

NORRIS

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Newton, Illinois 62448 • 783-8765

Electric News

This editorial is by Bruce Graham, Vice President of Member Services and External Affairs for Kansas Electric Power Cooperative, Inc.

The Value of Cooperative Membership

It is safe to say that there is a crisis of confidence today among American consumers and investors. Regularly, we see reports and updates on national scandals at accounting firms, the stock market, and other segments of corporate America. A number of formerly high-flying utility companies are suffering on the regulatory, financial and leadership fronts. In many instances, they have customers and employees who are frustrated and flabbergasted.

On the other hand, it has never been a better time to be an REC member. Recent research shows that our members believe in and trust their cooperative. They see RECs are part of the solution, not part of the problem.

That research is a small part of NRECA's Regional Meeting, which is packed with presentations guaranteed to build REC stamina and pride. Programs such as "The Cooperative Business Model - Why It's a Competitive Advantage," that cites a comprehensive and very timely new study. More than 22,000 cooperative consumers and 4,000 non-cooperative customers were surveyed and divided into the following groups:

1. Members who know they are served by a co-op and who identify themselves as "members-owners" or as "member-customers";
2. Cooperative consumers who identify themselves only as customers;

3. Consumers who don't know they are served by a co-op; and
4. Customers of investor-owned utilities, or municipal systems.

The key result: Cooperative members who have some degree of identity as owners are more satisfied and more loyal than any other group:

- they are more loyal than those who think of themselves as customers;
- they are more loyal than those who don't know that they are served by a co-op;
- and they are more loyal than IOU and municipal customers.

When asked if they would definitely recommend their provider to a friend or family-member, 70 percent of self-identified co-op members said yes, while only 51 percent of self-identified customers answered positively.

The research measured consumer satisfaction on a 10-point scale with "10" being "very satisfied." Fifty-two percent of those who have some identification as a coop member rate their satisfaction as a "10." In contrast, only 33 percent of those who self-identify themselves as customers give a score of "10."

It doesn't stop there. Self-identified members:

- Perceive that their co-op had fewer outages than did self-identified customers.
- "Having customer's best interests at heart" -- Sixty-three percent of members rate

co-ops as "excellent," versus 40 percent of those who call themselves customers, a 23 percent gap.

- Showing personal interest -- 21 percent gap.
- Resolving issues or problems -- 17 percent gap.
- Charging reasonable rates -- 16 percent gap

Another interesting survey result was "having courteous employees." Eighty percent of members give an "excellent" score, versus 65 percent of customers -Note: these are the same employees. It is the consumer's self-identification that makes the difference.

So, what do we do with that information?

NRECA is suggesting, at the very least, a rededication to communications and member services that concentrates on turning customers into members. "How we advertise ourselves and communicate with members is as essential as implementing an engineering plan. No matter how competitive we are, or how good our engineering is, we can always have a public relations problem," NRECA says.

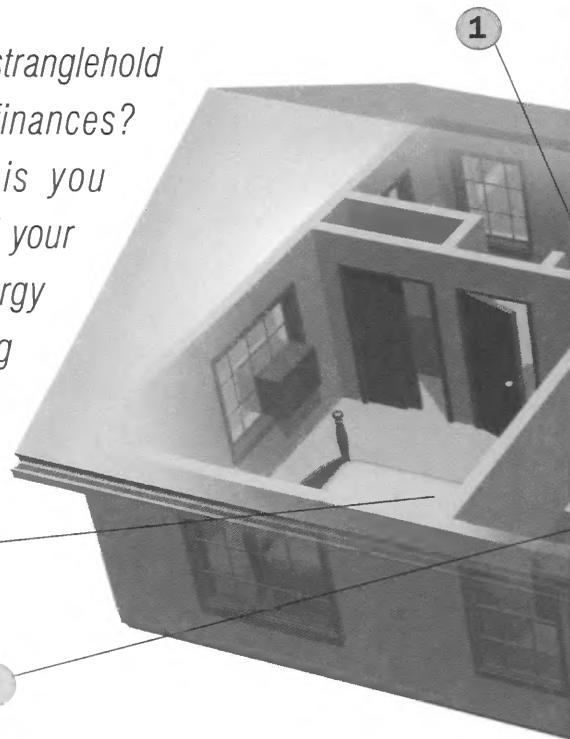
How to communicate the value of being a cooperative member?

Look to Touchstone Energy®. Instinctively, the Touchstone Energy message felt right ... but this new research proves that it has been on target the past four

(continued on 16d)

A room by room look at energy efficiency

Do energy bills have a stranglehold on your family's finances? The good news is you can offset some of your costs by using energy more wisely. The following is a room-by-room look at measures that may help.



1 bathroom

Bathing: Fifteen percent of a typical energy bill goes to heating water. It takes about 30 gallons to fill the average tub and a shower with a flow of 3 gallons a minute uses only 15 gallons in five minutes. A water-saving showerhead reduces usage even more.

Faucets: Fix leaky faucets. A leaky faucet dripping 30 times a minute wastes 50 gallons of water and \$1 a month in energy if it's hot water.

2 bedroom

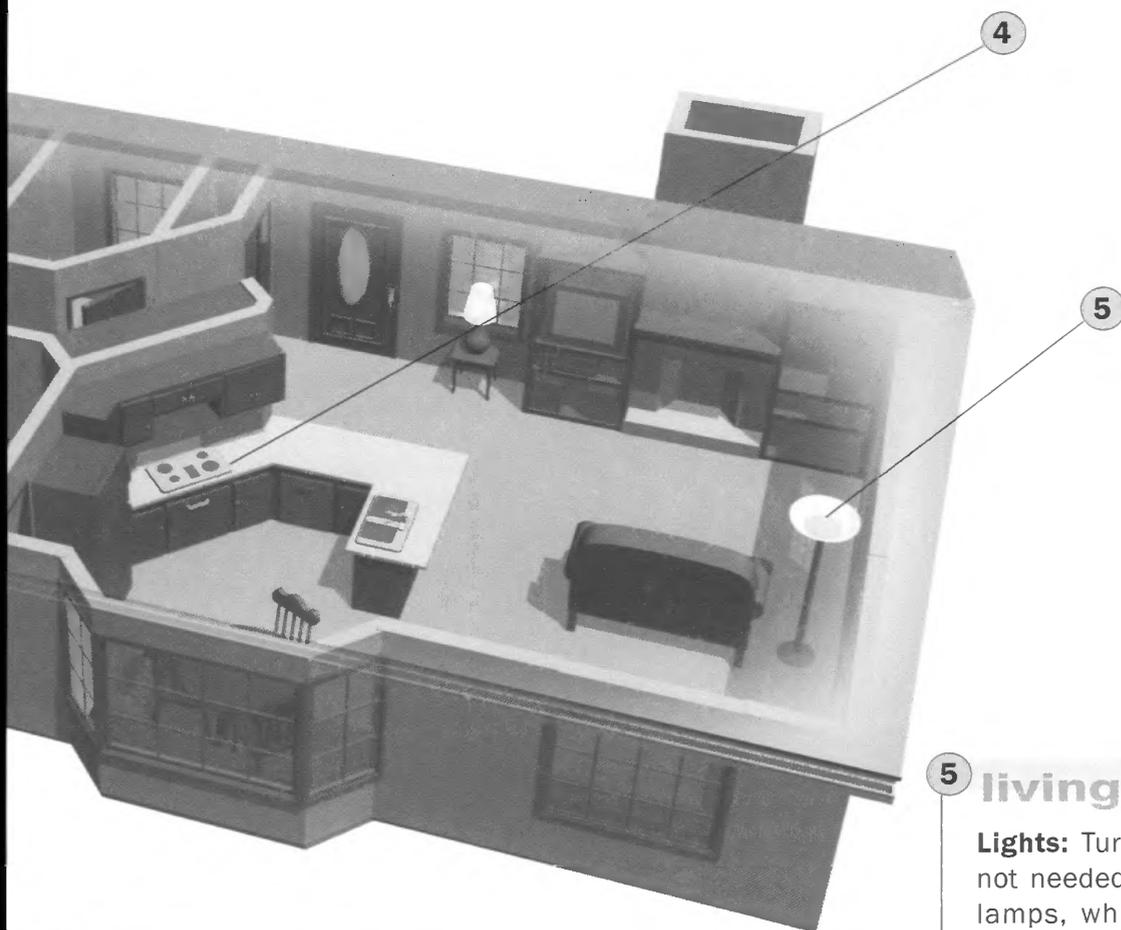
Waterbed: A waterbed heater can use more electricity than a refrigerator or water heater. Keeping a comforter on your bed can cut heat loss 30 percent. Use a timer to turn the heater on.

Washing: Of the energy used in doing laundry, 90 percent goes to heating water. Use cold or warm water instead of hot and use the right amount of water to fit the load size. Rinse with cold water.

3 laundry room

Water Heating: Reduce the water heater to 115 degrees. Insulate the water heater tank unless the manufacturer advises you not to. Check the heating elements for mineral buildup. If you will be away for several days, turn the water heater off at the breaker panel.

Drying: Clothes dryers account for about 5 percent of the electricity used in most American homes. Hang clothes, if possible. Dry full loads but don't overload the dryer. Clean lint from traps often.



4 kitchen

Cooking: Don't open the oven while cooking; up to 20 percent of the heat will escape. Defrost food before cooking which saves up to 50 percent on cooking time. An electric skillet uses half the energy of a typical range. Slow cookers use one-third the energy of an oven and toasters are three times as efficient.

Dishwasher: Run full loads using the shortest wash cycle possible. Avoid the rinse and hold cycle, which uses about eight gallons of water just to pre-rinse dishes. Air-dry or use an energy-saver setting.

Refrigerator/Freezer: Set the refrigerator to 38 to 40 degrees and stand-alone freezers to 0 degrees. Cool foods before putting them in the refrigerator, and cover liquids to stop evaporation. Place refrigerators and freezers away from heat registers and stoves. Leave 2 to 3 inches clearance around the appliance to allow for air circulation and clean

5 living room

Lights: Turn off lights when not needed. Use fluorescent lamps, which produce four times more light per watt than incandescents.

Fireplace: Keep the flue closed when not in use, and install glass doors. For gas logs, choose sealed vent models that don't pull air from the room. Better yet – install an electric fireplace with realistic flame effects!

Heating: Set your thermostat as low as you can while maintaining comfort. Every degree you raise the temperature adds about 2% to your heating costs. Don't block heating vents or return air grilles. Change your furnace filters to maintain good airflow, and have regular heating system checkups to maintain peak efficiency.

(continued from 16a)

years. We're not some conglomerate accounting firm suddenly discovering the need to advertise integrity. RECs have been true to their roots, operating with a history of innovation, accountability, commitment to community, and true integrity.

Touchstone Energy has been a solid investment in brand development and in this time of turmoil, the message of stability, pride and the value of cooperative membership is on the mark. Recognizing that, NRECA and Touchstone Energy are working to unify more cooperatives under the Touchstone Energy brand. Part of that effort was to significantly revise the national investment structure and it is paying off in increased member-

ship. Big RECs in Texas, Georgia and Florida have joined. Membership meetings are underway in Louisiana and Alaska. Co-ops from Virginia, New Hampshire, Missouri, Iowa, Arkansas, Washington and a few other states have expressed their intent to join as well.

I believe it is time for electric cooperatives across the nation to continue with and capitalize on the investment made by more than 500 visionary Touchstone Energy partners. The program is growing, developing new services, and most importantly, it's working! The latest advertising messages reinforce the value of cooperative membership and the production quality of the materials is first class. The employee

customer service modules are equally strong, and the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) results are a bonus as are the Business Advisory Council reports. Programs such as the Touchstone Energy Home, the upcoming "Get Charged" school materials, among others, fall within the value-added category that is only possible through the combined investment and energy of all Touchstone Energy cooperatives.

Bottom line is ... we're doing things right. Let's communicate our cooperative spirit. Let's show everyone that we're just as proud as our members are to be part of a rural electric cooperative.

Vegetation Control Schedule

We will have crews performing routine tree trimming or spraying during **February** in the following areas:

Cumberland County
Crawford County

These areas have been scheduled quite a bit in advance so our plans may change. You should call us if you have any questions relating to a specific area or our vegetation management policies and practices. You may also call if you wish to make

other arrangements for your specific property or to question our vegetation control practices. Our Forestry Department can be reached at (877) 783-8765 or (618) 783-8765 during working hours. Our Web site is www.norriselectric.com.



Being a cooperative member. . .

What it all means

We don't like to admit it, but sometimes we have a tendency to forget that all our members have not always received their electricity from an electric cooperative. You may not know about the advantages of receiving electricity from a cooperative — your rights, your privileges and your responsibilities.

When receiving your electric service from an electric cooperative, you should know:

- You are a member of the cooperative and as a member, you are part owner of the cooperative.
- You have the right to attend the cooperative's annual meeting of members held each year and to vote for the board of directors who governs the cooperative.
- You have the responsibility to keep up with the developments affecting your cooperative.
- Your cooperative was established by local activists at a time when existing utilities refused or neglected to serve the area where you live now.

Your local cooperative chooses to provide you with a monthly subscription to Illinois Country Living. Electric cooperatives began publishing periodicals such as this in the 1940s to communicate with their members.

Today, your cooperative relies on this magazine not only to relay information about this business, but also to encourage you to use electricity wisely and safely. Promoting electrical safety can help save the lives of our cooperative members. Promoting wise electrical use can help the cooperative and its members save money. Cooperative personnel can help members make informed decisions when purchasing new, efficient appliances and technologies for the home.

Norris Electric Cooperative • Route 130 South • Newton, Illinois 62448 • (618) 783-8765
Office hours: 8 a.m. — 4:30 p.m

2003 Youth to Washington Tour

Your cooperative has always been committed to improving the quality of life of its members. One way we do this is by enhancing the lives of young leaders in our community. Today's youths are our country's future and we are committed to encouraging them to be leaders in our society. We do this by providing college scholarships and sending students to Washington, D.C. to experience and witness their government in action.

