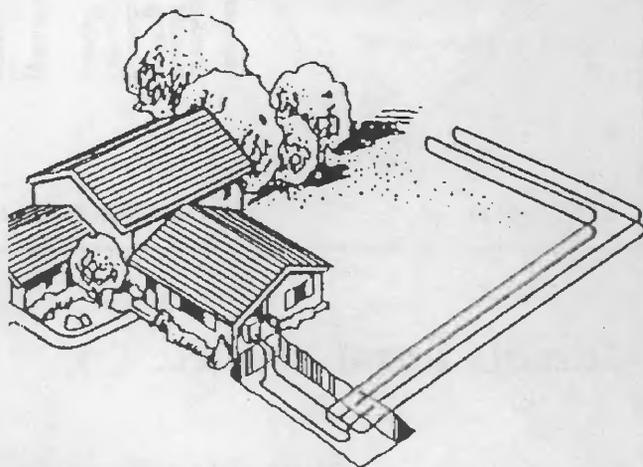
Electric utilities do this because geothermal heat pumps have high energy-efficient ratings. These heat pumps also return a more even year 'round demand on utility power plants. Both of these factors can help a utility delay the need for building more plants.

Air-to-air and geothermal heat pumps can provide heating and cooling from a single unit. They do so because they transfer heat instead of creating it. For this reason, electric heat pumps can return more in heating or cooling comfort than it costs in electricity to operate the system.

The now traditional air-source heat pump, which dates back to the 1950s, exchanges heat with the outdoor air via the familiar compressor unit that sits in the back yard. Instead of an outdoor compressor, the relatively new ground source heat pump exchanges heat with the ground via underground plastic piping.



Vertical pipe layout



Horizontal pipe layout

Energy savings

Geothermal heat pumps work less to exchange heat than air-source heat pumps do. That's because the ground's temperature in most parts of the country remains a year-round 55 to 60 degrees, while the air temperature can fluctuate much more widely. The earth's stable temperature translates into bigger energy savings for the homeowner. In fact, you can get up to \$4 in heating or cooling from each dollar of electricity.

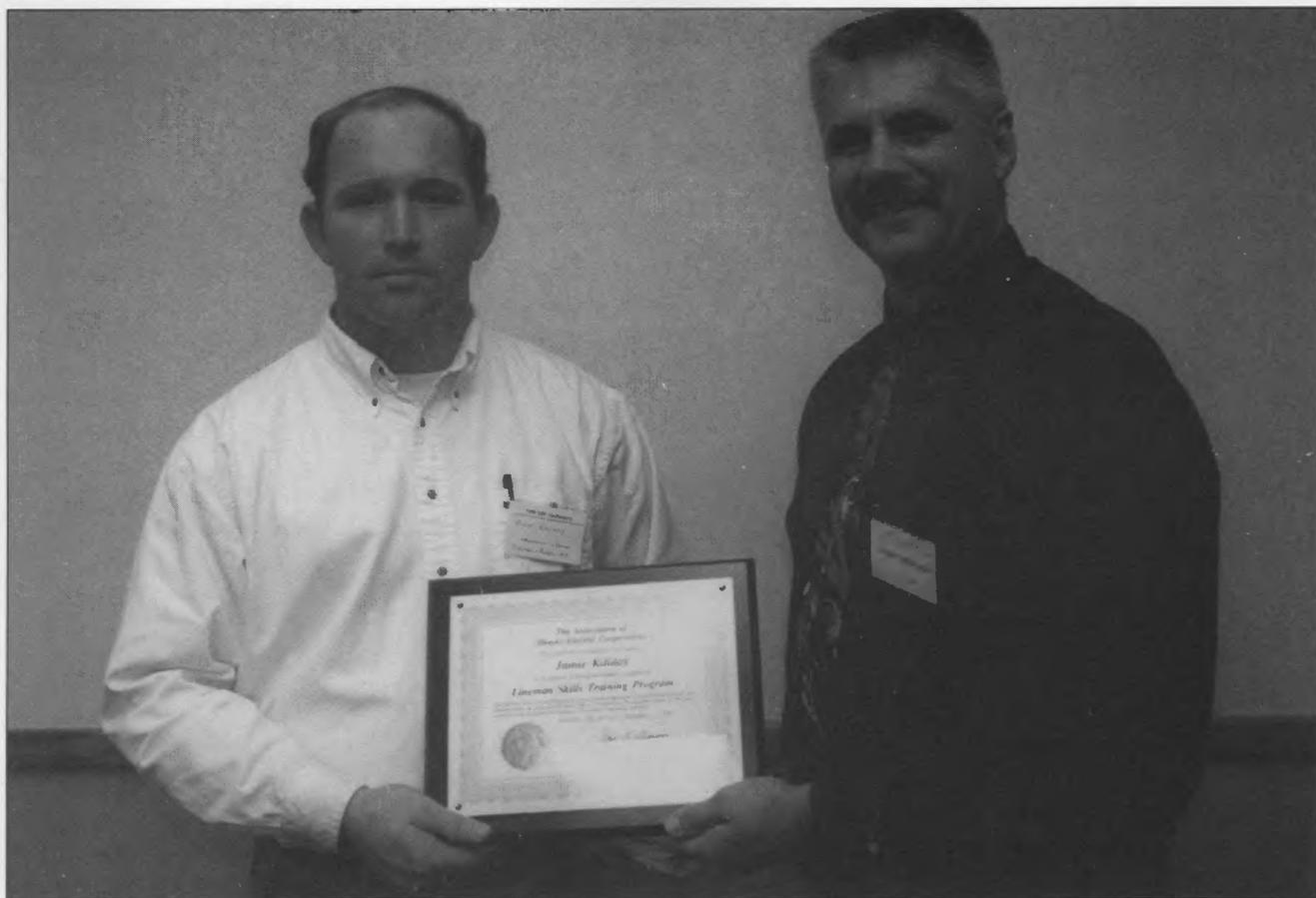
Other advantages

Geothermal heat pumps offer other advantages as well. Some systems can provide year 'round hot water. During the air conditioning mode, the water heating is "free," the system takes the house's heat, and puts it into the water heating tank.

The compressor is permanently sealed, like your refrigerator, and normally doesn't require refrigerant refills. Since it has no outdoor compressor, you and your neighbors will appreciate its quiet operation.

A geothermal heat pump's piping configuration can be laid out in a horizontal trench, or a vertical hole, depending on soil conditions. The cost to install either geothermal heat pump makes the system costlier than a regular air-to-air pump, but the energy savings will pay you back the difference in three to five years.

For more information on this exciting new technology, contact Illinois Rural Electric Co.



Jamie Killday of Griggsville recently received a graduation certificate after completing the Lineman Skills Training Program of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC). Jamie, a serviceman lineman for Illinois Rural Electric Co., completed the comprehensive lineman apprentice training program. With him is Roger Stegeman, AIEC manager of safety. The award was presented at the Safety, Supervisory and Technical Conference sponsored by the AIEC.

Electric power in your home

Electricity provides power that will serve you in countless ways the rest of your life. It is a controlled energy which your power supplier channels into homes and industries in a safe and dependable manner. At that point, it becomes your responsibility to use this controlled power safely.

One point to always remember — never give this electricity an opportunity to strike you through some unthinking careless act in your daily routine. Exercise Responsible Electric Accident Control Today (RE-ACT) by respecting this power through the safe and efficient use of the many labor-saving devices powered by man-made lighting.

The practice of operating or touching a plugged-in appliance when working in or around your kitchen sink is an invitation for man-made lightning to strike. Those water faucets and sewer connections provide an excellent path to the ground for electricity to follow — don't let it pass through your body to get there!

Radios or similar small appliances that are

within reach of the bathtub or shower make bathrooms an excellent place for accidents. Exercise caution when using appliances in the bathroom.

Laundry room areas, where water and its associated pipes are ever present, require safe practices. Be sure that three-wire appliance cords are used and that the appliance cases are bonded to the ground wire of the electric unit.

Almost all power tools are equipped with three-wire cords to be used in three-wire outlets. Too frequently, though, work to be done is out of reach of such an outlet. Extension cords are needed, and to avoid a jolt of man-made lightning, make sure they are of the three-wire variety and are connected to a ground fault interrupter-protected circuit.

Outdoor patio living has become enriched with the use of the dependable servant, electricity. Don't let this man-made energy go astray by failing to use three-wire cords and ground fault interrupters on all outdoor electrical circuits.

High Energy Storm Trapper[®]
From Cooper Power Systems and
Illinois Rural Electric Co.

Surge Protection

With a surge arrester outside the house at the meter socket, we can now offer protection from surges inside the house.

