

NORRIS

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Newton, Illinois 62448 • 783-8765

Electric News

Norris Electric donates equipment to electrify Philippine villages



Many co-op leaders were instrumental in Norris Electric's donation of electric materials. From left are Jerry Kinder, Maintenance Supervisor of Norris Electric; John Freitag, Vice President of Operations for the Association of Illinois Electric Co-ops; Keith McKinney, Manager and Tim Huber, Electrical Engineer of Norris Electric; Travis Housely, a Kentucky cooperative volunteer who coordinates the Philippines project; and Bill Freeman of United Utility Supply Cooperative.

Any day now, rural residents of the Philippines will get electricity for the first time. Three ocean containers of electric line equipment have been shipped to the Philippines, where the materials will be used to extend electric service to hundreds of rural Filipinos in rural villages.

Norris Electric donated the materials through National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's

International Program. The co-op donated more than 200 transformers plus various other distribution and transmission line material.

"All of the equipment donated is in working order," says Tim Huber, Electrical Engineer for the co-op. "The transformers were just too old, or too small for us to affordably rebuild. That's why we decided to donate them to the International program."

The co-ops' generosity will help to supply electricity to three or four small villages. The amount of materials donated filled three ocean shipping containers. In the United States, one transformer may only serve one house with electricity, but in the Philippines, each transformer will serve several families.

■ *Continued on 16b*

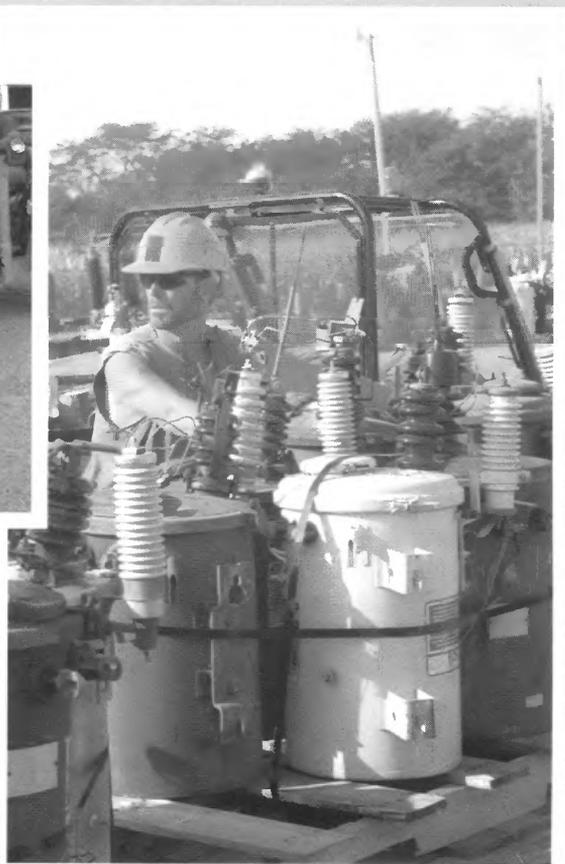


Loading donated electrical insulators are (l-r) Norris Electric Cooperative employees John Bogard, Jim Tarr and Tom Tarr.

“This material is of no value except for scrap in the United States,” says Manager Keith McKinney. “Technology and materials have evolved so much that these products are no longer used in this country, and the salvage value is minimal. It just made sense to send this material someplace where it could be used.

“These areas are similar to the ones in the United States served by cooperatives years ago,” says McKinney. “With that in mind, we know that these areas can use all the inexpensive material that they can find. This action ties in closely with the sixth and seventh Cooperative Principles — cooperation among cooperatives and concern for community.”

Norris Electric’s donation is a small part of a much larger effort of electric co-ops nationally to bring electricity to poor areas around the world. Over the past 40-plus years, hundreds of advis-



Ed Hannaman assists in securing insulators.

ers and tons of electric materials have been sent abroad, bringing electricity to millions of people in third world countries.

The recent shipment will go to the southern islands of the Philippines, where international co-op leaders are extending service to remote villages and rural areas that have never gotten electricity. Much of the Philippines are served by electric cooperatives, which are modeled after the U.S. rural electrification program.

Vegetation control schedule

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

Richland 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.

Clearance of electric supply conductors to grain-handling equipment

Researched by Rebecca Kocher

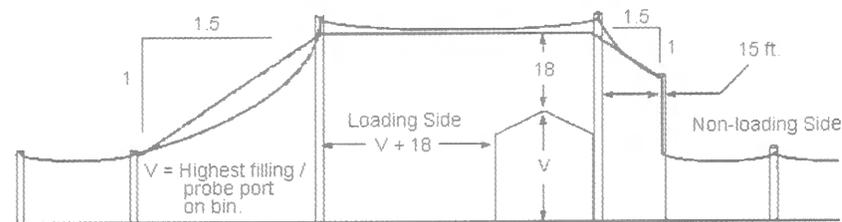
Many farmers have their own grain-handling and storage systems. These systems increase economic potential of farms by allowing direct marketing control. However, there are hazards associated with maintaining grain systems. One frequently overlooked hazard is overhead power lines. The risk of electrocution around grain-handling and storage areas, particularly with the use of portable augers, is a serious threat. This danger increases in systems using frequently moved augers. An auger coming in contact with or near an overhead power line can be deadly.

Rules governing proximity of overhead lines

There are two sets of guidelines to consult for placement of overhead power lines in relation to grain-handling systems. The first is the National Electrical Safety Code (NESC). It applies to the primary electrical supply equipment and wires ahead of the transformer location serving the farm. The second is the National Electric Code (NEC), which is concerned with electrical wiring from the meter location to the loads.

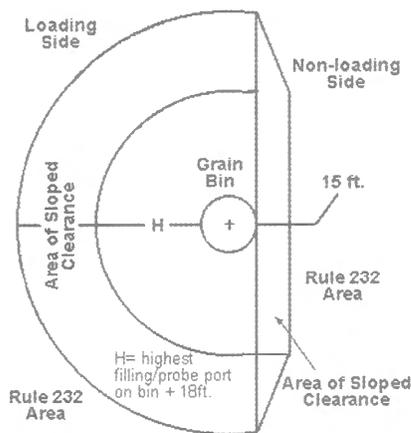
NESC

The NESC is the standard the power supplier should adhere to when placing service at the site. It is effective up to and including the transformer supplying the site. Two different sections apply to grain handling systems, one to fixed systems (grain legs and other permanent equipment) and the other to portable grain-handling systems (moving augers). The guidelines listed here deal



with both types of systems. Further concerns should be directed to your local power supplier.

The primary differentiation between fixed and portable systems is in regulations involving magnitude of clearances. Figure 1 (above) shows minimum clearance of lines around a bin where portable grain-handling systems are used. A distance of 18 feet (5.5 meters) must be maintained above the highest port of the bin. Furthermore, on the loading side of the bin, the



line must maintain this height for a distance of 18 ft. (5.5 m) plus the height of the bin. The line may then be sloped down at a ratio of 1:1.5, or 67 percent slope, to its regular height. On the non-loading side of the bin, the line may slope for a distance of 15 ft. (4.6 m) from the edge of the bin, then lower vertically to its original height. Figure 2 is an overhead view of the layout.