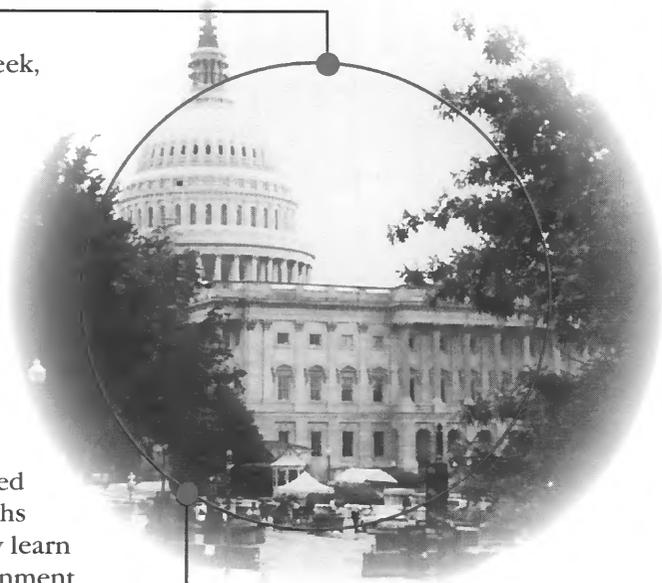
Some 60 students from Illinois participate in this trip each year. These students will learn about the foundation on which this country was formed. They will be able to "see" our nation's history through visits to Arlington Cemetery, Gettysburg, the Holocaust Museums and many historic monuments and memorials. Students will learn how our country operates today by meeting with members of Congress and seeing the Supreme Court and the U.S. Capitol. And students will leave with a better understanding of what role they can play in their country's future.

During the week, students will also have the opportunity to meet with students from 42 other participating states. The overall group of students usually totals more than 1,300 each year. The "Youth to Washington" program has helped thousands of youths across the country learn more about government and the legislative process. Past alumni of the tour include State Representative Art Tenhouse and former State Representative Tom Ryder.

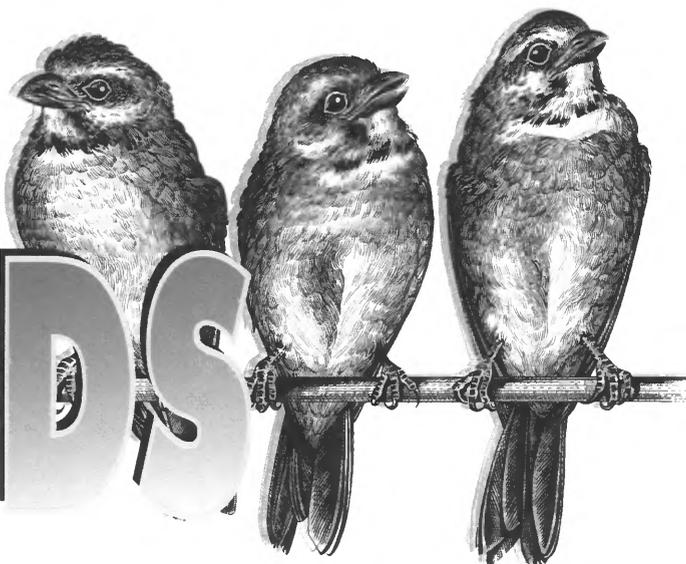
The tour, which is in its 44th year, is well supervised and available to high school sophomores and juniors. In addition to students sponsored by an Illinois cooperative, children and grandchildren of co-op employees, members and directors are eligible and encouraged to participate as "Willie Wirehand" stu-

dents. The cost of sending these students is \$850, which includes all travel, lodging, meals, insurance and tickets.

This year's "Youth to Washington" tour will take place June 13-20, 2003. For more information, please call Mike Ochs at the cooperative at (618) 783-8765 or contact your high school's guidance counselor. Also, visit the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative's Web site at www.aiec.coop.



For the BIRDS



A flash of red marks a cardinal's descent. A splash of orange heralds an oriole's arrival. A beacon of blue reveals the presence of a blue jay. To the thousands of bird watchers in Illinois, these are the welcoming sights seen from back porch swings and through bedroom windows.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service says that feeding birds is the most popular wildlife related recreational activity around the home. More than 50 million Americans participated last year. This winter, prepare your backyard for birds, then sit back and watch natural beauty take its course.

Do you love witnessing the acrobats of finches, hearing the call of a cat-bird, or do you prefer watching the fluttering wings of hummingbirds? When the weather outside turns cold, birds need a safe haven to rely on for food, water and shelter. The type of shelter and food you provide depends on which species of bird you wish to attract.

The most popular feeders are tubular, hopper, hummingbird and suet style. Tubular styles attract small birds such as finches and chickadees, and hold niger and sunflower seeds.

Hopper style feeders attract a wide variety of birds such as cardinals and grosbeaks. Any type of seed can be used, but black-oil sunflower seeds seem to be a favorite of many bird species.

Hummingbird feeders are plastic cylinders filled with a nectar solution. These feeders should be cleaned and refilled every few days, especially in hot weather. Put your feeder out in early spring and wait until late fall to take it down.

Suet supplies some needed nutrients to birds such as chickadees and woodpeckers. You can buy suet cakes and feeders or make your own.

To attract attention to your new backyard feeders, put some seed on a piece of aluminum foil placed below them. Also, wash them regularly. Feeders need to be placed about 5-10 feet from nearby shrubbery and cover. Otherwise, predators can hide from the vulnerable birds. But don't put feeders out in the open where hawks can spot them either.

Also, find a place that's shaded part of the day and out of the wind. Remember, birds only use feeders to supplement their diet. They will continue to find the nutrients they need in the wild as well. Plant-

ing flowers and trees that provide food for birds can also help attract them to your paradise. Trees that produce sap in the spring, flowers in the summer, or fruits in the fall are some favorites of birds.

Let children become involved in bird watching. Have them smear peanut butter on a pine cone and hang it near a window so they can observe their guests.

Shelters are another good way of attracting birds to your backyard habitat. But don't expect all 100 bird species it's possible to see in Illinois to flock to your newly built birdhouse. Species of birds have different housing requirements. Most important is the entrance hole size.

For example, chickadees require a 1-1/8 inch hole, whereas bluebirds need 1-1/2 inch openings. Birdhouses also need to be placed correctly; some birds prefer very high homes, while others do not. When in doubt, place houses about 10 feet from the ground. This will accommodate most species.

Clear out your birdhouses this winter and add sawdust for roosting winter species. A brush pile or discarded Christmas tree next to your feeding station also provides shelter from predators.

And don't forget to supply a constant fresh water source for your feathered friends. Birdbaths are easy to create and care for. You can even use a garbage can lid placed on the ground. Heaters are available for wintertime bathers, or add warm water regularly to frozen baths. Water makes a bird's life much easier. Bathing and preening feathers keeps birds in good health all year long. Readily available fresh water in the winter helps birds conserve energy.

Many people join in bird feeding in the winter months, but it is also important to keep feeders out all year long. You can experience some of the other seasonal joys of watching your feathered friends. For example, in the summer mothers will bring their babies to the feeders, and in spring, the birds will return to your feeders after migration. Or birds will stop off for a treat in the spring and fall on their way north or south.

To join the National Bird Feeding Society or learn more about them, visit their Web site at www.birdfeeding.org or mail an inquiry to P.O. Box 23, Northbrook, IL 60065.



FIREPLACE SAFETY

Fireplaces help warm your family's home, but can be dangerous if not properly attended. Please follow these steps to keep your home safe and warm in the dead of winter:

- Check your fireplace and chimney often and keep them clean and in good repair.
- Always use a good fire screen in front of the fireplace.
- Keep the damper set so the draft (flow of air) will remove all smoke and gases.
- Keep the area near the fireplace clear of materials like papers, books, toys, etc.
- Never leave a fire unattended, and make sure the fire is completely out before going to bed or leaving the house.
- Always keep a fire extinguisher close at hand. Make sure everyone knows how to use it. Keep emergency phone numbers on or next to the telephone.
- Do not stack artificial logs in the fireplace like you would real wood.
- Do not use your fireplace if it has loose bricks or needs to be cleaned.
- Do not burn charcoal, coal or plastic materials (wrap, cups, plates, etc.).
- Never burn garbage in the fireplace.
- Never use gasoline or other such liquid to start a fire.
- Do not allow small children near the fireplace.

For other questions about fireplace safety, call your local electric cooperative.

OFFICE CLOSING

Our office will be closed February 17 in observance of President's Day.

Norris Electric Cooperative Route 130 South Newton, Illinois 62448 (618) 783-8765
Office hours: 8 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.

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Electric News

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34th Annual Meeting of the Illinois Association for Advancement of Archaeology

Sponsored by

Central Wabash Archaeology Chapter

Dig day, site visits, displays, special speakers,
museum and historical tours available

April 25, 26 and 27, 2003

Location:

Fife Opera House
Palestine, Illinois
Crawford County

*For more information contact
Central Wabash Archaeology Chapter*

c/o Vicki Stephens
10531 E 500th Ave.
Robinson, IL 62454
(618) 546-1180

OR

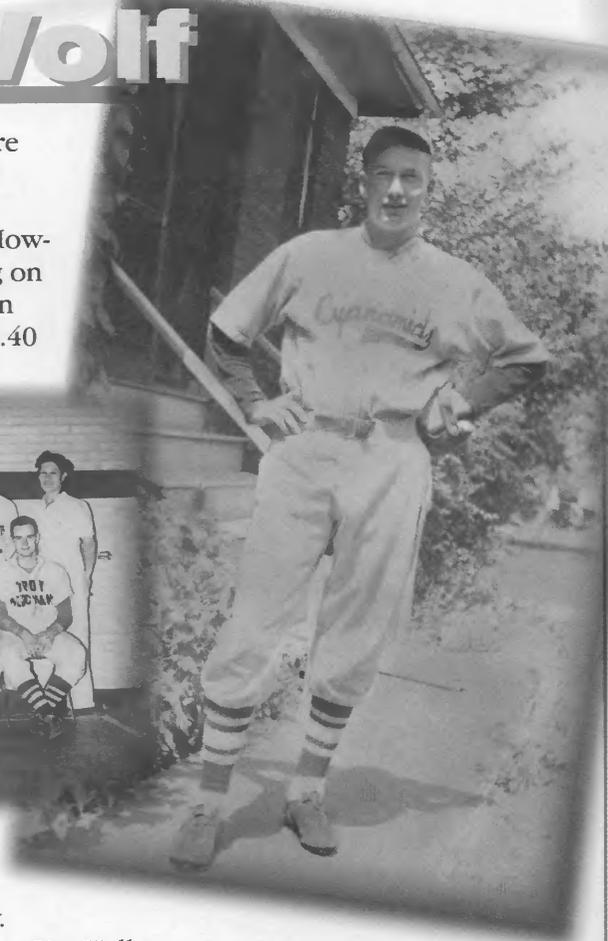
Kent Boyd
19282 E River Rd.
Palestine, IL 62451
(618) 586-2722

The Wolf's score for the home team

If you were to drive along the lines of Norris Electric Cooperative, you probably wouldn't be surprised to see a grandfather and grandson playing catch. But you would surely be surprised to see a professional player playing catch with his semi-professional baseball veteran grandfather. And that is indeed what you could see. Howard Wolf, a director for the co-op for 26 years, played semi-professional baseball in the 1930s. His grandson Ross Wolf, is currently playing the game professionally for the Jamestown Jammers, a minor league team associated with the Florida Marlins.

Howard Wolf

Howard's career began in high school where he played right field. After graduation, he continued playing for local teams while working on his family's farm. At 20 years old, Howard was the youngest of eight children working on the farm. In 1937, he was hired by the American Cyanamid Chemical Corporation in Joliet for \$5.40



a day. This was a good salary, much better than the \$1 a day he could earn as a farm hand. He soon began pitching for the company.

In 1940, he pitched in a game against the Kansas City Hallmarks. In the sixth inning, Howard pitched a change-up with a little curve that connected with the bat for a home run. The announcer then broadcast that the batter was the Home Run King of the Negro league, Jackie Robinson.

In 1941, one of Howard's brothers joined the Armed Services and Howard ended his game in Joliet to return to the family farm. He then played with local teams until the age of 37. Howard taught the sport to his sons Gary, John, Tom, David and Kenny, who in turn passed the tradition on to their children. Gary, a Norris Electric member, passed on his love of the game to his children, Adam, Blake and Ross.

Ross Wolf

Ross Wolf followed in his grandpa's footsteps and has taken them farther. Ross has been playing the game for more than 12 years, and was voted most valuable player in the 2001 Illinois High School Baseball State Tournament while playing for Newton high school. While attending Wabash Community College, Ross was drafted in the 47th round by the Montreal Expos. He then moved up to the 18th round of the Florida Marlins. He was the 503rd player to be drafted out of 1500.

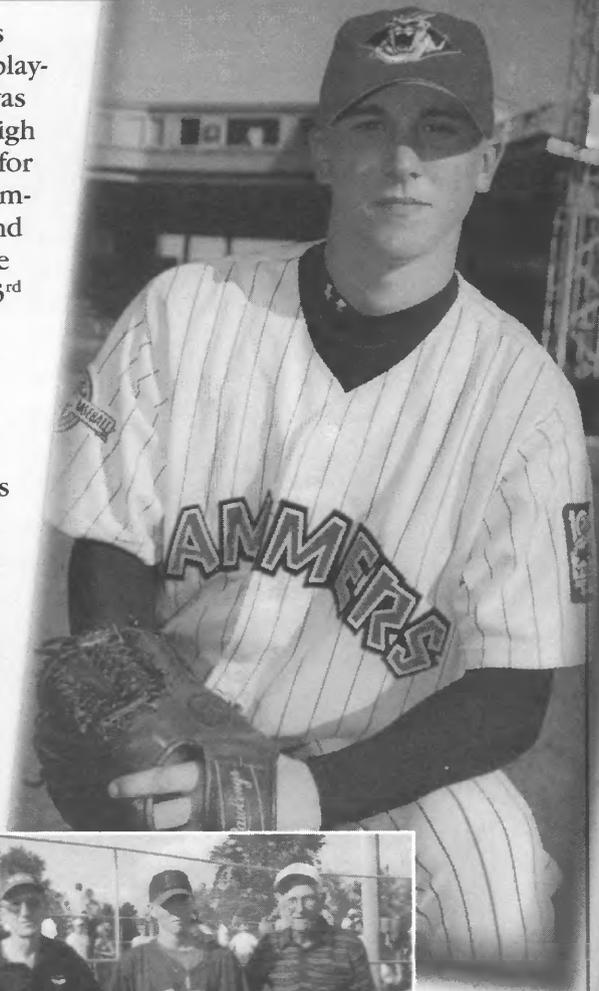
"I feel that baseball has been a part of my life for a long time. I grew up with baseball. Now, I am getting to do what every kid dreams of. I am on the road to the big leagues," said Ross in an interview for an article for the Press Mentor/News Eagle. In the off season, he remains in town, working at McClane Motors, and preparing for spring training. Ross knows he has a lot to learn before making it to the major leagues, one of the things being a new pitch. "I have to develop a breaking pitch. I have a slider, but I didn't throw it much. Now, I'm going to have to work hard to develop that pitch."

