

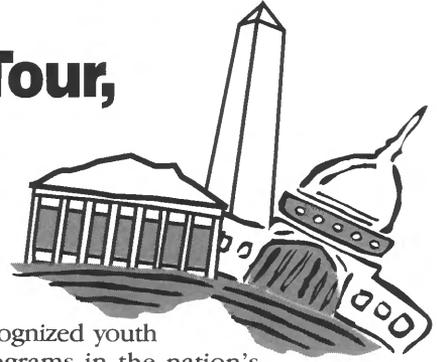
Rural Electric NEWS

Convenience Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

AUBURN, ILLINOIS • 217-438-6197

Apply now for 2001 Youth Tour, Youth Day programs!



High school juniors, now is the time to apply for great trips to Springfield and Washington, D.C.! Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative is sponsoring area students again this year for the popular Rural Electric Youth Day in Springfield and a chance to win a free trip to Washington.

Up to 10 local students will be sponsored by RECC at the Illinois Youth Day program on April 4, touring the Capitol, Illinois Supreme Court, and other historic sites and meeting with their state legislators. Two of those students will be selected to attend the Youth To Washington trip, June 15-22, with about 1,000 young people from around the country. RECC sponsors these trips to encourage students to learn more about our government's operation and about electric cooperatives.

Any junior attending a high school in RECC's service area is eligible for these expense-paid programs. Application request forms have been sent to our local schools, or the coupon below can be returned

to our office. We will mail a complete application kit and background information directly to the student. The application includes a summary of the student's school and civic activities and accomplishments, and a brief essay question pertaining to the rural electric program.

Applications must be returned to RECC by March 15, and the ten students selected for the Illinois Youth Day program will be notified by March 21 so that they can arrange their school schedules around the trip on April 4. Transportation will be provided from Auburn to Springfield and back.

After the day's activities in Springfield, the students will come to RECC's office in Auburn for individual interviews to select two winners for the trip to Washington, D.C. They will be judged on their application information, personal poise and confidence, and demonstrated understanding of the rural electric program. The two winners will travel by bus from Springfield to Washington this summer, in one of the best-

recognized youth programs in the nation's capital.

Even if a student is not chosen to be sponsored by RECC on the Youth To Washington tour, they may attend as a self-sponsored participant to share in this fantastic experience. At an expected cost of just \$850, including transportation, hotels, tours and meals, several Illinois students take advantage of this opportunity each year.

Tell your child, grandchild, neighbor or friend about these two super programs sponsored by your electric cooperative, and encourage them to apply. They can fill in the coupon or call our office at (800) 245-7322 and ask for Dana Smith, Director of Member & Public Relations, for more information. Don't let them miss this chance to meet new friends, learn about our government and co-ops, and have fun!

Tear off here and return to RECC, or call for an application form. Completed applications are due by March 15.

Request for Application

2001 Rural Electric Youth Day/Youth to Washington Tour

Student Name _____ Phone No. _____
High School Attended _____
Parent Name _____
Address _____
City _____ ZIP _____

Board of Directors: Jimmy Ayers, John Beatty, Ted Dowson, David Lewis, Lee Marten, Cassie L. Pierson, Melvin Repscher, David White, and Lyle Yeaman • **President/CEO:** David Stuva



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, weather-stripping, 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 RECC hope you'll help make the winter season safer by investing in a CO detector!

Business and Residential long distance rate plan

**Available to RECC members and non-members!
Tell all your friends!**

4.9¢ 6.9¢

All calls in Illinois

All calls out of state

**24 hours a day — 7 days a week
plus 6 seconds increment billing**

- Free to join • No monthly fees • No monthly premiums
- No term agreements • Major carrier
- 800 Number 4.9¢ — 6.9¢ per minute — no fees
- Free calling cards 13.9¢ per minute (No surcharge)
- **NO CODES TO DIAL**

Join the hundreds of co-op members saving money every month on their long distance bills! A flat rate of 4.9¢ per minute for in-state Illinois calls, and 6.9¢ per minute to other states in the continental U.S., any time, any day of the week! Power Net Global Communications is an established phone service provider for residential and commercial consumers, using the Qwest long distance network.

Your local phone company may charge \$5-\$10 to change long distance providers. **For more information, call customer service toll-free at 1-877-796-2333.**



**FREE
Personal
800 NUMBER**
No fees
Same low rate

PNG Application Form

Mail to RECC, or fax to 217-438-3212

Name _____ Social Security Number _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Your Telephone Numbers: () _____ - _____ () _____ - _____

Services Desired: Outbound Direct Dialing 800 Number—ring to number _____

Calling Cards (How many? _____) If you do NOT want LOCAL long distance Toll Services from PNG, initial here _____

I hereby authorize PowerNet Global Communications, or its designator, to transfer my long distance service. I agree to financial responsibility for all charges arising from all long distance services provided. The service requested will be provisioned only on the approval of credit for the application. A service charge may be assessed by the local telephone company when they make the carrier change.
Class 1 + LDA69EZ 800# E 69EZ Travel T14E Agency REC.

Customer Signature _____ Date _____

Different types of plugs causing confusion?

There are so many electrical appliances and so much equipment on the market today, and every one of them seems to have a special plug. What are they, and what do they do?

Computers, faxes and other electronics almost always have a three-prong plug. That third prong provides a path to ground for any leaking electricity, to protect the equipment and help prevent the user from getting a shock. Never remove the ground prong on a three-prong plug. If your outlet is just a two-prong type, have it replaced with a grounded outlet.

Even two-prong plugs are different today; one prong is usually larger than the other. This is called a polarized plug, and it ensures the plug is inserted correctly in a socket to reduce the risk of electrical shock. Don't try to force the plug into the socket. If it won't go in easily, turn the plug the opposite direction and try again. Chances are it will fit the second time.

Many appliances designed for use in bathrooms, such as hair dryers, now sport a big box-like plug on the other end. This plug may be an appliance leakage circuit interrupter, an immersion de-

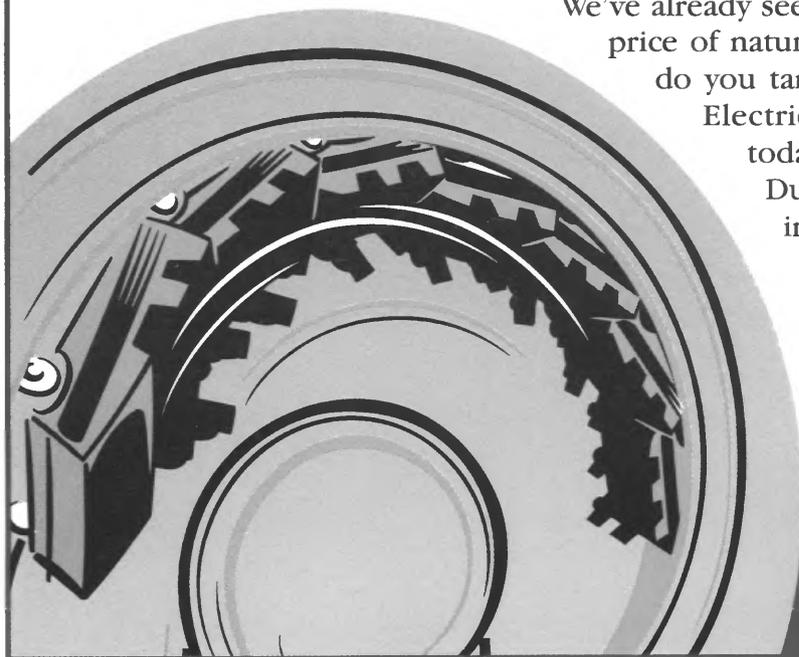
tection circuit interrupter or a ground-fault circuit interrupter.