One unpredictable, untrackable, unstoppable stroke of lightning and poof!

Expensive electric equipment gone.

Data lost.

Never before have we entrusted such things to in-house electrical equipment: financial records, schoolwork, even some peoples' livelihoods.

When you think of it that way, a point-of-use surge

suppressor at an outlet doesn't seem like quite enough protection. (It's not).

For an initial evaluation of your existing grounding for \$19.95 and a monthly fee of \$4.95, you'll never be concerned with lightning again.

Please contact me!

Name

Phone

Best Time to Call

Please mail this to:
P. O. Box 80
Winchester, IL 62694

Or drop it off at the
Cooperative's office.



217-742-3128

High Line News

ILLINOIS RURAL ELECTRIC CO.

WINCHESTER, ILLINOIS

We now know: "No"

A while ago, we asked if you would be willing to pay about \$1.50 a month and avoid having to read your own meter.

We had heard that a cooperative was charging about that much for an automatic meter reading device.

Overwhelmingly, the answer was "No." Most of the comments indicated that people didn't mind reading their own meters. That's a good thing. While we'll be testing automatic meter reading and, in all likelihood, installing it throughout the system over a period of years, the costs of doing that all at once would be prohibitive. With fewer than four customers per mile of line, it would also be prohibitively expensive to use meter readers, as is done in cities and towns.

So, let us say thanks for your candid responses. If you sent in a coupon, we'll let you know who won the drawing.

Thanks, too, for reading your meter.

1997 Financial results

We have the audited results for 1997. Your Cooperative earned \$541,000, or 3.7 percent of \$14,702,000 in revenue. The 1996 results were \$334,000, or 2.4 percent of \$14,117,000. Members' equity increased to \$7,958,000 from \$7,485,000.

With the warm weather, the results so far this year haven't been as good, but there's still a lot of time left.

Customer Services: SmartWater™

To complement our line of top quality appliances, we're adding GE SmartWater™ Whole Home Systems.

The water throughout the service area is hard, or extremely hard, and we expect growth in both water softening and in water filtration.

We can also help you with **Surge Protection, Appliance Repairs and Electric Wiring.**

We've consolidated all of these activities at our South Main Street Building. We've remodeled a little, too, and after we finish fixing the roof, we plan on painting the exterior. Stop in to see the changes if you can, or give

us a call if we can help you in any of these areas.

Telephones

We've installed a new phone system at the office to help improve service. An automatic system answers if a person can't do so promptly. Please use the "voice mail" feature if the person you're trying to reach isn't immediately available. It'll be a big help.

e-mail

If you want to reach us in cyber space, our address is "electric.co-op@mailexcite.com".

An anniversary

It's not one of those anniversaries which end with a zero or with a five, but it's been a long time, and today is the day this writer started working for a utility. Indulge my remembering a lady who greeted me on that first day — we worked together for over a dozen years. And during that time and throughout her life, Edith Lockwood was unfailingly polite.

There's a lot to be learned in any business, but not all that much that's more essential.

Farm electrical safety checklist

Service pole and service entrance

YES NO

- Do farm family members and all hired farmhands know where and how to disconnect power in the case of an electrical emergency?
- Are disconnects, especially main breakers, regularly turned off and turned back on to ensure free action and good contact? (Manufacturers of circuit breakers claim that they should be opened and reclosed once per month.)
- In case of fire, can the electricity be shut off to that particular building on fire without shutting off electricity to the water pump?

Animal housing

YES NO

- Do animals enter a building or drink at the stock tanks without hesitation?
- Is the water piping (metallic) and service entrances of buildings properly grounded? (NOTE: Check for corrosion of grounding system by animal waste.)
- Is the farmer using an industry-made electric fence which bears the UL label?
- Are heat lamps in farrowing houses hanging by the cord only? In case of drop, are there guards on the fixture?
- Are the lights enclosed in globes and guards (where required)?
- Is the wiring suitable for wet conditions (because of the humidity created by the animals' respiration)?
- Does all wiring appear to be in good condition and free from damage by rodents?

Grain-handling equipment

YES NO

- Are overhead lines out of the way of augers and winged-type farm equipment?
- Do all motors have correctly sized overcurrent protection?
- If magnetic starters are used, are heater coils of the proper size?

Machine shed

YES NO

- Is the grounding bayonet on drop cords, power tools, etc., intact?
- Is the service entrance properly grounded?
- Are all receptacles in use properly grounded?
- Are drop cords of adequate size for the appliance or machine it is serving?
- Are drop cords put away after use so machinery can't run over them?
- Are power tools such as circular saws, table saws, drills, jig saws, etc., left unplugged when not in use so that a child couldn't accidentally turn them on?
- Is it adequately lighted?
- Are drop cords in good condition with no sign of insulation damage?

General

YES NO

- Do children know whom to call in case of an electrical emergency?
- Do family members know first aid for electrical shock and/or burns?
- Are GFCI's installed where required?
- Do appliances function satisfactorily without giving a tingle to user when turned on?
- If lightning protection is installed, are all wires leading to ground?
- Are all electrical fittings on the gas pump of explosion-proof type?
- Before trees are planted, has proper siting been provided to avoid nearby overhead and underground power lines?
- Are trees free and clear of overhead electrical lines?
- Before new buildings are constructed, have the buildings been cleared of nearby overhead and underground power lines?
- Can tractors equipped with end loaders be raised to the most upper position and clear all overhead electrical lines?
- Items checked NO indicate a potential electrical safety hazard. Proper action should be taken immediately to ensure safety.

Energy saving tips

May is the month when members could be using heating and air conditioning. These energy saving tips can help save money on your electric bill by:

- Use kitchen, bath and other ventilating fans sparingly. In just one hour these fans can blow away a houseful of warmed or cooled air. Turn them off as soon as they have done their job.

- Also, keep your fireplace damper closed unless you have a fire going. An open damper in a 48-inch square fireplace can let up to 8 percent of your heat out through the chimney.

- Turn up that air conditioning thermostat. 78 to 80 degrees will feel cool when it's 95-100 degrees outside. Also, use fans to increase the

air movement. Ceiling fans are great and don't cost much to purchase or to operate. Small portable fans are also useful. Attic fans are also great when you are not using your air conditioning, especially in the early summer when it's not really too hot yet. Just keep that air moving!

- Keep your windows shaded during the day to keep your house as cool as possible. When the sun is not overhead and the outside air begins to cool, open the windows and exchange that warm air for cool outside air. It doesn't take very long.

- You could put in a new high efficiency heat pump (maybe even a geothermal heat pump).

Make your home electrically safe

Here are ten simple ways to help you use electricity more safely around your home.

1. Put safety covers on all unused wall outlets so children can't explore them with tiny fingers. Replace any broken wall plates.
2. If cords are frayed or cracked, replace them. Never nail or staple cords to the wall or floor. Keep furniture off cords, even if they're hiding beneath carpet.
3. Extension cords are meant to be used temporarily. It's not safe to use them as permanent household wiring.
4. Use three-prong plugs in three-prong outlets. Never cut the third prong off to fit into a two-prong outlet. Don't force plugs into outlets if they don't fit easily.
5. Install ground fault circuit interrupters in bathrooms and kitchens. They help prevent elec-

trocutions where water and electricity might meet.

6. Make sure your light bulbs are the proper wattage for the fixtures they're used in. If you don't know the proper wattage (lamps and light fixtures often have it stamped or etched-in), check with the manufacturer.

7. Circuit breakers and fuses should be of the current sizes for your circuit. If you're not sure, call Illinois Rural Electric Co. or an electrician.

8. Keep water away from appliances. If you use a blow dryer to dry your hair in the bathroom, unplug it when it's not in use.

9. If an appliance consistently trips a circuit or if it shocks you, get rid of it.

10. Protect yourself and your computer and entertainment equipment. Look for cracks in wiring, plugs and connectors.

Celebrate "Electrical Safety Month" in May!

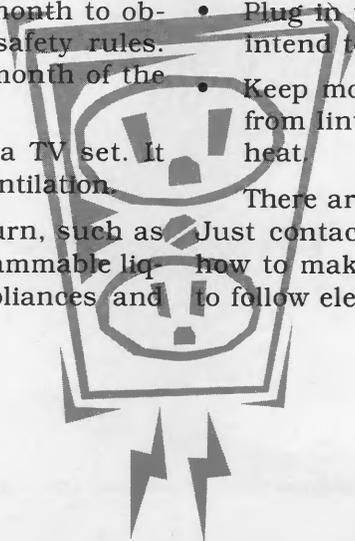
The calendar tells us it's the month to observe and learn about electrical safety rules. Here are some tips to follow any month of the year.