Ross's scout, Darin Blair, told the Press Mentor/News Eagle, "He's got a chance to be a very good pitcher. He's got all the things it's going to take to get him to the big leagues."

Ross comments that baseball is not all just fun and games. "It's just like a regular job. We have to be at the diamond at 2:00 for workouts, and all the games start at 7:00. We're there for about nine hours a day.

"I'll finally be making the salary, too. It's not a bad first job. And I'm the first kid in Newton to sign and play baseball professionally."

All the baseball fans in Newton will surely be keeping an eye on this young athlete. He's on his way to the big leagues, armed with his grandfather Howard's love of the game and his family and town's support. Good luck Ross!



From left: Gary, Ross and Howard Wolf.

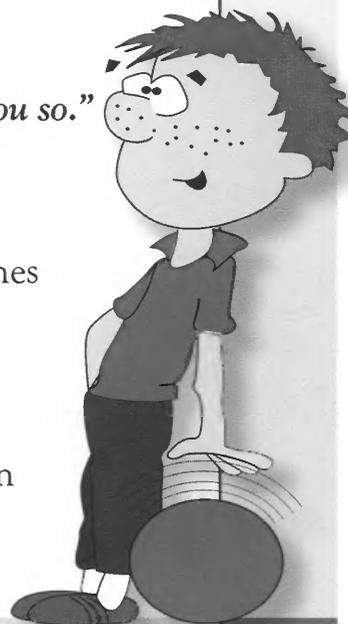


TOP 10 LIST

for power line safety

Kids, here are the top ten reasons not to ever interfere with anything caught in a power line:

1. You don't like the nickname "Sparky."
2. You don't like hospital stays.
3. You don't want to hear your mother say "I told you so."
4. You'd like to live to see your 15th birthday.
5. You'd like use of both arms and legs.
6. The balloon, shoe or kite that's caught in the lines isn't as valuable as your life.
7. You have a promising future ahead.
8. It's not a "cool" thing to mess with.
9. Fireworks shouldn't be seen in your county again until July 4th.
10. You know better.



For more information about power line safety, call your local electric cooperative or visit www.safeelectricity.org.

Vegetation Control Schedule

We will have crews performing routine tree trimming or spraying during **April** in the following areas:

Effingham County
Lawrence County

These areas have been scheduled quite a bit in advance so our plans may change. You should call us if you have any questions relating to a specific area or our vegetation management policies and practices. You may also call if you wish to make

other arrangements for your specific property or to question our vegetation control practices. Our Forestry Department can be reached at (877) 783-8765 or (618) 783-8765 during working hours. Our Web site is www.norriselectric.com.

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Electric News

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Delbert Mundt wins Citizen of the Year award

Delbert Mundt, a veteran board member for Norris Electric Cooperative, is a shining example of the cooperative principle of commitment to community. His leadership and commitment to his rural community were honored in January when he named the 2003 Effingham Daily News Citizen of the Year for his lifetime of dedication.

Mundt, a retired farmer and insurance agent, has lived in the Dieterich area for most of his life. He has been influential in assuring that his small rural community has survived the inevitable changes brought about through the years.

Mundt has always been interested in agricultural issues. He's been very active with the Farm Bureau and was the first regional director of the Farm Bureau Young People. He has also been involved with the University of Illinois Extension Council, was a 4-H leader, and a founder and first treasurer of Effingham County Pork Producers.

In addition, Mundt has also been involved in various venues of education, he has served on several advisory boards for St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital, he was founder and president of the Dieterich Community Development Corp., he was a founding member of the Dieterich Ruritan Club, he was prevalent in the rights of the mentally ill, he served 10 years as president on the board of directors of Norris Electric Cooperative, is on the board of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, and is involved with the Electrical Deregulation Bill.

But Mundt is probably best known in his community for founding and serving as the first

president of EJ Water Corp., which was responsible for bringing safe water to rural areas in six counties.

In 1988, Dieterich was on an Environmental Protection Agency list because of its badwater situation. New homes could not be built in the area because of this issue. "We sat around many times drinking coffee trying to figure out how to get water. At that time, going 10 miles to the Little Wabash River just seemed impossible," said Mundt.

Since Mundt was president of the Ruritans, he brought up economic development at one of the club's main meetings. Hank Stevens, an attorney who was present at the meeting, made the point that economic development was impossible without water. Soon the conversation switched to how Dieterich could get water.

In 1989, Mundt was selected as chairman for the rural water project. "I was really searching how to get water. The Ruritans agreed to sponsor one informational meeting about rural water. There were some professional people there, and they kind of gave us the step-by-step process on how to form a rural water system," Mundt said. And to Mundt's surprise, the Little Wabash River was not the recommended source of water to use, and it was advised that the group use the Embarras River instead.

Mundt organized meeting after meeting, and eventually a plan for water was in place. The group's original goal to have the support of 300 members was quickly met as 400 members signed up in the first few months. "People really amazed me. They



agreed to give us a \$50 membership (fee), even though we didn't have a source of water, and we weren't organized at that time. They just had faith," said Mundt.

Soon after the informational meetings, committees were officially formed in each of the townships. A director was selected to lead each committee, and the formation of a board of directors was complete.

The non-profit cooperative, E J Water, was officially established in June of 1989. Currently, it covers a six-county region with more than 800 miles of water, and serves more than 5,400 rural members. Mundt said this project, "has brought about development in our rural area. There are lots of houses being built along our water lines now."

And with everything that Mundt has done to help the economical development of his rural community, it's no wonder why his friends and neighbors nominated him to be honored as Citizen of the Year.



NORRIS

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

ANNUAL MEETING

Co-op sees an optimistic future

Members of Norris Electric Cooperative held their 65th annual meeting Saturday, February 15 at Newton High School. While the electric industry remains unsettled, Norris Electric leaders said the co-op continues to see conservative but consistent growth and an optimistic future.

Norris Electric is a local, democratically controlled, member-owned cooperative. Members elected four area men to serve three-year terms on Norris Electric's board of directors. Re-elected were Larry Buser of Palestine, Delbert Mundt of Dieterich, Gordon McClure of Newton, Russell Scherer of Sumner. Dean Dietrich of Dundas was re-elected for a two year term.

Although these are troubling times globally, President Kent Hetzer of Wheeler said there is reason to be optimistic locally. He said, "I am proud to report to you that your co-op is financially strong. Norris Electric continues to grow. Even during an economic downturn we've added 1 percent in new services and energy sales, and we still



Standing from left are: Walter Hart, Joe Helmink, Larry Buser, Keith Sherwood, Larry Seals and Gordon McClure. Sitting from left are: Vice President Earl Minderman, President Kent Hetzer, Manager Keith McKinney, Secretary Russell Scherer, Treasurer Dean Dietrich and Delbert Mundt.

have one of the lowest electric rates of any electric co-op or investor-owned utility in Illinois. Just think about this, we have 4.6 consumers for each mile of line. The average investor-owned has 35 customers per mile, and city owned utilities have 47 customers per mile. Maintaining a mile of line is expensive. We really have been fortunate and we haven't raised our electric rates since 1983."

Manager of Norris Electric Keith McKinney reported on the co-op's growth during the past

year, highlighted by the addition of a new substation near Lawrenceville to serve Shell Pipeline, and the addition of 19 miles of new line. He gave credit to the directors and employees.

"I would like to recognize our employees and directors and I believe our cooperative is blessed with the highest caliber of employees and directors," said McKinney. "Presently we have 67 full time and part time employees. Our employees have been our strength over the years. Last year our payroll exceeded \$3.2



million. This is money that is going back into the communities where we live.”

Along with stable rates, McKinney said the co-op is constantly looking at ways to add and improve service to the members. Improvements were made last year to better handle large call volumes during outages. McKinney said, “We now have the capability to answer multiple calls at the same time.” And he added, “Over 92 percent of all calls are answered by a live person. We are not changing just to say we have changed but to try to serve you better.”

Office Manager Donna Smallwood was congratulated and thanked for her 50 years of service to the co-op. And board member Mundt was also recognized for being named Effingham’s Citizen of the Year for all of his volunteer work and community leadership.

Treasurer Dietrich said in his report to the members that the co-op is financially sound and had operating revenue of more than \$22 million in 2002. Dietrich said, “About 65 percent of this amount or more than \$14 million was used to buy power from Ameren. About 27 percent is used for operating expenses taxes. The amount that was left plus interest and other non-operating margins was \$1,955,218.” The net value of the cooperative went up more than 7 percent in 2002, said Dietrich.

Norris Electric Cooperative serves more than 18,000 members over 3,960 miles of distribution line in all or parts of Clark, Crawford, Cumberland, Effingham, Jasper, Lawrence, Richland and Wabash counties. The co-op is a member of Touchstone Energy® — an alliance of more than 600 local, consumer-owned electric utilities around the country, committed to providing superior service based on four core principles: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community.



Vegetation control schedule

We will have crews performing routine tree trimming or spraying during May in the following areas:

Effingham County
Crawford County

These areas have been scheduled quite a bit in advance so our plans may change. You should call us if you have any questions relating to a specific area or our vegetation management policies and practices. You may also call if you wish to make

other arrangements for your specific property or to question our vegetation control practices. Our Forestry Department can be reached at (877) 783-8765 or (618) 783-8765 during working hours. Our Web site is www.norriselectric.com.

Don't let your dishwasher flush \$\$\$ down the drain

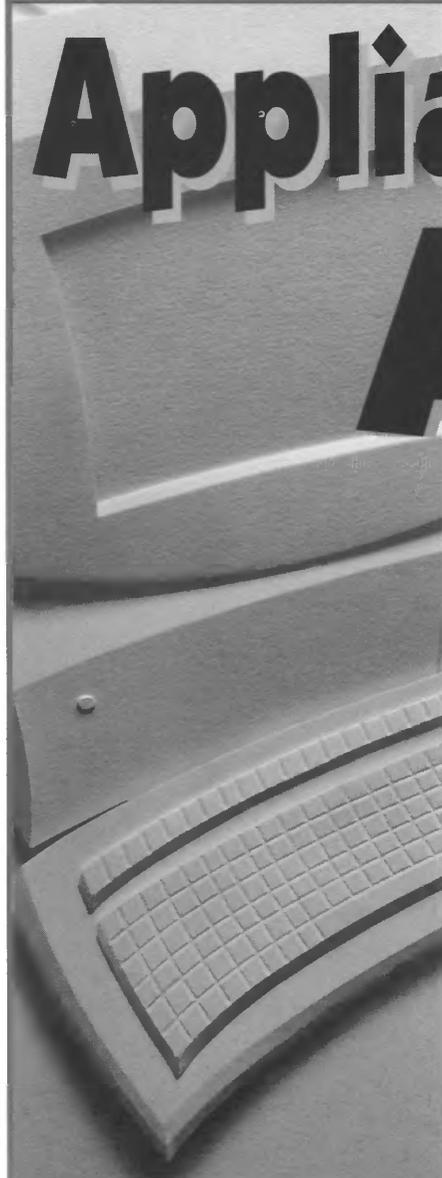
Add up how much electricity all those appliances in your home use, and pretty soon you're talking real money on your electric bill. Your dishwasher is no exception.

About 80 percent of the energy used by a dishwasher is for hot water, not for electricity to run the motor. So, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) recommends doing the following to make your dishwasher more cost effective.

- Check the owner's manual for the recommended water temperature. Many have internal heating elements that will allow you to lower the temperature if it is set too high.
- Scrape, don't rinse, large pieces of food from dishes. Soak or pre-wash only when there is burned-on or dried-on food.
- Fill your dishwasher before each use — but don't overload.
- Do not use the "rinse hold" on your machine for just a few soiled dishes. This setting uses three to seven gallons of hot water.
- Let your dishes air-dry instead of using the heat-drying option.
- Relax and enjoy the convenience of having a dishwasher because dishwashers use less water than hand washing — about six gallons less per load. Dishwashers also do a better job of killing germs because they use hotter water than you would use with hand washing.

INDOOR HOME SAFETY

Appliances



Always unplug an appliance or tool before cleaning, adjusting or repairing it. Prevent electrical shocks and fires by using safety tested appliances. Never use something other than a fuse to replace a fuse and make sure the replacement fuse is the correct amperage. Make certain extension cords are rated to handle the lamp, tool or appliance you're using. It only takes a few extra seconds to be safe and the life you save may be your own. To learn more, visit www.safeelectricity.org.

www.safeelectricity.org

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Office hours: 8 a.m. — 4:30 p.m

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Electric News

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Voluntary and open membership • Voluntary and open membership • Voluntary and open membership

Co-op receives safety award at state conference

Norris Electric Cooperative received a safety honor recently during the Safety/Supervisory Technical Conference held in Springfield. The member-owned electric cooperative received an award for “best accident/illness record.” The conference is sponsored annually by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC). Presenting the award is AIEC Vice President of Operations John Freitag (left). Shown receiving the award is Maintenance Supervisor Jerry Kinder.

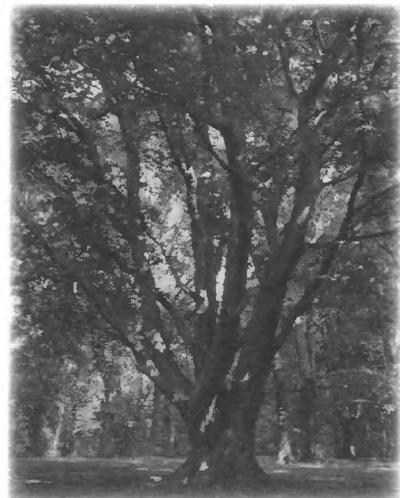


Vegetation control schedule

We will have crews performing routine tree trimming or spraying during **June** in the following areas:

- Effingham county
- Crawford county

These areas have been scheduled quite a bit in advance so our plans may change. You should call us if you have any questions relating to a specific area or our vegetation management policies and practices. You may also call us if you wish to make other arrangements for your specific property or to question our vegetation control practices. Our forestry department can be reached at (877) 783-8765 or (618) 783-8765 during working hours. Our Web site is www.norriselectric.com.



ILLUMINATING

the present with the past



Before electric co-operatives, such as Norris Electric, brought electricity to rural families, kerosene lamps were a common sight. The lamps gave off a small circle of light, used for children to do homework, mothers to sew and families to eat by. Outside of this small illumination, the rest of the farmhouse was dark.