Although each works a little differently, they're all designed to shut off power to the appliance in unsafe conditions, particularly if the appliance is submerged in water. But that doesn't mean that if you drop your hair dryer in a sink full of water you can safely reach in and get it out. To be safe, you should still unplug the appliance first and carefully remove it. And even with these special plugs, appliances used around water should always be plugged into a GFCI wall outlet, too.

Are gas prices turning your budget upside down?

Remember how much fun it was to take that roller coaster ride at this past summer's fair? Well, it's winter now and you're in for another ride, one that won't be so fun. It's the ride you'll be taking with some home heating costs.

We've already seen significant increases in the price of natural gas and propane. So how do you tame this wild ride? Call Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative today and ask about our 4-cent Dual Fuel rate for electric heating, air conditioning and water heating. With the low Dual Fuel rate, your home heating cost will not fluctuate and you'll be back on solid ground again.



Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative — We offer practical solutions for today's problems

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Kids!

Win a \$50 bond in RECC's Safety Poster Contest!

Area students can win a \$50 savings bond with their artistic ability, while promoting electrical safety, in RECC's new Safety Poster Contest! With National Electric Safety Month coming up in May, this is a great way to get our youths thinking about safe use of electricity and electrical equipment.

Any student, age 6-12, enrolled at area schools (or home school) is eligible to participate, with a safety poster that includes an electrical topic. Entries must be received between March 1 and April 30. Our judges will select the two winning posters based on originality, neatness, and attractiveness. Each winner will receive a \$50 U.S. savings bond. If enough entries are received, they will be broken into two age categories (6-9 and 10-12), with one prize for each age level.

All entries will be displayed at the RECC Annual Meeting on June 7 in Girard, and RECC reserves the right to publish any entries received in our member publications.

Original drawings are encouraged, but for those needing suggestions of topics, some samples can be found on our Internet web site, www.recc.org. Or, visit our office to pick up some printed safety materials.

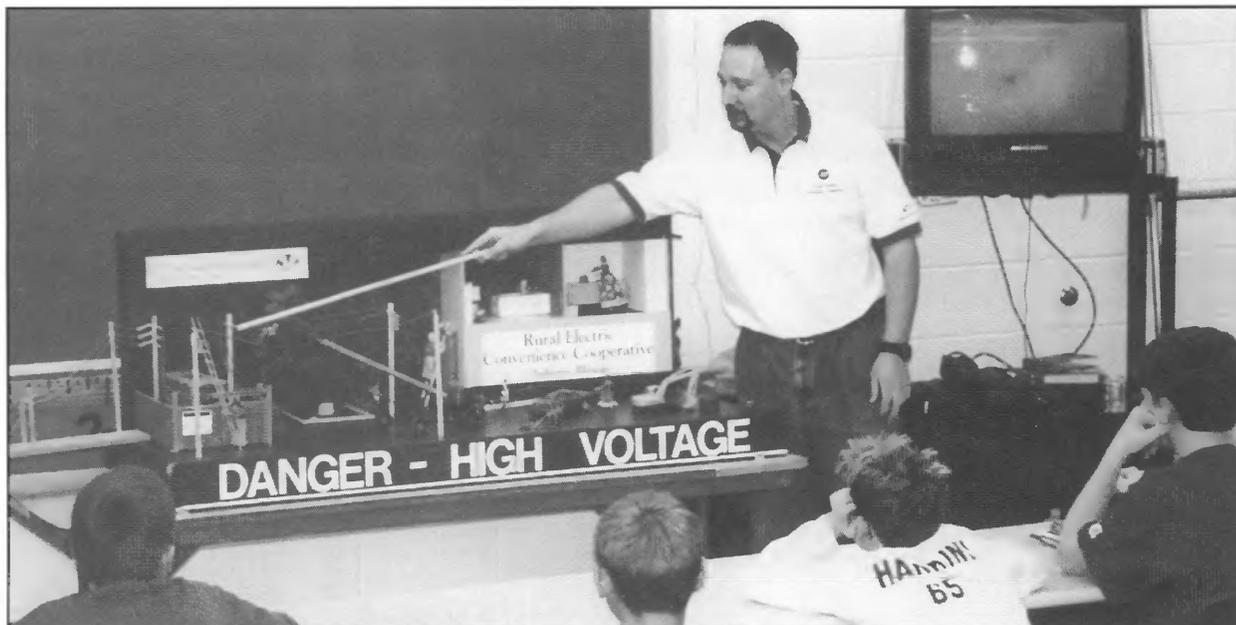
Encourage your kids and grandkids to put their talents to good use, and enter our first Safety Poster Contest!

Safety Poster Contest Rules

1. Open to all area students, ages 6-12
2. Entries must be on paper or poster board, from 8 1/2 x 11 inches to 11 x 16 inches
3. Any drawing medium is allowed
4. Must include electric safety message
5. All entries will be displayed at RECC Annual Meeting, June 7
6. Winners to be announced by May 15

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RECC provides safety classes at Glenwood Jr. High



Member Service Electrician Jeff Lancaster shows one of the hazards that can occur around overhead power lines, during a Technology class at Glenwood Junior High School. Along with Dana Smith, Director of Member and Public Relations, Jeff talked to 187 seventh graders about safety, wiring and home insulation.

RECC's member service employees put on their teacher's caps February 19 and 20, presenting eight electrical safety programs to the Technology I classes at Glenwood Junior High School in Chatham. A total of 187 seventh graders saw a miniaturized model of home, farm and suburban settings where electrical hazards can occur, with 12,000 volts surging through accident "victims" time after time.

The demonstrations were given by Dana Smith, Director of Member and Public Relations, and Jeff Lancaster, Member Service Electrician, who also built the table-top display. Everyday activities such as a child climbing a tree, to construction workers digging near power lines, can lead to injuries and even deaths. Students were reminded of safe practices around electric lines and equipment, both inside and outside the home.

Smith and Lancaster also

talked about insulation and electric wiring in a home. The Technology classes are building small home-like structures in the school shop complete with electric meter and wiring. Teachers Bob Holquist and Colin Lanning use the building process to teach basic skills in home design, hand tool use, carpentry, plumbing, wiring, drywall, siding and roofing. The finished small "houses" are sold to area companies or individuals for storage and other uses.

This hands-on training is a valuable asset for the young students, with skills that can be used for a lifetime. RECC's part in making students aware of electric wiring and equipment, and potential safety hazards involving electricity, are also important for a lifetime. The safety knowledge picked up by the Glenwood students may even help extend their lifetime if they are faced with an electric hazard in the future!



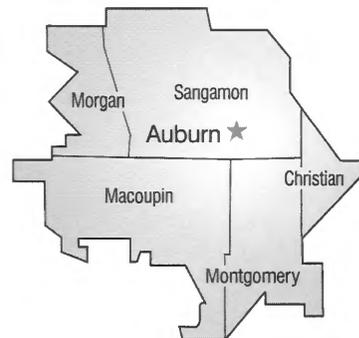
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Editor: Dana Smith



Building a new home?

