

Need a new heater?

Geothermal heating uses free earth- energy

If your old heater has seen better days, why not consider the latest in energy efficient heating and cooling — a geothermal heat pump. Your new heat pump will use the earth's energy to heat and cool your home for year-round energy savings.

Geothermal heat pumps are quiet, efficient, clean, safe and environmentally sound.

Energy savings

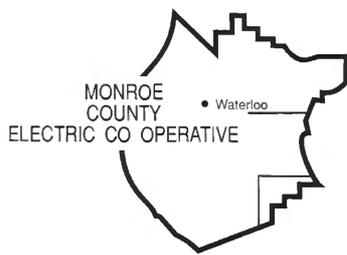
Geothermal heat pumps take advantage of the constant year-round 55 to 60 degree ground temperature. You can get \$4 in heating and cooling from each dollar of electricity.

Other advantages

- Free hot water through a waste heat recovery system.
- No outdoor compressor — you and your neighbors will appreciate its quiet operation.
- Safe, pollution-free operation. No flame and no carbon monoxide poisoning.

***For more information on new heat pump technology,
contact your electric cooperative or local
geothermal heat pump dealer.***





Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC.

WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the Manager's desk



Joseph J. Fellin

Throughout the world, 1999 is sure to be a year of celebration and excitement for the coming of a new century. Here at home, for rural electric cooperatives, it will be a time of particular anticipation. It will be a year in which we honor those whose leadership has brought us to this point. And it will be a year in which new leaders step forward to lead us into the millennium.

It will be a year of optimism.

More and more states may consider and pass new laws to change the way you purchase energy services. Congress may even pass legislation next year. Throughout it all electric cooperatives will be there on the front lines fighting for you.

I think we all learned a valuable lesson from deregulation of long-distance telephone services. Most of us, I'll bet, are completely confused about which company's plan is best and when we can call to save the most money. A dime a

minute sounds nice, but is that the rate all the time? It depends. How long was your call, 3 minutes, 30 minutes? You've got to read the fine print to know what you're paying when. The TV ads definitely confuse things.

Electric cooperatives have been, and for all time, will be committed to change that benefits residential consumers and small business owners. These consumers are the energy users most at risk from the huge power monopolies looking to make an easy buck by working for the same type of confusing rules we got when long-distance telephone service was deregulated.

Our priorities are different. Our priorities start with consumer advocacy and protection instead of profits. It is a responsibility that electric cooperatives embraced when we first began more than 60 years ago, and it is a responsibility that we celebrate as we enter the 21st century.

For several generations, electric cooperatives have been leaders in the communities they serve, working with others to bring jobs and opportunity to their communities.

It is a job that will continue.

Our vision of the future is one that brings the promise of electric cooperative service to all who desire it. To those who want local control. To those who want to protect themselves from being taken advantage of. To those who want to work together to bring new opportunity to their communities in a new century.

Take care of electric blankets

Now is the time to put that electric blanket back to work for your comfort and convenience.

Here are a few clues on care.

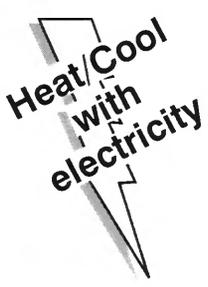
Plug in your electric blanket and see that all electrical parts are working properly as follows:

- Check connections to be sure all plugs fit securely so the connections won't come apart in normal use.
- See if the signal light on the control dial goes on indicating that the blanket is heating.
- Check the cord. If there are bare or worn areas, take the blanket and cord parts to an

authorized dealer. Be prepared to wait about two weeks and longer if the blanket must be returned to the factory for replacement parts.

Never, never have an electric blanket dry-cleaned. This usually ruins the insulation on wiring.

Most blankets are washable. Read the instructions that came with your blanket and follow them carefully. If the directions have been misplaced, ask your dealer to supply a new set to match the blanket model you bought, or write to the Manufacturer's home economics department.



System: GT

Geothermal heating, cooling and water heating

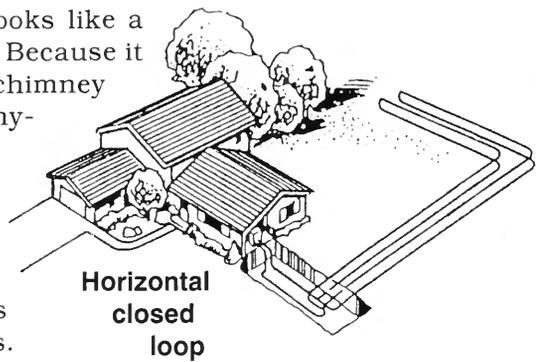
Rebates!
Rebates!
Rebates!

**Heat and cool with
up to 400% efficiency**

MCEC members, now you can get maximum comfort, energy and cost savings from a system designed to use natural energy from the earth. Better than the best gas furnace!

What is a geothermal system?

Geothermal is the safest, most energy-efficient, pollution-free heating and cooling system available. Basically it looks like a normal furnace, but that's where the similarity ends. Because it burns no fossil fuel, it emits no pollutants, thus, no chimney is required. Therefore, it can be installed almost anywhere, in a basement, crawlspace, attic or closet. Geothermal is a complete home heating system. In the summer, select the cooling mode on the thermostat and the geothermal system is your complete home cooling center. Geothermal can also supply most of your domestic hot water requirements. Customers report savings up to 60 percent heating their homes. Cooling cost reductions of 50 percent are not uncommon with a geothermal system.



Cost comparisons

LP Gas — Natural Gas vs. MCEC Electric Heat Rate

Listing below is the cost to provide one million BTU of heat. This is a direct cost comparison of different fuel sources and types of heating systems to produce the same amount of heat. You can use this information to help you decide the most economical heating system to install in your home.

		per million B.T.U.
Geothermal Heating	COP3.75	
	MCEC Electric Heat Rate 78 kwh @ 5¢/kwh =	\$ 3.90
Air Source Heat Pump	COP2	
	MCEC Electric Heat Rate 146 kwh @5¢/kwh =	7.30
Electric Resistance Heat	COP1	
	MCEC Electric Heat Rate 293 kwh @ 5¢/kwh =	14.65
Natural Gas	90 AFUE 11.1 Therms @ 55¢/Therm =	6.11
	80 AFUE 12.5 Therms @ 55¢/Therm =	6.88
Liquid Propane Gas	90 AFUE 12 gallons @ 70¢/gallon =	8.40
	12 gallons @ 80¢/gallon =	9.60
Liquid Propane Gas	80 AFUE 14 gallons @ 70¢/gallon =	9.80
	14 gallons @ 80¢/gallon =	11.20
Dual Fuel System	HP COP 2.5/80 AFUE LP	
	Heat Pump 78 kwh @ 5¢/kwh = <u>\$3.90</u>	
	LP 4 gal @ 70¢/gal = <u>\$2.80</u>	
	=	6.70

*COP — Coefficient of Performance

Don't let carbon monoxide sneak up on you this winter!

It has been said that the chief cause of problems is solutions — those things we do to solve one problem lead to another. That is true of the steps we've taken over the years to combat the energy crunch.

Years ago, when coal, oil or propane heated most homes, and when those fuels were inexpensive, it was easy to keep a house warm. If we felt chilly, we just built a bigger fire.

Houses were built with little thought to air infiltration, because it didn't matter much. Then energy costs rose dramatically. There were families whose energy bills matched or exceeded their mortgage payments, and it became necessary to find a remedy to that problem.

One solution was to snug up houses. We did that by adding insulation, weatherstripping, by caulking in places where different kinds of material joined.

People who built new homes were encouraged to "build tight," and that helped with heating and cooling. But it brought problems, too. Those old drafty houses had one advantage: any carbon monoxide generated by the cook stove and/or furnace went out through all those cracks, along with some of the heated air.

When we set out to tighten up our homes, we made it harder for the heat to escape and the carbon monoxide as well.

Carbon monoxide (CO), which is generated any time something burns, is particularly deadly because it is invisible and odorless. Many people save themselves from fire because they can smell smoke, or see it, or they can see flames. CO is a sneaky killer, and its effects can be cumulative. More than 250 people die each year in the U.S. because of CO, and some 10,000 seek medical help after being exposed to it.

Carbon monoxide is more of a problem in winter than in summer, because furnaces use a lot of fuel, and the more fuel that's burned, the more CO that's generated. And we're much less likely to have a window or door slightly ajar, as we are in the summer. Then there's always the temptation to warm up the car while it's in the garage. Never do that!

In addition to furnaces and cook stoves, other sources of CO can be wood-burning stoves, fossil-fueled water heaters and clothes dryers. Barbecue grills, kerosene stoves and camping heaters, which are sometimes used by people desperate for warmth, are especially hazardous.

People subjected to low levels of CO experience nausea, dizziness, vomiting, headaches, confusion and fatigue, while high-level exposure results in diarrhea, impaired vision, abdominal pain, convulsions and coma. If they don't get away from the CO, death will result.

Low-level CO poisoning is often confused for flu, partly because both tend to be most prevalent during winter.

The elderly, the very young and the sick are the first to suffer the effects of CO poisoning, and in pregnant women, the fetus is the first to be affected.

There are several things you can do to protect yourself. Probably the first line of defense should be to make a point of having any fossil-fueled appliance checked by a professional serviceman every year, preferably at the beginning of the heating season. Obviously, you should seek help immediately any time you smell gas.

Another wise step is to buy and use a CO detector. For years, safety experts urged people to put smoke detectors in their homes and to keep their batteries up to date. That campaign has saved many lives and prevented a lot of property damage.

CO detectors can do the same. While they're not as cheap as smoke detectors, the prices of CO protection are coming down. Now's the time to go to your home supply store and buy a CO detector.

There are different kinds, and part of the difference is in how the unit is powered. Some plug into a wall outlet, while others use batteries. Some have a digital display that shows the CO level in the air, while others sound an alarm when the CO level reaches a certain point.

Your friends at your local electric co-op hope you'll help make the winter season safer by investing in a CO detector.





On call in

Good
weather...

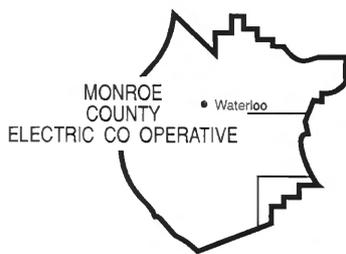
and BAD.

When winter winds give us their worst, the line crews at your electric cooperative are on call 24 hours daily to make sure that you have prompt electricity if an outage should occur.

When the lights go out in the middle of the night, it's reassuring to know that the line crews at your electrical cooperative are there. With little notice they'll be on the scene, working their hardest to get the power back on and keep it flowing. Cooperative line crews brave some of nature's worst elements, often off the road in deep snow or 40 feet off the ground working the overhead lines. Safety must be foremost in their minds at all times.

Keeping the electricity flowing is dangerous work. . . in good weather and bad. Members, like you, can count on cooperative linemen to get the job done . . . and keep the power flowing.





Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC.

WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the Manager's desk



Joseph J. Fellin

The consumer comes first

No one knows what is best for a local community more than the men and women who live and work there. In fact, local control and consumer ownership were guiding principles that rural communities used 60 years ago to form electric co-ops.

Now, other communities are now coming together to do the same thing. While the member-consumers of these new co-ops may already have electric service, they want something more. They seek the promise that electric co-op service makes to customers every day; to put their priorities first, above all others. And they desire what consumers of electric co-ops already have — a voice in determining the direction of their energy provider.

As consumer-owned businesses, we exist to serve you. Our rules are simple — what is best for the consumer is best for us. What hurts the consumer hurts us.

Our history of working for the best interests of consumers puts us in a unique position as electric utilities. In fact, no other utility can lay claim to the remarkable record of consumer advocacy that we can. Nor can any other utility company count as partners the businesses that purchase their electricity, the labor unions their employees belong to, or the consumer advocacy groups that work along side us. Finally, no other utility can claim the high level of consumer satisfaction and loyalty that electric co-ops command.

Yes, our commitment to current consumers remains as strong as ever. But, electric co-ops nationally are also committed to helping others gain the benefits of electric co-op service. They've already helped people in places as diverse as New York City and California form new co-ops. Our work is based on the belief that consumers in any part of the country ought to have the opportunity to benefit from having their own, locally controlled electric utility.

The strongest competitive advantage we have is our special consumer advocacy position in the utility industry. Our competitors have no claim on our ability to represent consumer interests as well as electric co-ops. Our vision for the future is one that puts the consumer first — above all other priorities. This has always been the commitment of electric co-ops for six decades. It remains so today for us at Monroe County Electric Co-Operative.

Nominating Committee named:

Meeting set for Feb. 3

A committee on nominations has been appointed and will meet at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 3, 1999, at the Monroe County Electric Co-Operative meeting room in Waterloo. The committee will meet to place the names of three persons in nomination to be elected at the cooperative's annual meeting, to serve a three (3) year term as directors of Monroe County Electric Co-Operative.

The cooperative's 61st Annual Meeting of Members will be held Monday, March 22, 1999 at the Hecker Community Center, Hecker, Illinois.

Directors whose current terms expire and who are eligible for re-election are:

District 4 Donald L. Gleiber
#2 Richard St.
Waterloo, Illinois

District 5 Terry J. Grommet
3810 High Prairie School Rd.
Belleville, Illinois

District 6 Ross R. Mueller
4700 Fischer Rd.
Fults, Illinois

Allan Mueller, 143 Sterrit Run,
Waterloo, Illinois, 62298
Tom Heavner, # I David St.,
Waterloo, Illinois, 62298
(Alternate)
Walter Rau, 8800 Gilmore Lake Rd.,
Columbia, Illinois, 62236

As a cooperative member, you have the right as well as an obligation to participate in the election process. If you have any comments or suggestions for the election, please contact members of the 1999 Nominating Committee.

Cooperative Bylaws state: Any twenty five (25) or more active members, acting together, may make other Nominations by petition received at the Cooperative office not less than twenty one (21) days prior to the Annual Meeting of members and shall be posted at the same place as nominations by the committee is posted, and shall appear in the official notice of the meeting and on the official ballot. Additional nominations may also be made from the floor. Any nomination by petition or from the floor shall meet the same qualifications and eligibility as nominees by the nominating committee.