For systems with fixed grain-handling equipment, a power line serving the transformer and passing over a roof or other solid structure not easily accessible to people must have a minimum vertical clearance of 12.5 ft. (3.8 m) or more. If the roof has easy access (as in the case of a grain bin), the conductor must have a minimum clearance of 18 ft. (5.5 m) above the highest probe port. A horizontal clearance of 7.5 ft. (2.3 m) must be maintained.

Whether a fixed or portable system is used, Section 232 states that any lines over a path or roadway traversed by cultivation equipment must be at least 18.5 ft. (5.6 m) above that area. This ensures that contact between lines and large equipment, such as a combine or tractor, will be kept to a minimum. Contacting overhead lines with other machinery can be just as deadly as with grain equipment.

NEC

The NEC is the standard that applies to farm distribution and wiring after the meter. NEC specifications listed here are applicable when maximum voltage does not exceed 600 volts. The NEC does not differentiate between fixed and portable equipment.

A horizontal clearance of 3 ft. (0.9 m) must be maintained between equipment and insulated conductors. The minimum

■ *Continued on 16d*

■ Continued from 16c

vertical clearance of 18 ft. (5.5 m) above roadways used for forest, orchard, grazing or cultivation equipment must be maintained to reduce risk of contact with tall equipment. An 8-foot (2.4 m) clearance is required above rooflines that are easily accessible to people (such as a grain bin roof). Contact your local electrical inspector, power supplier or similar authorities for further interpretation of these specifications.

Suggestions for improved safety

A dangerous situation exists if the above conditions are not currently being met. Extreme



caution should always be exercised when moving grain augers near power lines. Lower the auger to transport level to ensure contact will not take place. It is also wise to reposition the lines to their proper height or have the electrical service attached to the bin from a non-loading side.

Operators who design or expand a grain-handling system may want to explore the option of placing the lines underground. The hazard of contacting any power lines with tall equipment is then eliminated. Underground

lines are the safest means to supply electricity to a site where portable augers are in use.

A new option not previously available is an elevator that uses tractor power to raise and lower the auger. These new augers are raised and lowered by a hydraulic cylinder. A farmer may follow the safe practice of lowering the auger if there is an easy way to do it. Tractor power is usually available and may be used to raise and lower the auger. All augers currently being manufactured should have a warning label affixed, which should resemble the one displayed in Figure 3. Please read all operating instructions, particularly the warnings and other safety notices regarding proper operation.

New robot brings softer, kinder touch to business of milking cows

The latest innovation from IceRobotics Ltd. gives new meaning to the term “cash cow.” The Scottish company has just developed a new robotic milking arm modeled on an elephant’s trunk.

According to industry experts, robotic milking yields more because cows can be milked when they want to be milked, which is often between 11 p.m. and 3 a.m. Robotic milking can increase a cow’s yields by as much as 20 percent, as a result of milking three to four times a day instead of twice.

The first fully automated robotic milking stall was introduced in the Netherlands in 1992. One of the problems with that technology has been that it is not sensitive enough for the job of milking cows, according to developers at IceRobotics.



Developed in a tightly controlled manufacturing environment, the old technology’s transition to the dairy farm has been difficult, where the technology is vulnerable to dirt, dust, and fluids. Also the robot must be careful to avoid milking if the animal is injured.

The new technology has cameras and a flexible arm, which is excellent at locating the cow’s teats and also adjusting to

any new angles a cow teat might take on. Using an infrared camera, the robotic arm zeros in on the warm teats and then gently places suction-powered cups over each of them. Putting cameras in the arm also helps detect cuts and malformations, which can lead to less milk production and an unhealthy cow.

Farming analysts are projecting that robotics will be more widespread within the coming decade. Nearly 2000 farms worldwide have installed robotic milking systems already.

Milking cows by hand is grueling work. In Wisconsin, for example, the task consumes 50 million worker hours each year. Industry analysts think automated milking is potentially big business.

Source: *Nature*; *BBC News*

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36



Country living at its best

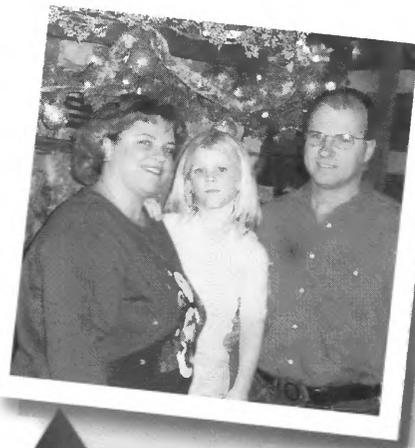
Tony and Karen Flach, along with their children Amanda (18), Jethro (15) and Emilee (6), have a picturesque log cabin home in the woods near Montrose that is served by Norris Electric Cooperative. Tony's father, Tim Flach, sparked an interest in log homes in his son long ago. Tony and Karen became big believers in log cabins and through their home, have sparked an interest in them in Tony's four brothers, who have built log cabin homes along with their father, all within a five-mile area.

In 1982 Tony and Karen were looking at building a home and decided upon a log cabin. They looked around and felt that "Honest Abe Log Homes" from Moss, Tennessee had the best reputation and craftsmanship.

They liked the rustic look and were happy that Honest Abe Log Homes had authentic looking "chinking" and dovetail corners. They also found that this company was looking for independent dealers for their cabins and felt that was ideal fit. Tony and Karen soon started Spring Creek Cabin Company in Montrose.

One of the features the Flachs like about their log homes is that you can buy as little or as much of the cabin as you like. Some people just buy the logs for the walls and others buy a complete package. About 95 percent of the homes the Flachs sell are custom designed. Their customers can also take a course and build their own home, or have others build it.

■ (continued on 16b)



Karen, Emilee and Tony Flach of rural Montrose in Cumberland County.



Tony and Karen's family room (above) and living room with fireplace (right).



Dan Flach's cabin (Tony's brother).

Honest Abe Log Homes have building crews but Tony has worked with a local contractor that has constructed the majority of the cabins that he has sold.

Tony has found that most of his sales have come from the word of mouth from satisfied customers and from area home shows. Tony and Karen have sold around 75 log cabins in Illinois and Indiana.

Tony says some of the most common questions from people who approach him about log cabins address insect damage and maintenance. He says that these issues are no more of a problem with his log cabin than what they may be with a normal frame construction home. Log homes have insect treatments that may be applied during construction if desired and Tony recommends resealing the exterior of the logs every 3-5 years.

Like frame homes, the cabins can be built on standard foundations or over basements. Tony has found from his own home as well as those of his family that these homes are just as energy efficient as frame homes. He said in the summer months that air

conditioning is even a little more efficient due to what they call the "thermal mass" of the logs. Once they get cool, the mass of the logs tends to stay cool, decreasing the amount of cooling needed. These homes can have wood burning furnaces, standard furnaces and air conditioners, heat pumps and geo-thermal heating and cooling systems. In that respect they are just like frame homes.

Tony has several "outbuildings" that are also log buildings. He says that because of the "custom" work done by Honest Abe Log Homes that they can design and supply any attachments such as garages or unattached buildings. You will typically see a well-built Honest Abe Log Home cost about the same as a similarly built frame home. Construction takes about the same amount of time as a frame home.