Planning your dream house? Before you turn over that first shovel full of dirt, be sure to check out the many programs RECC offers to help you save energy and money. From efficient building design to rebates on electric equipment, we will work with you and your contractors to assure that your new home is comfortable and affordable!

SOME OF THE PROGRAMS WE OFFER INCLUDE:

Certified Comfort Home - A booklet full of construction tips to make your home more energy-tight and efficient. We'll even visit your construction site at various progress points to rate your key efficiency factors such as insulation, caulking and heating system efficiency.

Construction Video - Based on the energy demonstration home built by RECC in 1997, shows tips for insulating and sealing a new home, high-efficiency geothermal heating and cooling, Marathon water heaters, and even an electric fireplace!

Rebates - for installation of electric heating systems and appliances.

Water Heaters - Lifetime-warranty Marathon water heaters are available through RECC, with 50 and 75 gallon models available.

Dual Fuel Rate - Homes using electric heating and water heating qualify for a special 4-cent rate for those loads, AND for air conditioning. A separate meter is installed by the co-op to determine the heating, cooling and water heating usage.

Peak Switch - A Peak Switch is included in Dual Fuel homes, to cycle air conditioners and water heaters during peak load days in the summer. For homes with gas heat, a Peak Switch can be installed on an electric water heater for a monthly credit of \$3.50, and on air conditioners for a credit of \$25 per month in June, July and August.

AFTER YOUR HOME IS COMPLETE, YOU CAN ALSO ENJOY THESE OTHER SERVICES AND CONVENIENCES FROM RECC:

Security Light Rental - One monthly payment includes all maintenance and energy costs.



Budget Billing - Levels your monthly electric bills.

Automated Clearing House - Your electric bill is paid directly from your bank account.

Visa/Mastercard - Convenient payment of your electric bill or other charges on your credit card.

Long Distance Phone Savings - The PNG/Qwest long distance service is just 4.9¢ a minute for all in-state calls, and 6.9¢ a minute for out-of-state calls. No monthly fees, no gimmicks! Also a free personal 800-number at the same low rates.

Surge Protection - Whole-house protection for \$5.00 a month, plus plug-in strips protect sensitive electronic equipment.

Warehouse door upgrades completed

Extension of five overhead doors has been completed in RECC's line truck warehouse, which raised their height to 14 feet. New trucks with longer booms and more accessories would not fit in all of the bays at the Auburn headquarters building, so the door heights were raised to accommodate the modern equipment. Trucks can also drive straight through the warehouse bays, avoiding the need to back in or out through the doors. Final trim around the doors was installed recently by Midwest Overhead Doors of Pawnee.



Call before you dig!

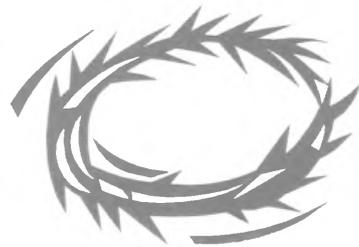
Springtime will bring outdoor work around our homes, planting shrubs, putting in patios or decks, building swing sets or installing fences. With all there is to do, you might not think twice before you push that shovel into the ground. But you should! In many areas, homes are served by underground electric and other utility lines. If you cut into a line, not only will you probably interrupt service to your home, but you could also be seriously injured! One call to the JULIE system for underground locates, at 800-892-0123, can tell you all you need to know before you start your project. You must call at least two working days before digging, so that any utility companies in the area can mark their underground facilities. Don't pay the price for neglect...call JULIE for free underground locates before you dig!



RECC office closed on Good Friday



RECC's office will be closed in observance of Good Friday on April 13. Line crews will be on call to respond to any outages or emergencies. If you have a problem after-hours with your electric service, you can call the 24-hour dispatch center at (217) 438-6197.



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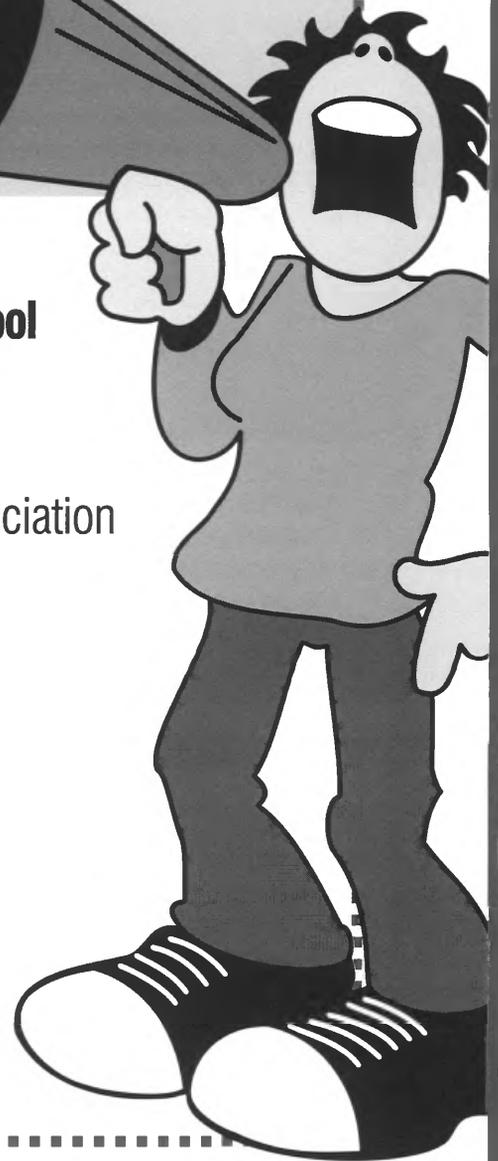
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REMEMBER YOUR ANNUAL MEETING!

Make plans to attend your cooperative's Annual Meeting, June 7 at the Girard High School gymnasium!

- 5:00-6:45 p.m.** Pork chop supper by Mid-Illinois Pork Association
- 6:45 p.m.** Early-bird prize drawings
- 7:00 p.m.** Business Meeting, election of directors
Door Prizes
Grand Prize Drawing

All registered members will receive an attendance gift. Be an active part of your cooperative — attend the Annual Meeting!



Board of Directors: Jimmy Ayers, John Beatty, Ted Dowson, David Lewis, Lee Marten, Cassie L. Pierson, Melvin Repscher, David White, and Lyle Yeaman • **President/CEO:** David Stuva

Where Do Electric Co-ops Fit in a Dot-Com World?

**Guest Editorial : Keven Groenewold
Executive Vice President
New Mexico Rural Electric Cooperative Association**

Since a small group of weavers founded the first cooperative in Rochdale, England, over 150 years ago, the idea of people joining together to pursue shared business interests has been adopted around the world in the form of the cooperative business model. In the United States, cooperatives provide food, housing and financial services; market agricultural and dairy products; and bring electricity and telephones to rural consumers—just to name a few cooperative businesses. They exist to meet the needs of their members; they don't exist to make profits or pay dividends to shareholders.

Will this approach work in the New Economy?

We read every day about Internet businesses whose employees work 100-hour weeks for stock options that will, hopefully, make them millionaires before they turn thirty. Financial

live our daily lives. How we use it may look like a telephone or a light bulb; what we do with electricity is communicate and choose.