1999 Nominating Committee

District 4

Arnold Matzenbacher, 6526 Goeddeltown,
Waterloo, Illinois, 62298

District 5

Dennis Sambo, 5249 Douglas Rd.,
Belleville Illinois, 62220
Lester Wachtel, PO Box 48,
Smithton, Illinois, 62285
Gilbert Fischer, 4919 Fischer Rd.,
Smithton Illinois, 62285
(Alternate)
Ken Kapelski, 3512 High Prairie School Rd.,
Belleville, Illinois, 62220

District 6

Warren Dannehold, 1361 N. Moore St.,
Waterloo, Illinois, 62298
Willard Meister, 2916 KK Road,
Waterloo, Illinois, 62298
Vernon Hesterberg, 4943 Rock Road,
Waterloo, Illinois, 62298
(Alternate)
Arthur Koch, 4975 Maeyes Rd.,
Waterloo, Illinois, 62298

1999 Youth to Washington tour

In June of each year, the electric and telephone cooperatives in Illinois and across the United States sponsor groups of young people to Washington, D.C. on the Youth to Washington program. During a full week in the nation's Capital, these students get an up-close look at democracy in action and get to meet with their congressional delegation and staff.

Past participants will tell you it is the trip of a lifetime. It's an experience they never will forget, full of fun, new friends, non-stop touring and yes; they actually learn something too. Most come back with an even deeper respect for our Country, our form of government and their opportunities.

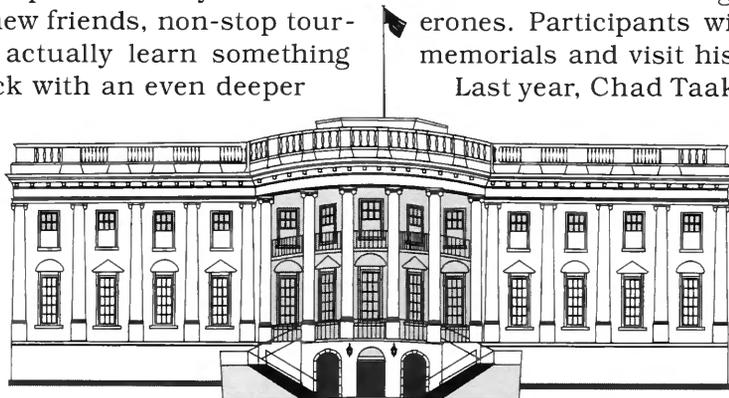
Since 1957, hundreds of future leaders have

been introduced to government and the legislative process through this program. Many alumni of the program have gone on to leadership positions in our communities and government. Two current members of the Illinois General Assembly, State Representatives Tom Ryder and Art Tenhouse, are past members of the tour.

The Youth to Washington tour is recognized as one of the best youth tours of Washington, D.C. The tour is well organized with good chaperones. Participants will see monuments and memorials and visit historical places.

Last year, Chad Taake of Waterloo and Perry Trolard of Freeburg attended and had a great learning experience.

For more information, contact the cooperative office.



What you can do during a blackout

A utility lineman was working another 16-hour day during an outage rebuilding a primary line when a woman drove up and unloaded a string of obscenities. She wanted heat and lights now. The lineman tried to explain to her that the line was down and it was dangerous. And, besides, restoring the primary line was a first step in getting power back to her and hundreds of others. She said, "I'm tired of listening to your excuses," and drove off.

It's very easy to lose your patience during a long outage. Linemen and all the other co-op employees hope you remember it took years to build the miles and miles of electric lines serving your home and others. Rebuilding a line after a major storm often can't be accomplished in just a couple hours.

There are things you can do to help. First, report your outage and anything you've seen like a downed power line. Second, be patient with our dispatchers answering the phone. The busy signal you'll probably hear is not because they've left the phone off the hook on purpose. It's probably glued to their ear as they try to answer hundreds of phone calls.

When a power line falls down in your road or yard, whatever you do, don't touch it. That's rule number one for coping with a blackout. The line might still be energized. Just because sparks aren't flying doesn't mean the power is off. Circuit breakers at the substation probably shut the line down as soon as it fell, but testing the reliability of the circuit breakers isn't worth a fatal shock. The circuit breaker may be set to try to reconnect the line during the first minute and power will rush through it again, if only for a split second. This is

why your lights may blink three times before finally going off.

Don't drive over a downed line, either; although your tires will insulate the car, you're taking the chance that the line may change position and injure you or someone else.

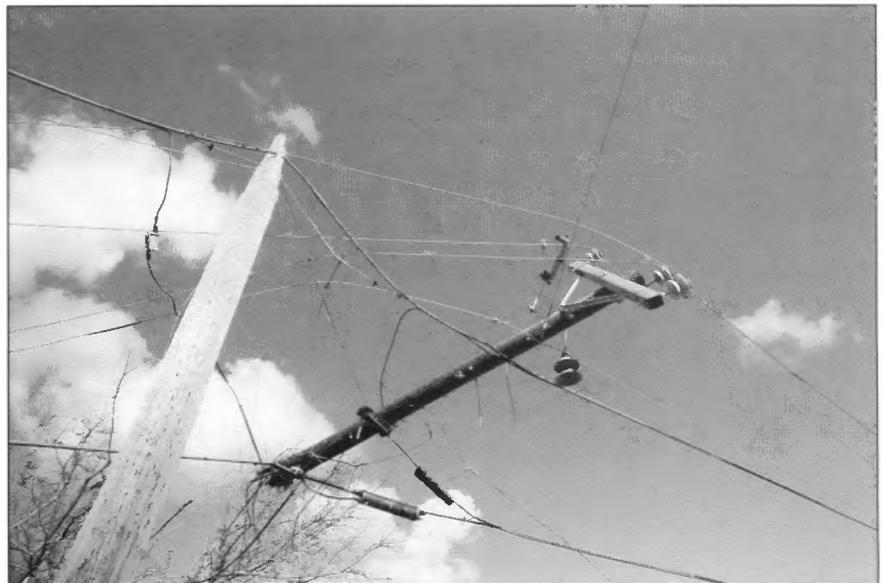
Rule number two is, don't put power into a line. (This means, do not plug a generator into the housewiring.) It is possible to light your house marginally by doing this, but you could kill someone because the power you put into your house could get out of it, into power lines outside. Going the other way, it will jump in voltage and suddenly you'll be feeding seven thousand volts into a wire that may be hanging low in somebody's yard, or that a lineman may be repairing. Instead, plug appliances or lights directly into the generator. For larger generators install a double throw transfer switch at the meter pole. Call the co-op if you have any questions on safe use of generators.

When repairs are under way, settle in with your candles and wait. The candles were in a convenient drawer with the matches

because you are an organized person who anticipates blackouts and you have stored candles, water and a battery-powered radio and you have a way to keep at least one room warm. If your home is on a well, fill a bathtub and large water containers as soon as you know a large storm is coming.

The linemen have one more word of advice. Turn off or unplug your appliances including your heater (or air-conditioner in the summer). There may be little bursts of power through the line when the power comes back on, the alternating current frequency may be momentarily higher or lower than normal. This surge may be uncomfortable for your appliances or your home computer. It helps the lineman too because, if at the moment power is restored, all the refrigerators and other big appliances in all the homes start up at the same time, that in itself can blow fuses and trip relays.

So when the lights go out don't touch the wires, don't plug a portable generator into your house, wiring unless you've installed a double throw transfer switch, call when you have information, turn off the appliances and wait. Check on your neighbors. Get out the camping equipment and candles. Finally, be safe and be patient. Our lineman won't stop until your lights are on.



A comfortable home for all seasons

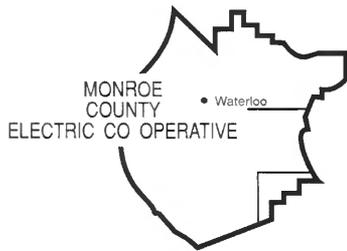
This winter has been a record breaker for Illinois. And as records were set, many homeowners became painfully aware of energy leaks in their homes. But, unlike the snow, home weatherization problems will remain with us even after the changing of the seasons.

Air leaks and low levels of insulation that let heat escape this winter will plague you this summer when you try to keep your home cool.

Spring is a good time to make energy efficiency improvements. Your electric cooperative can help you plan for maximum comfort, convenience and economy by advising you on everything from upgrading your heating and cooling system to caulking and insulation. Call us today.



Electric Cooperatives of Illinois
Helping you use energy efficiently



Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC.

WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the Manager's desk



Joseph J. Fellin

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative will have its 61st Annual Meeting of Members on March 22 at the Hecker Commercial Center. Registration and pre-meeting activities begin at 5 p.m. We will again have health-related organizations with informational booths. Harres Furniture will have merchandise on display and for sale, Ameritech will have a cellular phone display, and Harrisonville Telephone Company will be demonstrating DIRECTV. A chicken dinner will be served from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

During the business meeting, you will hear and approve reports of directors and officers, elect three members to serve three-year terms to the Cooperative's board of directors, and act on any other business that may come before the meeting.

Daryle Stonier, farmer and humorist from Minonk, Illinois, will be the featured speaker at this year's meeting. Daryle is proud to be an American farmer, husband, father and grandfather. He has the ability to see the humorous side of life and has a love for entertaining people.

Registered members in attendance will receive a pocket calculator as a door prize. Four \$25 credits on electric bills will be given as "Early Bird Prizes". Attendance prizes will be awarded at the conclusion of the meeting.

So please come join us at our 61st Annual Meeting of Monroe County Electric Co-Operative on March 22nd at the Hecker Community Center.

Projections for 1999

Your management and staff have been busy preparing the 1999 Work Plan and Budget. We project to build about 100 new services in 1999. Revenue for 1999 is estimated at \$8,352,742 on projected sales of 81,951,112-kilowatt hours. Power cost is projected at 62 percent of revenue. Expenses for maintenance of transformers, regulators, oil circuit reclosers, testing of single and three phase meters, tree trimming and right-of-way spraying are included in the 1999 Budget. On-going system maintenance is a high priority at your cooperative to insure a reliable continuity of electric service to our members.

We will continue a lightning protection program started in 1997, of changing out old arrestors with a new type arrestor to give better protection to our system and members from lightning damage. It should also help with some of the blinking problems and help reduce outages due to lightning.

Most of the construction projects for 1999 will be

growing subdivision development. Several of the existing subdivisions are expanding into the next phases of their work plans. A new subdivision next to Gilmore Lake Subdivision is planned for 1999. The electric service area for that subdivision lies about equally between our cooperative area and Illinois Power. We are also looking to upgrade a three-phase line between the Smithton and New Athens substations so that we can back feed that line from either direction.

Long range plans still call for a 69,000 KVA transmission line from our Poe Substation to a metering point near Red Bud, completed by Southern Illinois Power Cooperative in Marion. Conversion of the 34,500 KVA line between the Waterloo and Poe Substations to a 69,000 KVA line is also in the long-range plan.

These maintenance and construction projects will improve service reliability and assure adequate voltage to areas with heavy growth.

Call us first

Have trees that need trimming under or near our power lines? If you do, give us a call at 939-7171 or (800) 757-7433. Play it safe — trees in and around power lines could be dangerous if you try to trim them yourself.

We have experienced tree-trimming crews. Call us and we will try to honor your request.

Remember — Call us first at 939-7171 or (800) 757-7433.



PureWater assures clean water for 4 cents a gallon

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

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

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

MCEC's board and management decided to sell the PureWater system to our members because of the confusing array of water treatment systems

being promoted today, the limited effectiveness of many systems, and the high cost of the better equipment. PureWater is one of the most effective systems available, yet it's simple and reliable and can be self-installed in many instances.

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

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

An informative booklet called "The Water Book" is available on water quality sources and symptoms, and the types of treatment systems available. Members can

get a free copy of "The Water Book" by calling the MCEC office or dropping a note in with your bill payment.

Typical PureWater Contaminant Removal Rates*

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

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

Only \$600 plus tax

\$50 discount to MCEC members.

Up to six months to pay to qualified members.

**Mark
your
calendar**

**Monroe County Electric
Co-Operative's
61st Annual Meeting is
scheduled for
Monday, March 22, 1999
at the Hecker Community Center.**

Think conservation

Building or buying a new nest

For many of us, spring brings the urge to migrate. All over Illinois, as the days lengthen and the weather gets better, many will be looking at new homes. Others will put the final touches on plans and drawings, getting ready to build when the weather cooperates.

You can avoid energy-wasting mistakes if you consider climate, local building codes, and energy-efficient construction when you build or buy.

Does the home take advantage of the sun's natural light and warmth in the winter, when those commodities are in such short supply? Has it been designed not to over-heat in the summer, when heat and sunlight are so plentiful?

When building a home

- Insulate walls and roof to the highest specifications recommended for your area.
- Insulate floors, too, especially those over crawl spaces, cold basements and garages.
- Ventilate the attic using vent panels under the eaves and gable end or ridge vents rather than motor-driven fans.
- Use double-pane insulating glass throughout the house. Consider windows with low-emissivity (low-E) coatings and gas fills when retrofit or replacement is necessary. They improve comfort, cut condensation, and reduce the fading effect of ultraviolet light on home furnishings. Low-E coated

double-pane windows will improve the insulating value of the window area by 40 to 50 percent. A low-E coating is a virtually invisible metal or metallic oxide layer on the glass that reflects heat back into the home during cold weather and back to the outdoors during warm weather.

- Window frames and their quality of construction are as important as the glass unit when making a purchasing decision. Wood and vinyl frames offer the best insulating value today.

- Consider solar heat gain from the windows. Many glazings are available today to control the amount of incoming solar radiation.

- Install windows you can open so you can use natural or fan-forced ventilation in moderate weather.

Install the water heater as close as possible to areas of major use and insulate the pipes to minimize heat loss.

- Consider all the ideas mentioned above for building a house.

- Ask for a description of the insulation and data on the efficiency of space heating, air-conditioning, and water heating equipment, or have an independent engineer advise you about the efficiency of the equipment.

- Consider the need for additional insulation or replacement of equipment. Even some new houses may not be insulated properly. Be sure to check.