Tony and Karen have withstood the test of time and are the longest running dealers of Honest Abe Log Cabins. They

received the first Customer Service Award that Honest Abe Log Homes awarded. You can schedule a visit to a number of log cabins by calling Tony and Karen at Spring Creek Cabin Company at (217) 924-4184.

Honest Abe Log Homes report that they started in 1970 at Green Forest Wood Products, a small saw mill nestled in the rolling hills of Tennessee. The company was looking for a productive use of its larger logs. The result was the development of Honest Abe Log Homes. You can also visit the Honest Abe Web site at www.honestabe.com.

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Capital Credits Allocation vs. Payment

About this time of year you receive a notice that indicates what your Capital Credit Allocation is for the previous year - 2003. This is just a reminder that this is the amount that is "Allocated." A lot of people anticipate that they will be getting paid this allocated amount in the next few

days or that it can be credited to their bill. However, this allocated amount will be paid at a later date. The last payment of capital credits that we paid were for those capital credits that were allocated for the year of 1967. When we paid those capital cred-

its there was about a 30-year lag between allocation and payment. Other people believe that the cooperative is holding on to their money. The unpaid capital credits are tied up in "Plant" value. Unpaid capital credits are your ownership of the cooperative.



A handshake still means something

Remember when a handshake was all it took to seal a deal? It's still that way at your local electric cooperative.

The Touchstone Energy® logo you see on our trucks, hats, and on our sign outside, along with our co-op name, stand for our promise to you that you'll receive the best electric service at the best possible price.

We're here only to serve you. And in a world where not much is certain, you can count on that.

We are the power of human connections.



Touchstone Energy®
The power of human connections

OFFICE CLOSING

Our office will be closed Monday, February 16 in observance of President's Day.

WATCH FOR YOUR INVITATION

Our annual meeting of members is February 14, 2004, at the Newton High School. This year we are starting just a little earlier because we have a special treat. We will have Senator Norris speaking of the trials and tribulations of creating the REA many years ago. Norris Electric Cooperative is named after this great Senator from Nebraska. This year we are going to start the meeting at 9:30 a.m. After the meeting opens we will have Senator Norris tell his story. The Norris-Rayburn Act, more commonly called the Rural Electrification Act was passed on May 20, 1936, and is a tribute to Senator Norris. Norris Electric Cooperative struggled with a name for their cooperative and entertained such names as: "Embarrass River Electric Cooperative," the "Red Top Electric Cooperative" (because of the Red Top wheat that was produced in the area) and then someone suggested naming it after Senator Norris. This will be a very entertaining and informative presentation—don't miss it! The Annual Meeting Notices will be mailed at the end of January.

TENTATIVE AGENDA

Registration Starts after 8:30 am

Meeting Starts at 9:30 am

National Anthem
Invocation
Welcome
Senator Norris-Guest Speaker (Don't miss this)
Roll Call to Determine Quorum
Awarding of two \$75 Cash Prizes
Approval of 2003 Annual Meeting Minutes
Presentation of Reports
Treasurer
President
Manager
Introductions of Guests and Dignitaries
Report of Nominating Committee and Election of Directors
Unfinished Business
New Business
Report of Election Results
Awarding of Prizes
Adjournment

LIST OF PRIZES

Winner's names to be drawn at the end of the meeting!

17 prizes of \$25	7 Pork Hamlets	10 Pkg Porkburgers
10 Boneless Turkeys	10 Pkg Hamburger Patties	5 Whole Hams
2 Cordless Phones	5 Boneless Hams	

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Norris members hear positive financial news at their 66th annual meeting

Members of Norris Electric Cooperative were updated on their cooperative's growth and financial condition, and about new technology that will improve their service, during their 66th annual meeting of members held on Saturday, February 14, at Newton Community High School. The members also elected two area men and re-elected four others to the co-op's board of directors. Re-elected to the board were Kent Hetzer of Wheeler, Joe Helmink of Teutopolis, Keith Sherwood of Casey and Larry Seals of Mt. Carmel. Newly elected to the board were Frank Draper of Hutsonville and Ron Viehman of Lawrenceville.

Treasurer Dean Dietrich reported that the co-op is in good financial order, with net patronage capital and margins of \$2.1 million, which is up 10 percent from last year. Dietrich added that the value of the cooperative also increased by nearly 4 percent in 2003. As a not-for-profit cooperative, that net patronage capital and margins are not paid to shareholders. They are returned to cooperative member/owners, or put back into the operation of the cooperative.

Cooperative Manager Keith McKinney stated that the co-op is growing, with the addition of 309 new services in 2003. He said that several line and equipment improvements made during the year are helping the co-op keep pace with the new



Pictured above is the 2004 Norris Electric Board of Directors. Left to right are: newly elected Directors Frank Draper of Hutsonville and Ron Viehman of Lawrenceville, and re-elected Directors Larry Seals of Mt. Carmel, Keith Sherwood of Casey, Kent Hetzer of Wheeler and Joe Helmink of Teutopolis.

growth. A tool that's helping to facilitate these improvements is infrared scanning. This technology allows service technicians to troubleshoot and find potential problems with substations and lines, enabling them to make repairs during planned outages. McKinney says, "Although it is a nuisance, it is always better to schedule an outage, instead of having it when we least expect it. It also makes for a shorter outage."

McKinney also discussed automatic meter reading, which is being phased in during the next two years. This technology will allow meter readings and other information to be transmitted over distribution lines to substations, and subsequently to the co-op office. McKinney says, "The main advantage to this system is that we have up-to-date knowledge of the meter.

We can identify problem areas such as areas with low voltage or blinks that are notoriously hard to find. We can tell if a meter has been removed. We can be notified of outages and identify the extent of outages, and we will no longer have to estimate bills." The new system will help Norris Electric assist its members in better understanding and managing their energy usage.

In closing, McKinney announced that Power Net Global, Norris Electric's very popular long distance service, has dropped its already competitive rates from 4.9 cents to 4.5 cents per minute in-state, from 6.9 to 4.9 cents out-of-state, and from 13.9 to 12.9 cents per minute for calling card calls. To date, more than 5,500 people have signed up for the service.

■ (continued on 16b)

NORRIS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

■ (continued from 16a)

Board President Kent Hetzer reported that Norris Electric has teamed up with the National Rural Telecommunication Cooperative (NRTC) to bring high-speed broadband Internet service to the co-op's service territory. The service will provide Internet service via a small satellite dish. The advantages to members will include considerably faster data transmission, unlimited Internet access, and continuous access to service. Hetzer says, "The cost of the service has not been determined yet, but it is going to be

attractive to our members. We hope to start offering this service sometime after July."

Entertainment for the meeting was Senator David Landis of Nebraska, a Senator George Norris portrayer. Norris, who was a senator from Nebraska, was a tireless advocate for rural America, and the father of the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). Norris Electric is Senator Norris's namesake.

Norris Electric Cooperative serves more than 18,500 mem-

bers over 3,982 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 610 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.



Director Keith Sherwood (right) recruits twins Karnell (left) and Kirstyn (his right) Bowen to assist with prize drawings on stage.