Communications and choice are the cornerstones of the Internet economy. Co-ops, in turn, are about people. And people are about change and challenges and excitement. I can't tell you how co-ops will adapt to the new economy any more than my grandmother could have predicted the World Wide Web 20 years ago. I can say the co-ops that survive the dot-com revolution will listen to their members and learn from them what makes sense in the 21st century. Then, they'll find a way to make it work.

“ We use electricity to know more about the world around us ”

markets operate 24 hours a day, powered by computers and instant information transmitted around the globe. Consumers are gradually abandoning local shops for Internet stores that are open whenever the consumer wants to buy something or just browse quietly through screen after screen of merchandise.

What relevance do co-ops, especially electric co-ops, have in this tremendously fast-paced, dynamic, rapid-fire world?

In a word, everything. Electric co-ops were born in the last great technological revolution, the electrification of America. This revolution was about much more than electrical lighting and televisions and phones and dishwashers and 10,000 other things that form the fabric of our post-electric lifestyles. The electrical revolution was really about communications and choice.

We use electricity to know more about the world around us and to create choice in how we

Providing electric service will remain their core mission. However, they will realize that they aren't really in the business of shipping electrons across wires to their member's homes. They will realize, instead, that they are in the lifestyle business.

They will realize that electricity is a means to an end. It powers a way of living, just as the Internet powers its new economic model. And, they will take the next step and learn from their members what is needed for the emerging lifestyle.

I won't predict what that may be. It's been pointed out that 2001 is the final year of all the five-year business plans written in 1996. None of them predicted half of what is happening in today's economy, so there is no point in adding to the list.

I will predict, however, that co-ops have a vital and integral role to play in bringing the future—whatever it may look like—to their members. We all look forward to the challenge.



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Editor: Dana Smith



Morgan Sangamon
Auburn ★
Macoupin Christian
Montgomery



Paper or plastic?

*For your convenience,
now you can say "Charge It!"*

Rural Convenience Cooperative understands your need for billing convenience financial flexibility. That's why we accept MasterCard and Visa credit cards for both electric bill payments and retail purchases.

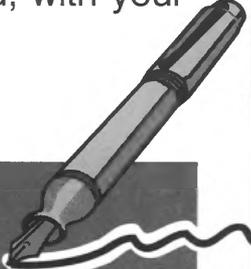
We also offer the Co-op Power Plus™ Visa card, with your choice of a low-interest card or a rebate card!

More good news...

You can now arrange to have your monthly payment billed automatically each month to your Co-op Power Plus™ Visa! Plus, you'll get a 3% rebate (paid by the credit card company) on your electric bill payments if you're using the Visa rebate card!

Your benefits:

- ✓ Convenience
- ✓ Peace of mind
- ✓ Financial flexibility
- ✓ Fewer checks to write

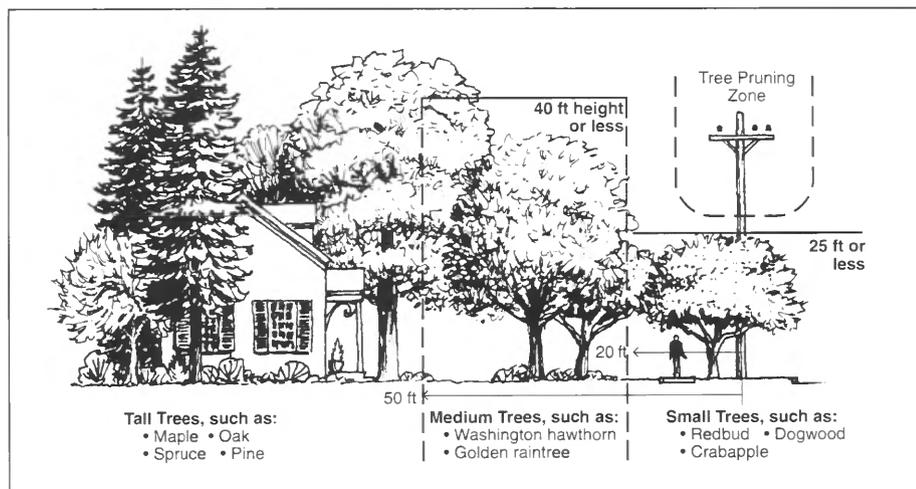


How to pay with your card

To make a payment with your MasterCard or Visa credit card, you can call RECC during office hours, and give us your payment instructions and card number. We'll process your payment on the spot!

If you want to have your payment billed automatically each month to a Power Co-op Plus Visa card, call us at (800) 245-7322 to request a sign-up form. If you don't have a Power Plus Visa yet, we'll send you an application form!

Please, plant the right tree in the right place



Trees are prized possessions in our yards and communities. They give needed shade in summer, provide protection from winter winds, help clear the air of pollutants, furnish a home for songbirds and wildlife and they please the eye with the beauty of their foliage.

But, when a tree's branches grow too closely to, or actually touch, power lines the result is going to be a power outage. This is a case of the wrong tree being planted or allowed to grow in the wrong place.

Trees and power lines can co-exist. But the trees must be selected and planted with size and growth characteristics appropriate to their location.

All responsible arborists and their associations subscribe to the following tree-planting rules in relation to overhead power lines:

Low Zone - Tree species that will not exceed 25 feet in height can be planted directly beneath power lines and for 20 feet to either side. Taller existing trees in this zone have to be pruned (sometimes drastically) so they'll grow around the wires. We're all in agreement that trees pruned in this manner are not attractive.

Medium Zone - Trees that grow to 40 feet in height at maturity are recommended for areas immediately adjacent to the Low Zone. This will rule out the possibility of limbs overhanging the power lines that we'll need to

prune or trees that can topple into the lines during a bad storm.

Tall Zone - Taller maturing trees should be planted at a distance of 50 feet or more from the power lines. This will insure they'll reach their full potential undisturbed by pruning. There is also little likelihood that wind or ice will cause them to do damage to the power lines.

Please call RECC at 800-245-7322 if you have a specific question about trees or for a copy of our brochure - *"Lines, Limbs and the Landscape"* - that explains why and how we prune, where to plant and a list of tree species that are suitable to plant within each zone.

Use extra precautions with electricity around water gardens

Water gardening is becoming more popular every year. If you plan to install a water garden this summer, or you have a pond and you're preparing it for the new season, you need to consider some basic safety steps when using electricity around the water.

Make sure any pump you use to aerate and recirculate your pond is rated for underwater use (submersible). Using a non-submersible pump, at best, will ruin

the pump. At worst, you could be in for a severe and possibly fatal shock. The same is true for underwater lights.

Your exterior electrical outlets should be equipped with ground fault interrupters (GFCI). Exterior GFCI outlets should also be equipped with covers to prevent rain or splashing water from tripping the circuit.

Never hook a pump to an extension cord, even one rated for exterior use. The pump should

be plugged directly into the GFCI outlet.

Use care when installing and plugging in the pump. Lower the pump into the pond, making certain it is stable. Then be certain to dry your hands and stand on a dry area before you plug it in.

Keep other electric tools and appliances away from the pond. If you should drop anything electrical into the pond, unplug the tool before you try to retrieve it.