If improvements are necessary, you may want to seek an adjustment in the purchase price to cover all, or a reasonable share, of the costs of bringing the house up to par.

Call your co-op for an energy audit

You might want to give some thought to having a qualified person do an energy evaluation of your home's construction and condition for an indication of likely utility bills and for recommended cost-effective energy improvements.

Many Illinois electric cooperatives offer home energy audits, and several participate in the "Certified Comfort Home" program. Check with your co-op if you need help with energy conservation decisions. Your friends there will be glad to help.



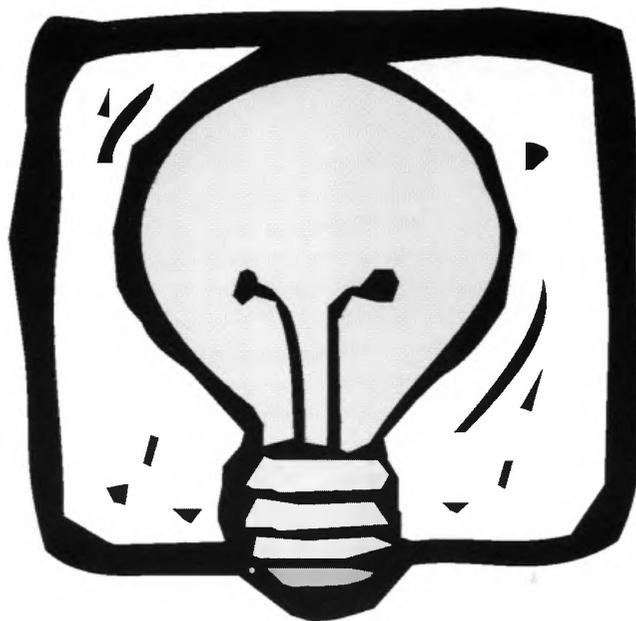
The simple essence of electricity

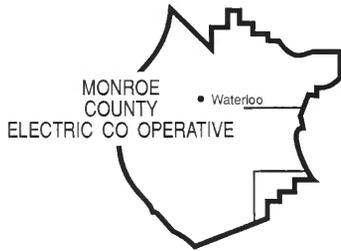
**Find a light bulb and sniff it.
Let everyone in the house sniff it.**

Don't be confused if you can't smell anything. You shouldn't be able to because electricity doesn't have a distinct smell. You can't smell electricity. With electricity, there are no odors, indoor pollution or carbon monoxide to worry about. Electricity provides safe and efficient power for everything in your home.

Please use electricity wisely and conserve when you can. Think about your family's safety when you buy a new appliance. Think electricity!

Electric Cooperatives of Illinois
Helping you use energy safely and efficiently





Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC.

WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the Manager's desk



Joseph J. Fellin

One of the exciting things about working with cooperatives is the ability to help people accomplish things for themselves. The banner of empowerment and self-determination is one that electric cooperatives will proudly carry into the new century.

We've known for a long time that other businesses in the energy service industry don't share our cooperative business principles. That message comes through loud and clear when you look at the business philosophies of large energy monopoly companies.

As the electric industry becomes more competitive, these large power companies may have no reason to serve unprofitable customers. Their philosophy may change from trying to keep all customers, to keeping only the profitable ones. After deregulation is a reality, they will no longer have an obligation to serve loss customers or even marginally profitable ones. As many other companies will do in a competitive environment, they'll focus their resources on those customers who will give them the targeted rate of return expected by their shareholders. The profitable customers usually end up being the larger Commercial or Industrial type loads. Making this their prime objective may leave the residential segment paying for the discounted rates to these loads.

This brings us back to the logic of big power monopolies 60 years ago regarding the electrification of rural America.

Some things never change. Restructuring is bringing about that same attitude but this time it applies to millions of Americans and thousands of small business owners who are "marginally profitable" to the investor-owned power

monopolies. Can consumers with the least amount of market influence expect anything more than being left with the highest rates?

We want to remind everyone that there is a different kind of business model that works, and works well. For essential services like energy, it is an especially good model because it allows those with little or no individual market power to come together in a large pool that allows them to exercise influence in the marketplace alongside huge individual consumers of energy. Such pools already exist in 46 states and they are called electric cooperatives.

We believe that electric cooperatives do have tremendous potential in a changing market place. History does have a way of repeating itself. We must remember the lessons of history and never forget the lessons we have learned from the past.

Office closing

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative will be closed for Good Friday, April 2, 1999

For emergencies call,
(800) 757-7433 or (618) 939-7171



Outage summary for 1998

Electric service is one of the most dependable items you can buy. Monroe County Electric Co-Operative takes pride in bringing you reliable electric power. Occasionally, however, your power may be interrupted by circumstances over which we have little or no control. It is our goal to keep the average outage per member as low as possible and keep the momentary blinking and surges to a minimum.

During 1998, there were 304 outages on the cooperative's system totaling 17,483 consumer hours of outage time. This represents an average outage time of 3.21 hours per member for 1998. This is up .1 hours per member from 1997.

During 1998, power supplier outages accounted for 54 percent of the outages on our system. Weather-related outages accounted for 23 percent of the outages. This was down about two percent from last year. Equipment failure, which includes overload, transformer failure, and deterioration, added another seven percent.

To ensure reliable electric service, your cooperative places a high priority on system maintenance. Approximately 25 percent of our operating expense is for upkeep and maintenance. Tree trimming and right-of-way maintenance

is of utmost importance in keeping our electric distribution lines clear of trees and falling limbs during storms. Other maintenance performed includes pole testing and change-out, testing of substation regulators and transformers, meter testing, upgrading and replacing Oil Circuit Reclosers (OCR's) or breakers and other routine maintenance.

Service is our most important commodity. We are aware of the inconvenience resulting from outages. Management and employees alike are committed to keeping our system in top operating condition.

The following chart shows the cause, total consumer hours and percentage of outage for 1998:

Cause	Total	
	Consumer hours	Percent
Power Supply Construction & Maintenance	9,507	54.4
Equipment	129	.7
Weather	1,201	6.9
Animals	3,954	22.6
Accidents, unknown, other	125	.7
	2,567	14.7



New! First time ever!!

Corporate rate plan now available to Monroe County Electric Co-Op members

- Monthly Access \$9.95
- Peak Airtime (per minute) \$.17
- Off-Peak Airtime (per minute) \$.02

Equipment

Installed

Motorola TX300 \$124.00

Bag

Motorola 2250 Tote \$ 67.00

2/3-Year

Handheld Portable

Motorola Profile 300 FREE!

Nokia 918 \$24.00

Motorola Micro TAC 650e \$49.00

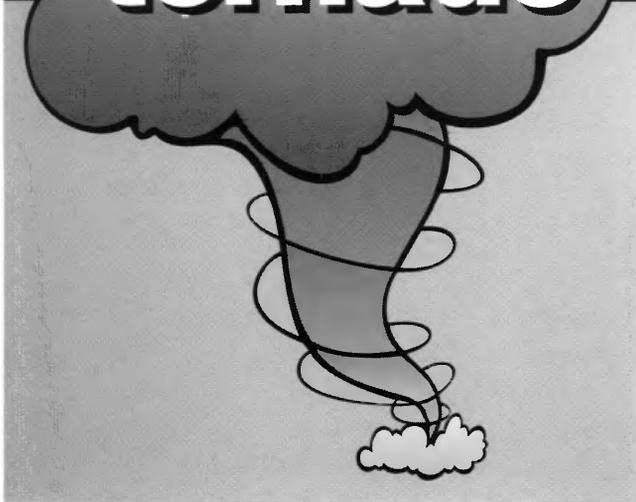
Nokia 252 \$69.00

Take advantage of Corporate Rates and receive **FREE:**

- Call Waiting
- Call Forwarding
- Three-Way Calling
- Detailed Billing

Bills sent conveniently to your home address
Automatic Credit Card Billing required to participate in program

Spring brings increase in tornado activity



Even though most thunderstorm and tornado activity normally takes place in April, May and June, Illinois has already had some severe storms, and we shouldn't be surprised if more come soon.

Normally, tornadoes and severe thunderstorms tend to develop in the late afternoon and early evening, but that's not always the case.

Now is the time of year when you might want to stash a few items in the safest place in your house, and leave everything there until you're sure the storm season's over. A flashlight should be in your kit, as well as a battery-powered radio and blankets and pillows. If you have a basement you should store your emergency kit in this safe area.

There are two different kinds of warnings involving tornadoes. A tornado watch simply means that the weather is getting rotten and that a tornado may develop if things get worse. You can go about your normal business if you "watch" the weather.

A tornado warning means that the weather is already rotten, and it's time to seek shelter in that little nest you prepared earlier. Warnings aren't issued unless a tornado shows up on radar, or one has actually been sighted.

If you hear a warning, go to your basement, if you have one. That's by far the safest place. In many homes, a stairwell, inside hallway or bathroom on the lowest floor will be the safest place.

Get into a closet or bathtub, if you need to.

If you're in a public building, look for a designated shelter. Often, there'll be one in an interior area on the lowest floor. Stay away from outside walls, doors and windows. Stay out of large rooms, such as gyms, and avoid parked vehicles.

If you're outside when a tornado comes, head for the nearest shelter. If you're caught out in the open, lie down in the nearest ditch or depression, preferably away from trees and power lines. Since flying debris is a major cause of deaths and injuries during tornadoes, cover your head as well as you can.

If you're in your car, get out and find shelter. If there is none, lie flat in a depression. Don't try to outrun a tornado in your car. This isn't the movies, it's reality!

One of the worst places to be in a tornado situation is a mobile home. Leave a mobile home immediately if you hear a tornado warning and take your chances in the best shelter you can find. Experts agree that you're better off in a ditch or small depression than in a mobile home.

If you're stuck in a tornado-prone area and a house without a basement, there is an option you may want to look into. Years ago, it was common practice to have a small storm shelter out in the yard, usually about half underground and mounded over.

As more and more homes were built with basements, they fell out of favor. If you have a mobile home, and no access to a better form of protection, you may want to give some thought to building such a shelter.

After the storm can be a dangerous time. Watch for downed power lines. They may look safe lying on the ground, but they are **not** insulated and they could still be energized and deadly.

Be careful clearing trees after a storm. Contact your local electric co-op if the trees are near power lines. They have the tools and training to handle the job safely.



There's no place like home...

... and when the quiet of night rolls around, you'll have peace of mind with a security light from your electric cooperative.

Nothing foils a would-be burglar or trespasser like a brilliant electric cooperative security light. Today's security lights are brighter and more efficient than ever. And since the security light turns itself on at dusk and off at dawn, it never wastes electricity.

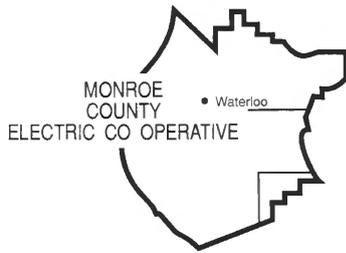
Today, a security light is a necessity for every farm and home. . . providing you with safe, secure protection for you family and possessions.

So, put a little light in your night . . . and call your electric cooperative today for all the details.



Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

You deserve the peace of mind a security light can provide.



Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC.

WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the Manager's desk



Joseph J. Fellin

Annual Meeting highlights

Over 450 members and guests attended your cooperative's 61st Annual Meeting, Monday, March 22, 1999 at the Hecker Commercial Center in Hecker. We were pleased with the attendance and thank all of you who participated in the meeting.

Three board members were re-elected to a three-year term. Donald Gleiber of Waterloo was re-elected for District 4. Terry Grommet of rural Belleville, who is currently board chairman, was re-elected for District 5. Ross Mueller of Fults was re-elected for District 6.

All members who were registered for the meeting received a pocket calculator as a door prize and were eligible for the drawing of attendance prizes awarded at the end of the meeting.

Speaking to the members and guests, board chairman Terry Grommet welcomed everyone. He stated that the cooperative has had a very busy year.

Grommet reported that last June, representatives from MCEC and IDOT met together and finally reached a settlement on the 3.89 acres of property that was taken away from us due to the Route 3 widening.

Also resolved last year was the issue of the access road wanted by Walmart Supercenter and the city of Waterloo through the co-op's property. The cooperative granted the access road in exchange for a four-year agreement to provide wholesale power to the Illinois Municipal Electric Agency (IMEA). The city of Waterloo meters and bills the power to Walmart. The co-op also received improvements to our property to increase the value for future sale and we also received property behind the Walmart store to relocate our North Waterloo substation.

Grommet also said that since the opening of the new Super Wal-Mart store behind our co-op office,

our property's monetary value has increased significantly. That along with the fact that the co-op has outgrown its present facility, the decision was made to begin the process of selling off the lots to our property and search for a new office location.

He also discussed the new alliance with Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC) and expressed that this was a great opportunity for us to secure future power requirements at substantial savings to the co-op. "We are happy with the agreement we have with SIPC and feel it is a great organization to be associated with," Grommet said.

Joseph J. Fellin, President/CEO, reviewed events and operations over the past year with the aid of a new Power Point computer presentation program which projected figures, images and pictures pertaining to the meeting, onto a large screen as the evening proceeded. Fellin noted that in 1998, our line crews constructed about ten miles of new line to serve 150 new services. He added that we upgraded 55 existing services, changed out 44 bad poles and had our North Waterloo substation moved to a new location. It was noted that the average member's cost per kilowatt-hour did drop slightly. He also reported that energy sales increased about seven percent from 1997.

Fellin added that three major systems were upgraded this year; our voice radio, SCADA (system monitoring), and data processing systems. The new data processing system is now an "in-house" system. A product of that upgrade is a new and improved billing statement.

Fellin reviewed the history of the co-op and the past relationship we've had with Soyland Power. He discussed the buy-out of Soyland and the new association with SIPC in Marion. Fellin noted that the savings in the wholesale power costs from SIPC for the next three years will be used to pay off the Soyland debt. He stated the rates will remain the same for that period of time. After that, our cost of wholesale power should drop from 6 cents/kwh (Soyland) to about 4 cents/kwh with SIPC.

President/CEO Fellin also thanked the board of directors and fellow employees for their support this last year.