Sheriff Ed Francis chats with members before the meeting.

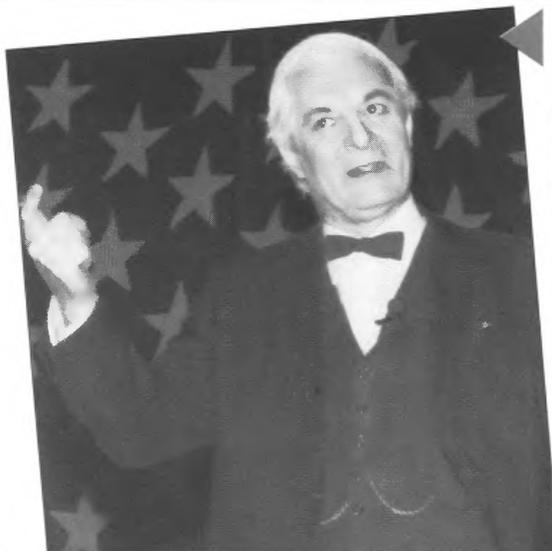


The PowerNet Global team has a lot to smile about with their recent decrease in long distance rates.



Registration is as usual a busy spot on annual meeting day.

ME'S 66th ANNUAL MEETING



Senator David Landes of Nebraska captivates the crowd with his lively portrayal of Senator George Norris, for whom Norris Electric Cooperative was named.



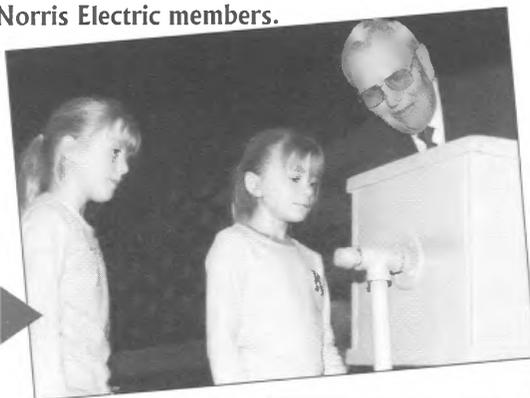
Air Evac Membership Coordinator Becky Phillips mans the booth for Air Evac Lifeteam, an emergency medical transit service offered to Norris Electric members.



Board President Kent Hetzer, right, presents a plaque to retiring Director Walter Hart of Annapolis, for 18 years of service to the cooperative.



Hetzer also presents retiring Director Earl Minderman of Lawrenceville with a plaque honoring him for 39 years of dedicated service to Norris Electric.



Twins Karnell and Kirstyn assist Director Delbert Mundt in the drawings on stage.



Secretary Russell Scherer provides the invocation for the meeting.

The colorful Touchstone Energy cold air balloon brightens up the gymnasium at Newton High School.



Hetzer reports that Norris Electric will soon be able to provide high speed broadband Internet service to its members.



Manager Keith McKinney discusses advantages of the newly installed automatic meter reading (AMR) system.



Treasurer Dean Dietrich announces that the value of the cooperative increased by 4 percent in the past year.



Jeff Vance of Ameren Energy Marketing thanks Norris Electric members for their business and discussed Ameren's purchase of Illinois Power from Dynegy.

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NEW LOW RATES ON LONG DISTANCE

Billed by Power Net Global Communications
utilizing the Qwest Long Distance Network (The nation's 4th largest carrier)

4.5¢

All calls in Illinois

4.9¢

All calls out of state

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

- Free to join • No monthly fees • No monthly premiums
- No term agreements • Major carrier
- 800 Number 4.5¢ — 4.9¢ per minute — no fees
- Free calling cards 12.9¢ per minute (No surcharge)
- NO CODES TO DIAL



Norris Electric Cooperative is offering long distance telephone service through Power Net Global Communications. This long distance service is one of the lowest-cost long distance services available. As you can see, you can call anywhere in the State of Illinois for a low \$0.045 per minute or anywhere out of state in the continental United States for \$0.049 per minute. In addition, you can have your own personal 800 number to receive calls from family members or acquaintances. Incoming calls on your 800 number are billed at the same rates noted above. All rates are the same 24 hours a day — 7 days a week. There are no monthly fees, no minimums, or long-term agreements. Your local provider may charge \$5-\$10 to change providers.

**For Additional Information Call: (877) 783-8765, or
Mail Application to: Norris Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 6000, Newton, IL 62448**

Name _____ Social Security Number _____
 Street _____ Estimated Monthly Usage _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Current Carrier _____
 Your Telephone Numbers: () _____ - _____ () _____ - _____
 Services Desired: Outbound Toll (Initials) _____ Travel Cards (Initials) _____ How many _____
 Intralata (local toll) _____ (Initials) _____ This change applies to local instate toll call charges only, not local service
 800 Service (Initials) _____ Ring to number () _____ - _____ Is 800 number new _____ or existing? _____
 If you are requesting a new toll free number it will be randomly generated
 I hereby authorize PowerNet Global Communications, or its designator, to transfer my long distance service. I agree to financial responsibility for all charges arising from all long distance services provided. The service requested will be provisioned only on the approval of credit for the application. A service charge may be assessed by the local telephone company when they make the carrier change.
 Class 1 + LDA49RBTC 800# E 49RBTC Travel T13E Agency NEC.
 Referred by: _____
 Customer Signature _____ Date _____

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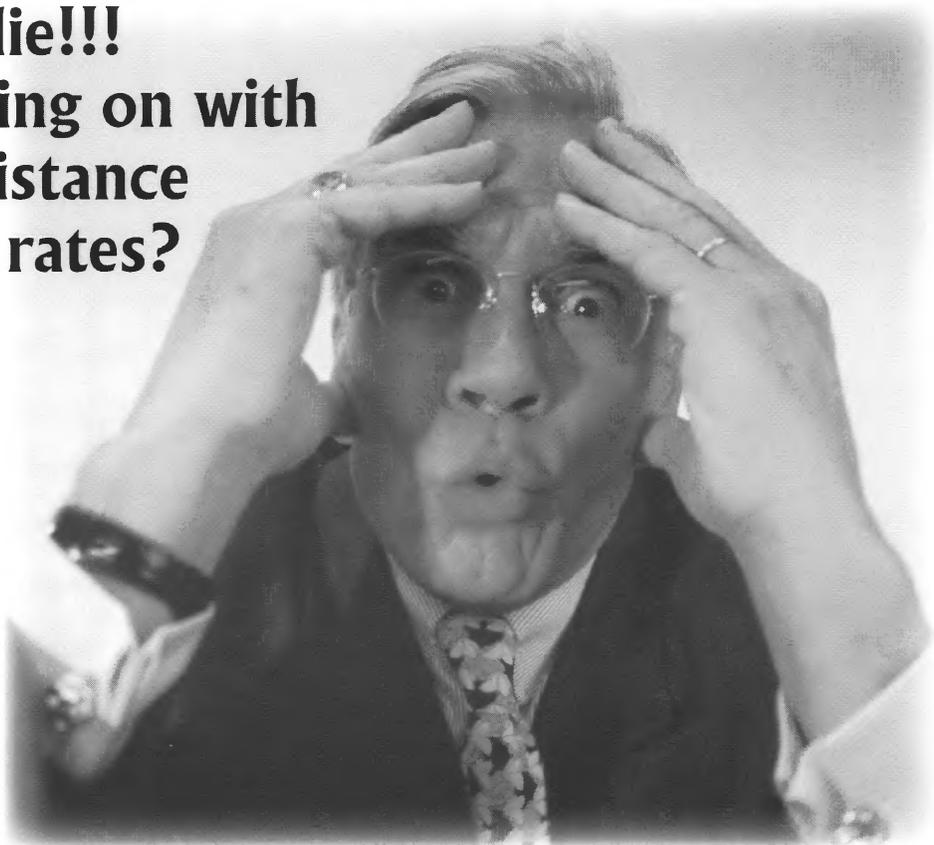
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Whoa Nellie!!! What's going on with my long distance telephone rates?