Now that electricity provides us the light we need to work, the 25 watts of light produced by kerosene lamps can be seen as a comforting glow, used for emergencies or romantic settings.

And though the kerosene lamp has dimmed in popularity and use since the 1800s, it remains a beautiful and intricate part of our past.

One couple in rural Claremont recognized the beauty and history of these lamps and have started collecting them.

Robert and Loretta Steber bought their first glass lamp more than five years ago. That purchase sparked a passion for the beautiful lights; and the Steber's have continued buying them ever since. Their collection ranges from "Whale Oil" lamps to newer models of kerosene lamps.

More than 600 of the intricate lamps are proudly displayed in their home, and the num-

ber continues to grow. Robert says, "Most of the lamps were manufactured between 1850 and 1900. Prices can reach hundreds of dollars per lamp depending upon their age, manufacturer, condition and appeal."

Robert and Loretta attend sales and auctions looking for lamps, but have been most successful buying from Ebay over the Internet. Most of their lamps are native to the United States, but some are from as far away as Australia.

The majority of the lamps are made of glass, with different ornate designs. These designs have their own names, such as Mother of

"Most of the lamps were manufactured between 1850 and 1900."



Loretta have become very adept at catching “knock offs” or counterfeit lamps and parts. They say it is often hard to find an authentic globe for a lamp because they seem to be the first thing to break.

The Stebers plan to continue searching for rare and beautiful lamps to illuminate their lives. And as darkness falls each night in Claremont, you can bet the Stebers are surrounded by the flickering light of dancing flames, reminding them of a time long past.

Pearl, Thousand Eye, Coolidge, Greek Key, Daisy, Mount Washington, Diamond Platter, Thread Lamp, Cobalt and others.

As Robert and Loretta began researching the lamps, they discovered what lamps were rare and began only buying those. They even decided that for their Christmas presents to each other, they would jointly buy an expensive lamp.

The Stebers have noticed certain trends in the lamps. For example, cranberry color glass seemed to be abundant in the early years. Some of the glass is actually composed of three types, or colors, so the designs are expressed in multiple shades.

The Stebers say that in the late 1800s American glassmakers ventured into a glowing and somewhat hazardous creation: uranium glass. Originally discovered in Europe, uranium glass was produced by adding small amounts of radioactive uranium oxide to the glass, producing a vibrant green or yellow colored glass.

Robert says Vaseline glass was a popular style of uranium glass produced in the United States. It used heat-sensitive chemicals to produce a yellow glass with a milky white diffused edge. The yellow uranium glass fell out of style during the Depression era, causing glassmakers to think of new ways to boost sales. One method they used was

adding iron oxide to the yellow uranium glass to give it a dark green color.

Robert and Loretta also have some very unusual lamps in their collection. These lamps seem to be oddities today, but were important years ago. Two examples are the Bicycle Lamp, which could either be carried or clamped to a bicycle, and a Cigar Lighting Lamp. The Cigar Lighting Lamps were small lamps that had utensils you could ignite from the wick to bring a flame to your cigar.

Over the years, Robert and

“Prices can reach hundreds of dollars per lamp depending upon their age, manufacturer, condition and appeal.”





Wish Mom a happy
Mother's Day and
save money with
Power Net Global!

4.9¢

6.9¢

All calls in Illinois

All calls out of state

*24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Free to join and free
800-number at same low rate
No monthly fees, premiums or
term agreements
6-second increment billing*

For additional information, call (877) 783-8765
or call Norris Electric at (618) 783-8765.

Go ahead and give Mom a call this Mother's Day (May 11), she'll be
glad to know she's taught you to be so thrifty!

Pool Safety

Spring is prime time for installing swimming pools. So if you're considering adding a pool this year, make sure that you choose your site carefully, with an eye to any power lines that may be overhead or underground. When doing so, consider these key safety points:

- Make sure overhead electrical lines do not pass over the pool. In fact, it's best to keep your pool at least 25 feet away from power lines in all directions.
- Allow at least 18 feet of clearance between overhead power lines and a diving board, deck, platform, slide or observation area.
- Never build an in-ground pool or set up an aboveground pool over underground electric



cables. Pools and pool decking should be installed at least five feet away from all underground utility lines.

- Except for specially designed lighting fixtures, don't put elec-

trical fixtures or receptacles within five feet of a pool. Any electrical wiring that is within 20 feet of a swimming pool should have protection from a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter.

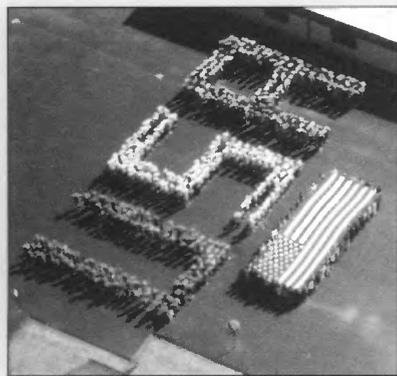
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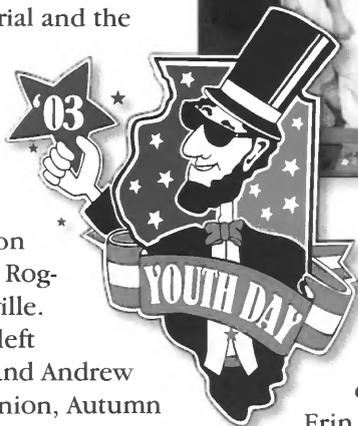
Proud to be Americans

Students in grades 1-8 at Newton Central School showed their support for our troops overseas April 15, 2003. The 460 children wore colored clothing and held up colored paper to form the initials USA. Teachers got together to hold the flag, the same one used at Norris Electric's Annual Meeting. Organizers of the event included Principal Travis Wyatt, Counselor Stacey Johnson, Teacher Steve Kibler and Pilot/photographer/part plane owner Corey Jackson. For more information about the event, contact Steve Hardwick at (618) 783-8464.

Norris Electric Youth Day at the Capitol

Twenty-seven students representing Norris Electric Cooperative met with area legislators during the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives' Youth Day on Wednesday, April 2, in Springfield. While in the state's capital, students had an opportunity to watch government in action, visit the Illinois Supreme Court, and tour Lincoln's Tomb, the Vietnam Memorial and the Governor's Mansion. Students are pictured with Senator John O. Jones of Mt. Vernon, Senator Dale A. Righter of Mattoon and Representative Roger Eddy of Hutsonville.

First row from left are Eric Anderson and Andrew Poorman of West Union, Autumn Ray of Greenup, Ryan Ross of Toledo, Chad Pike and Elizabeth Brummer of Effingham, Maddie Johnson and Mallory Walls of Effingham and chaperone Monte Newlin of Hutsonville High School. Second row from left are Representative Eddy,



Sarah Robinson of Altamont, Clifford Rush and Hannah Burris of Robinson, Brandon Catt of Oblong, Erin Hocking of Mt. Carmel, Matthew Woods of Olney, Megan Goodwin of Palestine, Miranda Butcher of Flat Rock, Valerie Fritscher of Dieterich, Jason Buenker of Effingham, Zach Bayne of Mt. Carmel, Zeb Holder of Olney and Sena-

tor Righter. Back row from left are Becca Hartrich of Ste. Marie, Tyler Weber of Newton, Stephanie Schumacher of Effingham, Kortney Herrmann of Shumway, Susanne Warner of Beecher City, chaperone Jerry Kinder, Senator Jones, Matt Niemerg of Teutopolis and Brittany Phillips of Altamont. The day was sponsored by the electric and telephone co-ops in the state in an effort to introduce young rural leaders to state government.



Turkey Creek

Turkey Creek Lodge near Newton is more than just a hunting lodge. It features a complete bed and breakfast, with nature trails, horseshoe pits, volleyball, five catch and release farm ponds, and a variety of other outdoor activities. Lodge owners, brothers Dave and Rick Dow, are happy to arrange art tours, shopping, antique hunting, winery tours, a trip to the local Drive-In movie theater, and golfing at Laws Creek, Quail Creek or Shelbyville golf courses.

Guests can also bring their boats and fish alongside experienced bass fishing guides at Newton Lake or East Fork.

All mounts in the lodge are from the surrounding lands except for a few turkey not found in this area.



In addition to overnight guests, the lodge can also cater to corporate meetings, birthday parties, weddings and family reunions. Large parties can reserve the entire lodge.

The lodge is a 3,000 square-foot log cabin with a Great Room featuring an oak floor and a stunning 10-foot stone fireplace. A master bedroom is available with a private bath, and guest rooms offer semi-private baths that can accommodate up to 12 persons.

Surrounding the lodge are two game preserves featuring large acres of beautiful countryside. The land consists of 45 percent agricultural land, 25 percent hardwood timber, 15 percent high protein food plots and 10 percent no-hunting sanctuaries.

Many of the acres are owned and farmed by the Dow family. Dave and Rick own the lodge and receive assistance from their parents, Joyce and LeRoy Dow. The staff is small and includes Rick's wife Tracy, Dave's wife Nancy, Andy Dow, Joe Carter, Brett Britton, Scott Huelsing and Ernie Weber. The close-knit staff works together to create a comfortable environment with a lot of adventure.

The main stay of the lodge is of course, hunting. And the Dow family, all life-long hunters, built their hunting experience around elements they liked from lodges they had visited. "We took the best of those we'd visited and personalized our services more," says Dave.

The family built the lodge five years ago. "The agricultural economy was in a slump and we got into this business to help diversify our land," he said.

And the land is better off for it. The natural wildlife in the



Dave Dow is part owner of the lodge.

area is booming thanks to the Dow's land improvements. "We enhance the area with food plots and native prairie grasses. All the animals are wild but the upland game. We buy those animals fully grown," says Dave. The deer population is thriving and includes many large bucks because guests are only allowed to harvest bucks eight points and larger.

Although guests are not guaranteed a kill, most go away successful. And the guests come from throughout the country. "About 65 percent of our deer hunters are out-of-state residents. We get a lot of guests from Pennsylvania, New York, Virginia and the East Coast. Local people usually already have a place to hunt," says Dave. The lodge also sees a lot of nationalities and a wide variety of professions. "We have phone, fax and computer



Lodge

More than just turkey, this lodge has something for everyone

access for business guests. We try to cater to everyone's needs."

Turkey Creek lodge tries to take care of the hunter's every need. With guided hunts, good meals, comfortable lodging, game processing and taxidermy services, a hunter is free just to hunt. And so is his favorite four-legged companion, who is cared for in the lodge's kennels. Well-trained dogs are also available from the lodge to partner an upland hunter. And those hunters wishing to sharpen their skills can do so at the 10-station sporting clay course.

In addition to preserving their own land for hunting, the Dow family also participates in many organizations devoted to wildlife. Dave is a member of Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Quail Unlimited, the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Christian Deer Hunters Association and a board member of the Illinois Outfitters board.

In keeping with their generous nature, the Dow family also donates funds and gift certificates to many organizations.

If you are interested in staying at the lodge, call (877) 660-6602 or visit their Web site at www.turkeycreeklodge.com for more information. The Web site contains directions, pricing, links to other sites, and photos and videos of wildlife. E-mail is checked at least twice a day and responses are quick, so e-mail your interests to Dave to have a hunt tailored to your needs, from a half-day hunt to a full week package.

"We're full almost every day. We book early for hunts, and we only allow hunters with reservations. Now is a good time to book for the upcoming fall season," says Dave.

You may have seen the lodge or its preserves featured on the Outdoor Channel with Kirk Dooms from **Show Me Outdoors**.



The Dow family cut down the necessary trees, planed the wood and helped build the lodge themselves. It has truly been a family project from the start.

Safe Electricity Offers Tips To Stay Safe After Storms

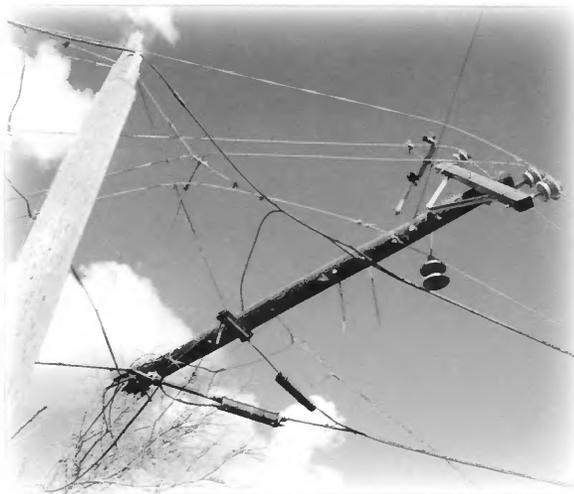
Springtime can spawn severe, damaging storms and heavy rain. Safe Electricity would like to remind people of the increased electrocution risks that springtime storms and flooding can cause and offers safety tips to avoid serious injury or death when dealing with the aftermath of a major storm or disaster.

"The danger does not end when the storm does," says Molly Hall, director of Safe Electricity. "People can be hurt or killed by hazards left behind. It's wise to be cautious in any clean-up effort."

Stay away from downed power lines and be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. Treat all downed or hanging power lines as if they are energized. Warn others to stay away and contact the electric utility.

If using electric yard tools in clean-up efforts, do not operate them if it's raining or ground is wet, or while you are wet or standing in water. Keep all electric tools and equipment at least ten feet away from wet surfaces.

"Before re-entering storm-damaged buildings or rooms, be sure all electric and gas services are turned off," said Jay Solomon, University of Illinois Extension Engineering Educator. "Never attempt to turn off power at the breaker box if you



must stand in water to do so. If you can't reach your breaker box safely, call your electric utility to shut off power at the meter."

Never step into a flooded basement or other area if water is covering electrical outlets, appliances or cords. Be alert to any electrical equipment that could be energized and in contact with water. Never touch electrical appliances, cords or wires while you are wet or standing in water.

"Cleaning up and using water-damaged appliances also carry safety risks," said Solomon. "Electric motors in appliances that have been drenched or submerged should be thoroughly cleaned and reconditioned before they are put back into service. It may be necessary to repair or replace electrical appliances or tools that have been in contact with water. Do not use any wa-

ter-damaged appliance until a professional has checked it out."

If after a storm or disaster, the power to your home is out for a prolonged period, know important safety rules, such as never using a charcoal or gas grill to cook inside! And if you use a standby generator, make sure a transfer safety switch is used or connect the appliance(s) directly to the generator output through an isolated circuit before you operate

it. This prevents electricity from traveling back through the power lines, what's known as "back feed." Back feed creates danger for anyone near lines, particularly crews working to restore power.

For more information on electrical safety, visit the www.SafeElectricity.org. Spanish versions of electrical safety information are also available on this web site.