After the business meeting adjourned, Daryle Stonier, farmer and humorist, entertained the membership with an inspiring and amusing collection of stories and anecdotes.

Summertime can mean "surge time"

Ask most people what causes a power surge and they'll say: "lightning." But a surge can also be caused by road accidents involving utility poles, by your air conditioner starting up on a hot summer day, or even by birds and squirrels shorting out a line. Power surges aren't always noticeable but they can quickly damage your valuable electronics and appliances.

We are offering a selection of products designed to provide "Total Home Protection" from surge damage.

Either a Meter Socket Adapter (MSA) or a Universal Surge Suppressor (USP) is used to protect standard equipment such as a washer, dryer or refrigerator.

Plug-in surge suppressors called Transient Tamers (TTs) are designed to plug into your individually grounded (three-prong) outlets. These suppressors will protect a variety of electronics

including those with sensitive silicon chips such as your television, VCR or home computer.

Electronics can be damaged by a single surge of electricity or by electronic rust (the wearing down of electronic equipment exposed to repeated and usually unnoticed surges).

While the technology does not exist that can prevent damage from a direct lightning strike, L.E.A. DYNATECH products can help protect your home electronics from most serious power surges. L.E.A. DYNATECH products are protected by a 10-year manufacturer's warranty. The manufacturer also offers a consequential damages plan. The plan provides coverage of up to \$5,000 per equipment failure, a \$2 million per residence for equipment damage due to failure of a product.

These surge suppression products are on display at the cooperative office.

Vacation time hints can save electricity

It never fails. Every year we hear the same story. It usually sounds something like this: "Our meter must be wrong. We were on vacation for two weeks last month. We couldn't have used that much electricity."

While you may have been enjoying much-needed time away with the family, unless you have taken the proper steps, everyone will miss you except your meter. The water heater still keeps the water hot, the air conditioner still keeps the house cool, the refrigerator and freezer keep the food cool, etc. So before you leave, prepare your home for a vacation too!

Use the circuit breaker to turn the electric water heater off. There is no need to maintain 140 degree water when no one is home to use it. When you get home, you can turn it back on and have hot water in a couple of hours. Make sure all the water faucets are turned off. Even the smallest leak can be noticeable on your electric bill.

Make certain all refrigerator and freezer doors are closed tightly. If possible, empty, unplug them, and open the doors. This may not be feasible unless you are leaving for a long period of time. If you are only leaving for a short time, keep the refrigerator full. If it is not full, fill gallon bottles with water to help reduce the number of start/stop cycles on the compressor. This extends the refrigerator's life and saves electricity.

If you leave the air conditioner on, set the thermostat at 90 degrees. You may want to turn it off at the breakers and open all windows a little. If you want lights on at night, put them

on a timer or let a neighbor turn them on. A timer will allow people to see lights turning on and off as if someone is home.

Turn the breaker off to the kitchen range. Unplug all the appliances you can, eliminating any chance of them using electricity while you are away. This includes the "little guys" — clocks, instant-on TV's, stereos, VCR's, etc. They use a small amount of electricity when they are turned off. Also, be aware that if the waterbed is left plugged in, it will continue to use electricity while you are away.

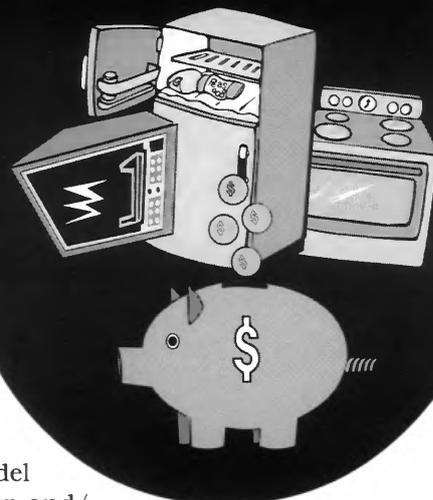
One last thing — when you read your meter, keep in mind all the clothes you washed and cleaning that was done before you left and when you returned from the vacation. One way to know exactly what was used while you were away is to read your meter before leaving and then again upon returning. It may seem that you will be saving on your electric bill if you are gone for a while, but unless you have prepared for it, your meter will never miss you.



Office closed

Monday, May 31 in
observance of Memorial Day

Quick, cheap and clean ways to save in the kitchen



Aside from heating, air conditioning and water heating, the kitchen is one of the most energy-expensive places in the average home. Things you do in the kitchen influences those costs.

As you cook in the kitchen, the house warms up and the air conditioner has to work more, so your electricity usage goes up. As you use more hot water to cook or wash dishes, that expense increases, too.

There are many things you can do to save energy in the kitchen, and all of them together can help you save a bundle on your energy bill. As you work at meal preparation, keep the following items in mind—any or all of them will help, both in comfort and savings.

If you have a gas stove with a pilot light make sure it is burning efficiently, with a blue flame. A yellowish flame indicates that you need to have it adjusted.

Never boil water in an open pan. It will come to a boil faster and use less energy in a covered pan.

Keep range-top burners and reflectors clean. They'll reflect the heat better, and you will save energy. Match the size of the pan to the burner or heating element. More heat will get to the pan, and less to the surrounding air.

If you cook with electricity, get in the habit of turning off the burners several minutes before the allotted cooking time. The heating element will stay hot long enough to finish the cooking for you without using more electricity.

When using the oven, make the most of the heat from that single source. Cook as many foods as you can at one time. Prepare dishes that can be stored or frozen for later use, or make all oven-cooked meals.

Watch the clock or use a timer; avoid the temptation to open the door and peek. Every time you open the door heat escapes and your cooking takes more energy.

Use small electric pans or ovens for small meals rather than the kitchen range or oven. They use less energy.

Use pressure cookers and microwave ovens when you can. They can save energy by reducing cooking time, and microwaves don't put nearly as much heat into your house.

The average dishwasher uses 14 gallons of hot water per load. Be sure to use it energy efficiently. Make sure your dishwasher is full, but not overloaded, when you turn it on.

If you're in the market for a new dishwasher, look for a model with air-power and/or overnight-dry settings. These features automatically turn off the dishwasher after the rinse cycle. This can save you up to one-third of your total dishwashing energy costs.

Let your dishes air dry. If you don't have an automatic air-dry switch, turn the control knob to "off" after the rinse cycle and prop the door open a little, so the dishes will dry faster.

Don't use the "rinse-hold" on your machine. It uses three to seven gallons of hot water every time you use it.

Scrape dishes before loading them into the dishwasher so you won't have to rinse them. If they do need rinsing, you can save pennies by using cold water.

Don't keep your refrigerator or freezer too cold. Recommended temperatures: 38 to 40 degrees for the fresh food compartment of the refrigerator; five degrees for the freezer.

If you're buying a refrigerator, be sure to look for the more efficient models. Once you get past the sticker shock, note that refrigerator technology has improved over the last few years, and that the more efficient new models will do a good job at a far less cost than the older ones. Get one that's as energy-efficient as you can afford.

Remember that those frills, such as automatic icemakers and ice and water through the door, add a lot to the cost of such units, and you get little benefit in return.

Consider buying manual-defrost refrigerators and freezers. While they're inconvenient to defrost, they cost quite a bit less to operate.

Regularly defrost manual-defrost refrigerators and freezers. Frost buildup increases the amount of energy needed and makes the motor run longer and more often. Never allow frost to build up to more than one-quarter of an inch thick.

Make sure your refrigerator door seals are airtight. Test them by closing the door over a piece of paper or a dollar bill so that it is half in and half out of the refrigerator. If you can pull it out easily, the latch may need adjustment or the seal may need replacing.

Give your bill a break... while you break for vacation.



Your bags are packed, you remembered to put a hold on your mail and take the dog to your mother-in-law's for the week, but what about your montly electric bill? It won't go away just because you have.

You can, however, take steps to reduce your bill while you relax on vacation.

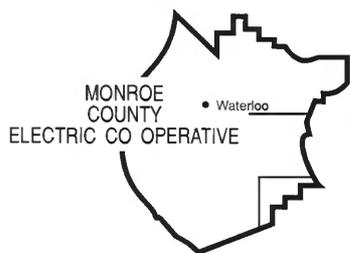
Make sure that all radios, televisions and lights are turned off. You can use dusk-to-dawn timers with lights to maintain the "presence" at home during the evening. Lower your refrigerator and/or freezer temperature settings. Turn off your water heater if you'll be gone more than a few days.

And after all of that is taken care of, remember to have fun while you're on vacation.



Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

For more information on conserving energy while you're away,
call your local electric cooperative.



Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC.

WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the Manager's desk



Joseph J. Fellin

At Monroe County Electric Cooperative (MCEC), our efforts to be Y2K compliant are progressing on schedule. In surveys of electric utilities by the North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC) for the U.S. Department of Energy, distribution cooperatives, like our cooperative, indicated that nearly all would achieve Y2K readiness by the industry target date of June 30, 1999.

We continue to hear doom and gloom reports from the media about what will happen on January 1, 2000. No doubt those reports will grow as this year progresses.

We appreciate and understand the membership's concerns with our approach to the Y2K problem. MCEC is aware of no significant problems in connection with our being Year 2000 Compliant. However, to assure ourselves and those who rely upon us that we will be able to handle the transition to the next century, we have two outside firms reviewing our computer applications.

In November 1998, we contracted with Electric Laboratories and Sales Corporation (ELASCO) of Mattoon, Illinois to identify potential Y2K problems that would affect our ability to provide you adequate electric service during and after January 1, 2000. ELASCO will identify those items utilized in the day to day operations of MCEC and make recommendations to MCEC towards the ultimate goal of reaching Y2K compliance.

In addition, Central Area Data Processing of St. Peter's, Missouri, has updated the software for our data processing capabilities, including, but not limited to, customer service records, billing data, payroll data, and engineering information. This update assures of Y2K compliance.

It is our belief that these independent contractors will confirm that we are Y2K compliant. If any part of our system needs upgrading to meet these requirements, then MCEC will authorize needed upgrades and make sure those upgrades are made by a responsible contractor.

MCEC relies on the integrated electric utility grid to provide electric power to our distribution system. We are in the process of seeking assurance from our local power suppliers and transmission suppliers that they have made provisions to be Y2K compliant. It has always been the goal of MCEC to provide dependable electric service.

While we cannot guarantee uninterrupted service all together, we are doing everything in our power to assure reliable electric service through January 1, 2000 and beyond.

Springtime begins tornado season.

Although tornadoes can occur anytime, peak months are March through August. Here are some recommendations:

- There are two types of tornado alerts. A watch means atmospheric conditions are right for a tornado to develop. Stay tuned to the news for further information. A tornado warning means one has been sighted in the area or will occur.

- If a warning has been issued, seek shelter immediately. The best shelters are basements or storm shelters. If your home does not have a basement, move to a small room, such as a bathroom or closet, in the center of the house.

- If you are in your vehicle, do not try to outrun a tornado. If you cannot escape the path of the tornado, stop and get away from your vehicle. Lie flat with your head covered in a low area such as a ditch or a ravine. One of the major causes of tornado deaths and injuries is flying debris, so be sure and keep your head covered.

- Do not stay in a mobile home. Evacuate the home to find a low area where you can lie down and cover your head. It might be wise to also check

rules and regulations concerning "hold down" equipment for new or used mobile homes.

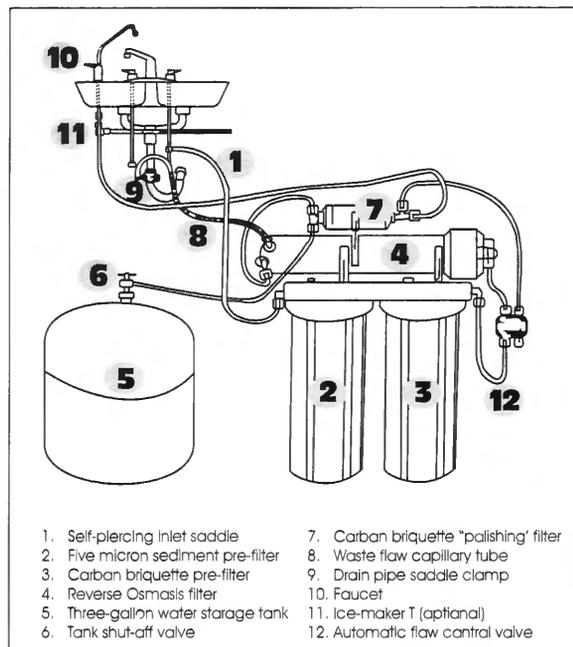
Your family should have an emergency plan and know exactly what to do if a tornado hits.

Each home should have basic emergency supplies, such as a portable radio, batteries and flashlights on hand in the basement or closet. Being safe is being prepared!



You deserve PureWater

Yes you do! And Monroe County Electric has it. It takes everything out of your water but the water, produces up to **25 gallons a day** of pure, odorless **drinking and cooking water**, has **4 filters including reverse-osmosis** and is **comparable to models selling for \$1,000-\$1,200**. PureWater is **only \$550** to the member from Monroe County Electric. Makes absolutely great ice cubes, too.



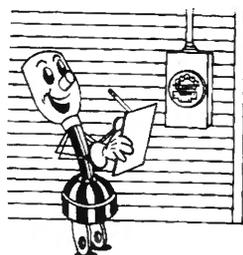
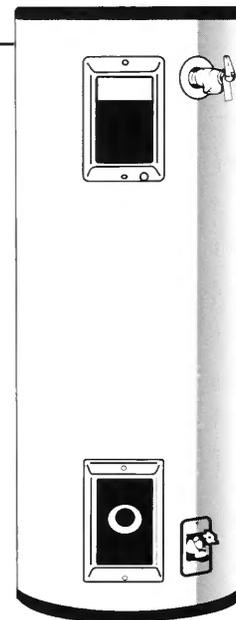
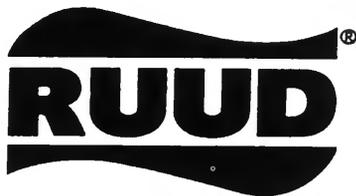
- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Self-piercing inlet saddle | 7. Carbon briquette "polishing" filter |
| 2. Five micron sediment pre-filter | 8. Waste flow capillary tube |
| 3. Carbon briquette pre-filter | 9. Drain pipe saddle clamp |
| 4. Reverse Osmosis filter | 10. Faucet |
| 5. Three-gallon water storage tank | 11. Ice-maker T (optional) |
| 6. Tank shut-off valve | 12. Automatic flow control valve |

Special offer

Purchase a RUUD Master Plus Electric Water Heater from Monroe County Electric Co-Operative

- 50-gallon \$125 plus tax
- 65-gallon \$150 plus tax

New Features
8-year warranty
EverKleen self-cleaning device
R-20 insulation



**Willie says-
Please read your
meter on the first
of each month!**



Office closed

The cooperative office will be closed Monday, July 5th in observance of the Fourth of July.