- Don't restrict air flow around a TV set. It can overheat without proper ventilation.
- Don't put materials that can burn, such as clothing, curtains, paper and flammable liquids, near lamps, heating appliances and hot surfaces.

- Plug in portable appliances only when you intend to use them.

- Keep motors or their protective covers free from lint, dust and dirt so they don't overheat.

There are many more tips to add to the list. Just contact us for additional information on how to make every day and every month time to follow electrical safety rules.





GE SmartWater™

Whole Home Systems

Quality Water
You Can
See, Taste
and
Feel

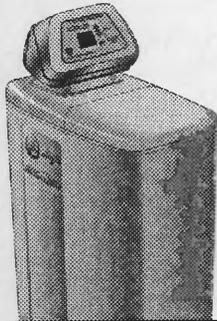
GE SmartWater™

Reverse Osmosis Filtration System

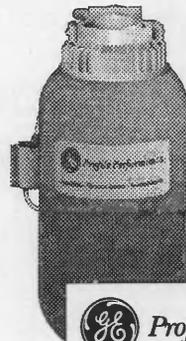
- ✓ Great tasting, high quality water for drinking & cooking, on-demand.
- ✓ Eliminates the expense and inconvenience of bottled water.
- ✓ Reduces the following undesirable elements:

Taste & Odor
– Ammonia
– Chlorine
Sediment

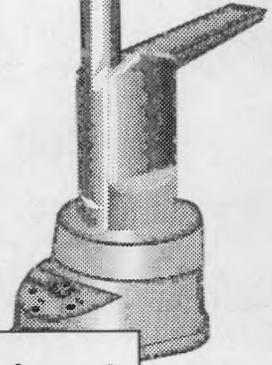
Lead
Cysts
Nitrates/Nitrites
Sodium
Organic/Inorganic
Chemical substances
And More!



Profile Performance™



Profile Performance™



GE SmartWater™ Softening System

- ✓ Laundry is brighter, cleaner and softer; life of clothing is increased.
- ✓ Reduced spotting of dishes and glassware.
- ✓ Helps reduce scale build-up in pipes.
- ✓ Increases efficiency of water heaters. Saves over \$500.00 in energy costs over the life of your new water heater.

Starting at \$23.00 a Month
Call 217-743-3128 or 800-468-4732

Illinois Rural Electric Co.



High Line News

217-742-3128

ILLINOIS RURAL ELECTRIC CO.

WINCHESTER, ILLINOIS



Installing underground electric service Apprentice Sam Surratt (top) operating the co-op's trencher at the Sandy Creek subdivision north of Murrayville. Chad Gregory, also an apprentice, (lower left) holds the red tape which is buried directly above the electric lines, and foreman Kenny Roundcount (lower right) connects the electric cable to the pad mounted transformer.



Winchester's assistant fire chief and Illinois Rural Electric's plant accountant, Dennis Taylor model new fire fighting gear for the *Winchester Times*.

**Illinois Rural
Electric Co.
1998 Annual
Meeting of Members**

**July 18, 1998
Registration 9:30 a.m.
Business Meeting
at 10 a.m.**

**The last time we
mentioned the meeting
we failed to tell
you that it would
be held in
Winchester.**

**Among other things,
members will be asked
to amend
the Bylaws and the
Articles of Incorporation.**

**There'll be a sale
on appliances that day.**

**Refreshments.
Prizes Galore!!!**

**We hope to see
you there.**

More details later on.



High school students from across Illinois met their state legislators in Springfield during "Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Youth Day." Twenty-four students were sponsored by Illinois Rural Electric Co. Representing the co-op are, first row, from left, chaperones Patty Brogdon and Michele Peters; Catherine Bergschneider of Franklin; Amana Johnson of Pittsfield; Alyssa Martin of Winchester; Joy Schmitz of Meredosia; Teresa Floyd of Meredosia; Kelli Kaufman of Bluffs; Sarah Postelwait of Carrollton; Krisi Cockerill of Jacksonville; Lindsey Latimer of Kinderhook; Mariah Rueter of Manchester; Chelsey Hankins of Jacksonville. Second row: from the left, Susan Brogdon of Chapin; Leigh Ann Koehler of Murrayville; Katherine Doyle of Jacksonville; Adam Ghrist of Pittsfield; Eric Winters of White Hall; Matt Brawner of Pleasant Hill; Representative Tom Ryder; Senator Vince Demuzio; Representative Richard Myers; Andy Merriman of Bluffs; Brian Lohnes of Barry; Jacob Hectner of Pleasant Hill; Janie Foiles of Carrollton; Dorie Wheeler of Ashland; Jean Hechner of Barry; and Jonathon White of Kinderhook.

Chaperone Patty Brogdon, Illinois Rural Electric's administrative assistant, said, "What a great group of young people! It was a real pleasure to be with them for the day." The tour include the Illinois Supreme Court, the State Capitol, the Old State Capitol, and the Executive Mansion.

Cards and letters

We haven't gotten many over the past month. One note said, "You certainly have a nice group of men working for you. They are gentlemen, and also professionals." The nice lady was writing about Darrell Harshman

and Cory Kattleman who had just installed a new water heater for her.

We can't quote one letter about a tree we had to cut. If a tree is threatening to fall on the electric wires, we really don't have any choice.

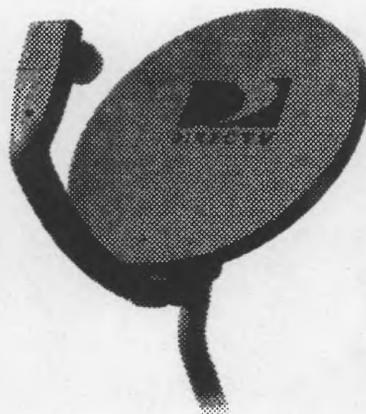
If you have a question or a concern, give us a call or drop us a line. If you're "on line," e-mail us at

electric.co-op@mailexcite.com.

It's a good way to get to the manager, first thing in the morning.



Nothing measures up to **DIRECTV**



DIRECTV offers more than 175 channels, over 55 pay-per-view choices a night, and more sports than any other mini-dish service. So, what are you waiting for? Call today for special savings on America's most popular satellite TV service.

Illinois Rural Telecommunication, Co.
940 West Morton
Jacksonville, IL
(800) 713-4782

DIRECTV is an official trademark of DIRECTV, Inc., a unit of Hughes Electronics Corp. © 1998 NRTC.





Illinois Rural Electric Co.

Notice of the 1998 Annual Meeting of Members

To All Active Members of Illinois Rural Electric Co.:

The 1998 Annual Meeting of the Cooperative's Members will be held on Saturday, July 18, at 10:00 AM at the Scott County Fair Grounds in Winchester. Registration will begin at 9:30 AM.

In addition to reports on the past year and the election of four directors, members will be asked to vote to amend the Bylaws and to change the Articles of Incorporation.

Perhaps just as important, the meeting provides an opportunity for you to ask questions and make suggestions concerning your cooperative as the electric industry changes here in Illinois and across the nation.

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, I urge you to attend. If you are not able to attend, please send your proxy with a friend or neighbor who is attending.

I look forward to seeing you on July 18th.

F. Alan Heaton,
Secretary

Use these coupons to enter for the door prize drawings.

You could win a \$500 or a \$100 prize.

You must be present to win.

THERE WILL BE FIVE \$500 PRIZES! THERE WILL BE TWENTY-FIVE \$100 PRIZES!

\$500.00

Please print your name

Please print your phone number

\$100.00

Please print your name

Please print your phone number

To Our Members:

Two events in the past year overshadowed all others, one of them occurring in January and the other in December.

Lower Rates

In January, our power supplier, Soyland Electric Power Cooperative, lowered its rates to us, and those savings were passed on to customers. On an annual basis that amounted to \$1,134,107. The average was \$113 for each customer, or 9.5%.

Soyland has set forth an ambitious plan to eliminate its debt by 2002/2003, and, when that happens, I expect that the Cooperative will continue to be able to pass those savings on to customers.

Like other utilities in Illinois and across the country, Soyland made ill-fated investments in nuclear power. About three-quarters of that debt was written off by the federal government, but, like customers almost every where, we will pay off the remaining obligations, which arose from decisions made long ago when the energy world looked very different from today's.

Deregulation

In December, the governor signed legislation which will make dramatic changes to the electric industry in the state over the next few years.

The good news for the member-owned electric cooperatives in Illinois is that they will continue to be controlled locally. Your Board of Directors will decide if and when customers get to select their electric suppliers.

Please remember that when a customer selects a new supplier, that customer will continue to have the electricity delivered by the same wires. From the customer's point of view, having the option to select suppliers will be a lot like selecting your telephone long-distance carrier.