Safe Electricity is a statewide electrical safety public awareness program. The program was created by a coalition of nearly three dozen organizations including the University of Illinois, rural electric cooperatives, and investor-owned electric utilities from throughout the state. All are members of the Illinois Electric Council, a not-for profit organization dedicated to promoting electric safety and efficiency.

Vegetation control schedule

We will have crews performing routine tree trimming or spraying during **July** in the following areas:

Effingham county
Crawford county

These areas have been scheduled quite a bit in advance so our plans may change. You should call us if you have any questions relating to a specific area or our vegetation management policies and practices. You may also call us if you wish to make other ar-

rangements for your specific property or to question our vegetation control practices. Our forestry department can be reached at (877) 783-8765 or (618) 783-8765 during working hours. Our Web site is www.norriselectric.com.

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Office hours: 8 a.m. — 4:30 p.m

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Electric News

Being prepared Preventative maintenance helps reduce outages

The Boy Scout motto is “Be Prepared.” That’s what we try to do at Norris Electric. We perform preventative maintenance such as pole replacements, wire upgrading and resizing of transformers. Things such as these help to reduce the number of unscheduled outages. It is a nuisance for our members to have their electricity shut off while we do routine maintenance, but it is a lot better to know about it in advance than to be surprised during Sunday dinner or at 3:00 a.m. some morning.

That’s only part of our “Be Prepared” philosophy. We also maintain a large inventory of poles, wire, crossarms, transformers and other hardware. It is costly to keep this inventory but past experience has shown us that in emergencies such as major storms, that material is often hard to find. If we are having problems, it’s a good bet that other cooperatives and utilities are also having problems. We purchase two major stocks of inventory each year. We use this material for various projects throughout the year, but it is also a large enough quantity that we could handle a sizeable storm without running out of material.

We are also a part of our state association’s Emergency Work Plan. If we need help in times of an emergency, we can make one call to the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives and they



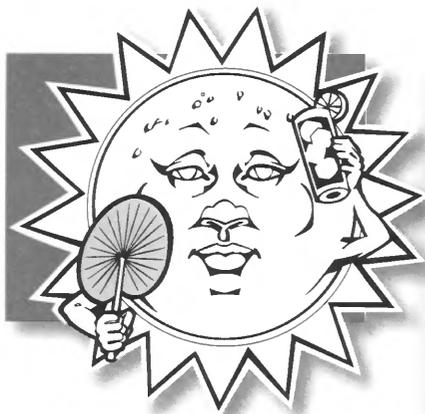
will make the calls to cooperatives across the state to get extra trucks and manpower to help us. It is another way that we live by the 6th Cooperative Principle, “Cooperation Among Cooperatives.”

We know your electric service never seems good enough,

but we try to perform preventative maintenance, have necessary materials on hand, and have a plan to get help when we need it. All these things are done so we can try to live up to your expectations. It’s our way of “Being Prepared.”



Keep cool indoors



If your home is too hot in the summer, there are many ways you can help keep heat out of the house. But a surprising amount of heat comes from inside your home.

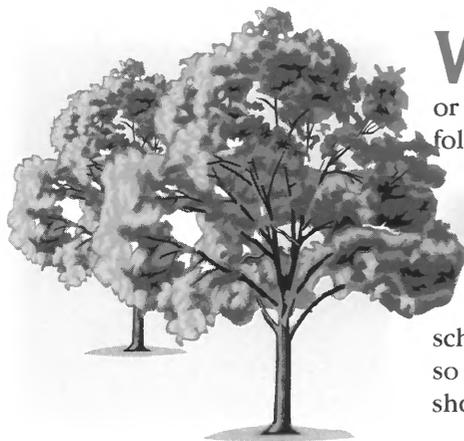
The biggest sources of internal heat gain are lights and appliances. Reducing their use will save electricity and keep your home cooler. In humid climates, moisture that is released by cooking, bathing, and other activities will also make it harder for air conditioners to cool your home. A drier home feels more comfortable.

Source: John Krigger, Saturn Resource Management, www.residential-energy.com.

Here are some easy ways to keep cool in the summer:

- Replace standard incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lights. The electricity used by standard bulbs produces 10 percent light and 90 percent heat. Compact fluorescent lights are cheaper to operate, too.
- Schedule heat-producing chores like baking or doing the laundry after the hottest part of the day.
- Install an insulating jacket on your water heater.
- Use hot water sparingly—it produces heat and humidity. Wash clothes in cold water and dry outdoors when possible.
- Use kitchen and bathroom fans to remove heat and moisture during and after cooking and bathing.
- If you plan to remodel your home, isolate your heater, washer, and dryer from the cooled part of your home. Or, ask a heating contractor if you can install a door between these appliances and the rest of the home.
- When replacing appliances, buy those with the ENERGY STAR® labels. These appliances conserve energy and release less unwanted heat.
- If you are home during the day, use a room fan to create a cooling breeze.
- If you live in an area where evenings are cool, don't forget about the cheapest cooling of all. Open your doors and windows, or run window fans. This will move cool air through your home for almost no cost.

Vegetation control schedule



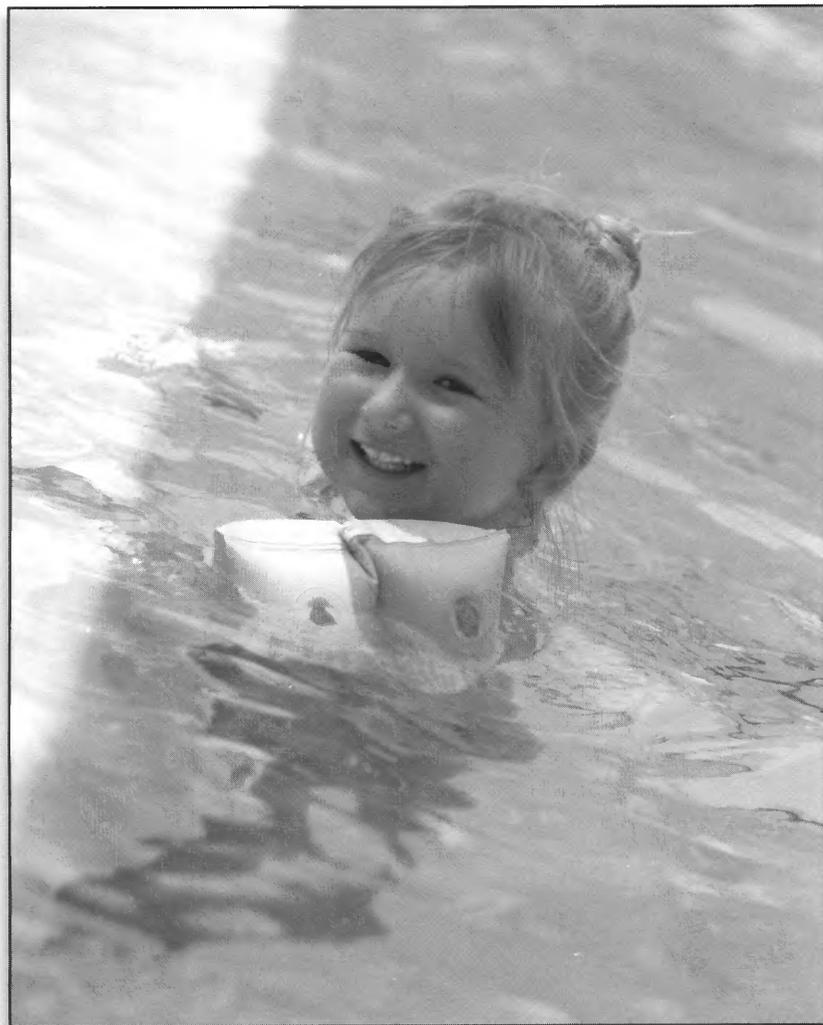
We will have crews performing routine tree trimming or spraying during August in the following areas:

Lawrenceville county
Crawford county

These areas have been scheduled quite a bit in advance so our plans may change. You should call us if you have any

questions relating to a specific area or our vegetation management policies and practices. You may also call us if you wish to make other arrangements for your specific property or to question our vegetation control practices. Our Forestry Department can be reached at (877) 783-8765 or (618) 783-8765 during working hours. Our Web site is www.norriselectric.com.

Slow the energy loss from your pool or spa



just as a breeze cools a swimmer when he or she gets out of the water. A pool cover also slows the evaporation of pool chemicals so they don't have to be added as often. And it keeps leaves and other debris out of the pool so the filtration system doesn't have to run as long.

If you have a heated outdoor pool, consider shortening the heating season by a few weeks in the spring or fall to decrease heating costs.

Check with a pool serviceman to determine how long your filtration system needs to run to effectively clean your pool. You may be able to shorten the cleaning cycle. Consider installing a high-efficiency, two-speed pump. These can be set to run at a slower speed for a longer period of time, saving a surprising amount of electricity. Give your filtering system a periodic check-up. Clogged filters cause your pump to work harder and use more electricity.

Finally, set your filtration system so it does not run during the "peak" hours of 12 noon to 6 p.m. Electrical demands are the highest during these afternoon hours, causing strain on the electrical supply grid. Your pool will be just as clean if you run the filtration system in the morning or late evening.

Source: John Krigger, Saturn Resource Management, www.residential-energy.com

There is no way to avoid it. Pools and spas use a lot of energy to heat water and to run filtration systems. There are a few tricks, however, that will help you reduce consumption and save money.

The very best way to lower costs for your pool or spa is to

install a blanket or cover. This can reduce your heating expense by up to 70 percent. Heating a pool without a cover is like heating a house without a roof.

A pool cover saves energy mostly by slowing evaporation from the surface of the water. This evaporation cools the water,

*4th of July
Celebration*

**Our office will be closed
Friday, July 4th in observance
of Independence Day. ★ ★**



Pinched electrical cords present real risks. The cord's insulation can be damaged, exposing the wires, which can lead to fire or shock. So check around your house. Is a lamp cord compressed by the leg of a chair? Is the washing machine cord pinched against the wall or the back of the appliance? It's a simple problem to fix, but left unattended, these cords present a very real danger.

For more information go to:
**National Safety Council (www.nsc.org) or
Safe Electricity www.safeelectricity.org.**

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Electric News

Coming soon!

Online bill presentment and payment

Online bill payments are fast, informative, simple, secure and fun!

Many of our members utilize Internet technology and have come to rely on the ease at which certain tasks can be done. We are able to shop on-line, talk on-line, read the news on-line, and now, view and pay our Norris Electric Cooperative accounts online at www.norris.com.

Details are being worked out with Southeastern Data Corporation to allow Norris Electric members to access their billing information. Our new on line billing system will give our members the ability to instantly view information about their current bill, payment history, electricity usage, monthly cost comparisons and pay their bill.

Why use our online billing system? If you choose to pay your bill online, you will eliminate the paper billing you receive and get the same information via the Internet plus these added benefits:

- You have instant access to your Norris Electric account 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- Any time you need a record of your bill, you can simply print out the information you need.
- Online billing gives you all the information you received with the paper billing PLUS your billing and payment history, your kilowatt-hour usage history and monthly cost comparisons.
- You'll be notified by e-mail when your current bill amount is due each month.
- Our online program is provided through a secure server so your information is private and safe.

How does it work? You will need to have Internet access. Then you can quickly sign up for E-Bill by completing a form

with your name, address, e-mail address and desired password, which you will need to mail back to us. The form may be found on our Web site.

Then, each month, we will e-mail you a notification that your bill is ready. This notification will have a link to our Web site. When you click on the link, you'll be prompted for your e-mail address and password. After you enter this information, you'll have access to your current bill, billing history, payment history and monthly cost comparisons. All you need to do then is note the bill amount for your records. Norris Electric does the rest - it's that easy! For more information about our online billing service, call (877) 783-8765.

Internet bill payment

From your computer, you will visit Norris Electric's Web site and click on the "PAY MY BILL ON-LINE" icon.

Your request will be forwarded to our server. It will then enter the mainframe HP computer. This action determines the amount of the bill. The request to pay is received at the host of our Web site. From the HP computer the amount of the bill and the credit card information that was entered by the member is sent to our credit card processing company located in Atlanta to validate the credit card purchase. The amount of the bill is applied to the card and the card is charged at this time.

You will also have the option of paying by e-check or ACH (Automatic deduction from your bank account).

It's all in the SOAP



Above:
Debbie measures
the ingredients for the soap.

Right: Debbie always mixes
the lye outside.

Debbie Hill, her husband Bruce, and their family are members of Norris Electric Cooperative living on the south edge of Newton. Last year there was a change of events that opened up an opportunity for Debbie. For more than 16 years she had performed accounting functions for a company, and spent a great deal of time on the computer.

Debbie's career changed last November and she found herself staying home, out of the workforce. This coupled with some inquiries from friends and neighbors got her looking into making soap to combat various skin problems, and provide unique homemade Christmas presents.



She began investigating the art of soap making and found that in the early years soap was made from lye (wood ashes) and used oil. People would cook with their oil until it was no longer any good and then use it in their soap.

Her first efforts had her buying and using a "melt and pour" premixed product. She found that there was not any challenge to this and wanted to experiment with her own mixtures. She also found the premix product had a lot of non-natural ingredients that may not be as healthy for you as more natural ingredients.

After doing her research, she decided to try making soap with all natural ingredients. Today she uses Red Devil Lye, a combination of nut, vegetable and animal oils, water, essential and fragrance oils, and other ingredients to provide the desired results.

She was very apprehensive in her first attempts and waited until everyone was gone in case there was an accident with the lye. She is a lot more confident now, but still mixes the lye outside. The process involves careful measurements of the ingredients. She mixes the lye and water outside, letting the chemical reaction take place to cause heat. After

the chemical reaction has taken place she mixes the other ingredients and allows the mixture to cool to a "pudding" consistency.