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Students see Washington up close and personal

An Illinois delegation of 48 students and nine chaperones saw about as much of our nation's capital as you can see in one week, on the 2001 Rural Electric Youth to Washington trip. They traveled by bus from Springfield June 15-22, and even added sites along the way such as the Civil War battleground at Gettysburg, PA.

Karen Brehm of New Berlin and Josh Dickey of Auburn represented RECC on the expense-paid trip, which included delegations sent by electric and telephone cooperatives from several other states. Karen is the daughter of Allen and Beth Brehm, and Josh is the son of Bob and Bonnie Dickey.

The trip helps students understand and appreciate our government's history and function, and included visits with the



Illinois congressional delegation. The group also learned more about cooperatives, and the Illinois students formed the "Chip'n'Pop Co-op" during the week to provide affordable treats while operating their own cooperative enterprise.

Washington sites such as the White House, Capitol Building, the U.S. Memorial Holocaust Museum, and Smithsonian Museums were on the itinerary, and special activities included an evening dinner dance on a Potomac River cruise boat, a play at the Kennedy Center, and a reception at the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. The group also visited George Washington's home in Mt. Vernon, VA.

Karen Brehm and Josh Dickey viewed the Civil War battlefields at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on the way to Washington, D.C. in June. The Illinois Youth to Washington trip included 48 students and nine chaperones from electric and telephone co-ops around the state.

The Youth To Washington trip is coordinated by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, with the participation of 22 electric and telephone co-ops in the state. Juniors at all area high schools are invited to participate in RECC's selection contest in the spring.



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Keep your COOL and your energy dollars too



Room air conditioners can do a great job helping you keep your cool on hot, sweltering days. Used wisely, they can do their work without costing you a bundle, too. For instance:

- Fans can't entirely replace air conditioners, but they can provide extra cooling, especially on milder days. Whenever you can stay comfortable with a fan instead of running your air conditioner, you'll reduce your energy use by 60% or more.
- Set the thermostat as high as you can while still maintaining

your comfort. The less difference between the Indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your overall cooling bill will be.

- Don't crank the air conditioner to a really cold temperature to try to get your home cooler faster. This just doesn't work and you'll waste a lot of energy in the process.
- Make sure your room air conditioner is installed level and on a flat surface. Otherwise, the drainage systems and other features won't work as efficiently, and that reduces the overall cooling efficiency, too.
- On very humid days, set the fan speed on low; this will take more moisture out of the air and keep you more comfortable. When it's not really humid, set the fan speed on high.
- Using a fan with your air conditioner will help move that cool air around and keep the entire home more comfortable.
- Don't put lamps, televisions or other heat-producing appliances near the air conditioner. The thermostat will sense that extra heat and work harder and run longer than it needs to.
- Install the unit in a shaded spot on the north or east side of your home; direct sunshine and hotter southern and western exposures on the unit's outdoor heat exchanger will decrease its efficiency. A unit installed in the shade will be as much as 10% more efficient than an air condi-

tioner working away in the hot sun.

- Keep the air conditioner's filter clean; check it monthly and clean or replace it when necessary. A dirty filter can lower your air conditioner's energy consumption by 5% to 15%.
- If the air conditioner's drain channels become clogged, it won't pull as much humidity out of the indoor air - and that means you won't be as cool. The extra moisture in your home can also discolor and stain walls and carpets. Check the channels and clear any clogs by running a stiff wire through them.
- If the seal between the air conditioner and the window frame isn't tight, cool air can easily escape from your home. Moisture can damage this seal, so inspect the seal annually.

Source: Department of Energy (www.eren.doe.gov/buildings/consumer_information); Lawrence Berkeley Laboratories (HomeEnergySaver.lbl.gov)



**Rural Electric
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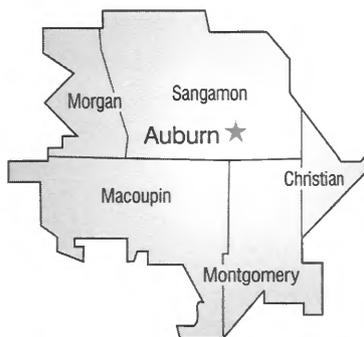
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(800) 245-7322

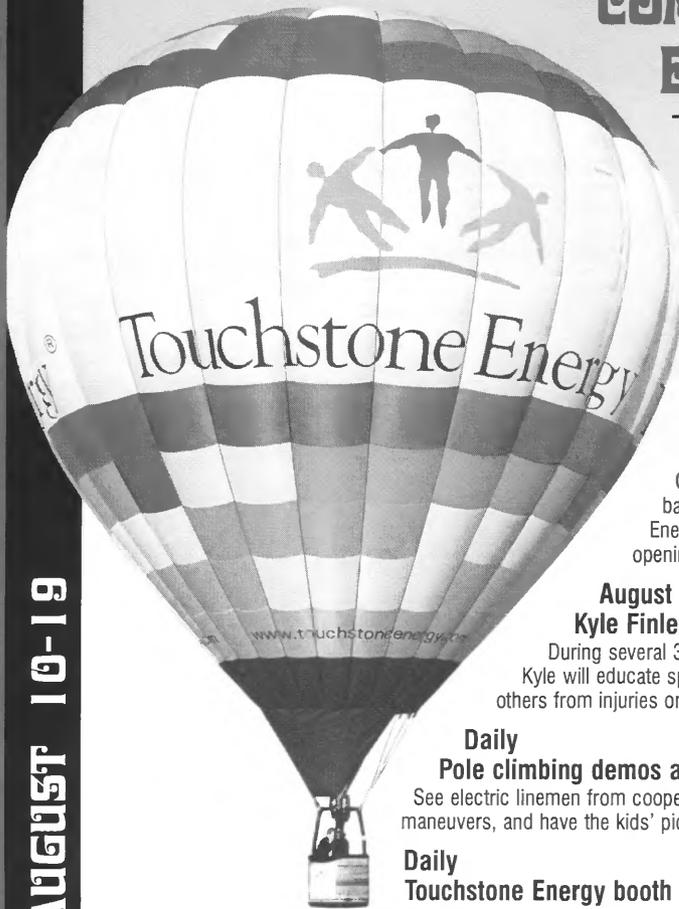
Office hours: 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Web address: www.recc.org

Editor: Dana Smith



ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

AUGUST 10-19



COME SHARE THE EXCITEMENT!

Join the Touchstone Energy® electric cooperatives

See all the activities at the Touchstone Energy® booth on Illinois Avenue, just south of the carnival:

August 10-12 Meet Cheri White

See this U.S. Hot Air Balloon Ladies' Division Champion, and get your autographed collectors balloon card. Expect a visit from the Touchstone Energy hot air balloon opening night and throughout opening weekend.

August 10-12 and 17-19 Kyle Finley's Live Line Safety Demo

During several 30-minute daily shows, using live electric wires, Kyle will educate spectators on how to protect themselves and others from injuries or even death caused by electricity.

Daily Pole climbing demos and kids' pictures

See electric linemen from cooperatives around the state demonstrate climbing maneuvers, and have the kids' pictures taken in lineman's climbing gear.

Daily Touchstone Energy booth

Meet electric cooperative employees and see the latest products and services offered by their cooperatives. See why Touchstone Energy cooperatives are the power of human connections!



Touchstone Energy®

Planning grain drying facilities?