Initially, we expect that only large customers, which use essentially the same amount of energy every day, will see significant savings from selecting their electric supplier. Over time, the electric use of residential customers may be "aggregated" for the best deal. But, of course, that's just what electric cooperatives have been doing for a long time. In our case, we've been aggregating customers — and working together to get the lines built — since 1936.

Come to the Annual Meeting

I hope that you'll be able to attend this year's annual meeting. We'll discuss these major issues, and the other issues which affect the Cooperative. We also look forward to answering your questions and greeting you personally.

I'm sure you wouldn't get the chance to meet with the board and management of any other type of electric utility and to ask any question or make any suggestion. But you will get that with us.

Please join us on July 18!

William Griswold,
President

Members of the Board of Directors

Region 1

Gary K. Clark,
New Canton

Region 2

Ronald K. Myers,
Griggsville

Region 3

Merton L. Pond,
Bluffs

Region 4

J. M. Sapp,
Pittsfield

Region 5

Robert Reed,
Nebo

Region 6

Robert A. Brown,
Treasurer,
Winchester

Region 7

F. Alan Heaton,
Secretary,
Murrayville

Region 8

Thomas D. Meehan III,
Roodhouse

Region 9

Francis J. Toppmeyer,
Golden Eagle

Region 10

Thomas H. Camerer,
Eldred

Region 11

William Griswold,
President,
Rockbridge

Illinois Rural Electric Co.
and its wholly-owned subsidiary
Illinois Rural Telecommunications Co.

Condensed, Consolidated Balance Sheet and Income Statement
Dollars in Thousands

	1997	1996
ASSETS		
Total Utility Plant	\$29,675	\$28,767
Less Accumulated Depreciation	8,779	8,845
Net Utility Plant	20,696	19,922
Investments and Patronage Capital	1,792	2,364
Cash and Other Current Assets	3,471	2,289
Total Assets	\$26,160	\$24,575
Liabilities		
Total Equity	\$7,958	\$7,485
Long-Term Debt	15,042	14,019
Total Current and Accrued Liabilities	3,160	3,071
Total Liabilities	\$26,160	\$24,575

	1997	1996
REVENUE	\$13,312	\$13,059
EXPENSES		
Purchased Power	7,418	8,410
Operations and Maintenance	1,125	1,053
Customer Accounting	332	382
Sales, Administrative and General	1,406	1,041
Depreciation	775	907
Taxes	197	218
Interest	782	739
Other, Net	(207)	25
Extraordinary Item	(532)	
NET MARGIN	\$542	\$334

**COPIES OF THE COMPLETE AUDIT OF THE 1997 AND 1996 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE ANNUAL MEETING.**

VOTING BY PROXY

The Cooperative's Bylaws allow a member to carry as many as three proxies and vote them at the Annual Meeting. You are urged to attend and to vote in person; but, if you are unable to attend, please send your proxy with a friend or neighbor.

PROXY As a member of Illinois Rural Electric Co., I, the undersigned, hereby appoint

_____ my proxy to vote in my stead at the annual meeting of members to be held in Winchester, Illinois, on July 18, 1998, and I hereby ratify and confirm my proxy's vote.

Witness my hand and seal, this ____ day of July 1998.

Signature

Printed Name

Proposed Change to the Articles of Incorporation

Like many other cooperatives formed in the 1930s, Illinois Rural Electric took the term "Co." at the end of its name. The corporate name is set in the Articles of Incorporation.

The Board of Directors proposes that members change the corporate name to Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative to more appropriately describe the organization in today's language.

Proposed Changes to the Bylaws

Article 9, Section 2

Article 9 describes how capital credits shall be retired, that is the process of paying the capital credits to members in cash. The proposed change would add the underlined to the last sentence of the third paragraph of the section:

Any such retirements of capital shall be made in order of priority according to the year in which capital was furnished and credited, the capital first received by the Cooperative being the first retired for amounts furnished and credited prior to January 1, 1999. For capital furnished and credited after January 1, 1999, the Cooperative's Board may retire such capital in any order whatsoever.

This proposed change would give the Board greater flexibility to retire capital credits in the future.

Article 1

Article 1 describes the requirements for membership, and one of those requirements, set forth in Sections 1 and 7, is the purchase of electric energy. In the future customers may purchase electric energy from a supplier other than the Cooperative and purchase electric energy delivery services from the Cooperative.

The Board recommends that the purchase of electric energy delivery services be added to each section as an additional way to satisfy the requirements of membership.

Copies of the complete Bylaws will be at the Annual Meeting, and copies of the minutes of the 1997 Annual Meeting will also be on hand.

Report of the Nominating Committee

After due consideration, it was moved, seconded and voted to nominate the following to run for directors of Illinois Rural Electric Co.: District 2, Ronald K. Myers; District 4, J. M. Sapp; District 6, Robert A. Brown; and District 8, Thomas D. Meehan III.

1998 Nominating Committee

Eric Lakin, Chairman, Fred Bradshaw, John Early, John Nolte and Jim Wilson.

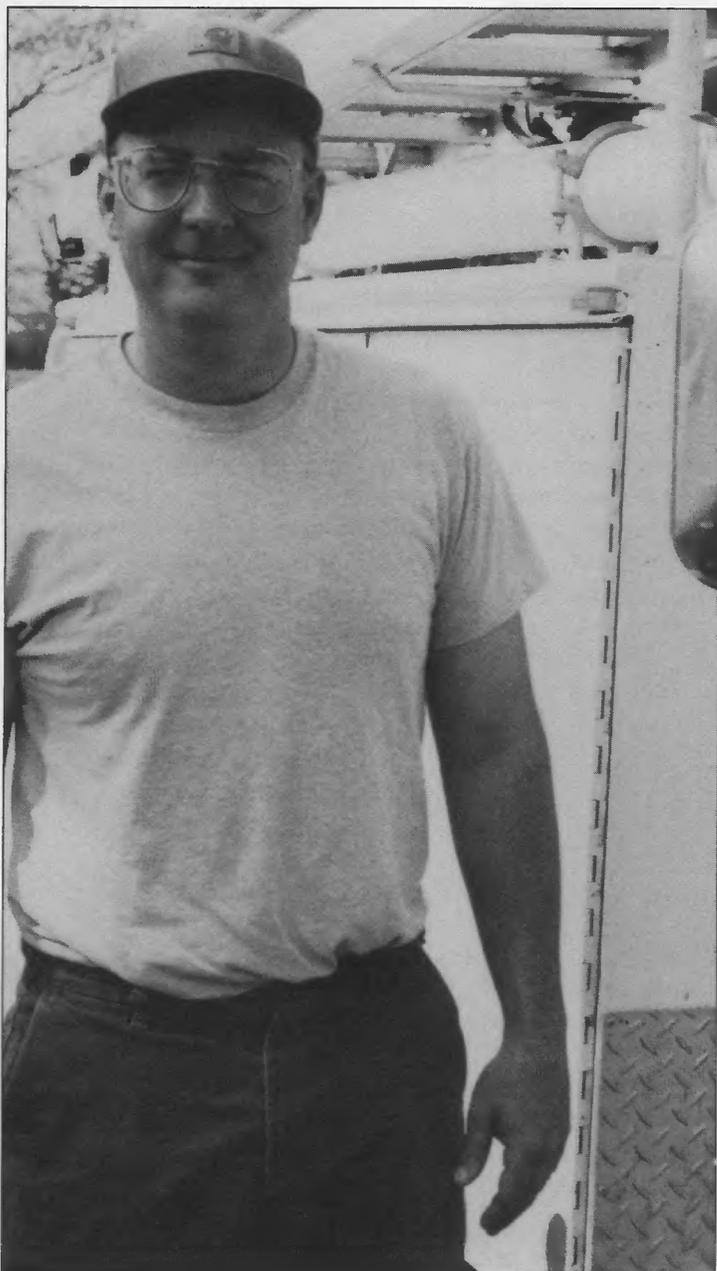


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High Line News

ILLINOIS RURAL ELECTRIC CO.

WINCHESTER, ILLINOIS



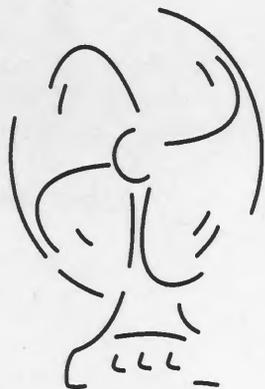
David Gant, one of the Cooperative's Greene County servicemen, stands by the Illinois Rural truck this spring for a snapshot. An 18-year veteran, he and his family live in Carrollton.