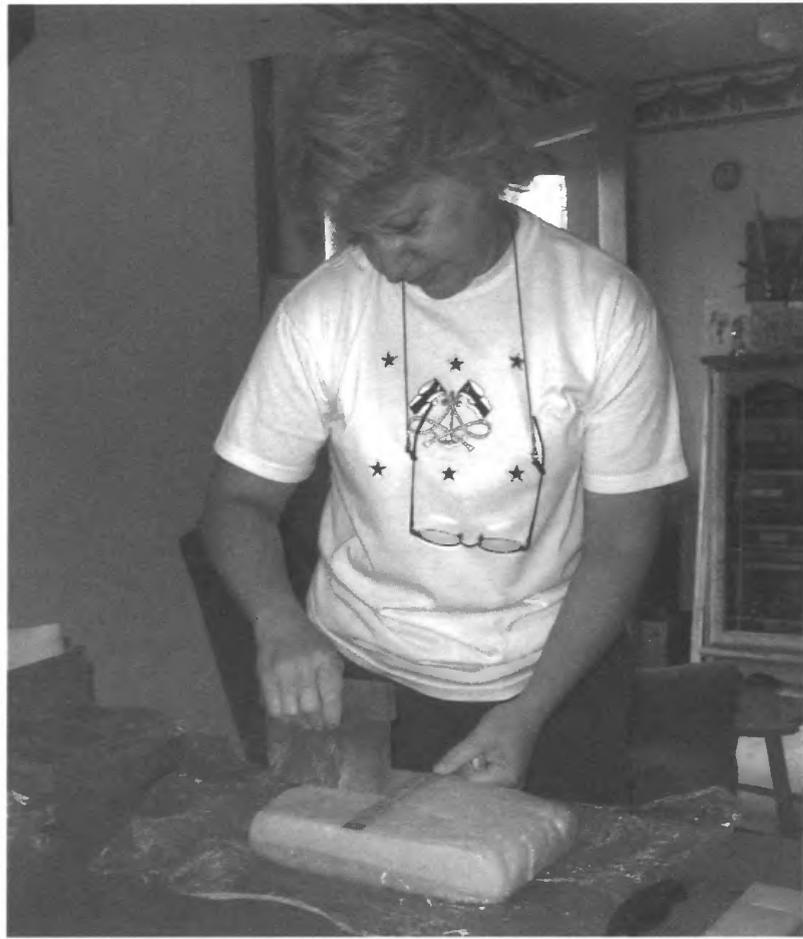
Different oils and fragrances are added at varying stages of the cooling. If the mixture is too hot, the oils or fragrances can be lost to the air and not remain in the soap.

The mixture is then poured into molds. Most of her soap is formed by pouring the gelled like substance into cardboard boxes lined with plastic wrap. The soap is left to harden for 24 to 48 hours to get to a firm enough consistency to cut into bars. When the soap has firmed enough she uses a large chop knife to cut the molded soap into bars. A lot of the bars are cut with a crinkle cut knife. Even then the soap is very soft and can nearly disappear in the shower. It really needs to cure for three to eight weeks to make it more durable.

In her studies, Debbie has found that commercial soaps have detergents added and glycerin removed. Neither of these practices are great for the skin. Essential oils keep the skin soft and the lye based soap is better for the skin than detergents. Her customers have confirmed that her soaps have the desired effects. A family member suffered from acne and after using one of her soaps for a while the acne seemed to improve.

She has soap geared toward shaving. It provides a slick service for shaving and leaves the skin soft afterwards. Debbie has never been much for following a recipe to the letter and has found that she can add this or that and improve her soaps. As her soap making skills grew she found that some of her ingredients were costly and hard to find.

She since has begun growing her own herbs and fragrances such as Lavender, Peppermint and Red Clover. Some of the other ingredients are honey, oatmeal, cornmeal, goat's milk, herbs, fruits, clays, vegetables,



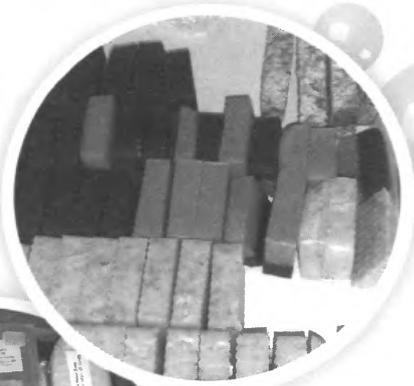
When the soap has firmed enough, Debbie uses a large chop knife to cut the molded soap into bars.

teas and vitamins. She indicated that occasionally there is a mistake made and the soap doesn't turn out as desired. Some of these mistakes can be recycled to make good soap while some people turn these mistakes into laundry detergent or dog soap.

For those of you that might be concerned about all the testing that is done on animals, rest assured, there is no testing of these soaps on animals.

They are all tested on friends and family! If you have any questions or would like to order some of Debbie's soaps you can call her at (618) 783-8188 or e-mail her at

puresoap77@hotmail.com. She also has just created a Web site www.puresoap.net.



Above: Debbie's soap unpackaged and in hardening phase



Left: soap packaged and ready to sell

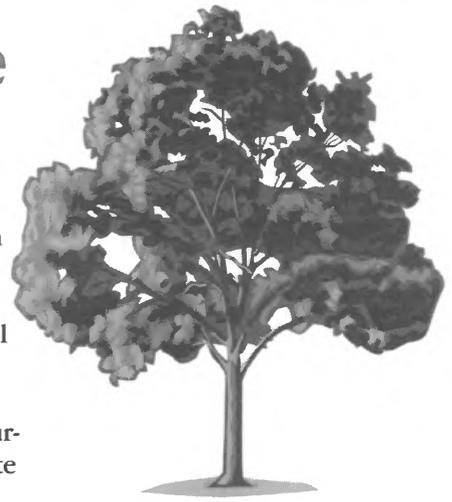
Vegetation control schedule

We will have crews performing routine tree trimming or spraying during September in the following areas:

Lawrenceville County
Crawford County

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questions relating to a specific area or our vegetation management policies and practices. You may also call us if you wish to make other arrangements for your specific property or to question our vegetation control practices. Our Forestry Department can be reached at (877) 783-8765 or (618) 783-8765 during working hours. Our Web site is www.norriselectric.com.



We go to school too

The end of summer is coming. It will soon be time for the big yellow buses to head down country roads to take kids back to school.

But school time is all year long for your electric cooperative employees. While your kids are learning about the three “Rs” — reading, writing and arithmetic, your co-op employees attend classes to stay current on safety techniques, and learn new technology and better ways to perform their jobs.

It’s just one way we show *concern for our community*, one of four Touchstone Energy® program’s core values. We do it because we care.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

The power of human connections

For more information on Touchstone Energy®, contact your local electric cooperative.

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NORRIS

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Electric News

Newton, Illinois 62448 • 783-8765

Donna Smallwood retires after 52 years of service.

Office Manager Donna Smallwood has certainly seen some changes while working for Norris Electric Cooperative. She began working for the co-op March 17, 1952 and had nearly 52 years of service as of her retirement.

Donna is only the third Office Manager in the co-op's history. The first was Rowena Hutson, followed by Judy Smith, and then Donna, who is passing the duties to Tamara Phillips.

July 18, 2003, Donna's co-workers and friends wished her a joyful retirement at a cake and coffee party held at the co-op. Although it is sad to see Donna retire, we at the co-op know she has well-deserved this time in her life to travel and spend more time with her hobbies. She has been a truly dedicated employee.



◀ All three past office managers and the latest in the history of Norris Electric joined together for a group photo at Donna's celebration. From left are Rowena Hutson, Judy Smith, Donna Smallwood and Tamara Phillips.

▶ Donna was joined at her retirement party by other Norris Electric retirees Ernie Weber and Rowena Hutson. Each of these outstanding employees dedicated 51 years to the co-op before their retirement. Combined, the three represent more than 150 years of service to the co-op.



PROMOTIONS



Tamara Phillips is stepping into Donna's position of Office Manager. She began working at the co-op in June 1982 as a keypunch operator. She then worked as a billing clerk, computer operator, assistant plant accountant, and plant accountant. Tami and her husband Richard live in rural Newton with their daughters Kiley, 16 and McKenzie, 14. In her free time Tamara enjoys antiques, water skiing and watching her daughters ball games.

Due to Tamara's promotion, Susan Platz will move into the spot of Plant Accountant. Susan began her career with the co-op in 1983. She has worked as a keypunch operator, assistant construction secretary, construction secretary and assistant plant accountant. Susan and her husband Mike live in rural Sigel with their three children, Tyler, 11; Alyssa, 8; and Bailey, 7. Susan enjoys watching her children's activities and swimming.



Due to the recent retiring of Donna Smallwood and other staff changes, Norris Electric would like to announce the promotions of four of its employees.



Susan's promotion leaves a vacancy for Assistant Plant Accountant, and Annette Stanciu will fill that position. She began working at Norris Electric in 1988 as a typist/clerk before moving to assistant capital credits, billing clerk, assistant mapping technician and engineering clerk. Annette and her husband Gary live in rural Newton with their sons Derek, 16 and Mitchell, 11. In her free time, Annette enjoys walking, gardening and watching NASCAR.

Betty Kocher filled Annette's position as engineering clerk from her former positions of assistant cashier and keypunch operator. Becky worked at the co-op from 1979-1982 and returned in 1992. She and her husband Ramon live in Newton with their children, Jesse, 21 and Leslie, 17. Becky enjoys walking and fishing when she has spare time.



Vegetation control schedule

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- Lawrenceville county
- Crawford county

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**Start preparing now for
Old Man Winter**

It may still be warm out, but winter's icy winds and driving snow will soon be at your door. The price of natural gas is expected to soar this winter, and you need to be prepared. Call your local electric co-op today for ideas on energy efficiency. Plan ahead and keep Old Man Winter outside where he belongs.

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NORRIS

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Electric News



Across the Manager's desk

Keith McKinney

The northeast blackout and fixing the electric grid

As U.S. and Canadian authorities investigate the causes of the August blackout in the Northeast, the U.S. Congress is in the final stage of hammering out a national energy bill to send to the President. An overall national energy policy is important, but if we have learned any lessons from recent history like the Midwest price spikes, the California electricity crisis, and the massive Northeast blackout, it is that we cannot afford to make mistakes in the electricity part of the legislation.

■ What got us to where we are today

Electricity is unlike any other energy commodity. It cannot be stored. It must be used in the instant it is produced. It must be transported by wire. And it is not easily substituted for, particularly in the short-term. Because of this, the nation's electric system is ripe for manipulation, price gouging and miscalculation. That has happened, and that is the dark side.

The bright side is the North

American electric system, the largest machine invented by mankind, has worked amazingly well over the last 75 years. The manipulation and price gouging by some large power companies in the late 1920s were corrected when Congress enacted the Public Utility Holding Company Act and the Federal Power Act. Consumer-owned electric cooperatives were the last piece of the puzzle as the new electric industry grew, giving people an opportunity to provide themselves with electricity by relying on their own initiative and good judgment to act in the interests of themselves and their communities. The combination of adequate federal and state regulation of profit-making utilities, while relying on the good judgment of consumers to manage the electric cooperatives they had formed, has been a successful formula.

In 1992, Congress repealed a portion of the Public Utility Holding Company Act and modified the Federal Power Act to promote wider access to the existing transmission system

and wholesale competition in the generation of electricity. That experiment obviously has had mixed results. California compounded the problem by preventing utilities from owning the electric generation needed to serve their customers, and instituting a poorly designed market with flawed market rules. While the intent was to create a market not dominated by utilities, the actual result was to separate generation from the utility's responsibility to serve customers. California and the entire West are still paying the price for that big mistake.

■ Where we are today

Even though the lights are back on, the real work is just beginning. We need national energy legislation that promotes increased reliability and protects consumer interests. Before the blackout the House and Senate passed versions of an energy bill that will have to be reconciled in a conference committee. Co-op leaders favor the Senate approach.

The House bill would totally repeal the Public Utility Holding Company Act and modify the Federal Power Act, resulting in vastly reduced protections for consumers and investors. It seriously reduces federal regulation of the investor-owned power companies and increases federal regulation of consumer-owned and operated not-for-profit cooperatives.

■ (Continued on 16b)

■ (Continued from 16a)

The House bill also seeks to take more money from consumers in transmission charges and give it to the big power companies, hoping that they will use the money to invest in transmission upgrades. The Senate bill also repeals the Public Utility Holding Company Act, but replaces it with good consumer protections that require power companies to show they are actually benefiting consumers. The Senate leadership position emphasizes the “just and reasonable” test for transmission pricing and recognizes the important differences in motivation between absentee-owned, for-profit investor-owned utilities, and consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives, by mandating federal regulation of investor-owned power companies and relying on consumer regulation of cooperative electric systems.

■ Legislative goals

The choice is clear. The goal is a modern, reliable, affordable electric system capable of meeting the requirements of today’s electronic society. The Senate electricity proposals look at the past and the future in a realistic way. Congress should pass the Senate’s version of electricity legislation.

The House bill ignores the lessons of the past, demonstrates a blind faith in “market forces,” and provides no guarantee that the millions of dollars prescribed for upgrades will actually improve service or otherwise benefit consumers.

Electric cooperatives agree the electric transmission system is inadequate and believe the solution is to reduce the financial risk associated with transmission investments. Cooperatives believe that once a new piece of transmission is proven to be necessary, and approved by the appropriate regional authority, its cost should be rolled into the rate base and recovered like other transmission assets over its useful life.

If the government can substantially reduce the financial risk, transmission will become a safer investment and require a lower rate of return to attract the necessary investment. That is not just our opinion. That view is shared by a Wall Street investment firm, which testified to that effect in Congress two years ago.

We also need a set of national standards to assure the system operates reliably and efficiently. Electric cooperatives operate a well-maintained electric infrastructure in some of the toughest terrain in the nation, and have done it for years.

The Rural Utilities Service, formerly the Rural Electrification Administration, has played a critical role in reducing risk by (1) assuring that prices to consumers are adequate to pay for the system, and (2) requiring electric cooperatives to adhere to a set of design and operating standards for the system.

Electric cooperatives have a model that is working both for consumers and the nation. Let’s hope that this investigation ushers in a new approach to the creation of a national transmission grid -- one based on the principle that in exchange for a just and reasonable rate of return on low-risk transmission investment, owners must adopt appropriate national standards for the construction and maintenance of the national transmission system and must be held accountable for its safe and reliable operation.

Let’s hope the investigation of the blackout is not used to advance an agenda that will not serve the people well. If the investigation is a serious attempt to find the causes of the blackout, and proposes realistic solutions for investing in and improving the transmission system, it will conclude that the electric cooperatives’ “national standards” and “reduced risk” model should be the preferred alternative.

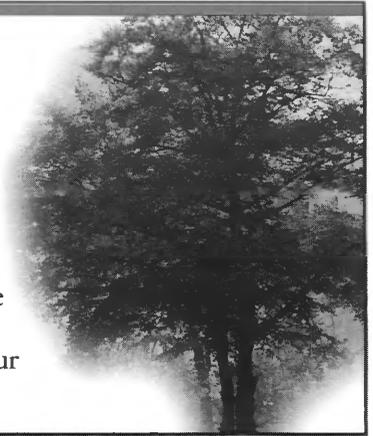
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People are talking over long distance

If you watch television, you've seen advertisements for long distance telephone service. One company uses a cartoon type animal and a former football player. They tout rates similar to ours (20 minutes for a buck). However, if you talk for less than 20 minutes, then their rate is higher. You must also be aware of a monthly customer charge.