It looks like another good year for corn and soybeans, which may mean more grain drying and storage facilities will be needed to hold the plentiful harvest. Don't forget to include electrical capacity requirements in your planning process, and let us know if you'll need a new or upgraded electric service for your installation!

Add up the running amperages for all motors that might possibly run at one time, and make sure your main circuit breaker or fuses are large enough to carry that load. The meter wiring must also be sized adequately, and RECC will assure that our transformer and service wire are

the proper size.

If service changes are needed, or a new service is requested, our operations department will need time to plan your job, make sure we have the needed inventory, and schedule the crews to do the installation. So don't wait until the last minute (or even the last week) to contact us!

Grain Drying Rate available

RECC has offered the special On-Farm Grain Drying Rate for several years now, with an off-peak rate of 4 cents per kWh from September 16 through May 31. Only grain drying, handling and pro-

cessing are eligible for this rate, so grain facilities must be separately metered from residential or other farm usage. In some cases a submeter is required, which is paid for by the member. Each meter billing also includes a monthly facilities charge.

If you have a grain drying installation that you believe may qualify for the Grain Drying Rate, give us a call. We'll check the installation, and let you know if any wiring changes are needed. If so, we can also give you an estimated annual savings from the special rate, so you can make an informed decision on whether to invest in the new wiring.

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.



Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative

(217) 438-6197 • (800) 245-7322

Rural Electric NEWS

Convenience Cooperative

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Four-year work plan approved

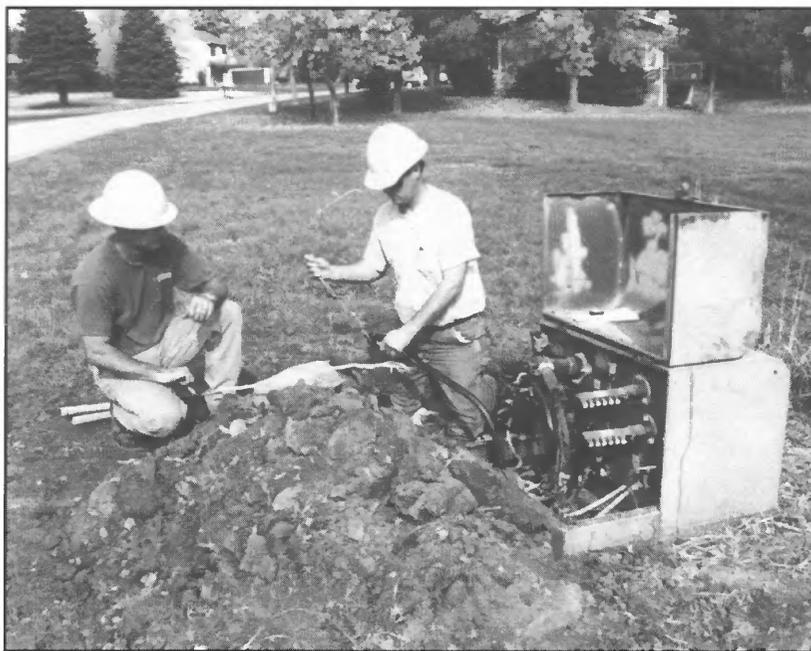
The RECC board of directors approved a new four-year work plan at their August meeting, outlining construction and financing plans for the co-op in the coming years.

The plan assumes a load growth of about 4.7 percent per year, and the addition of 80 new member services each year. Engineering analyses are run to ensure that all substations and circuits will safely carry the anticipated load and maintain proper voltage levels. This analysis was done by our consulting engineering firm, Allgeir, Martin & Associates.

The work plan includes big jobs such as converting 20.5 miles of single phase distribution lines to three-phase, and smaller jobs such as installing and changing out security lights. Some new lines will be installed to tie substations together for better reliability. New voltage regulators and capacitors will also be installed at key points to maintain optimum voltage and power quality.

A detailed work plan for each year has been prepared for crews to follow, along with their routine maintenance work and response to service requests.

Also included in the new plan is the installation of an automated meter reading system (AMR) that will enable the co-op to send meter readings electronically to the office each month. Besides getting usage information faster, the AMR meters can automatically report a power interruption,



Replacement of older underground and overhead wires will continue under the new four-year work plan approved by the board of directors in August. Most of the older subdivisions with high-voltage underground cable have been changed out, as shown above with linemen Clark Bowman (left) and Tim Hemberger making new connections at a padmount transformer.

record voltage problems, and keep track of “blinks” on the line that may indicate a problem.

The AMR system that is now being studied would use existing power lines to carry information from the member’s meter to the substation, where it is collected and sent over phone lines to an office PC. Readings would be available every day, or even several times a day, which could help resolve a member’s high-usage problems.

Utilities across the country are installing AMR systems, in a quest

for more and better usage information for their customers and possible new services or rate plans in the future.

Just as when RECC was created 64 years ago to meet the needs of rural homes and businesses, we are striving today to meet the rising expectations of our customers. Continued investments in equipment and technology will enable us to do that while keeping prices stable and maintaining a strong local presence.

Board of Directors: Jimmy Ayers, John Beatty, Ted Dowson, David Lewis, Jack Loving, Lee Marten, Cassie L. Pierson, Melvin Repscher, and David White • **President/CEO:** David Stuva

Celebrating the co-op advantage

OCTOBER is national **cooperative** month. It is a time to celebrate the **accomplishments** of cooperatives and to **educate** the public about the advantages cooperatives offer. The idea for a **celebration** of cooperatives began in 1924 in Waukegan, **Illinois** and became a **national** event in 1964.

Today, educating the public about cooperatives has become even more important due to the deregulation of many industries. Electric deregulation is in the forefront now, and electric cooperatives are a large part of that industry.

More than 34 million people in the United States receive their electricity from a cooperative. That's more than one in 10 Americans. And chances are, all Americans receive some product or service through the 48,000 plus cooperatives that exist in America. Products such as Land O'Lakes, Ocean Spray and Sunkist are all made by cooperatives. And businesses such as Ace Hardware and True Value are cooperatively owned and operated.

But what is a cooperative? It is a member-owned, democratically controlled enterprise, created and used by its member-owners to provide goods and services. That means member-owners have a say in how the cooperative is run and receive the benefits of it. With other businesses, shareholders receive all the capital gain at the expense of the people who use the products or services. But electric cooperatives give back this gain in the form of capital credits to the members themselves.

More than 120 million people across America are forming cooperative businesses to find solutions to their community's needs. They have realized that cooperatives give consumers more choices, cost savings and less risks. Cooperatives are guided by the set of seven principles below.

1st Principle: voluntary and open membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership.

2nd Principle: democratic member control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership.

3rd Principle: members' economic participation

Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. They usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership.

4th Principle: autonomy and independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

5th Principle: education, training, and information

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives.

6th Principle: cooperation among cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7th Principle: concern for the community

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for community development through policies accepted by their members.

Keep these principles in mind as you think about the cooperatives that help make your life a little better. To find out more about electric co-ops visit www.aiec.org or www.nreca.org.



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Web address: www.recc.org
Editor: Dana Smith

Co-op Power Plus Visa offers special 0% rate for 6 months!