Above is one of the famous stone houses in Eldred, this one just east of the Hillview Road. While not complete, this building has benefited from a substantial amount of renovation.



The week of June 12-19 was a memorable one for four area youths. The students spent a week exploring Washington, D.C., meeting with Illinois Congressional leaders and learning about government during the annual "Youth to Washington" tour, sponsored by the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois. Catherine Bergschneider of Franklin, Jean Hechler and Brian Lohnes of Barry and Leigh Ann Koehler of Murrayville represented Illinois Rural Electric Co., Winchester. They met with Congressman John Shimkus on Capitol Hill and were among 62 rural youth leaders selected for the trip. In addition to the Capitol, students also explored Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian Museums, The U.S. Holocaust Memorial, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia and a number of other historical sites. Pictured are (l-r): Bergschneider, Koehler, Congressman Shimkus, Hechler and Lohnes.

'Fan' tastic Ideas for Summer



That good old stand-by, the electric fan, can help you save money on air conditioning.

Whole House Fans

In the cool of the night when temperatures are at or below 82 degrees, whole house fans can be the ticket to savings of up to 50 percent of your cooling costs. Exhaust the warm, stale air by putting one in your attic (if you have good attic ventilation), or the central hall or stairway.

Ceiling Fans

A ceiling fan can help to. By moving air, the effect of evaporation makes you feel more comfortable at warmer temperatures. And, it only uses about the same amount of electricity it takes to light a 15-watt light bulb.

Window and Exhaust Fans

In an open area, window fans are very effective, or use your fan for exhausting moist air from the bathroom or kitchen.

Portable Fans

Place a portable fan facing away from your window air conditioning unit to help spread the cool air around. The fan helps move cool air into other rooms and down hallways. Just as hot air rises, cool air sinks to the floor, so put the portable fan on the floor for best results.

Improve air conditioning cost and comfort

Correctly sizing an air conditioning unit is important. Too large a system will do a poor job of dehumidification and will cost more to purchase and to operate. Too small a system will not cool your home adequately.

Systems are sized to meet peak heating and cooling needs, and units are sized by the "ton," which represents 12,000 BTUs of cooling per hour. Factors such as geographical area, building orientation, insulation, windows and doors are considered in sizing the unit.

Air conditioner sizing should never be based merely on an estimate.

Methods are available from professional organizations such as ASHRAE (the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers, Inc.) and ACCA (the Air Conditioning Contractors of America). Computer software is also available to assist homeowners in sizing their own air conditioning systems.

Air conditioners are rated by their seasonal energy efficiency ratio (SEER) and the sensible

heat fraction (SHF). The higher the SEER rating the greater the efficiency. A minimum SEER of 10 is required by the National Appliance Efficiency Standard. The SHF expresses the unit's dehumidification ability. The lower the SHF, the better it dehumidified conditioned air. The suggested maximum SHF is 0.80. Units with a higher rating may not adequately dehumidify some homes.

Finally, join IREC's Choose and Save program. We'll install a FREE radio-

Controlled switch on the outside unit of your central air conditioner. This switch allows the compressor to be cycled during the hottest summer afternoons. It saves the cop money and the savings are passed to you.

Phone the Engineering Department to sign up for Choose and Save.



Electric power in your home

Electricity provides power that will serve you in countless ways the rest of your life. It is a controlled energy which your power supplier channels into homes and industries in a safe and dependable manner. At that point, it becomes your responsibility to use this controlled power safely.

One point to always remember — never give this electricity an opportunity to strike you through some unthinking careless act in your daily routine. Exercise Responsible Electric Accident Control Today (RE-ACT) by respecting this power through the safe and efficient use of the many labor-saving devices powered by man-made lightning.

The practice of operating or touching a plugged-in appliance when working in or around your kitchen sink is an invitation for man-made lightning to strike. Those water faucets and sewer connections provide an excellent path to the ground for electricity to follow — *don't let it pass through your body to get there!*

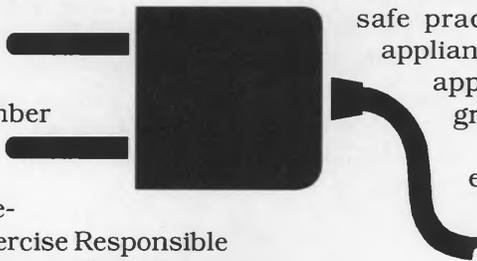
Radios or similar small appliances that are

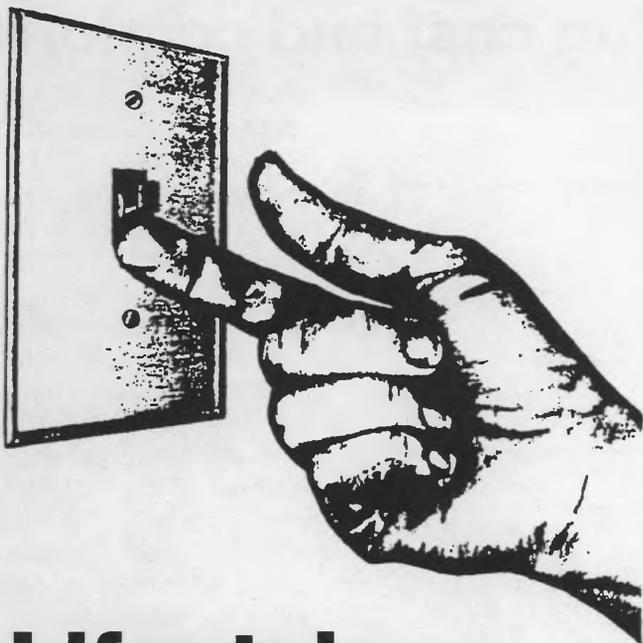
within reach of the bathtub or shower make bathrooms an excellent place for accidents. Exercise caution when using appliances in the bathroom.

Laundry room areas, where water and its associated pipes are ever present, require safe practices. Be sure that three-wire appliance cords are used and that the appliance cases are bonded to the ground wire of the electric unit.

Almost all power tools are equipped with three-wire cords to be used in three-wire outlets. Too frequently, though, work to be done is out of reach of such an outlet. Extension cords are needed, and to avoid a jolt of man-made lightning, make sure they are of the three-wire variety and are connected to a ground fault interrupter-protected circuit.

Outdoor patio living has become enriched with the use of the dependable servant, electricity. Don't let this man-made energy go astray by failing to use three-wire cords and ground fault interrupters on all outdoor electrical circuits.





Lifestyle makes a difference

You may not have given it much thought, but you have complete control over how you use your electricity. You choose the ingredients that are necessary for you to maintain your standard of living.

The way you live and the way you use your electrical appliances have a greater impact on your consumption of electricity than the number of appliances you have.

We in Illinois enjoy relatively good lifestyles, and we tend to use more energy than the national average. This applies to all forms of energy, not just electricity.

Let's take a look at some of these "lifestyle considerations" that can make your electric bill appear to be higher than "normal."

Family size

Let's face it, there is a direct relationship between the number of people living at home and the amount of energy that is used. That's especially true if you have teenagers at home. In addition, if friends and relatives are visiting, you can expect to use more energy for cooking, baking, laundry and hot water.

Space heating and cooling

From a comfort standpoint, most of us prefer to be relatively cool in summer and warm in winter.

Others prefer temperature extremes. In Illinois, humidity plays an important part in our year-round comfort, too. If we operate dehumidifiers in summer (and to a lesser degree, humidifiers, in winter), this contributes to our household energy consumption because they tend to run continuously. Portable space heaters, air conditioners, and fans in such places as the garage and basement also contribute to our energy consumption.

By taking 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, weatherstripping and caulking to simply turning down the heat and turning off the air conditioning in a room not being used.

Water heating

About 15 percent of the energy used in the average American home is for water heating. Hot water plays a very important role in everyone's lifestyle — but many lifestyles require substantial quantities of hot water, and that results in higher energy use.

Ask yourself some of the following questions:

"When I take a bath, do I use hot water sparingly, or is the tub completely full of water?"

"Do I take short showers, or do I stay in the shower until the hot water gets cold?"

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

"Do I operate automatic washers and dishwashers with a full load, or just whenever it's convenient? — like with a pair of jeans or just a few dishes?"

Appliance use

We have a host of time- and labor-saving appliances available to help us do our work whenever we need their service. Your appliances work for you around the clock, whenever you choose to use them. Wise use of appliances can have a positive effect on your energy consumption.

For example, ask yourself questions like these:

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

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

These are prime considerations that affect the amount of electricity you use to maintain your lifestyle. All Americans are part of the residential sector, and spirited energy management consciousness is likely to start at home.