Norris Electric Co-operative has been offering long distance telephone rates for more than three years. In most cases, and especially in a residential atmosphere, we have had the most economical rates available. Now, the low rates are going even lower. The in-state long distance went from 4.9 cents per minute to 4.5 cents per minute. The interstate rate went from 6.9 cents per minute to 4.9 cents per minute. The calling card rate went from 13.9 cents per minute to 12.9 cents per minute. Why? We can only guess that our own low rates have forced the competitors to lower their rates and PNG wants to make sure you continue using the PNG service. One competitor's advertisement says their rate is 3 cents a minute with a 39 cent connection charge. Pretty good, huh! It sounds pretty good until you do the math. If you look at the majority of your calls you will find that most people talk less than 20 minutes and if we compare our rate to the rate I mentioned above, our cost goes down even more for shorter calls.



Here are some examples:

Length of Call	Norris (PNG)		
	Within Illinois	Outside Illinois	Brand X
1 Minute	\$.045	\$.049	\$.42
3 Minutes	\$.135	\$.147	\$.48
5 Minutes	\$.225	\$.245	\$.54
10 Minutes	\$.45	\$.49	\$.69
15 Minutes	\$.675	\$.735	\$.84
20 Minutes	\$.90	\$.98	\$.99

(Brand X calculated at \$0.03/minute and \$0.39 to connect.)

If you couple those excellent rates with the other services we offer, such as the 800 number billed at the same low rates as other calls and no monthly service charge or minimum bill, you find a long distance plan that is hard to beat! In fact we have almost 6,000 members that have signed up for this rate. If you haven't signed up for this service yet, what are you waiting for? If you're already enjoying these low rates be sure and tell your friends and ask us about the referral program!

WildBlue Broadband Internet

Norris Electric Cooperative has decided to offer Broadband Internet Service. We have been watching technology and found that the rural areas have really fallen behind when it comes to high-speed Internet. High-speed Broadband Internet service is presently unavailable in most rural areas. It can be equated with electric service in the 1930s and 1940s when only the cities had electric service. There may be areas in our service territory where high-speed Internet service is available and that is great. However, most areas do not have this access. That is what we plan to rectify!

What is WildBlue?

WildBlue is a company that was established in Colorado in April 1995. It was formerly known as KaStar Satellite Communications and is centered around Ka Band satellite communication. NRTC (National Rural Telecommunication Cooperative) saw the need for their members and partnered with WildBlue. Norris Electric became a member of the NRTC and through them we are offering WildBlue.

How does it work?

Each subscriber's computer will be connected to a small satellite dish. The signal will travel from the satellite dish to an orbiting satellite. That signal will then be transmitted back to earth to one of many ground stations across the United States called a "gateway." The ground station will be connected to the Internet backbone.

How fast will this be?

Download speeds will be up to 1.5 Mbps and upload speeds of up to 512 kbps. That's up to 25 times faster than a 56k dial up modem.

How will I be billed?

The cost of installation and equipment will not be over \$299. The monthly fee will be based on the bandwidth: 512 kbps down/256 kbps up \$49.95; 1.5 Mbps down/512 kbps up \$79.95.

These prices are estimated now but we have agreed that we will

not charge more than this and it could be less. As technology advances these costs will undoubtedly go down perhaps even prior to us offering the system to our members.

Are there any time limits?

This service is always on. Your monthly fee pays for unlimited Internet service at no additional cost.

Is there an additional cost for more computers?

No. The determining factor is the bandwidth. If you begin adding more computers and your speed decreases, you may wish to step up to the higher tier of service for \$79.95.

What support is offered?

Support is offered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

What other services will be offered?

WildBlue will provide things like Web hosting, e-mail addresses and other services a typical ISP (Internet Service Provider) would offer.



Who will install the equipment?

Norris Electric Cooperative will either install the equipment or contract with another vendor. Whoever installs the equipment must successfully complete training to be a certified installer. Member satisfaction is very important and the set up on these dishes is more critical than the set up for television dishes. Therefore, certified technicians and not individual homeowners will do all installations.

Is Direct-TV or DISH Network compatible with this system?

The satellites for this system are adjacent to the satellites providing service to Direct-TV and DISH Network. If you are a subscriber to these television systems it is possible to put another LNB on the WildBlue dish and receive the television programming. Because the WildBlue dish is 26 inches in diameter (larger than a television dish at 18 inches), you cannot receive the WildBlue signal on television dishes.

So, you can receive both signals from the WildBlue dish but only the television signal from the television dish. We have

found that most of the satellite television service providers offer free dish and installation if you subscribe to programming for a year. It may be advantageous to have a separate dish for both services. Norris Electric does not provide any television services.

What is "Spot Beam Technology"?

WildBlue's Ka-Band Satellites are optimized for broadband. They use multiple spot beams pointed at different geographic regions rather than one beam that covers the continental United States. Spot beams allow a large degree of frequency re-use (i.e., multiple beams can re-use

the same frequency as long as they are aimed at different parts of the country). By contrast, Ku-Band satellites, primarily used for broadcast applications, have a single beam covering the entire continental United States. This limits frequency re-use and reduces broadband capacity to a fraction of the comparably priced Ka-Band satellite.

Are only Norris Electric Members eligible for this service?

Yes and no! Anyone can subscribe and once they subscribe they are members of Norris Electric. It is a different "class" of member. That class will receive capital credits but those capital

credits will be derived solely from the WildBlue financials and not from the electric side! In most cases a rural member will be a member of Norris Electric Cooperative for their electric service and also a member related to their WildBlue service. The monthly bill may have both systems listed but the accounting will be separate.

What's next?

The exact timeframe for the implementation for WildBlue is not definite but we think it will be sometime this summer, after July 1, 2004. Watch for news bulletins and check back with us to see how we are progressing!

Smart Meters

Norris Electric Cooperative has made the decision to install Automated Meter Reading (AMR) throughout the Norris area.

What is AMR?

AMR centers around a "module" that is installed inside most of the meters on our system. In a few locations for larger accounts the modules are placed in the meter box. In either case, these modules send the meter reading and other information over the distribution lines back to our substations. This type of communication is called Power Line Carrier or PLC for short. The data is received in the substation and then sent to the office by radio, satellite or telephone.