Now is the perfect time to apply for a Co-op Power Plus™ Visa credit card! From October through December, new applicants for both the Standard and the Rebate credit cards will get an introductory rate of 0% interest for six months! This no-interest offer applies to any purchases or balance transfers made during the introductory period.

The Standard rate card offers a normal rate below many other

credit cards, while the Rebate card earns up to a 3 percent rebate from First USA Bank every time you use it! When you sign up for automatic payment of your monthly electric bill on the rebate card, you get a 3 percent rebate on the billing amount. Pay for other products or services from RECC with the card, and you'll get a 2 percent rebate. All other purchases made with the card earn a 1 percent rebate.

There's no annual fee, and



you get the solid reputation and service of First USA Bank with your Co-op Power Plus card. Call our office at (800) 245-7322 for an application form!

What are YOU waiting for???

What will it take for you to start saving with the Power Net Global long distance service through RECC?

- A. Pigs to fly.
- B. Hades to freeze
- C. A simple, low-cost plan with **4.9¢**/minute for in-state calls, and **6.9¢** /minute for out-of-state calls.

If you picked "C" your wish is fulfilled! Fill in the application TODAY and send it to RECC, or call toll free, (877) 796-2333 for more information!



PNG Application Form

Mail to RECC, or fax to 217-438-3212

Name _____ Social Security Number _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Your Telephone Numbers: () _____ - _____ () _____ - _____

Services Desired: Outbound Direct Dialing 800 Number—ring to number _____

Calling Cards (How many? _____) If you do NOT want LOCAL long distance Toll Services from PNG, intital here _____

I hereby authorize PowerNet Global Communications, or its designator, to transfer my long distance service. I agree to financial responsibility for all charges arising from all long distance services provided. The service requested will be provisioned only on the approval of credit for the application. A service charge may be assessed by the local telephone company when they make the carrier change.
Class 1 + LDA69EZ 800# E 69EZ Travel T14E Agency REC.

Customer Signature _____ Date _____



Gardeners are part of your electric co-op

Like gardeners who work to make part of the community a little nicer place to be, Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative works to make our communities better, too. Supporting local projects, presenting safety programs

for school and youth groups, promoting economic development, helping out wherever we can. Just like any good neighbor would do ... or a conscientious gardener planting seeds for a better tomorrow.

Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co.

Highway 104, Auburn • (217) 438-6197

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Rural Electric NEWS

Convenience Cooperative

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

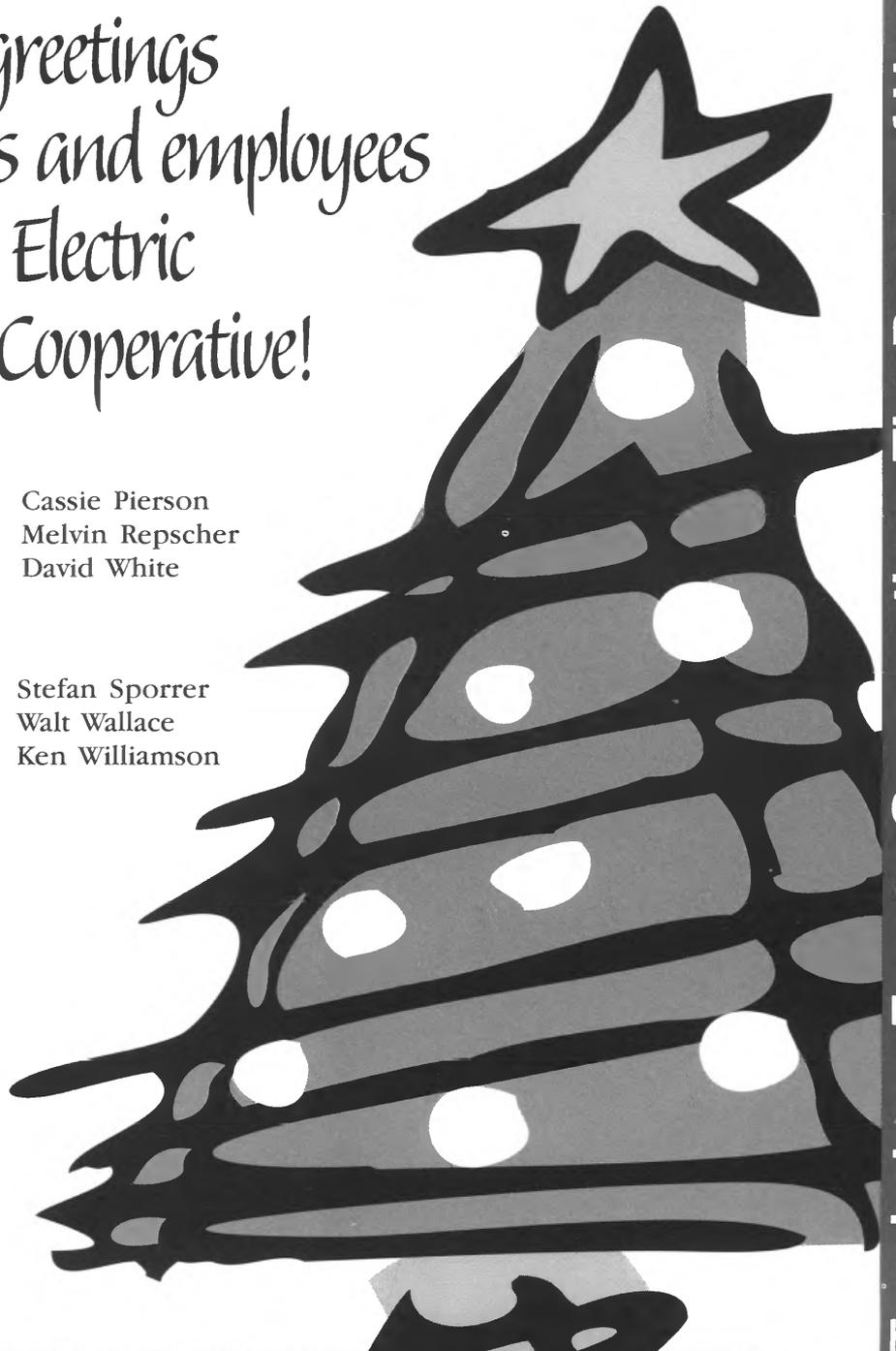
Directors

Jimmy Ayers	David Lewis	Cassie Pierson
John Beatty	Jack Loving	Melvin Repscher
Ted Dowson	Lee Marten	David White

Employees

David Stuva, <i>President/CEO</i>	Bob Garner	Stefan Sporrer
Clark Bowman	Bill Hart	Walt Wallace
Bill Carter	Tim Hemberger	Ken Williamson
Jeanette Clark	Martin Hinton	
Craig Costello	Sue Johnson	
Lou Delaby	Tom Jones	
Danna Elliott	Jeff Lancaster	
Curt Fishburn	Curt Nichelson	
Dave Flynn	Randy Olson	
Dean Fuchs	Jim Psaute	
Carol Funk	Dana Smith	

*In observance of the holidays,
RECC's office will be closed
Dec. 25 and Jan 1.*



Board of Directors: Jimmy Ayers, John Beatty, Ted Dowson, David Lewis, Jack Loving, Lee Marten, Cassie L. Pierson, Melvin Repscher, and David White • **President/CEO:** David Stuva

A guide to power outage safety

Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative makes every effort to keep the power on all the time. But sometimes, despite our best efforts, the power goes out. When that happens, there are a few things you can do to keep yourself and your home safe.