Another company advertises a rate cheaper than our rate but there is a \$0.39 connection charge for each call. For a call in Illinois you would have to talk for more than 40 minutes per call for their rate to beat ours.

We do not employ cartoon characters or football players. We do not have monthly customer charges or connection fees. We do offer one of the lowest, if not the lowest, long distance telephone service that can be found. Instead of celebrity endorsements we have friends telling friends and neighbors telling neighbors. Our strongest sales techniques are from the people that are already using our service.

Almost all of the electric cooperatives in Illinois are offering this service and there are satisfied callers all over the state. We have a very economical long distance service

that more than 5,000 people use and enjoy within the Norris Electric area. This service is not just available to Norris Electric members, but also the general public. Looking at the 5,000 subscribers and the fact that Norris Electric has about 18,000 members, we can see that almost a third of our members are using the service.

If you are not already enjoying these economical rates, contact your neighbors and see if they are using the service, or call our office. The rates are 4.9 cents a minute in Illinois and 6.9 cents a minute for calls outside the state within the Continental United States.

A calling card is available for 13.9 cents a minute and a toll free "800" number can be provided at no charge so you can economically call home when you or your loved ones are away. It is especially useful for college students or even children that may be away on a field trip or other travel. Those calls are billed at the same rate as if they were coming from your home phone, that is, 4.9 cents or 6.9 cents a minute.

Foreign calls are just as eco-

4.9¢
ALL CALLS IN ILLINOIS



6.9¢
ALL CALLS OUT OF STATE

nomical. Most places in Europe are in the \$0.10 a minute range. All calls are billed on 6-second increments so you do not get charged for 4 minutes when you only talk for 3 minutes and 5 seconds. Call (877) 783-8765 to start your enrollment and begin saving money.

Employees donate to their local communities

Many of the employees of Norris Electric Cooperative participated in the "Help Hands of Human Connection" employee giving campaign by donating money to various organizations. The American Cancer Society helped organize this campaign with the cooperative and it included organizations hand-picked by cooperative employees. The following organizations will be receiving the funds shown:

American Cancer Society	\$729.30
Muscular Dystrophy Association	\$162.50
American Heart Association	\$262.08
Multiple Sclerosis Society	<u>\$210.34</u>
Total	\$1430.00

We at Norris Electric applaud the caring attitude of our employees.

We will miss Kenny Madden

We were saddened by the death of one of our employees. Kenny Madden began his career with Norris Electric Cooperative on June 3, 1959, as a Line Clearance Journeyman, then moved to Lineman Journeyman and in September of 1985 became the Construction Superintendent. Kenny was an integral part of the Cooperative for many years and will be missed dearly. Shown below is his obituary in part:

Kenneth W. Madden
Newton

Kenneth W. "Kenny" Madden, 62, of Newton died at 7:26 p.m. Thursday, July 24, 2003, at Good Samaritan Hospital in Vincennes, IN. Mr. Madden was born June 23, 1941, in Richland County, the son of Melvin and Helen (Berry) Madden. He married Jean Dickerson on November 3, 1962. She survives. He worked for Norris Electric Cooperative for 43 years last serving as Construction Superintendent. He was a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Newton, past president of the Jasper County Boys Park, member of the Newton Bass Club, the Action Committee Rural Electric, and Eagles Lodge, and former member of the Newton Jaycees. He loved hunting, fishing and boating.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his father, Melvin Madden of Olney; one son, Kevin (wife, Sheryl) Madden of Mount Carmel; two brothers, Doug Madden and Jeff Madden both of Claremont; one sister, Nancy Madden of Paxton, an aunt, Mary Holbrook of Sarasota, FL; and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his mother and grandparents.



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Electric News

The art of CandleArt

At a chance meeting during a local craft show in March 1995, Phil Niemerg watched as a man from Indiana carved candles. This sparked his interest, and after some negotiating, the gentleman agreed to teach him the trade. He went to Indiana for a week and was taught the basic art of candle carving.

CandleArt began operations in August of 1995. Working out of their garage, Phil Niemerg and his wife Stephanie began carving candles part time and sold their product at various local craft shows. In January of 1997 they decided to enter into the business full time and started working with several craft show promoters, securing Christmas kiosks in regional malls across the mid-west.

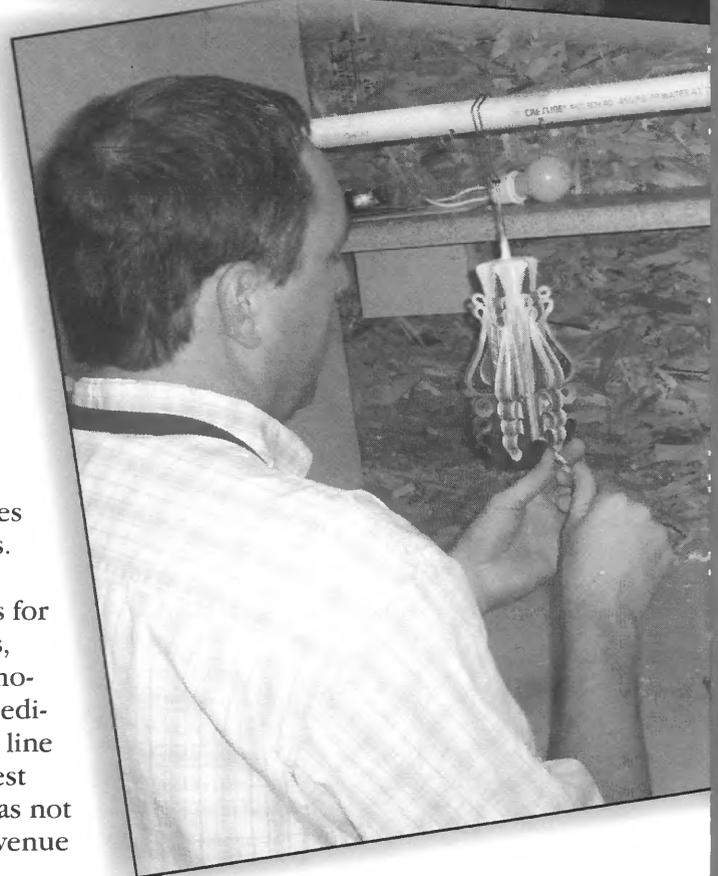
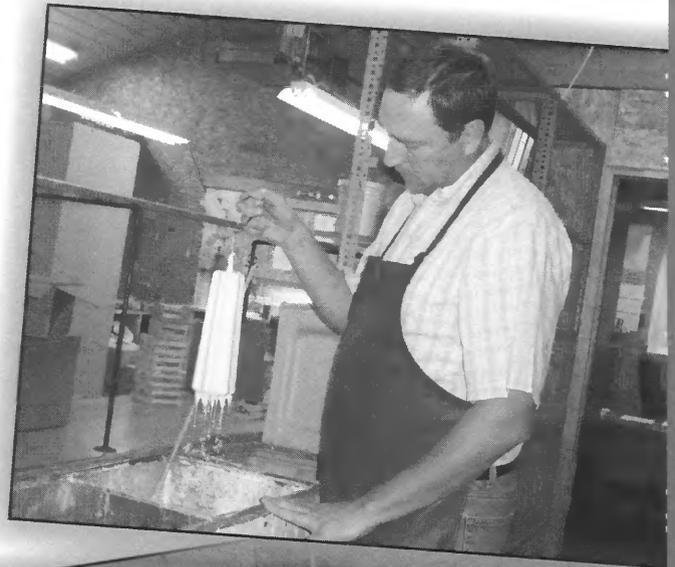
It was at this time that Niemerg began teaching the craft to other individuals. As the business expanded, CandleArt developed its first Web page for marketing its product on the Internet.

In January of 1999, the Niemerg's experienced a major set back with the destruction of their home by fire. After months of rebuilding, it was decided that CandleArt needed a full time presence, and Phil and Stephanie opened a store at 516 West Main Street in Teutopolis.

In November 2001, due to space limitations, CandleArt built an 1800 sq. foot facility adjacent to their new home. Phil currently employs 10 people, most of whom are made up of their family members, including Phil's partner and brother Ray and of course Phil and Stephanie's children, Adam 19, Kevin 17, April 15 and Rachel 3. They also employ Denise Goeckner and three part-time high school students.

CandleArt has several different product lines. *April's Scents*, named after Phil's oldest daughter, is comprised of three sizes of jar candles. This line is mostly sold to organizations for fund raising purposes. This makes up 1/2 of their business and the other 1/2 is wholesale business, which includes all the other scent lines. Some of these include unity and taper candles for weddings, tarts, votives, pillars, prayer and memorial candles. Phil's immediate goal is to develop a line named after his youngest daughter Rachel, but has not decided exactly what avenue the line will take.

■ (Continued on 16b)



■ (Continued from 16a)

This family-run business is very busy trying to fill orders from September thru May. The summer months are not typically a good time to ship candles due to the heat, so production is somewhat slower during this time. Annually, they sell about 65,000 candles to people all over the United States. Niemerg says that they also do a lot of their business locally, but thanks to the Internet, his candles have been shipped far from Effingham County and his business has doubled. CandleArt's full

line of candles can be found on www.candleart.com.

CandleArt is now venturing into the retail business. Ray has opened a store at the Northwoods Mall in Peoria, IL. There he is demonstrating his art to the public while promoting his fundraising program and wedding line. The store is looking forward to the busy Christmas season, as that always promises to be the best selling season for candles.

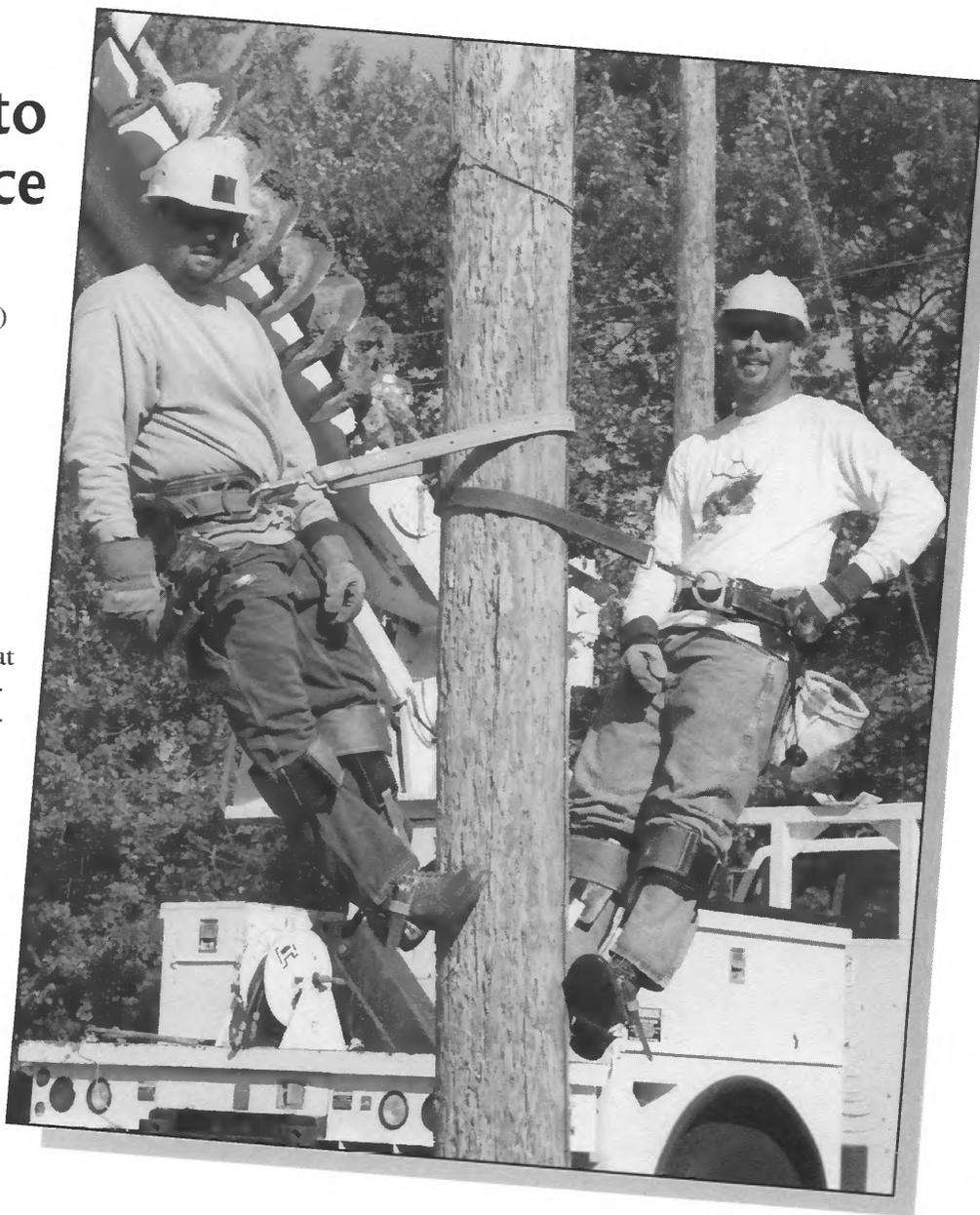
In addition to the traditional candles, CandleArt also provides refills for any container that you would like to

put a candle in for \$0.50 per ounce. For example, you could bring in a clay pot, an antique tea cup, or anything else you would like to make into a candle. You may choose from more than 50 unique scents

Phil is always trying a new venture. He is now making himself available for training for anyone seeking an independent business, whether full or part time. No experience is necessary, as you will be trained by one of their master candle craftsmen. You can call him for more details at (866) 857-6306.

Positions changed to Apprentice Linemen

Arnie Johnson (left) recently changed from Groundman to Apprentice Lineman. Bill Fields (right) moved from Journeyman Line Clearance man to Apprentice Lineman. Both men received basic pole-climbing training at a climbing school held at Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield.



Students encouraged to apply for 2004 IEC Memorial Scholarship



Norris Electric Cooperative Manager Keith McKinney has announced that for the ninth consecutive year the Illinois electric cooperatives will award \$1,000 academic scholarships to high school seniors. The four scholarships are being awarded through the Illinois Electric Cooperative (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

High school seniors pursuing a college education in the state of Illinois are eligible to participate in the program. Three of the four scholarships will be awarded to the child of an electric cooperative member.