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 fencer 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 they are 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.*



CHILL!

Put the sizzle
in your steak,
not your
home

One of the joys of summertime is a juicy steak, grilled over a hot flame. But who could enjoy it in a hot, humid home?

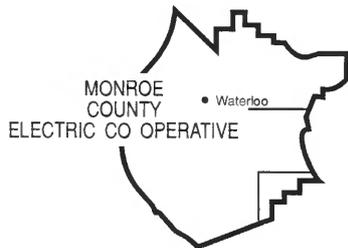
With a geothermal heat pump, you'll have cool comfort in the summer and snug coziness in the winter. A geothermal heat pump uses the earth's energy to provide cooled or heated air—and will pay for itself in a few years.

For more information about the advantages of geothermal heat pumps, call your local electric cooperative. We'll help you keep your cool.



Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

Powerful solutions for over 60 years



Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC.

WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the President's desk



Joseph J. Fellin

In a day when it seems that a dollar buys less and less, we at MCEC are doing our best to make sure you get the most out of every dollar you spend with us.

Consumer education is one of our primary missions. Wasting energy costs you money by forcing us to buy more power from generating plants, raising the cost of operating the system and adding to your electric bill. This publication regularly carries information to help you cut costs.

Whether it's a tip on installing energy-efficient lighting in your home, insulating your water heater, or changing the filters in your heat pump, we want to help you get the best deal you can on the electricity you buy.

That's what makes energy conservation a partnership between you and MCEC. While you work at home to keep your bill as low as possible, we're working to put the latest technology in place to better manage the system that brings the power to you. This new technology adds to the savings we can pass on to you.

Another important part of our commitment to you is safety education. Electricity is such a normal part of your life that it is easy to forget it can be dangerous if improperly used. We remind you to play it safe by installing child safety plugs in unused outlets, be careful when using electric tools near water, or having underground cables marked before digging around your home. We also provide important information to local schools to help teach children about electrical safety.

MCEC was created to serve the people it provides power to — not to provide profits to out-of-town power companies. The principle on which we were founded — service to our local communities — is just as strong today as the day we opened

our doors. Regardless of how much electricity you use, we'll do everything we can to help you get the most out of your energy dollar.

Keeping your home cooler

As summer heats up, keeping your home cool is a real challenge. Here are a few things you can do to get the most from your cooling dollars.

1) **Attic Ventilation** - A poorly ventilated attic will heat up during the day, causing radiant heat to beam down on you at night. To keep attic spaces cool, provide plenty of ventilation space as low as possible (roof eaves are a good spot). The other half of the ventilation area should be placed high to let hot air escape.

Check the intake vents each year to be sure insulation or other material has not blocked air movement. If you have a mechanical exhaust fan near the roof's peak, make sure the thermostat energizes the fan at the proper temperature.

2) **Shading Windows & Walls** - Although interior window blinds and curtains will reflect some heat, it's much more effective to provide exterior shading to block out solar rays. Exterior awnings, shade trees, or even climbing vines will protect windows and walls (particularly on the west side) from late afternoon sun. And, if you have central air conditioning, shading the outside unit will improve efficiency.

3) **Reduce Interior Heat Gain** - Vent excess heat and moist air at its source. When showering, close the bathroom door and open a window, or use a ventilation fan.

Do the same in the kitchen, and substitute the microwave for the stove when possible. Remember, the heat produced by just two stove-top elements can easily equal the cooling capacity of your air conditioner.

4) **Maintain Cooling Equipment** - An air conditioner both cools and dehumidifies. If yours doesn't cool like it should, check for a dirty air filter, and examine the outside unit to see if the coils have become blocked or are dirty. Have a trained air conditioning contractor service the unit and add refrigerant if needed. This could improve cooling and save you money this summer.

Life doesn't have to be a roller coaster

Roller coasters are the most popular rides at the amusement parks. There is something exhilarating about the extreme highs and lows, never knowing what to expect or what's coming around the bend. Unfortunately life can sometimes be like that. Fluctuating electric usage, due to summer heat or winter cold, can make us feel like we are back on that roller coaster.

Monroe County Electric has two budget payment plans that can help even out the highs and lows of your electric usage. One plan takes your last 12-month average and you pay that amount the next 11-months. The twelfth month you catch up with a debit or credit balance.

The other plan keeps a rolling 12-month average and changes slightly each month. There is no official catch-up month on this plan.

If you are interested in finding out more about these two budget billing plans, please call our office for more details at 939-7171 or (800) 757-7433.



What to do in an electrical storm

Lightning surges from the clouds to ground along the best conductor around. **Don't be that conductor.**

If you are outside in a storm, these are the things to do:

- Seek shelter. The best shelter is a house or building.
- Get in a car or a truck.
- On a golf course, get in your golf cart.
- Caught afoot in the open? Seek low ground.

Sit or lie down; it may be uncomfortable, but it may save your life.

Things not to do:

- On a golf course? Don't continue to play. And never hold a metal club in your hand.
- Don't swim. If you are in the water, get out! If you are in a boat, get to land!
- Stay away from metal objects that are lightning conductors.
- Don't stand under a tree. Instead of providing shelter, a wet tree can attract lightning. Never stand out in the open during a storm.

Lightning is usually attracted to the highest object around. **Don't be that object.**



Office closing

Monroe County Electric Cooperative will be closed Monday, July 5th, in observance of Independence Day. In the event of an electrical emergency, please phone our dispatcher at 939-7171 or (800) 757-7433.

Electric industry websites Site:

www.energysearch.com

EPRI's Energysearch - Excellent for finding energy-related articles and reports. Resources can be sorted by date or by relevance.



Warning from JULIE

The Illinois One-Call System Before
you Dig Call
(800) 892-0123

The Service is Free Operates 24
Hours 7 Days a Week

MOWER POWER TO YOU— MAINTAIN THAT MACHINE



Now that the first blush is off of spring, many of the fun things we wanted to tear into while we were trapped by winter's gloom may have lost some of their luster. Some of us, so deep in winter's thrall just a few short months ago, actually looked forward to such tasks as mowing the lawn.

For most of us, some of the fun has departed that little chore, by now. While that leaves a long summer ahead of us, it also provides us with an opportunity to turn loose of the old mower long enough to do some maintenance, or to have it done.

Many people tend to forget that mowers need care, and run them into the ground without ever doing more than adding gas and oil.

That's a mistake. Mowers will cut better, last longer and be less polluting if they get at least some routine maintenance. For example, many people neglect their mower's blade, the part where the machine meets the grass.

We're assuming here that you're a fairly normal person, and that you just wheeled your mower into storage last fall and left it.

If you're a real conscientious person, you didn't do that. Following the owner's manual to the letter, you ran the engine until all the gas was out of the tank, pulled the spark plug, shot a squirt of oil into the cylinder, put on a new plug, and changed the oil. And took the blade in and had it sharpened.

If you're like most of us, you probably never even thought of doing any of those things. If you just pulled your mower out this spring and started mowing, it's still not too late to do a little maintenance on that little rascal. By now, you've probably grown less fond of the mowing chore, and will be able to back away from it long enough to let the engine cool.

So, if you want your mower to cut better and

last longer—and who doesn't, since they're fairly expensive — now's as good a time as any to mow the lawn and shut the mower down for maintenance. The first thing to do is to disconnect the spark plug wire, so the engine won't start while you're working.

Next, take the blade off and take it in to a shop to have it sharpened. Since we're essentially in the middle of the season, that shouldn't take too long, but it still may take a few days. That's why we encouraged you to mow first.

Then, pull the spark plug and examine it carefully. If it's dirty, clean it. If the points are fused together, or nearly so, you'll need to replace it. Check their gap with a feeler gauge and set the gap to the manufacturer's specifications. Clean or change the air filter.

Since most mowers are air cooled, and since they burn a lot of oil, many people think that the constant addition of oil is enough to eliminate the need for oil changes. Not true. They need oil changes just like any engine does, and the failure to do that chore will shorten the engine's life considerably.

You can change the oil by removing a plug under the mower deck, and letting the oil drain out. Then, you replace the plug and pour in new oil. There will be a dipstick, or a little circle in the filler, that will enable you to know when you've put in enough oil. Be sure the plug's tightened before you do much more.

The simple change of oil and cleaning or replacement of the spark plug and air filter should make your mower a lot easier to start and will increase its life span, too. Having the blade sharpened should enable it to cut better, and will make mowing a little easier.

If all this sounds a little messy and inconvenient, that's because it is. You can avoid most of these headaches by going to a battery-powered electric mower. That will reduce most of your annual maintenance to having the blade sharpened. They're a lot more convenient, and a lot less messy and a lot less polluting, too!



Demolition derbies and corn dogs, lemon shake-ups and funnel cake, Ferris wheels and tractor pulls. . . These are just a few of the treats 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.

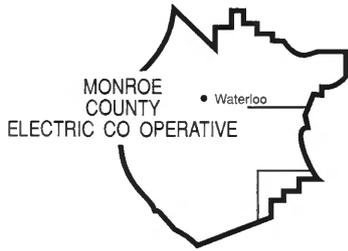
Just as electricity powers the modern farmstead, so the Illinois farmer feeds the world.

A salute to the Illinois farmer from:



Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

Powerful solutions for over 60 years



Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC.

WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the President's desk



Joseph J. Fellin

Protect your computer with a — UPS

Despite constant efforts to eliminate the potential for power outages by upgrading the distribution system for heavier loads, clearing lines of trees and brush, and utilizing capacitors and voltage regulators, there are still times when a momentary power outage occurs. Some people refer to these as the "blinking clock" syndrome. For the computer user, a blink can cause your computer to crash and the consequent loss of valuable information. One way to help protect your computer from a brief power interruption is to install an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS). A UPS works off of batteries, ensuring a constant source of power. It will allow your computer to handle not only momentary power interruptions, but depending on the UPS, possibly much longer outages. A basic UPS for a home user can be obtained for around \$120. Many businesses use a UPS since a loss of information due to power interruption can be very costly. Larger and advanced UPS's can be used with multiple servers, mini-computers, phone systems, and UNIX systems. Advanced UPS's can also be obtained for personal desktop systems for around \$300. The advanced UPS offers faster battery recharging, full-time surge suppression, noise isolation, audible alarms, fault indicators and more.

Momentary power interruptions have always been a challenge for power companies and electric cooperatives. However, people notice them more today than in the past. So many items in our homes today have solid state electronics and such



items are increasingly sensitive to voltage fluctuations. Items that do not use solid state electronics, such as a refrigerator, clothes dryer, or even a light bulb, are not that sensitive. In most cases, a momentary outage could happen and there would be no noticeable affect on the performance of such devices. Years ago we did not have digital clocks, VCRs and personal computers. Today we do, and we never seem to miss a blink.

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative is continually striving to deliver high quality power to the member-owners. Nonetheless, there may be times when an unexpected outage occurs. If you are concerned about your computer, you may want to purchase a UPS. Considering what you probably paid for the computer system, the cost of a UPS may be minimal.

OFFICE CLOSING

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative will be closed on Monday, September 6, 1999 in observance of Labor Day.

Please call 939-7171 or 800-757-7433 to report emergencies - 24 hours per day dispatch service.

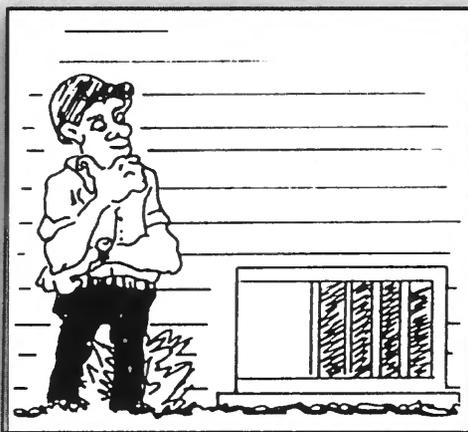
Improve air conditioning cost and comfort

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, Refrigerat-

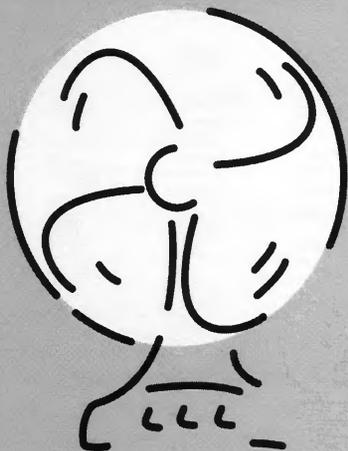


ing and Air Conditioning Engineers, Inc.) and ACCA (the Air Conditioning Contractors of America). Computer software is

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 dehumidifies conditioned air. The suggested maximum SHF is 0.80. Units with a higher rating may not adequately dehumidify some homes.

'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.