Check with your neighbors to see if their power is off. If not, the problem may lie in your breaker or fuse box. Try to reset the main breaker by flipping it

firmly to the "OFF" position, then back to "ON." In many cases, this is all you need to do to restore your power. For fuses, replace the main cartridge fuses at your meter or house panel.

If your power isn't restored using these methods, and/or your neighbors' power is out, contact RECC to report the outage. Turn off all appliances, heating and cooling systems, lights and other electrical equipment to avoid overloading the system

when your power is restored. Leave one light on so you will know when the power comes back on.

Keep a "power outage kit" handy that includes a flashlight, portable radio, fresh batteries for each of those, candles and matches. NEVER try to cook or generate heat indoors with a camp stove or charcoal grill. Both can emit fumes that can be deadly!

Generator dangers

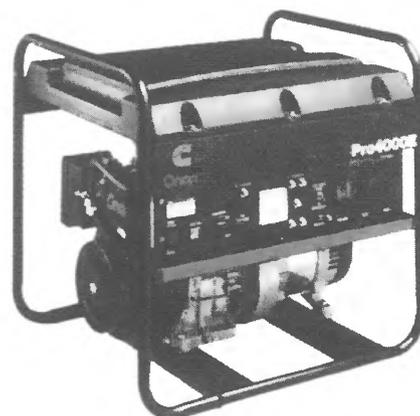
If you plan to use a standby generator for power during an electric outage, please keep the following tips in mind for safe operation:

TRANSFER SWITCHES: Attempting to connect a generator directly to the electrical system of any building is dangerous.

This can cause electricity to backfeed onto the co-op's lines and kill an employee working to restore service. Backfeeding can also cause serious damage to your building or a fire could result if the co-op attempts to restore power while the generator is in operation. Have a double-pole, double-throw transfer switch installed between the generator and the utility power supply by a qualified electrician before using a generator.

GROUNDING: If not properly grounded, a generator could become electrically charged and cause electrocution. Make sure the unit is grounded by following the manufacturer's instructions supplied with the generator.

VENTILATION: Gas-powered units must be properly ventilated to prevent the buildup of deadly carbon monoxide fumes. Obstructed ventilation could also cause overheating and possibly a fire. **DO NOT OPERATE A GENERATOR IN A CONFINED AREA** such as a garage, shed, basement etc. Do not operate a generator in an area occupied by humans or animals.



REFUELING: Gasoline and its vapors can ignite by coming in contact with hot engine parts, engine exhaust gases, or from an electrical spark. Turn the engine off and allow it to cool before attempting to refuel. Keep an A-B-C type fire extinguisher nearby when the generator is in operation.

EXTENSION CORDS: If you are using extension cords to power just a few appliances or tools, a heavy-duty (at least 14 gauge wire) three-wire grounded cord should be used. Appliances and tools used should have three-blade grounding plugs. Never use an extension cord that has worn or damaged insulation.



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Web address: www.recc.org

Editor: Dana Smith



Safety presents

for the ones you love



The holidays are just around the corner. Do you have shopping lists ready for each member of your family? Although they are not going to win “oohs” and “ahs” when presents are opened, here are some important gifts you may have forgotten that will show your loved ones how much you care.

■ SMOKE DETECTORS

One smoke detector is definitely not enough. December, January and February are the leading months for home fires and associated deaths in the United States. Install smoke detectors near bedrooms and on each floor of your home. Test smoke detectors monthly and replace batteries at least once a year. A good rule of thumb is to change your batteries when you change your clocks. Have children help test and change the batteries so they are familiar with the location and sound of the smoke detectors.

■ FIRE EXTINGUISHER

Every kitchen should have a fire extinguisher that is rated for grease and electrical fires. It is also a good idea to have fire extinguishers near the furnace, fireplace, garage and anywhere else a fire may start in the home. Ensure that every able-bodied person in the home is trained on how to use a fire extinguisher. If you do have to use a fire extinguisher, always be sure that you have a clear way out in case you can't put out the fire.

■ CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that is the result of burning fuel for furnaces, unvented kerosene and gas space heaters, stoves or automobile exhaust. More than 200 people in the United States die each year and many more become seriously sick from carbon monoxide poisoning. The risk of carbon monoxide poisoning increases during the winter as more people use furnaces, space heaters and fireplaces. The best way to ensure

the safety of your family from carbon monoxide poisoning is a carbon monoxide detector. Install carbon monoxide detectors near sleeping areas. Carbon monoxide detectors should meet the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) standards, have a long-term warranty and be easily tested and reset to ensure proper functioning. Research the various product features to see what best suits your family.

■ GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTER (GFCI)

A ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) is designed to protect people from severe or fatal electric shocks or electric burns by monitoring electricity flowing in a circuit and switching off power to that circuit if it senses any changes in the electric current. For example, one of your kitchen appliances has a bare wire inside touching the metal case. The metal case of the appliance is now charged with electricity. If you touch the appliance with one hand while the other hand is touching a grounded metal object, such as your water faucet, your body has just become an unintentional electric path to the ground. A GFCI would have switched off the electric current the moment it sensed the change in the electric current, preventing personal injury.

Portable GFCIs are widely available and easily plug into any electrical receptacle. Qualified electricians can install permanent circuit breaker and receptacle type GFCIs. All GFCIs should be tested once a month to ensure they are working properly.

For more information on safety products, visit the National Safety Council website at www.nsc.org, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/safeusa/ and Consumer Product Safety Commission website at www.cpsc.gov/CPSC/PUB/PUBS/.

Business and Residential long distance rate plan

Available to RECC members and non-members!
Tell all your friends!

4.9¢ 6.9¢

All calls in Illinois All calls out of state

**24 hours a day — 7 days a week
plus 6 seconds increment billing**

- Free to join • No monthly fees • No monthly premiums
- No term agreements • Major carrier
- 800 Number 4.9¢ — 6.9¢ per minute — no fees
- Free calling cards 13.9¢ per minute (No surcharge)
- NO CODES TO DIAL

Join the hundreds of co-op members saving money every month on their long distance bills! A flat rate of 4.9¢ per minute for in-state Illinois calls, and 6.9¢ per minute to other states in the continental U.S., any time, any day of the week! Power Net Global Communications is an established phone service provider for residential and commercial consumers, using the Qwest long distance network.

Your local phone company may charge \$5-\$10 to change long distance providers. For more information, call customer service toll-free at 1-877-796-2333.



PNG Application Form
Mail to RECC, or fax to 217-438-3212

Name _____ Social Security Number _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Your Telephone Numbers: () _____ - _____ () _____ - _____

Services Desired: Outbound Direct Dialing 800 Number—ring to number _____

Calling Cards (How many? _____) If you do NOT want LOCAL long distance Toll Services from PNG, intital here _____

I hereby authorize PowerNet Global Communications, or its designator, to transfer my long distance service. I agree to financial responsibility for all charges arising from all long distance services provided. The service requested will be provisioned only on the approval of credit for the application. A service charge may be assessed by the local telephone company when they make the carrier change.
Class 1 + LDA69EZ 800# E 69EZ Travel T14E Agency REC.

Customer Signature _____ Date _____