The effects of a home and farm energy management program can pay big dividends!



High Line News

(217) 742-3128

ILLINOIS RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

WINCHESTER, ILLINOIS

Amount Due Last Month	Payments Thank You	Adjustments/Late Charges	Current Charges	Amount Now Due	Due Date
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A New Monthly Statement

After a little thought, we've decided to spare you any attempts at levity concerning the monthly billing statement.

While we fully understand that the best change in the statement would be a lower price for electricity, we're not in a position to do that right now. We are, however, changing the format of the monthly statement.

Why?

1. The new form and printing process will allow us to get the best postal rates and delivery times, both to customers and from customers to us.
2. Using postal bar coding will also ensure our getting the best postal rates.
3. We will be able to insert information with the bill which we're not now able to do.

4. We'll also be able to provide a little more detail about the components of the total cost.

When should customers expect to see a new statement form?

We're in the process of programming the necessary changes right now (mid-summer), and we'll test the changes before sending out new statements. Customers should see the new form at the beginning of October or November.

Why spend the money on a new form?

Actually, we'll be able to achieve the benefits of a new form at the same total cost as the old form.

Are the rates changing?

No.

In the past, you'd see one price that combined the customer charge and the energy charge.

For example, on the Farm & Home Service Rate, for 1,000 kilowatt hours you'd see a charge of \$122.15.

Now for that same amount, you'll see a \$12.00 customer charge plus a change of \$110.15 for energy.

It's the same total, but over time Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative and other electric suppliers will be showing customers more and more detail.

Under the heading: Anybody can make a mistake.

We recently sent a customer a bill for about \$120,000!

There's a process to halt bills so far out of line with past use, but this one slipped by.

Our apologies.

We'll try not to do it again.

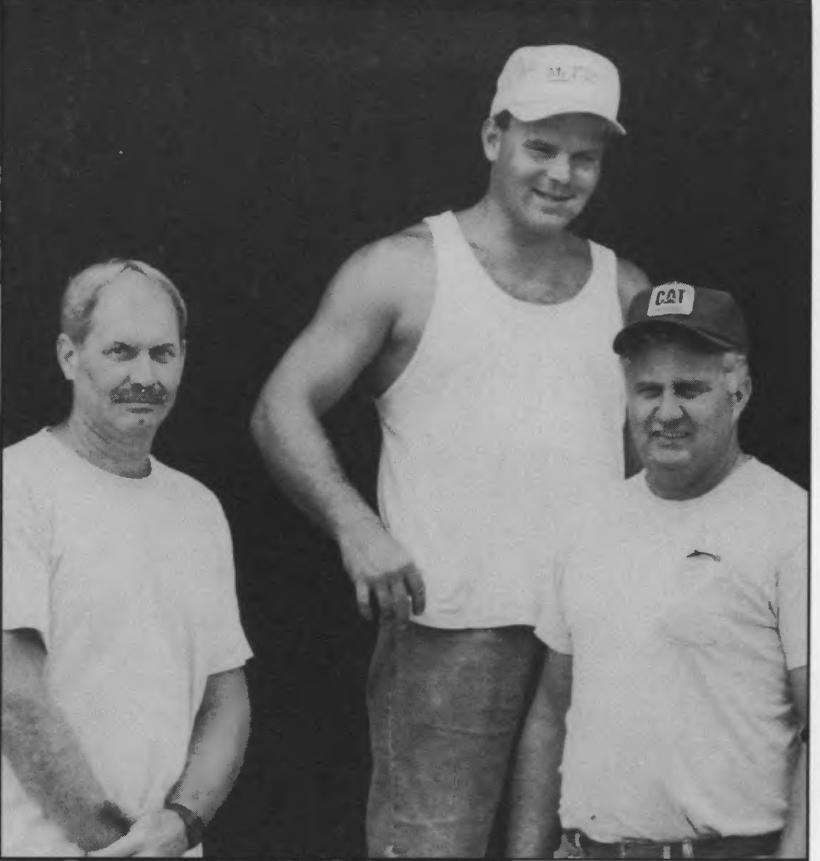


The End of the “Walker Building”

The Cooperative’s headquarters in Winchester adjoined the Walker Building, once home to Red Walker’s International Harvester Dealership. In recent years, the building provided storage for utility supplies. Unfortunately, its condition wasn’t sound, and the engineers said if we didn’t take it down, it would go down and take the other building with it.

So, on what started as a gray day, down it went. The three guys on the right — Terry Ayers, Jeff McIntire and Clarence Howard from McIntire Construction — are the ones who did it.

We’ll put up a wooden fence on the Main Street side, chain link on the back, and continue to use the space for storage.



1998 Annual Meeting Attended by 180 Members

We were pleased to see 180 members present this past July for the Cooperative's annual meeting.

Directors Re-elected

Members re-elected Ronald K. Myers, District 2; J. M. Sapp, District 4, Robert A. Brown, District 6; and Thomas D. Meehan III, District 8.

A New Name: Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative

One of the hallmarks of rural America may be the fact that few of us get called by our given name, and it's possible that many people, and many of them friends, will always call us "the REA."

In the case of Illinois Rural Electric, the formal last name was "Co." It was common for cooperatives to be named that way in the 1930s. But usage has changed over the years.

What's in a name? Shakespeare forgive us — a rose by any other name — but there's a difference in people's minds today between a company and a cooperative. A company is owned by some other person, but members own a cooperative.

Illinois Rural Electric has always been owned by its customers, and we were pleased that members agreed that it was time to change the name to reflect that ownership.

Bylaws change — one

Members voted to give the Board of Directors greater flexibility in the way earnings are distributed to members. (In an over-simplified way, earnings in a particular year become mem-

bers' "capital credits" in relationship to how much electricity a particular member used.)

In the past, when the Cooperative could afford it, the oldest of those capital credits had to be the first to be retired. With the change to the Bylaws, for capital credits earned after January 1, 1999, the Board may retire them in any order.

Bylaws change — two

In the future, customers may buy electricity from just about anybody and have that electricity delivered over the existing lines. Members approved language which would allow buying electric delivery services to qualify for membership in addition to buying electricity.

The critical issue here is that 85% of revenue must come from members to remain exempt from federal income taxes.

Winners, Winners, Winners!

The following members won \$500 door prizes: Norman Dean, Baylis; Ron Coultas, Winchester; Johanna Bruns, Winchester; John Hester, Bluffs; and Anita Hirschfeld, Golden Eagle.

\$100 prizes were won by: John Early, White Hall; Kenny Roundcount, Winchester; Leonard Bieker, Golden Eagle; David Gapinski, Pittsfield; Carroll Allen, Griggsville; Darrell Howard, Winchester; David Worrell, Winchester; James Spencer, Winchester; Harold Lister, Barry; Mrs. Billy Newman, Hillview; Teri Little, Winchester; Russell Renoud, Bluffs; Paul Baker, Pittsfield; Albert Weder, Winchester; Russell DeJaynes, Pearl; Donald Long, Winchester;

Shinn Lane Production, Griggsville; Charles Rose, Golden Eagle; Harold Baird, Winchester; Darrell Harshman, Pittsfield; Paul Lindsey, Franklin; Mrs. James Pruitt, Golden Eagle; John Albrecht, Carrollton; Earl Clayton, Winchester; and Joe Robinson, Barry.

Let us know what you thought about the meeting.

Would you do something different?

Would you follow the same meeting format for next year?

New Officers Elected Following the Annual Meeting

At its organizational meeting, immediately following the annual meeting, the Directors elected Merton L. Pond of Bluffs to serve as President; Robert A. Brown of Winchester to serve as Vice President; F. Alan Heaton of Murrayville to serve as Secretary; and Ronald K. Myers to serve as Treasurer.

William Griswold of Rockbridge who had served as President for a dozen years had told directors at the regular July Board meeting that he would not seek reelection to the office although he would continue to serve the Cooperative as a director.



High Line News

(217) 742-3128

ILLINOIS RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

WINCHESTER, ILLINOIS

Does the Cooperative still sell appliances: Ranges, Washers, Dryers, Dish Washers?

You bet.

What about water heaters?

Sure, water heater service contracts, too.

What about appliance repairs?