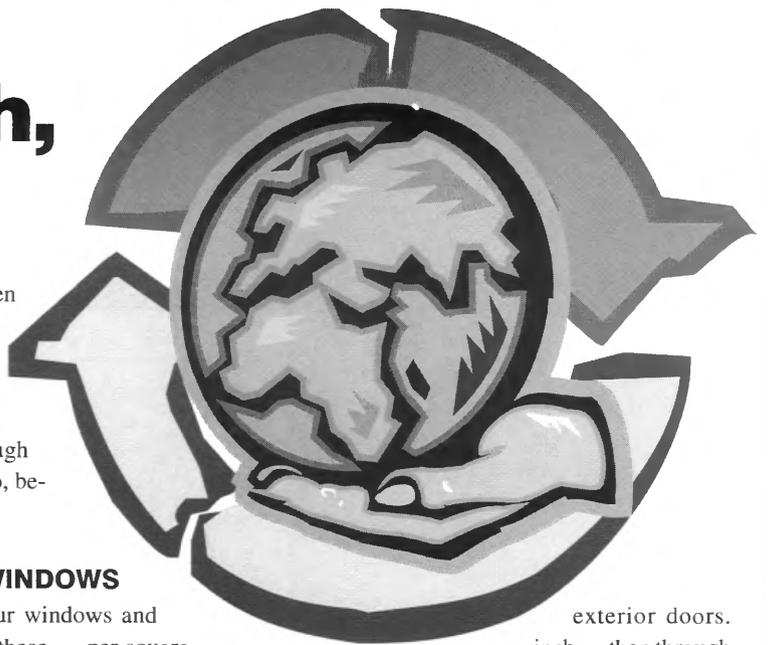
Portable Fans

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.

Save money, save the earth, save energy

Over the last couple of decades, many of us have taken some steps to save energy and to help mitigate the damage we do to the environment. Recycling, composting and switching to more environmentally friendly products are some of the steps we've taken.

The following home energy-saving tips — even though they're often overlooked — help protect the environment too, because they help you use energy more efficiently.



INSULATING DOORS AND WINDOWS

Start with your home's biggest energy wasters — your windows and exterior doors. You lose more of your heating and cooling dollars through these — per square inch — than through any other part of your home. For example, heat passes through a window with a single pane of glass 14 times faster than through a well-insulated wall. So, even with an attic full of insulation, you can still be wasting money and energy through your windows and doors.

Install storm windows, or double-pane windows, to cut this energy drain in half. Over the last few years, window companies have developed various films designed to keep heat out — or in — and to prevent the passage of ultraviolet rays into the home. These will save energy and help prevent fading in pictures, furniture and carpets. Add storm doors for additional savings.

CAULKING AND WEATHER-STRIPPING

After insulating your windows and doors, don't forget to caulk and weather-strip around them. Almost 40 percent of your monthly heating and cooling bill may be going out through small cracks around doors and windows and other parts of your home.

Caulking is a rubber-like material that can expand or contract to seal air leaks around each pane of window glass and between door and window frames and the house. Weather-stripping is a flexible material (foam rubber, felt, or aluminum) that helps to assure a snug fit between the parts of windows and doors that open and close.

WATER HEATING

Water heating is the second-largest energy user in the average American house. You can save water and the energy needed to keep it hot by maintaining an energy-efficient water heating system and by conserving hot water.

Start with the water heating tank itself:

- Get the right size water heater. Keeping more hot water on hand than you need can waste energy.
- For every 10 degrees you lower the temperature, you can save about 6 percent of your water heating energy.
- If the sides of your water heater feel warm to the touch, you may need more insulation. Wrap a water heater with an insulating blanket, especially if the water heater is located in an unheated area of your home.

In addition to insulating the water heater, you will also save money by insulating the hot water pipes going out of the water heater.

If you don't have low-flow shower heads and faucet aerators to reduce water flow, install them soon. They'll help you save both water and energy. Aerated showerheads and faucets mix air with water to maintain pressure, and low-flow showerheads pulse the water flow. These simple devices are easily installed and can reduce the amount of water and energy used by 50 percent.

DUCT SEALING

Seal and insulate the ducts that carry heated or cooled air to the registers in each room of your house. Doing a checkup here can save 10 to 15 percent on your energy bill. All ductwork should be sealed at the joints to prevent leakage. Ducts located in unconditioned areas of your home (attic or crawlspaces) should be insulated.

SET-BACK THERMOSTAT

A set-back thermostat allows you to change the temperature setting or turn off your heating or cooling system at preset times. Each morning when you leave and each evening when you return, the temperature changes to save energy, automatically. Heating or cooling is done only when someone is home.

By using these easy and cost-effective energy saving guidelines, you can stay comfortable all year and still save money.

For more information on how you can save energy all around your house, call your friends at your electric cooperative. They'll be glad to help.

It's back to school time



Summer is over, school bells are ringing and the children are headed off to class. It's Indian Summer, and it feels like winter will never come. But, don't be fooled. Winter is coming, and now is the time to prepare.

Look around your home. See any gaps around your doors or windows? A 1/12-inch gap around a standard exterior door is like having a 4" x 5" hole in the wall. Add that to cracks around other doors and windows and you could be allowing a lot of cold air into your home this winter.

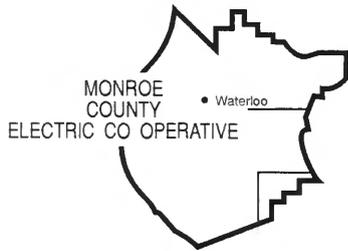
Plugging those leaks will increase your comfort, and it pays for itself in reduced energy bills. Just weather stripping around doors and windows can cut heat loss by nearly half. Caulking, additional insulation and storm doors and windows are other measures that will make your home even more energy-efficient.

Call your local electric cooperative for advice on weatherization plans that will fit your budget and pay off in lower energy costs. Then, sit back and enjoy the Indian Summer.



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MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC.

WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the President's desk



Joseph J. Fellin

School Days

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

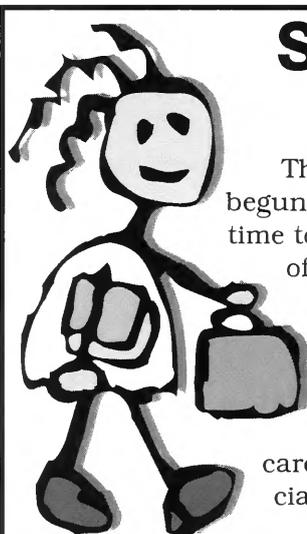
It's back-to-school time across America. For parents, it's a bittersweet reminder of the passage of time as we watch our children grow and become increasingly independent. It's also a time when we think about their safety.

Your electric cooperative shares that concern. That's why so many are looking out for the safety of our children. With the beginning of every school year, thousands of co-op line workers are keeping an eye out for children on their way to or from school. Sometimes it means helping a disabled school bus. Frequently, it means using their mobile communications to report a problem or a suspicious occurrence in a neighborhood. And always it means being there to lend a hand, whatever the problem.

Being committed to the community you serve means making the decision that service to the community involves more than just making sure your electric service is reliable. Even in these days when electric utilities are faced with competition that's getting tougher every day, going the extra mile in consumer and community service is standard operating procedure for an electric cooperative. It has to be that way because electric cooperatives are fundamentally different than for-profit electric utilities. Every day now, we hear reports of other utility service. And when you call your electric cooperative, you'll speak to someone close-by who knows your community and what's happening in it.

Being a local electric cooperative means doing business close to home. Because our consumers are also our owners, the cooperative gives first consideration to what's in the consumers' best interest. So, there will always be someone nearby you can talk to about any aspect of your electric service.

At first glance, it may seem that there is little connection between school kids waiting for their bus and the line crew in the local co-op's truck. But look again. Those line crews working on utility poles probably have kids waiting for their school bus alongside yours. Making sure all our children stay safe is part of what holds local communities together and it's part of the work your local electric cooperative takes pride in every day.



Summer's over!

The school year has either begun or will soon. Now's the time to get back into the habit of looking more carefully when you're driving. Kids are out and about more, and they're not in the habit of being particularly watchful or careful. So, please be especially careful to avoid them.

Office Closing

We will be closed Monday, Sept. 6, in observance of Labor Day. Enjoy your holiday!



Time to buy a new water heater?

Although most water heaters last 10 to 15 years, it's best to start shopping for a new one if yours is more than seven years old, according to the Department of Energy. Doing some research before the old one fails will help you select the best heater for your needs — and help you cut your energy costs.

There are a number of factors to consider:

Types of heaters.

There are now a variety of water heaters—conventional storage, demand, heat pump, tankless coil, indirect and solar. It is also possible to purchase water heaters that can be connected to your home's space-heating system. The conventional storage water heater remains the most popular type for homes in the United States. It releases hot water from the top of the tank when a hot water tap is turned on. To replace that hot water, cold water enters the bottom of the tank, ensuring that the tank is always full.

Energy factor rating.

The Federal Trade Commission requires that many appliances, including water heaters, have labels or fact sheets on energy consumption. For a water heater, the Energy Factor (EF) is the overall efficiency of the heater, with the higher the rating the more efficient the unit. Here are energy rating ranges for water heaters that use electricity, gas or oil to heat the water (these are conventional storage water heaters that can also use propane):

Type	Minimum Range	Maximum Range
Electric	87 to 91	94 to 98
Gas	51 to 56	60 to 86
Oil	48 to 53	60 to 63

The EF is based on recovery efficiency (how efficiently the heat from the energy source is transferred to the water), standby losses (the percentage of heat lost per hour from the stored water compared to the heat content of the water), and cycling losses.

Other factors, including FHR.

When shopping for a new unit, make sure that the one you purchase has at least 1 1/2 inches of insulation around the tank. In addition, consider the First Hour Rating (FHR) of the system. FHR measures the maximum hot water the heater will deliver in the first hour of use — this figure must appear on the unit's EnergyGuide label, and for good reason. Although some consumers base their purchase on the size of the storage tank, the FHR is actually the more important figure. So, before you shop, estimate your household's peak hour demand and look for a unit with an FHR in that range.

Comparing total costs.

Another important factor in the purchase of a water heater is the total life-cycle cost that encompasses purchase price, lifetime maintenance and operation expenses for the entire time you own and operate the unit. For example, units with longer warranties usually have higher price tags. However, the water heater with the lowest purchase price is often the most expensive to operate.

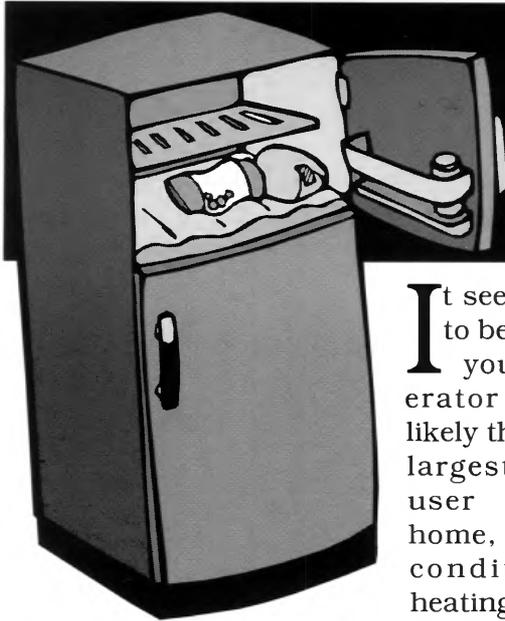
Remember to look for the Energy Star label



If you are considering purchasing a new home appliance, a piece of office equipment or heating and cooling systems, remember to look for the Energy Star label, the symbol for energy efficiency.

Whose symbol? The Energy Star label was created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy. Together they set energy-efficiency criteria that products must meet in order to qualify for the label. In voluntary partnership with the government, manufacturers and retailers agree to put the Energy Star label on qualifying equipment.

By using Energy Star products, you will not only save money, you help the environment by using less energy. For example, Energy Star appliances typically exceed federal efficiency standards by 13 to 20 percent — as much as 110 percent for some appliances.



Fridge is fourth-largest energy user in most homes

It seems hard to believe, but your refrigerator is very likely the fourth-largest energy user in your home, after air conditioning, heating and water heating. Depending on how big your fridge is, how many features it has, and its age, it may use between \$200 and \$400 worth of electricity a year.

The experts tell us that it's smarter to buy a new energy-efficient model, rather than use a fridge that's only a few years old. But as attractive as that sounds, most of us have better places to put our money than into replacing a fridge that we may not yet have paid for!

If your refrigerator is working okay and isn't too old, you can do some things to help reduce its operating costs. Here are a few suggestions.

Clean the condenser coils. Dirt and dust collect on the coils, which are usually located on the back of the fridge, but are sometimes on the bottom. That makes the machine work harder, and that costs you. Cleaning the coils at least once a year should improve your refrigerator's efficiency by up to 30 percent. To clean them, unplug the refrigerator, then brush or vacuum the coils (You'll probably need to move it out from the wall to do this). When you move it back, be sure to leave some space behind and around it so air can circulate around the coils.

Check the door seals, or gaskets. They can deteriorate over time and decrease the unit's performance. You can check this by closing the door on a dollar bill and trying to pull it out. If it comes out easily, your fridge will benefit from a new gasket. While they aren't cheap, they'll help. Call your repairman or the dealer you bought your fridge from, if you decide to have the seal replaced.

Check the temperature setting. Ideally, your fridge should maintain a temperature of

about 38 degrees F. to 40 degrees F: the freezer should be between 0 degrees F. and 10 degrees F. Thermometers to check the temperature are available from hardware and kitchen supply stores. Put the thermometer in the center of the unit so it doesn't touch any food, and leave it for about 15 minutes. If necessary, adjust the temperature by turning the thermostat dial.

Defrost regularly if your machine is a manual-defrost model. If you don't, ice builds up and makes your compressor work more. Don't let ice build up thicker than one-quarter inch. Be sure to unplug before defrosting.

Check your power-saver switch. Many refrigerators built during the last few years have the capability to prevent moisture from building up on the outside of the refrigerator during humid weather. They do this by supplying heat to areas around the freezer door where moisture is most likely to collect. A switch inside the fridge usually activates this option. With the switch off, your refrigerator will not have to draw the extra current needed to supply this heat. In times of especially high heat and humidity, you may need to turn the switch back on.

Check the condensation drain. These are usually found on self-defrosting refrigerators, and if it's clogged, ice will build up on the coils, and your fridge will have to work harder. Check the drain occasionally and make sure it's clear.

If you have an old refrigerator or freezer in the garage, keep in mind that it's probably costing you a bundle to run it. Unless your garage is cooled, the unit will have to work harder than it would if it were in the house, and that costs you. And, while we often tend to brush off the "experts" advice as ivory tower stuff, they're probably right when they recommend that you have one large refrigerator-freezer—inside—rather than two modest -sized units in different places. That's a judgment call you may want to take a good look at.