What kind of data can be obtained from AMR?

Presently we can only obtain monthly kilowatt-hours from "residential" meters, providing our members give us the reading. The larger meters for a commercial or industrial member often provide kilowatts, kilovars, power factor, voltage and a few other readings. With AMR we

can get hourly readings on all meters and this provides us with an hourly kilowatt reading for even residential type meters. We will have all the readings that we normally have plus additional information that we previously did not receive.

What are the advantages of using AMR?

- The readings are on time and accurate.
- Voltage and load readings can be taken at the same time over the entire system to help find problems areas where line improvements should be made.
- The phase (A, B or C) that the meter is on is available to help us better spread the load evenly over all three phases.
- Voltages are available for each meter, which helps to determine whether an outage is on the cooperative's side of the meter or the member's side of the meter. This will reduce the number of outage trips made by our linemen. This also allows us to see the voltage at the same time that an electrician may be calling to inform us of low or high voltage.

- All of our wholesale meters that register the quantity of electricity we buy from Ameren are read at the same time of the day on the same day. AMR allows us to read all of our meters at the same time to accurately determine our system losses.
- Allows us to determine whether a transformer is over or undersized.
- It is possible to tie the readings to an outage management system to visually see where and when an outage occurs as well as when service is restored.
- Linemen will no longer have to verify questionable readings or take readings where a member has failed to take a reading.
- Billing readings can be spread throughout the month to better utilize the office workforce.
- It provides information to the member to help manage his usage.
- This will help us to design rates in the future by knowing exactly how particular classes of consumers use their electricity.
- "Blinks" at a service can be seen to better help find problem areas.

- The extent of an outage can be determined quickly.
- A verification can be made to determine if all members are back on after an outage.
- We will know when a meter has been removed or tampered with, helping to prevent theft of energy.
- Members will no longer be charged a \$15 meter reading charge for us to read the meter. We currently read about 60 meters every month.
- There is a meter disconnect/reconnect option, which not only allows for remote disconnect and reconnect but provides verification that the action has been done.
- Readings are possible whenever a consumer wishes one to be made, such as when they are moving out and someone else is moving in.
- Meter failures will be known within a 24-hour period (or sooner) helping to reduce large estimates and loss of energy. This is especially helpful for services like cabins or when a member is on vacation.
- Newer members do not want to read their meters. They are moving from the cities and do not understand why they must read their meters.
- Staff time can be better utilized and more time spent on member services: Fewer calls related to estimated bills; No more letters required due to adjusting

bills; Fewer or shorter calls due to high bills.

- Almost all meters will be changed, helping to ensure that all of our meters are accurate and haven't started to fail.
- Electronic meters normally do not get slower as mechanical meters, but tend to either work or fail. We will have notification when a meter fails.
- AMR systems have the capability for controlling equipment like appliances. If we ever go on a rate from our wholesale provider where reducing our load would be advantageous to our members, it would be a simple matter to send a signal to these meters and control things like water heaters and air conditioners from our office. This would involve us changing our retail rates so a member could save money if he participated in this rate. However, presently we have no plans to change any rates.
- We presently read all the large power meters (this includes a lot of oil fields that have meters in remote locations). Those will all be read with AMR.

Why are we replacing the meters?

We found that we could retrofit most of our existing meters with the necessary modules, but the labor involved with that was more costly than installing new meters with factory installed modules. That means that we

will be replacing almost all of our meters. The residential type meters account for about 16,000 of the 18,500 accounts. Those mechanical meters will be replaced with new electronic meters.

What should you expect?

You may notice someone replacing your meter. You will still need to read this meter at the scheduled time because we need to do the installation work in stages. Once we have all the meters replaced that are fed from the same substation, we can begin to take automated readings. We may want to continue to get readings from our members for a few months in order to verify the automated readings. We will notify members in the Illinois Country Living Magazine when they no longer have to read their meters.

We have Meter Reading Routes or Cycles. These are groups of meters that are billed at the same time. As we complete the AMR process, we will be re-grouping our meters to allow for more economical readings. You will probably see your billing date change before we finish the project. The bill will always indicate the billing period.

This will be new to us as well as to you so we hope you are patient with us as we implement this new system.

Vegetation Control Schedule

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

Lawrence 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.noriselectric.com.

Norris Electric Cooperative • Route 130 South • Newton, Illinois 62448 • (618) 783-8765
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Electric News

The Life of a Norris Electric Lineman



Rick Strole repairing a bad connection in the Greenup Substation.

Keith Long installing a transformer for a new service.

The recent cold wintry conditions have been quite harsh. For most of us in the Midwest, we expect at least a little ice every winter. Sometimes in the rural areas, the heavy winds can make it impossible to see across the road.

When weather becomes so severe, many of us avoid traveling. Imagine working in these conditions. Not just going to work, but working outside. That's what your Norris Electric linemen do.

They're handling heavy equipment and high voltage electrical power. They work on rugged terrain at heights that many people fear. They will work in the middle of the night in these same conditions - even

continued on page 16b



Vic Klinger standing by while they dig a hole for a new service.

on holidays - it doesn't matter. And, all the while they must maintain the utmost safety precautions to protect their life and others.

It's very demanding work, but ask these guys fighting the ice storms, the wind, the tree limbs and the lightning what they think - they love it. Turning the power back on after a storm is very satisfying. "Few will admit it but no one likes to miss a major storm. It's hard to explain but I think it is the feeling of accomplishment accented with adrenaline. It's knowing that we took everything Mother Nature could throw at us and still got the power back on," comments Maintenance Supervisor Jerry Kinder.



Scott Ghist and Ed Hannaman digging a hole to set a pole for a new service.

There is a satisfaction in fixing problems to get the member's power restored. Sometimes at two or three o'clock in the morning when a storm is raging or snow is blowing, they may wonder about their choice of occupation. But, when the job is done and the power is restored, that sense of accomplishment gives them a good feeling and an appreciation for what they do.

When hiring a lineman, the cooperative has a very large number of applicants and tries to choose from these the best applicant for the job. On the job, every lineman must go through a four-year training process.

A new hire starts out as a first-

year apprentice and works his way up the ladder (or "pole," I should say).

During their studies, apprentice linemen complete training for climbing, rubber gloving, first-year, second-year and advance distribution schools, regulator school and substation school. They must also complete, on their own time, the "Lineman Skills Training" program consisting of a series of lessons, quizzes and exams.

Safety is a very important part of a lineman's job. Norris Electric Cooperative's safety training program meets the standards of the Illinois Department of Labor and the Na-

tional Electrical Safety Code.

As an apprentice lineman, mem-

**"It's knowing
that we took
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Mother
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and still got
the power
back on."**



Tony Zuber and Justin Mahaffey wiring up a transformer bank.

bers of the crew learn to climb electric poles. Before climbing, they look the pole over for knotholes, woodpecker holes, etc. Even though there are bucket trucks that help make the job easier and safer, sometimes the terrain doesn't allow for truck access. Every lineman must know how to climb a pole. It's obvious they do; and their techniques are the same, "Keep your knees locked and your rear end away from the pole!"

Linemen rely on a whole wardrobe of safety gear including climbing boots, hooks, straps, hardhat, tool belt and gloves.