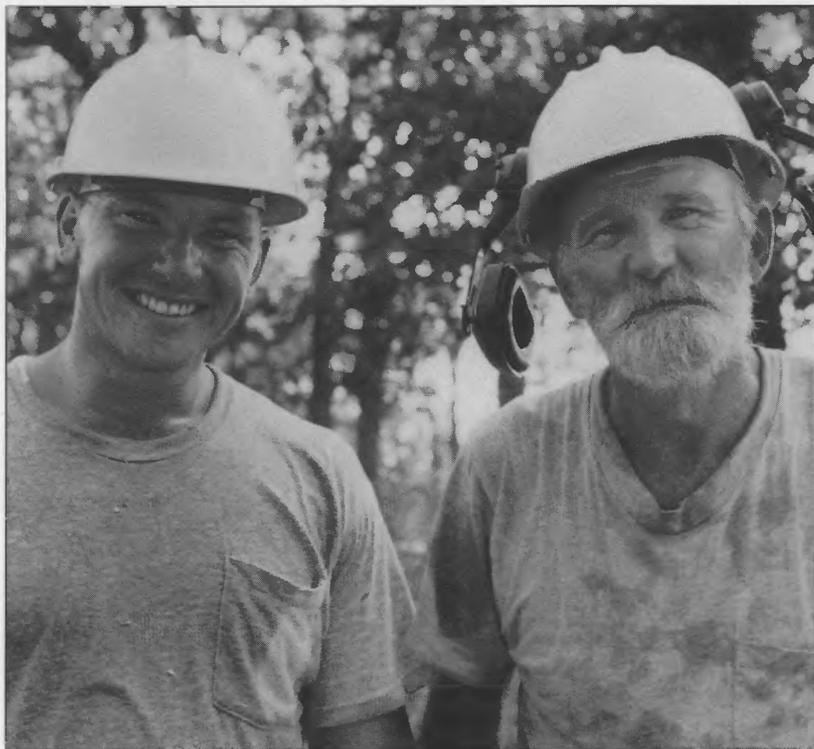
Call Illinois Rural Electric first.

Surge Protection?

\$4.95 a month.

Does the Co-op provide wiring services?

Yes, for both larger and smaller jobs.



We found foresters Darren Hayn (left) and Melvin Funk just south of Fishhook one nearly perfect summer day, clearing the electric right of way. Melvin started working for the cooperative at the beginning of 1973, Darren a little later at the end of 1996.

We went up the road to get a cold drink at the 1906 general store. It's got one of the best tin ceilings we've seen. Across the road is the 1884 Methodist Church.

It's "Fishhook" on the map, but "Fish Hook" on the small sign near the peak on the general store. Do any of our readers know why? What's the history? What was it like when these buildings were new?



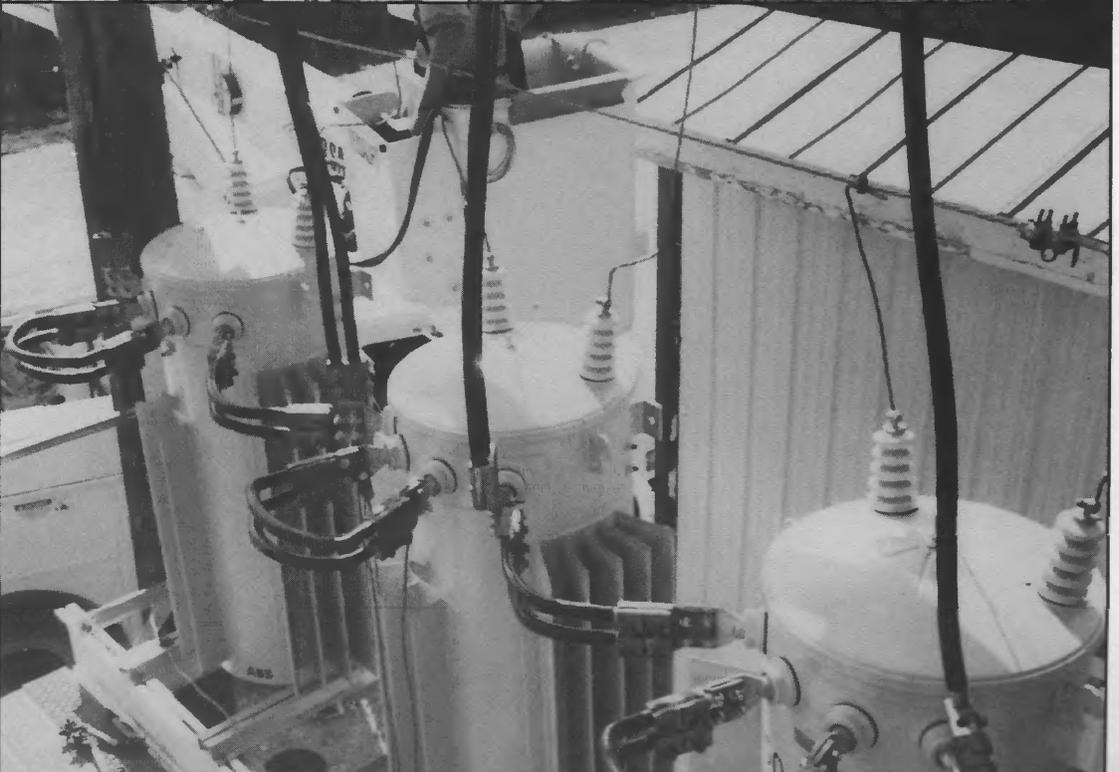
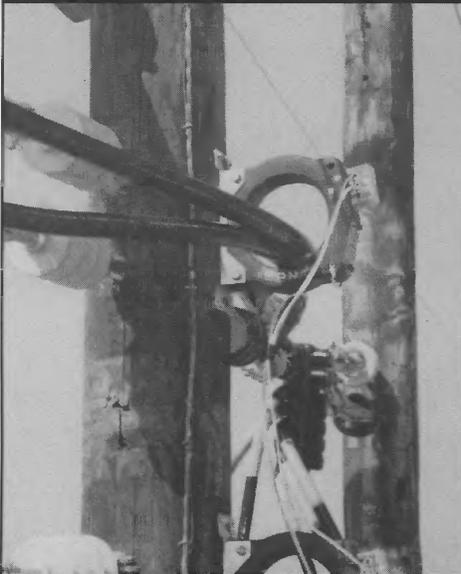
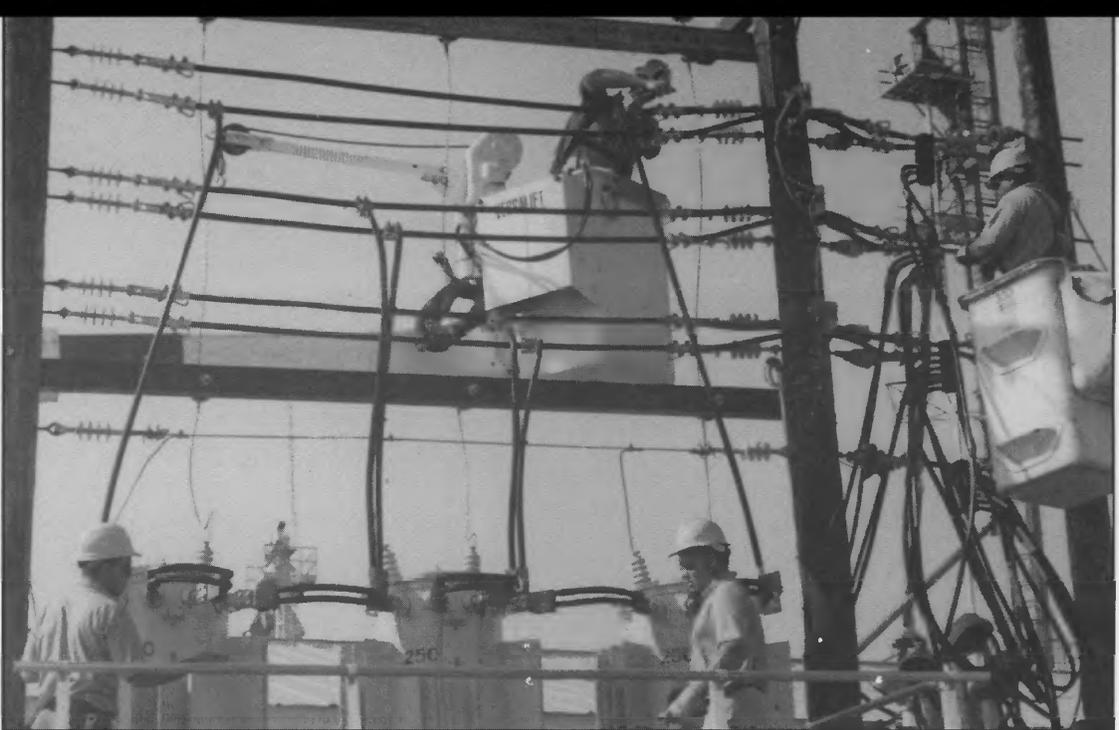


A Larger than Average Transformer Installation

We installed this transformer bank (750 kVa for those of you technically inclined) at a grain handling facility late this past summer. It's large enough to easily handle 50 good-sized single family houses.