At any rate, follow these suggestions, and you'll save a little on your electricity bill. Every little bit helps.

You, your neighbors... our cooperative



He's selling soft drinks to you at the town festival. She's sitting next to you at the school basketball game. Another one waves from the front step as you head to work. Yet another is buying a candy bar so your daughter's marching band can make that spring trip.

They're all around you. They are part of your electric cooperative, bringing the best possible electric service to homes, farms and businesses. They work in the office, or they are out on the power poles, or they are like you — a fellow member-owner. And, they are part of your community.

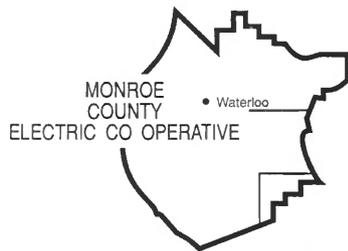
The "cooperative" kind of utility isn't some faceless office in a faraway city. It's you and the people you see at the grocery store or the local dance. It's you and your neighbors getting together to make your community a better place to live.

October is Cooperative Month



Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

Good for ALL Illinois



Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC.

WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the President's desk



Joseph J. Fellin

Consumers' Bill Of Rights

The United States Congress is considering restructuring the electric utility industry. Roadblocks that were once in place seem to be coming down as more and more states enact their own restructuring measures. Members of Congress from those states seem more willing to consider action at the federal level since their home state has enacted restructuring legislation.

As a consumer-owner of your local electric cooperative, you have an opportunity to once again reaffirm our common belief in and support for the importance of electric cooperatives in protecting the interests of consumers in the utility industry.

As Congress gets back to business after their August break, members of the Commerce Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives seem closer to agreeing on a plan of action for legislation restructuring the electric utility industry than ever before.

Adding to the momentum, members of the United States Senate announced they would continue working on restructuring legislation as well. These signals from Congress are a wake-up call that Congress has gotten very serious about this issue.

As part of the effort to ensure that all consumers can benefit from a changing industry, your electric cooperative has endorsed an Electric Energy Consumers' Bill of Rights that states that all consumers have:

1. The right to have access to reliable, affordable and safe electric power.
2. The right to join together to establish and operate a consumer-owned not-for-profit electric utility.
3. The right of consumer-owned not-for-profit systems to be treated fairly and recognized as a unique form of business.
4. The right to elect representatives to manage

5. their consumer-owned form of business to best meet their needs.
5. The individual right to privacy that assures information about consumers will not be released without their prior express consent.
6. The right to determine the scope of energy services to be furnished through their consumer-owned not-for-profit utilities.
7. The right to use consumer-owned not-for-profit utilities to provide additional services that meet the needs of their consumers and communities.
8. The right to work in cooperation with other consumer-owned entities with common goals.

October

is cooperative month

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

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

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

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

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

Rebates and incentive programs for members

Electric heat rebate

\$350 rebate from Monroe County Electric Co-Operative for new electric heat installations qualifying for cooperative's Electric Heat Rate 16.

Free water heater

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative will offer a free 50 or 65 gallon electric water heater to members who build new electric heated homes.

System Rebates

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative offers a \$125 per ton rebate for a System GT (geothermal heating, cooling and water heating) installation. The installed unit must be water source AR/320 or 330 rated. This rebate is in addition to electric heat rebate.

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative offers a \$30 per kW rebate for total-electric heating systems that include an electric furnace, heat pump, baseboard or ceiling cable. The rebate also applies to other all-electric heating systems. Total-electric heat systems must be 5 kW or larger to be eligible for the program.

Water heater promotion

Purchase a Ruud Electric Water Heater from Monroe County Electric Co-Operative:

- 50 gallon \$125 plus tax
- 65 gallon \$150 plus tax

Features:

- 8- year warranty - Premium grade anode rod
- R 20 insulation
- Stainless steel lower heating element

Purchase an electric water heater from any other dealer and receive a \$75 rebate from Monroe County Electric Co-Operative. To receive rebate:

1. Furnish a sales slip with the brand name and model.
2. Install your water heater on cooperative lines. The rebate is subject to verification.

For more information regarding these programs, please call 939-7171.

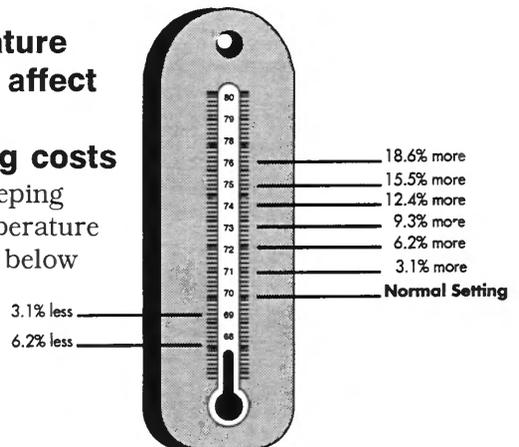
A couple of degrees equals a bunch of dollars!!

A degree here and a degree there and pretty soon you're talking real money! Lowering your thermostat by one or two degrees in the winter can mean real savings on your heating bills. Raising the temperature can also result in much larger heating bills.

For example, lowering your thermostat to 68° from 70° will save you 6.2 percent on your heating bill. Lowering the thermostat just one degree will save you 3.1 percent. However, let's say you like to keep your home toasty warm in the winter. Cranking up the thermostat to 76° will jack up your heating bill by 18.6 percent. Remember: each degree you raise or lower the thermostat from 70° means you will pay 3.1 percent more or less on your heating bill.

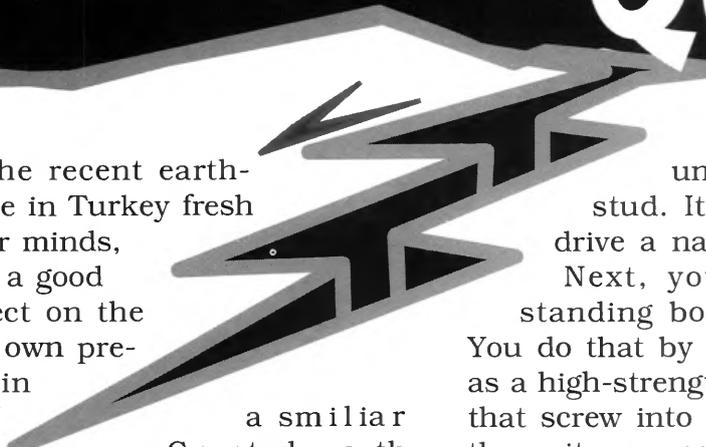
Temperature settings affect heating operating costs

Cost of keeping room temperature above and below 70°.



Disaster prepared: Don't let a leave you quaking

QUAKE



With the recent earthquake in Turkey fresh in our minds, now may be a good time to reflect on the state of our own preparedness in the event of a similar disaster. Granted, earthquakes are few and far between in this part of the country, but southern Illinois is situated on or near the New Madrid fault, and a damaging tremor can't be ruled out completely.

That fissure hasn't done any serious acting up in a long time, but the last time it did it was a real spectacle. As heavily populated as our area is now, even a minor tremor on the fault could cause serious property damage. And, there are other forms of disaster that can cause problems.

The idea behind these guidelines is to offer you some quick, inexpensive tips that will enable you to reduce the damage to your property if a moderate quake or tornado were to hit. They involve little chores that even the all-thumbs handyman can accomplish, and that can be done at very little expense. Please note that they are simple steps designed to help you minimize property damage, and will not save your life if your house is blown away or if it collapses on you.

Elementary quake preparations are fairly simple. You need to secure your water heater so it won't fall over. To do that, you need a strip of plumber's tape, which is available at hardware stores and home centers. It's a metal strip about three-quarters of an inch wide, with nail holes about every inch. You need to nail one end of the strip to a stud behind your water heater, run the strip around the

unit and nail it to another stud. It's not enough to simply drive a nail into drywall!

Next, you should secure free-standing bookshelves and the like. You do that by using a heavy line, such as a high-strength fishing line, and hooks that screw into the wall and the back of the unit you need to anchor. Affix a hook into the bookshelf, another in the wall (be sure it's screwed into a stud), and tie the two together.

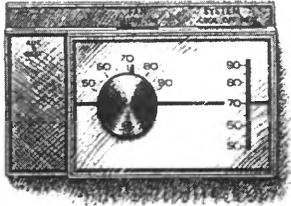
No matter what the problem is, whether it's Y2K, a tornado or an earthquake, it's important to know where your electrical main switch is so you can turn off all power if you have to. If you have natural gas or propane, you need to know where that shutoff is, and you'll really need one of the special wrenches it takes to shut them off.

Have a supply of bottled water on hand, and fill your bathtub so you'll have water to flush toilets with. Keep some canned foods that can be eaten cold, if necessary. While many soups and stews are palatable cold, they're much better warmed, so you may want a small camp stove and some spare fuel. A battery-powered radio would come in handy for weather reports. Whatever you do, don't forget a manually operated can opener.

Don't forget blankets and/or sleeping bags. Always keep candles, matches and a flashlight handy, and spare batteries, too. Remember that battery-powered lanterns are safer than coal oil lamps or those that use fossil fuels.

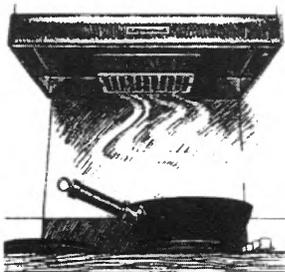
With any luck, you shouldn't have to go through the things we've outlined here. But if you do, you'll be pleased that you took our simple precautions. They take little effort and even less expense, and they can help a lot.

5 FREE SAVE ENERGY IN YOUR HOME THIS WINTER



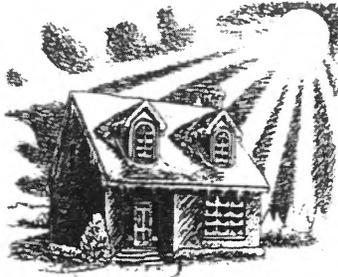
1 Use your thermostat like the gas pedal in your car.

When you're driving your car, you know what happens when you constantly speed up and slow down — or run at high speeds for an extended period: You waste gas. The same thing happens when you frequently change the temperature setting on your thermostat: You waste electricity. So set your thermostat and forget it, once in the morning and once at night. Or install an automatic setback thermostat to handle the settings for you.



2 Turn off exhaust fans as soon as you're done.

Exhaust fans are pretty handy in a kitchen or a bathroom. But as soon as the fan's job is finished, turn it off. Otherwise, you'll pump an enormous amount of heated air outside, and your heating system will have to work extra hard to catch up.



3 Take advantage of the sun.

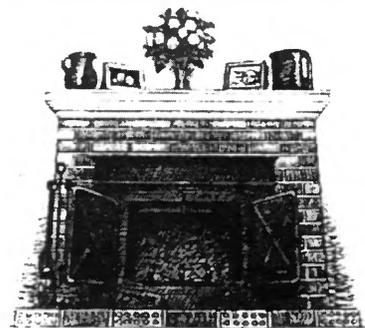
Contrary to what some people think, you don't need a sophisticated solar heating system to take advantage of the sun's warmth during winter. Just watch the sun's movement across your home to see which windows get plenty of sunlight — and open the blinds, shades and draperies on those windows to let the sun shine in to supplement your home's heating system.



4 Close the door on wasted energy.

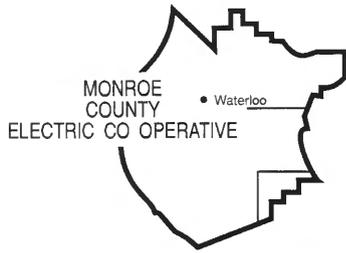
Are you heating a room you don't use? If so, close all registers, doors and windows — and check to make sure none of the items you've stored in the unused room need to be kept at normal room temperature.

If you fixed all the energy wasters in your home, you probably could save a considerable amount of your energy bill every year. Of course, every home is different — but imagine the impact five- or ten-percent savings could have! Best of all, none of the ideas shown here will cost you anything but a little time — so why not get started right now?



5 Close your fireplace damper.

Up to eight percent of the warm air from your heat pump or furnace will go right up the chimney every day you leave your fireplace damper open. When there's no fire, close the damper. And even when a fire is burning, it's a good idea to use glass doors to keep any of your home's heat from escaping.



Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC.

WATERLOO, ILLINOIS

Across the President's desk



Joseph J. Fellin

A series of local member meetings have been scheduled for four locations in the cooperative service territory during November. These meetings will give you an opportunity to learn about your cooperative, visit with cooperative personnel, friends and neighbors.

At the area meetings we will bring you up to date on cooperative activities and operations. We will set aside a few minutes to answer questions you may have concerning your cooperative.

Each member or family member attending these meetings will receive a year 2000 Saturday Evening Post Appointment Calendar. Five \$10 credits on electric bills will be awarded as attendance prizes in a drawing at the conclusion of each meeting. Refreshments and a fellowship period will close the event.

A post card will be mailed to each member announcing the meeting in their area. If you can not attend the meeting in your area, please feel free to attend one of the other scheduled meetings listed below:

1999 Area Meetings - Dates and Locations (All meetings begin at 7 p.m.)	
Monday, November 8	VFW Hall - Millstadt, Illinois
Tuesday, November 9	Hecker Community Center - Hecker, Illinois
Tuesday, November 16	Eschy's Restaurant - Maestown, Illinois
Thursday, November 18	Monroe County Electric Cooperative-Waterloo, IL

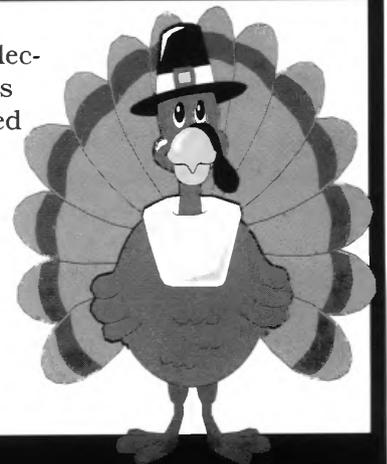
Low income energy assistance offered

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is available again this winter to help families experiencing hardships to pay their energy bills. The program started on September 1, earlier than in past years. LIHEAP offers a one-time benefit payment for eligible households based on income, household size, fuel type and geographic location. You do not have to own your home to be eligible.