Crews use aerial lifts (commonly called "bucket trucks"), digger derricks for setting poles, trenchers, pole trailers and hoists for moving poles and reel carriers for transporting wire.

During a typical day, crews are busy maintaining and trouble shooting lines and equipment. They repair and build a line so that electric power is available when members need it.

However, overtime is part of

the job. Members rely on their utility company to heat their homes, and in extreme weather conditions, that need is even greater. Other members rely on electricity for oxygen support or other medical equipment. Restoring power must be immediate.

Wind, rain and ice are quick to cause an outage. Other common causes include squirrels, birds, frogs, equipment failures or even a vehicle striking a pole.

No matter what the cause, working in emergency situations, especially in severe conditions, brings a comradeship between crewmembers. They have a respect for each other rarely seen in other occupations. "The closeness comes from the knowledge they have of their job and the characteristics of themselves,"

says Lineman Doug Casey.

Maintenance Supervisor Jerry Kinder adds, "Linemen need to be able to rely on each other's expertise to get through an emergency."

**"Keep
your knees
locked and
your rear
end away
from the
pole!"**

Many of the employees at Norris Electric have been here for years and have really come to know each other. The daily challenges and the appreciation from the members make their efforts and hard work worthwhile. Lineman Scott Ghasst says, "I enjoy climbing poles and that each day you are in a different area."

Still, why do they do it? Maybe it's the "saving the day" feeling the crew gets from a job well done. Whatever the reason, we're glad they do it.

Help Make Your Lineman's Job Safer

Being a lineman is no simple task. Climbing poles and stringing electrical wire is a daily job despite weather reports or working conditions.

To work on the electrical lines, a lineman uses a bucket truck or climbs up the pole using special steel spikes, called gaffs that attach around his boots. These gaffs dig into the pole and give the lineman a solid hold on the pole as he works with the electrical lines. The lineman's livelihood and his life depend on his being able to keep those gaffs in the pole. If he should lose his hold on the pole, he could fall, hurting himself badly or even fatally.

You can help linemen at Norris Electric Cooperative by keeping the poles around your property free of items that might keep them from doing their jobs safely. Here are a few examples of how you can help:

- Don't hang birdhouses or basketball goals on an electrical pole. The lineman who has to climb that pole will have to climb around these and there's a good chance he might use them as a handhold. If the structure he uses isn't secure, the lineman could fall and be badly hurt.



- Don't use electrical equipment for your target practice. This can cause nothing but damage to the equipment and could harm you. Shooting at power lines or the glass insulators located on the poles could cause the lines to come down and cause outages that affect hundreds of people.
- Don't landscape around the bottom of the pole with flower boxes, birdfeeders, etc. If a lineman should

fall on these, he could be seriously injured. Planting flowers in the soil around the pole doesn't do any harm as long as no wooden or sharp objects are used in the bed.

- Don't erect a fence or attach a gate to a pole. A fence post made of wood or steel driven into the ground near a power pole is a great hazard to a lineman if he should happen to slip and fall on it. Don't build or attach anything to the pole that could be a hazard.
- Don't hang a sign advertising a garage sale or promoting your favorite political candidate on the power pole. The signs themselves aren't hazards, but the nails or staples used to hold them up are. If a lineman should hit one of these while climbing, his gaff won't get a strong hold and he could slip off the pole. This goes for any metal object attached to the pole, including spikes, steeples or any kind of nail.

If you follow these simple rules, you'll be making the already dangerous job of the lineman much safer.

Vegetation Control Schedule

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

**Lawrence 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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Electric News

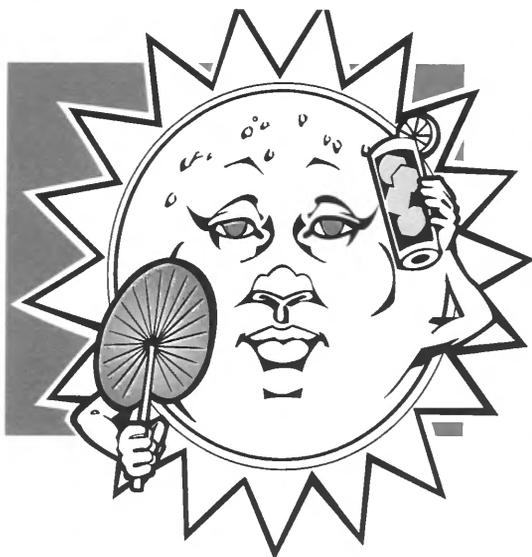
36



Thirty students representing Norris Electric Cooperative met with area legislators during the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives' Youth Day on Wednesday, April 21, in Springfield. While in the state capital, students had an opportunity to watch government in action, speak with State Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka, and tour the Illinois State Capitol, Lincoln's Tomb and the Illinois Supreme Court.

Students are pictured with Representative Roger Eddy of Hutsonville. Front row from left are Anna Likvaern of Teutopolis, Alexis Deisher of Allendale, Sydney Straw of Allendale, Amber Rudolphi of Newton, Sarah Kibler of Newton, Kindal Wernz of West Union, Kimberly Boden of Hutsonville, Kim Shick of Effingham, Jennifer York of Palestine and Megan Ellis of Palestine. Middle row from left are Barret Von Behren of Martinsville, Michelle Petty of Beecher City, Monica Albert of Effingham, Sarah Curtis of Olney, Kayci Bohlen of Olney, Abbey Nelson of Edgewood, Kaci Rector of Altamont, Jess Stevens of Teutopolis, Dailene Hewing of Montrose and Cole Cribelar of Martinsville. Back row from left are Laura Brooks of Effingham, Lucas Brown of Lerna, Monica Nuxoll of Beecher City, Rendi Lowrance of Robinson, Whitney Miller of Montrose, Laura Lindley of Robinson, Gary Klinger of Watson, Blake Chamness of Lawrenceville, Annelisa Morris of Lawrenceville and Shelly Mellendorf of Montrose.

The day was sponsored by the Illinois electric and telephone co-ops to introduce young rural leaders to state government.



'SUMMER-IZE' Your Home and Save Money

Summer may be the time for fun in the sun, but there's no fun in paying big energy bills. Just as most homeowners pay a premium to keep warm in the winter, they also must pay to keep cool when the sun's rays are at full blast.

According to the U. S. Department of Energy, space heating and cooling is the largest energy expense in most homes, accounting for more than 44 percent of the average utility bills. "Homeowners should assess their houses to see how they can conserve energy," stated Chicago Mechanical Contractors Association (MCA) Executive Vice President Steve Lamb, "A small investment of time can help to save money all summer long."

Start by checking insulation levels in exterior and basement walls, ceilings, floors, attics and crawl spaces. Insulation helps to keep the home at a comfortable temperature. Consult a qualified contractor on how to check insulation levels. Look for drafty holes and cracks around doors, walls, ceilings, windows, fixtures, switches and outlets. Weatherstripping and caulking help seal the home's interior against summer heat. Also check for open fireplace dampers.

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates about 40 percent of the unwanted heat that

builds up in a home comes in through the windows. Awnings, shutters, curtains and shades help reduce the amount of sunlight entering the house. Outside, trees can help to provide cooling shade.