The other \$1,000 award will go to the child of an electric cooperative director or employee. Deadline for applications to be returned to the cooperative is January 1, 2004.

"The purpose of the scholarship program is to assist electric cooperative youth while honoring past rural electric leaders through memorial gifts," said McKinney. "Norris Electric Cooperative 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, which 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 cooperative or ask your high school guidance counselor.

New government Web site has many tips for saving on your energy bills

The Department of Energy has launched a new Web site at www.eere.energy.gov/consumerinfo/energy_savers as part of its new Smart Energy campaign to help consumers conserve energy.

A new Web site sponsored by the Department of Energy shows consumers how to save money on their energy bills this winter. The website is part of the federal government's Smart Energy Campaign launched this summer to help consumers conserve energy and decrease demand for dwindling natural gas supplies.

"The demand for natural gas is growing faster than producers can get it out of the

ground and ship it out to consumers," Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham said when kicking off the Smart Energy Campaign.

"America's natural gas shortage effects everyone; from senior citizens, living on fixed incomes, to small business owners trying to keep the lights on," Abraham added. "Conserving energy in the home saves consumers money today while also helping ensure abundant

energy supplies in the future."

To see energy saving tips, go to www.eere.energy.gov/consumerinfo/energy_savers. The site recommends a whole-house energy efficiency plan, which asks consumers to think about their home as energy system with interdependent parts. The Web site has dozens of energy efficiency tips for your home.

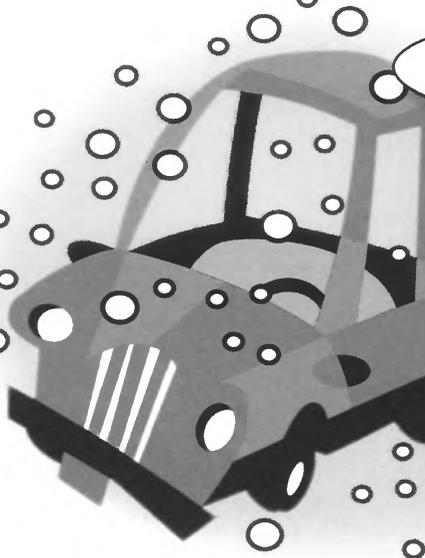
Source: DOE

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Be prepared for safe winter travel

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, 25 percent of winter deaths can be attributed to people being caught out in a storm. The National Weather Service reports that many of these winter deaths occur when people attempt to leave their vehicles during a storm to walk to safety.

To stay safe, stranded drivers should stay with the car, tie a piece of colored cloth to the car's antenna, and keep the car running while using the heater 10 minutes out of each hour. People should remember to keep their interior lights on while the engine is running and be sure the exhaust pipe is clear of snow and ice. Crack the windows slightly to allow in fresh air and avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. To prevent hypothermia and frostbite, bundle up in woolens or a blanket. If these aren't available, move your arms and legs constantly to keep the blood flowing.



Winter travel survival kit

- Battery-powered radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Booster cables
- Fire extinguisher (5lb., A-B-C type)
- First aid kit and manual
- Bottled water and non-perishable high-energy foods, such as granola bars, raisins and peanut butter.
- Compass and road maps
- Shovel
- Tire repair kit and pump
- Flares
- Extra clothing to keep dry
- Sack of sand or cat litter (for tire traction)
- Tow rope
- Knife.

If travel is necessary in stormy weather, it's best to inform someone of the travel route, destination and expected arrival time. Travelers should remember to keep their gas tanks near full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines, and keep a disaster supply kit in the car.

Source: American Red Cross; National Weather Service; National Safety Council



OFFICE CLOSING

Our office will be closed Tuesday, November 11 for Veterans Day, and Thursday and Friday, November 27 and 28 for the Thanksgiving Holiday.



Vegetation control schedule

We will have crews performing routine tree trimming or spraying during **December** in the following areas:

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- Crawford County

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The history of Santa Claus

In the United States there are two things that usually come to mind when you think about Christmas. The first is Jesus and the second is Santa Claus. We know that young children are sometimes mystified about Santa Claus but how much does anybody, including the adults, really know about the old gentleman?

Most historians believe that the United States received the legend of Santa Claus from Dutch settlers who brought with them the story of Sinter Klaas. But to fully understand you must go back to about 300 A.D. to the ancient Lycian seaport city of Patara, which is somewhere in ancient Turkey. It is here reported that a boy was born and named Nicholas.

Nicholas's family was very wealthy, which allowed him to travel throughout Palestine and Egypt. Reportedly, Nicholas was fond of helping the needy and due to his travels he seemed to gain quite a reputation and several stories were written about him.

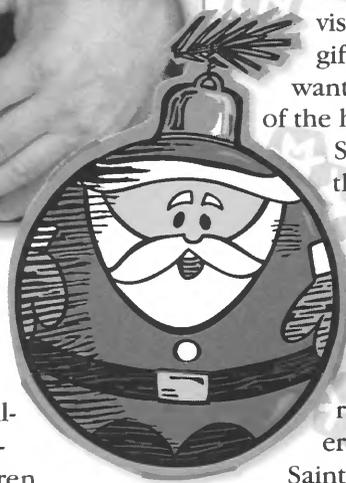
Nicholas was appointed as Bishop of Myra (now Demre, Turkey) but was soon imprisoned by the Roman Emperor Diocletian who persecuted Christians. He was released when Constantine the Great became Emperor. Today we are not sure whether these stories are fact or fiction.

One of the most famous stories written about Nicholas was when he heard of a very poor but honorable family that had three daughters approaching marriage. However, at this time,



for a young girl to be married she had to have a dowry. This family could not afford a dowry for three and the father decided that he must sell one daughter into slavery so that the other two could marry. Another version of this is that the daughters were going to work in brothels until they had enough money for their dowries. Reportedly, when each girl became of age, Nicholas threw a bag of gold equal to their dowries through their windows. Some believe that he placed these bags of gold in their stockings while they slept.

Nicholas's legends of helping the poor, saving storm tossed sailors, and defending young children prompted the church to name Nicholas a Saint. Because of his wisdom and sensitivity, many groups claimed St. Nicholas as their patron saint. Children, orphans, sailors and even thieves often prayed to the compassionate saint for guidance and protection. The Christian figure of Saint Nicholas replaced or



incorporated various pagan gift-giving figures such as the Roman Befana and the Germanic Berchta and Knecht Ruprecht. The saint was called Sankt Nikolaus in Germany and Sanct Herr Nicholaas or Sinter Klass in Holland.

The remains of St. Nicholas were taken from Myra to Bari, Italy in 1087 A.D. after the city of Myra fell to Islamic invaders. Celebrations related to saints are normally conducted on the anniversary of their death. Saint Nicholas died on December 6 so the feast of St. Nicholas was celebrated on that day. This marked the beginning of the medieval Christmas season. On St. Nickolas' Eve, the children would set food out for the saint, straw for his horses and schnapps for his attendant. The next morning, obedient children awoke to find their gifts replaced with sweets and toys while the disobedient found their offerings untouched, along with a rod or a bundle of switches.

After the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, the feasting of Catholic Saints was banned. But people had become accustomed to the annual visit from their beloved gift-giving saint and didn't want to forget the purpose of the holiday.

So, in some countries, the festivities of St. Nicholas were merged with Christmas celebrations, and although the gift-bearer took on new, non-religious forms, he still reflected the Saint's generous spirit. Because the Saint's life is so unreliably documented, Pope Paul VI ordered the feast of Saint Nicholas dropped from the official Roman Catholic Calendar in 1969.

In Germany he appeared as Weihnachtsmann, in England as Father Christmas, Julenisse in Scandinavia and in France as Pere Noel, who left small gifts in the children's shoes. The

term Christkindl (Christ Child) evolved to Kriss Kringle, another nickname for Santa Claus. In areas where St. Nicholas was still portrayed as the gift-bearer, a host of other characters developed to be his assistants. Two of the most well known were Knecht Ruprecht and Belsnickle. Depending on the local tradition, they were either attendants to St. Nicholas or gift-bearers themselves. Knecht Ruprecht (meaning Servant Rupert) was also known by other names such as Black Peter (because he delivered the gifts down the chimneys). In some places the images of Knecht Ruprecht and St. Nicholas merged to form Ru Klaus (meaning Rough Nicholas – so named because of his rugged appearance), Aschen Klaus (meaning Ash Nicholas – because he carried a sack of ashes as well as a bundle of switches), and Pelznickle (meaning Furry Nicholas – referring to his fur clad appearance).

The American version of Santa Claus was derived from the Dutch legend of Sinter Klaas, brought by settlers to New York in the 17th century. This is where the name Santa Claus came from as many English speaking American children uttered the name so quickly that Sinter Klaas sounded like “Santy Claus”. After years of mispronunciation, the name evolved into Santa Claus. The Scandinavians introduced gift-giving elves, the Germans brought not only their Belsnickle and Christkindl but also their decorated trees and the Irish contributed the ancient Gaelic custom of placing a lighted candle in the window.

In 1808, American author Washington Irving created a satire called “Diedrich Knickerbocker’s History of New York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty”. In this satire he described Santa as a jolly Dutchman who smoked a long stemmed clay pipe and wore baggy breeches and a broad brimmed hat. He rode over the treetops in

a horse drawn wagon dropping gifts down the chimneys of his favorites.

In 1822 Dr. Clement Clarke Moore wrote “A Visit from St. Nicholas”. It is more commonly known as, “The Night Before Christmas.” He substituted eight tiny reindeer and a sleigh for Irving’s horse and wagon. It is Moore’s description of Santa that we most often think of today, “He had a broad face, and a little round belly, that shook, when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.”

No one described his clothing until in 1863 when a German immigrant by the name of Thomas Nast was asked to illustrate Moore’s verse for a children’s book of poems. He gave us a softer, kinder Santa who was still old but appeared less stern than the ecclesiastical St. Nicholas. He dressed his elfin figure in red and endowed him with human characteristics. Most important of all he gave him a home at the North Pole.

In 1931, artist Haddon Sundblom began helping Coca Cola with the artistry on their billboards and in the Saturday Evening Post. He added a grandfatherly Santa with human proportions and a ruddy complexion. Sunblom’s exuberant, twinkle-eyed Santa firmly fixed the gift-giver’s image in the public mind. Montgomery Ward Company’s advertising copywriter Robert L. May created Rudolph, the ninth reindeer, complete with his red shiny nose in 1939.

Songwriter Johnny Marks was May’s brother-in-law and he took the story and developed lyrics and melody for “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.”

The legend of Santa Claus was a combination of many ancient beliefs all seeming to begin with the story of St. Nicholas. We know today that all the children in the United States look upon Santa as a pot belly, bearded man in red that delivers their Christmas gifts to them if they have behaved.

Merry Christmas

Office closings

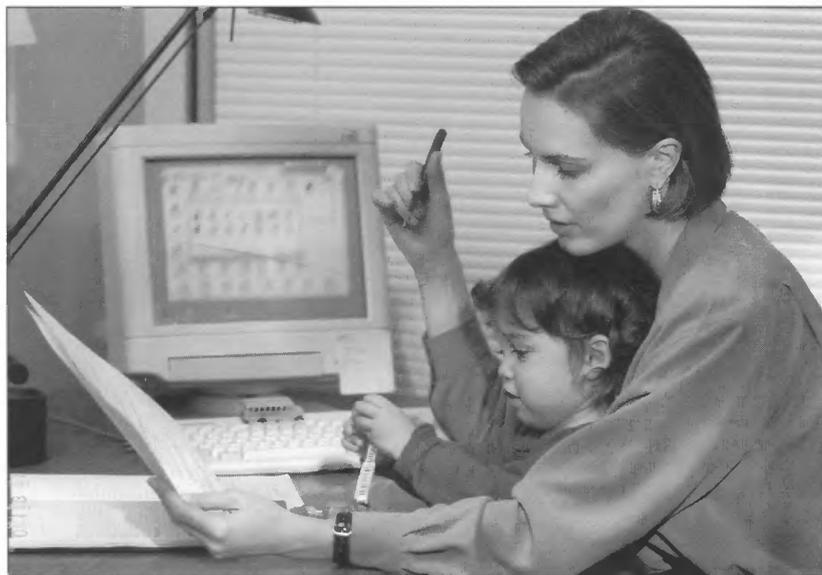
Our office will be closed Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 24 and 25 for the Christmas holiday, along with Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1 for the New Year’s celebration.



New Web site information— pay your bill online!!

For our members that utilize Internet technology, you can visit our Web site at www.norriselectric.com to see the many aspects of our cooperative. These include the history of our co-op, services that we provide, commonly asked questions, upcoming power interruptions and much more. The newest addition to our Web site is the ability to view and pay your bill on-line.

To view your bill, you must first contact the office in order to get your password into the secured site where you can instantly view information about your current bill, payment history, electricity usage, and pay your bill. Once you have accessed your account, there are a number of ways you may pay your bill. One is e-check, a one time withdraw from your checking account. Another is ACH (auto-



matic deduction from your bank account) for consumers who want their bill paid automatically each month. On the day before the bill is due, the funds will be pulled from your checking ac-

count and your bill will be paid each month. If you are considering this option, please contact our office at (877) 783-8765 and we will answer any questions you might have.

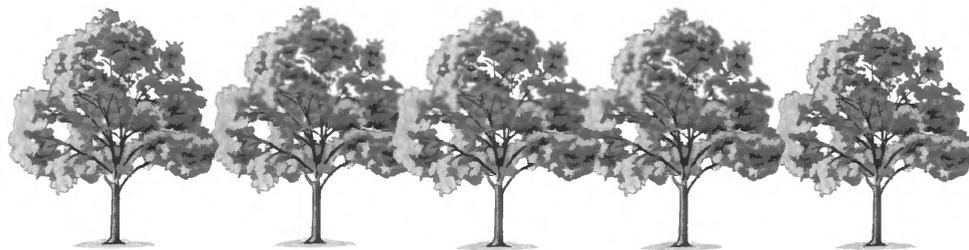
Vegetation Control Schedule

We will have crews performing routine tree trimming or spraying during January in the following areas:

Lawrenceville County
Crawford County

These areas have been scheduled quite a bit in advance so our plans may change. You should call us if you have any questions relating to a specific area or our vegetation management policies and practices. You may also call us if you wish to make

other arrangements for your specific property or to question our vegetation control practices. Our Forestry Department can be reached at (877) 783-8765 or (618) 783-8765 during working hours. Our Web site is www.norriselectric.com.



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Office hours: 8 a.m. — 4:30 p.m