These photos were taken by Albert "Sonny" Kirchner, journeyman specialist.

At the top of the next page, going clockwise from the top are journeyman specialist Dwight Ala, foreman Gary Harbison, journeyman Joe Killday, and apprentice lineman Nick Freeman. We also get bird's eye, or bucket truck, views of the installation thanks to Sonny.



Plaque Returned

Our Cooperative was one of the first in the nation to build and operate power plants when the larger investor owned utilities were unable or unwilling to supply power in the 1930s.

One of those plants, the Winchester Diesel Plant, built in 1938, was transferred to Western Illinois Power Cooperative and then to Soyland Power Cooperative at the time of their merger. Today's economics doomed the facility, capable of carrying only a fraction of the system's total, current requirements. It's been torn down.

The name plaque, however, was saved and returned to the Cooperative's President, Merton L. Pond of Bluffs, at a recent Soyland Board meeting.

The plaque reads:

"To advance the position of agriculture, to enrich the life of the community, to free men and women from the heavy drudgery of the home and farm, this generating plant was erected in cooperation with their federal government by farmers of the neighborhood to whom it supplies the limitless service of electricity."

The language is a little dated, too, but the idea of people working together for their common good isn't. It's a key building block of cooperatives across America.

Jim Bettis Retires

After a 31-year career at the Cooperative, Jim Bettis retired at the end of August 1998.

He had held a number of positions over the years, most recently general ledger accountant.

Our best wishes go with him.

Please, Please Call Ahead

We're happy to mark underground electric facilities before you dig and to meet with members about new building projects where electricity will be needed.

But, generally speaking, we need at least a couple of day's notice.

Temperature Settings & Costs

As a rule of thumb, your heating costs will increase by just over 3% for each degree you increase your thermostat setting. Try taking the setting down a couple of degrees, and save 6.2%.

Speaking of Costs, Would You Prefer Paying the Same Amount for Electricity Every Month?

Give us a call at 217-742-3128 or 800-468-4732, and we'll set up a plan for you.

**With summer and
air conditioning
gone
for months and
months,**

**And
winter and heating
close at hand,
think of the
benefits of
getting an
electric bill that's
the same
month after
month.**

**We can do that
for you with**

“Budget Billing.”

**Just give us
a call,
and we'll level out
your monthly
payments.**

**800-468-4732
217-742-3128**



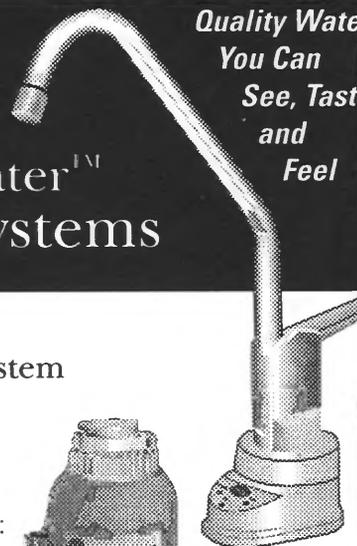
At the top, posing in a serious way, from the left are Apprentice Brad Kemper, Foreman Kevin Baird and Journeyman Matt Clayton. They were in hilly Calhoun County to install an electric service for the rural water district. The snapshot at the bottom captures them in a more natural way.





GE SmartWater™ Whole Home Systems

Quality Water
You Can
See, Taste
and
Feel



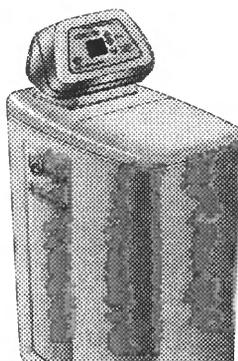
GE SmartWater™ Reverse Osmosis Filtration System

- ✓ Great tasting, high quality water for drinking & cooking, on-demand.
- ✓ Eliminates the expense and inconvenience of bottled water.
- ✓ Reduces the following undesirable elements:

Taste & Odor	Nitrates/Nitrites
- Ammonia	Sodium
- Chlorine	Organic/Inorganic
Sediment	Chemical substances
Lead	
Cysts	

And More!

GE Profile Performance™



GE Profile Performance™

GE SmartWater™ Softening System

- ✓ Laundry is brighter, cleaner and softer; life of clothing is increased.
 - ✓ Reduced spotting of dishes and glassware.
 - ✓ Helps reduce scale build-up in pipes.
 - ✓ Increases efficiency of water heaters.
- Saves over \$500.00 in energy costs over the life of your new water heater.

FREE Water Analysis!

No purchase necessary - A \$15.00 Value!
-with this coupon-

10% OFF

The Purchase of a GE Profile Performance Water Softener and GE Profile Performance Reverse Osmosis Filtration System
- with this coupon -

Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative



There's No Better Way to Travel

We've come into Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative territory on interstate highways, over bridges, and on state and county roads, but there's no better way to travel here than on the ferry.

Watch paddle wheel on the Golden Eagle Ferry work the river water. Look up and down the great river.

Maybe, once in a while, you'll get the pleasure of being the only passenger.

Think about getting something to eat at Kinder's while you watch others enjoy the trip.

And, before you know it, it's gone. Over too soon, your trip on the Mississippi. If you haven't done it, or haven't in a while, go soon.



NEWS, NOTES & VIEWS 11/98

Students Encouraged to Apply for Illinois Electric Cooperative Memorial Scholarships

For the fourth consecutive year, Illinois electric cooperatives will award academic scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each to two high school seniors.

High school seniors pursuing a college education in the state of Illinois are eligible to participate. One of the two scholarships will be awarded to the child of an electric cooperative member/customer. The other \$1,000 will go to the child of an electric cooperative director or employee.

The deadline for applications is January 1, 1999.

Candidates are judged on the basis of grade point average, college entrance exam scores, work and volunteer experience, school and civic activities and a short essay which demonstrates their knowledge of electric cooperatives.

The scholarship program was established in 1994 by the board of directors of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. For more information, call Patty Brogdon at the Cooperative's office.

You Be the Judge

After not hearing from the customer or receiving a payment for two months, we shut off the electricity at a seasonal cabin.

The customer/member was furious. He said he hadn't received either bill. The bills hadn't been returned to us.

Part of the customer's position was that we should have known that because of the 911 program in a city and county we don't serve, his address had been changed. We thought that when an address changes, it's the member's responsibility to let us know. What do you think?

We post a fair number of notices for community events in the window of the office here in Winchester.

Unfortunately, most members don't get to see them there.

If you want to use this "window" in *Illinois Country Living* for your community event, send it to us by the 20th of the month, two months before the event. For example, the 20th of October for the December issue. We'll use what we can, depending on available space.



Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 80, Two South Main Street
Winchester, Illinois 62694

1-800-468-4732

Seasons Greetings to All of You from All of Us

Braed Kemper Sam Dunatt Andy Nash

Jim Mason Ronnie Stair Lynn Rainey

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Perry Moore Joe Kallday

Danny Smith

Seasons Greetings

Ron Coulter

Merry Christmas

Mark Aerts

Melvin Funk



Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 80, Two South Main Street
Winchester, Illinois 62694

1-800-468-4732



Felices Fiestas

Et Olee

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Merry Christmas

Dwight ALA

Chad
Gregory



Merry Christmas
Clayton Dehart

Gary
Karlina

Merry Christmas
Jamie Kilday

Kevin Baud

Gary
Kurniss

MERRY CHRISTMAS

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Merry Christmas
Teresa Sipes

Craig Long

Cory L. Kattelman

Ho Ho Ho! Ho Ho Ho!

Meilleurs Voeux

Merry Christmas
Michelle Peters

Happy Holidays
Jim Biglow

Seasons
Greetings!
Julie Day

Happy
Holidays!
Patty
Broglow

Merry Christmas
Rand Long

Happy Holidays!
Sabrina K. Schnake

Merry Christmas
Jina Weber

Dave Gant

Merry Christmas
+
Happy New Year!
Sandy Wynn

Happy
Holidays!
Dennis W. Taylor

Merry CHRISTMAS
HAPPY NEW YEAR
Darren Hayn

Happy
Holidays
Donna Lawson

Seasons Greetings

Merry Christmas

Nik Freeman

Steve
Wisdom

Darrell
Harshman

Sonny Kuchner
☺

Kenny
Roundcount

Merry Christmas
Sean Middleton

Dave
Lewis

Happy
Holidays
Joann
Steele

Happy Holidays
Larry C. Weder

Matt
Clayton



Merry Xmas
Bruce Gifford

Happy New Year