You may be eligible to receive LIHEAP assistance if your household's combined income is at or below 125 percent of the Federal poverty guidelines. The member service department can direct you to the local agency that administers LIHEAP in your county for more information. Or, you can call the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs' Energy Information Line at (800) 252-8643.

Office closing

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative's office will be closed Thursday, Nov. 11 in observance of Veteran's Day; and Thursday and Friday, Nov 25 and 26, in observance of Thanksgiving.



MCEC joins Touchstone Energy Alliance

It's official. By now you have seen, or soon you will, a new graphic symbol accompanying the familiar name and logo of Monroe County Electric Co-Operative on utility bucket trucks, your power bill, and the headquarters located at 907 North Illinois Route 3, Waterloo, Illinois. Monroe County Electric Co-Operative joined the ranks of cooperative electric utilities across the country as a Touchstone Energy partner. Touchstone Energy is a nationwide brand and marketing effort that identifies cooperative utilities providing superior customer service while maintaining a strong local presence.

The Touchstone Energy brand will take Monroe County Electric Co-Operative and its members into the future as the electric utility industry changes.

It's much more than a graphic addition to our name and logo. It's a commitment to our customers, both households and businesses, that they can count on us, as a locally based and controlled utility to deliver them reliable, affordable energy services and to be an advocate for their energy and community needs.

We believe our local presence is one of our strongest assets, and our affiliation with Touchstone

Energy will remind our consumers who we are and what we stand for.

Some 300 electric cooperatives across the United States launched the Touchstone Energy brand to represent the advantages of locally owned and controlled electric service, which is rooted in the direct link that electric cooperatives like Monroe County Electric Co-Operative have with their customers.

The dictionary definition of touchstone is a test of genuineness. Touchstone Energy symbolizes everything that electric cooperatives represent today: electric

A Touchstone Energy® Partner



power, human connections, and the strength of co-ops' commitment to the communities and the consumers they serve.

By pooling resources through the brand with other cooperative utilities, Monroe County Electric Co-Operative will be able to provide consumer information and awareness of their customer-focused services as the electric utility industry evolves.

We'll help our consumers cut through all the clutter and we'll be here for our members, our customers for the long haul. If it's accountability, service and commitment to community you want, look no further than Monroe County Electric Co-Operative.

Three IEC Memorial Scholarships available in 2000



Monroe County Electric Co-Operative President/CEO Joseph Fellin has announced that for the fifth consecutive year the Illinois electric cooperatives will award academic scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each to three high school seniors. The scholarships are being awarded through the Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

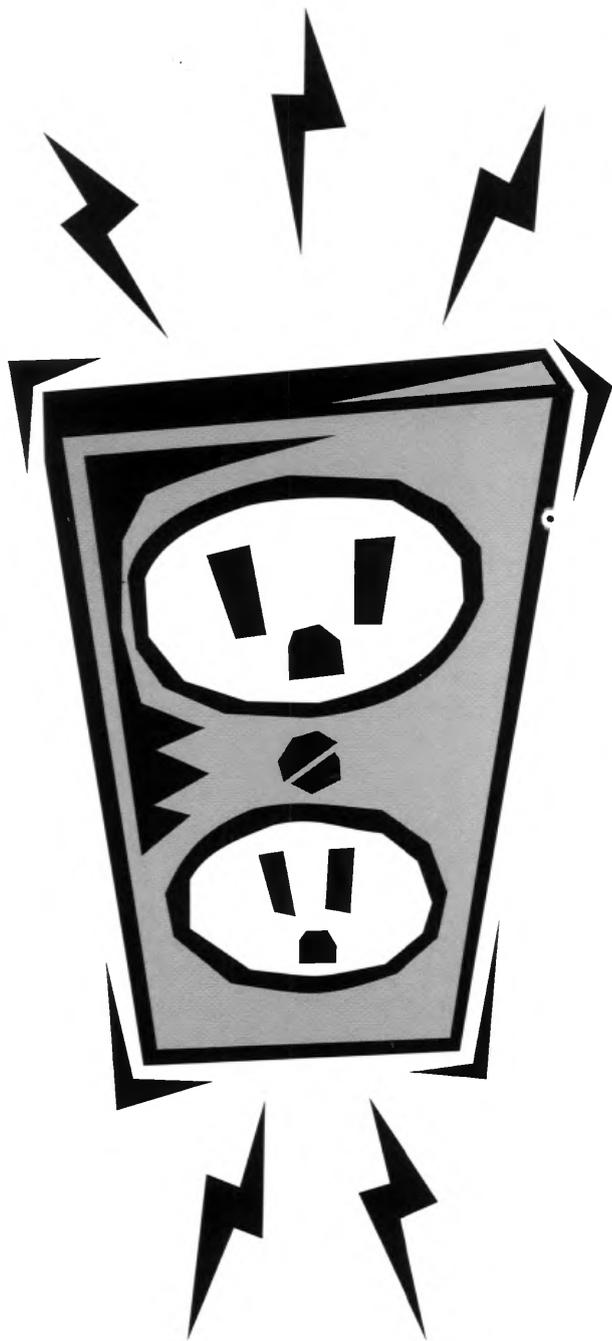
High school seniors pursuing a college education in the state of Illinois are eligible to participate in the program. Two of the three scholarships will be awarded to children of electric cooperative members. The other \$1,000 award will go to the child of an electric cooperative director or employee. Deadline for applications is Jan. 1, 2000.

"The purpose of the scholarship program is to assist electric cooperative youth while honoring past rural electric leaders through memorial gifts," Fellin said. "MCEC and the other Illinois electric cooperatives want to make a difference in their communities. One of the best ways we can do that is by lending a hand to our youth."

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 that demonstrates their knowledge of electric cooperatives.

The IEC Memorial Scholarship program was established in 1994 by the Board of Directors of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. For further information on the IEC Memorial Scholarship Program, contact the co-op office.

Gauge your home's "HOUSEPOWER."



Are you blowing fuses frequently? Are your circuit breakers tripping a lot? Do any of your appliances operate more slowly than they should? Do your lights dim when other appliances and equipment are in use?

You probably have low "housepower" if you experience any of these problems in your home. You may think it's related to the service you receive from your electric cooperative, but the problem can usually be traced to the wiring in your home.

The wiring in your house determines how much electricity you can safely use in your home. Low "housepower" is a signal that your home doesn't have adequate wiring to meet your family's electric needs.

The remedy might not be that expensive. However, you really need to consult an experienced electrical contractor to help determine how to gain the "housepower" needed in your home.

Call your local electric cooperative today for more information. Safety precautions mean peace of mind.

Use heat tapes properly for results, safety



This is the time of year when electric heat tapes get a real workout, to keep water pipes from freezing. And with that in mind, this is an especially good time to check your heat tapes and replace them, if necessary.

The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) says consumers (including residents of mobile homes) should replace uncertified heat tapes that are more than three years old with certified ones that meet recognized voluntary standards.

An electric heat tape resembles an electric cord. It may be round or flat. Some varieties have an overall covering of light metal braid. There is an electrical plug on one end and sometimes a pod or box with a thermostat switch to control the power to the heating conductors in the tape.

Heat tapes are usually installed in crawl spaces or attics. Often, they are used on mobile homes to heat water supply pipes that come from underground up to a mobile home.

For all the benefits heat tapes offer, they can be dangerous. According to the CPSC, electric heat tapes are involved in about 2,000 fires each year, resulting in about 10 deaths and 100 injuries. CPSC urges you to help reduce this risk of fire and death by using only certified heat tapes on your pipes. One way you can tell the difference is that all new certified heat tapes will have three-prong plugs; the older uncertified ones have two-prong plugs. Currently, there are

three organizations that are certifying heat tapes to meet recognized national voluntary standards: Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. (UL), the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), and Factory Mutual Research Corporation (FMRC).

Buying heat tapes that meet voluntary standards offers you and your family a degree of protection, but heat tapes also must be installed and used properly to provide the most protection against freezing pipes, as well as the highest level of safety for you and your family.

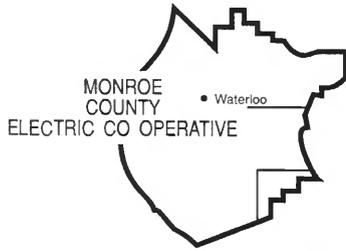
CPSC offers these safety tips for electric heat tapes:

- Inspect heat tapes each year and replace them if you notice signs of deterioration. Look for discolored surfaces (especially at the plug), charring, cuts or breaks in the insulation, or bare wires.
- When installing heat tapes, carefully observe installation instructions. Different heat tapes have different installation requirements.
- Always plug the three-prong plug into a three-prong outlet to make sure the heat tape is grounded.
- Use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) wherever heat tapes are plugged in.
- Make sure the heat tape you use is intended for use on water pipes (other tapes heat

roof, gutters, or garden soil).

- Do not wrap heat tape over itself unless advised by the manufacturer. Use nonflammable insulation such as fiberglass. Do not use foam or vinyl insulation. It could catch fire if the heat tape fails.
- Apply heat tape directly on the pipe to be protected, never on top of the insulation covering the pipe.
- Keep the end cap sealed and off the ground to prevent water from getting in. Moisture can lead to a fire.
- If heat tape has a thermostat, check instructions to see if the thermostat should be placed against the pipe and covered with insulation or if it should be left hanging and uncovered.

Heat tapes perform a useful function, but like any electrical product, they need to be treated with care and respect. Don't create a fire hazard trying to keep your pipes from freezing. Replace uncertified heat tapes that are more than three years old. Buy heat tapes that meet voluntary standards. Install and use heat tapes properly.



Monroe Electric News

618-939-7171

MONROE COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC.

WATERLOO, ILLINOIS



*Holiday greetings
from the directors and
employees of Monroe County
Electric Co-Operative!*

Board Directors

Terry Grommet
Donald Gleiber
Richard Liefer

Walter Amann
Larry Haas
Joel Harres

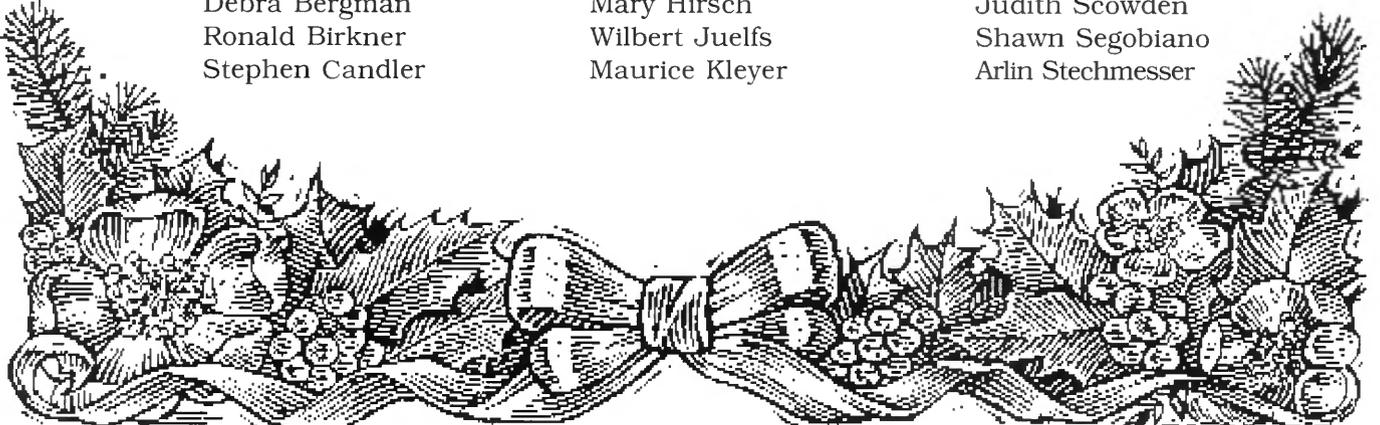
Manlee Knobloch
Larry Kraft
Ross Mueller

Cooperative employees

Joseph J. Fellin,
President/CEO
Patricia Hoffmann
Allan Masterson
Debra Bergman
Ronald Birkner
Stephen Candler

Chris Deterding
Steven Drennan
Randy Ellner
Robert Gross
Mary Hirsch
Wilbert Juelfs
Maurice Kleyer

Cindy Myrick
Ronald Rusteberg
Ronald Schultheis
Laverne Schutt
Judith Scowden
Shawn Segobiano
Arlin Stechmesser



Light the holidays safely

For the next few weeks you'll probably be busily decorating for the holiday season. Here are a few ideas that can make this festive time safe for your family.

- Before decorating the tree check your strings of lights for cracked or frayed cords, exposed wires and broken sockets. Throw away faulty equipment.
- Use only strings of lights listed by the Underwriters Laboratory or the Canadian Standards Association.
- Don't leave any light sockets empty. Small children may put their fingers in a socket and receive a potentially fatal shock.
- Always disconnect strings of lights before working on them.

- Be sure to replace burned-out miniature bulbs with bulbs designed for the same voltage. They all look the same, but read the packaging carefully!
- For decorating outside, use lights that are designed for outdoor use.
- Use insulated staples to fasten the strings to the house, etc. Never drive a nail through the insulation of a wire.
- Never decorate a metallic tree with electric lights. Damaged wire insulation could put an electric charge on the entire tree.



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Office closings

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative will be closed Dec. 24 and Dec. 31 in observance of Christmas and New Years. In the event of an electrical emergency, please phone

939-7171
(800) 757-7433



Buying someone a new appliance for Christmas?

Make sure it has a battery backup for the digital clock. That way, that special someone won't have to reset it after a split-second interruption of the power supply.



AT THE HOLIDAY SEASON...



...We see the lights of Christmas dotting the Illinois countryside as thousands of electric cooperative families spread holiday cheer. Electric cooperatives of Illinois extend best wishes and season's greetings to the more than 170,000 consumer-members who own the electric cooperatives of this state.

We wish you everything that's bright and beautiful during this holiday season...and for the coming new year.