Make sure home appliances are properly maintained. Replace old appliances with newer, energy-efficient models that generate less heat and use less energy. Refrigerators, dishwashers and dryers display an EnergyGuide label listing the annual estimated cost for operating the appliance or a standardized energy efficiency ratio. Also, reduce the time that heat producing lights are on and replace incandescent bulbs and fixtures with cooler fluorescent lamps.

Natural Ventilation: Putting the Wind to Work

Natural ventilation works best in climates with cool nights and regular breezes. Heat may accumulate in the building during the day, but cooler night air can flush it out. This can mean closing doors and windows by day and ventilating at night. If it's practical, natural cross-ventilation can be

generated by opening doors and windows in different parts of the home. Also, fans are an energy-efficient way to supplement the cooling effect of natural ventilation.

Natural ventilation can reduce high attic temperatures and slow the transfer of heat into living areas. Installing a reflective roof and at least a foot of attic insulation also can help to reduce heat.

Air Conditioning Tips

To save money, follow the U.S. Department of Energy's recommendation to set the thermostat to 78°F or higher. Each degree setting below 78°F will increase energy consumption by approximately 8 percent.

Inspect and clean the air conditioner's indoor and outdoor coils. The indoor coil acts as a magnet for dust because it is constantly wet during the cooling season, and that dirt build-up is the most common cause of poor efficiency. The outdoor coil also must be checked and cleaned regularly.

Check the refrigerant charge. If the system is overcharged or undercharged, it will not work properly. A qualified contractor can check the refrigerant charge and adjust it appropriately.

Remember to seal window gaps around window air conditioners, so cool air doesn't leave the house. Use the microwave oven instead of the stove. Washers, dryers, water heaters and dishwashers generate heat, so try to put off their use until evening. Also, seal off the laundry room and water heater from the rest of the house.

Upgrading or choosing a new central air conditioner can also save money. Before 1979, the seasonal energy efficiency ratings (SEERs) of central air conditioners ranged from 4.5 to 8.0. Replacing an old central air conditioner with a SEER of 6 with a new unit that has a SEER of 12 will cut air conditioning costs in half.

When a homeowner is thinking of adding central air

to the home, the deciding factor may be the need for ductwork. Check with a qualified local contractor. If heating and cooling systems already have been installed, ask a contractor to check those systems seasonally. Regular maintenance saves energy and increases the life of the equipment.

A contractor can evaluate existing ductwork and take care of any necessary repairs. According to the Southface Energy Institute, leaky ductwork often accounts for 10 to 30 percent of total heating and cooling costs. Improperly sealed return ducts can draw air from attics, crawl spaces and basement into living areas – and that air may be contaminated with dust, mold, and even radon.

Choosing a contractor

The expertise of the mechanical contractor and trained workforce you choose can make a real difference in your energy bills. The MCA suggests that homeowners check references, and ask about the training of the contractor's employees.

You should work with licensed contractors who will adhere to local building codes. Ask for proof of workers' compensation and general liability insurance. If the contractor is not insured, homeowners may be liable for construction-related injuries on the premises. The contractor's policies and guarantees should be clearly stated in their contract.

Vegetation Control Schedule

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

Richland 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.



2003 Capital Credit Notices

By the time you read this you may have received a "Notice of Capital Credit." This is a notification of the Capital Credits allocated to our members in 2003 that will not be paid for several years. We make these allocations each year and receive multiple calls every year from our members asking when they should be expecting their check. We just want to point out that the "Notice of Capital Credit" is only a notification of what we are going to pay at a later date. These credits cannot be applied to your current electric bill.

What is Mine and What is the Co-op's?

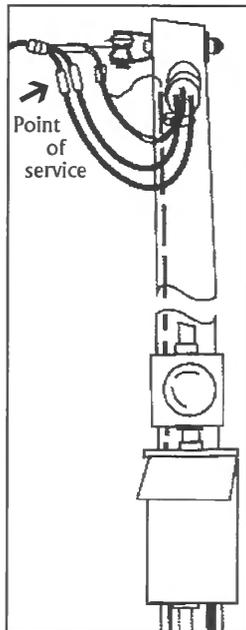
A lot of times a member may be surprised when he hears that the cooperative will not make a repair to part of his service equipment or wire. Sometimes it is hard to see a clear distinction between what is the cooperative's responsibility and what is the member's.

A loose interpretation is that the cooperative is responsible for everything before the meter and the member for everything after the meter. For a residential location this is a reasonable representation. However, a better description would be the service point where the cooperative's equipment meets the member's equipment.

Below are a few examples.

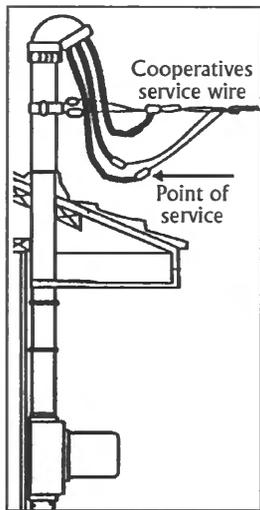
Your meter is on a pole near your home

The cooperative is responsible for the meter and the connection at the top of the pole. The member is responsible for the meter box, meter loop, the wire running up the pole and the service wire running from the pole to the house. The cooperative will provide a pole and meter loop specifications if requested. Members should have a qualified electrician build a meter loop for them. (Diagram shows the meter loop and meter box on the pole.)



Your meter is attached to your home

When a meter box and loop are on a member's house, the wire to the meter loop is the cooperative's responsibility, but the socket is not. A mast needs to be set up before service can be connected. (Diagram shows where the service point is.)

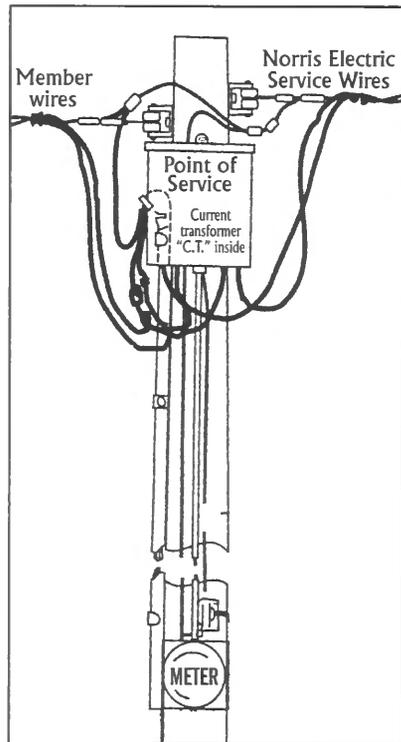


Your meter connects from your home to a pad mounted transformer

The co-op is responsible for the pad mounted transformer and the underground line running to the meter. We can connect a temporary service 15 feet from the transformer but the meter loop needs to be installed on the house before permanent service can be connected.

Your meter connects to a current transformer

With a current transformer (CT) rated meter, the electric current is measured by passing the service wire through a CT, which then sends a ratio of this current to the meter. The cooperative is responsible for the wire until it connects to or passes through the member's equipment.



If you are still unsure of what is your responsibility and what is the cooperative's, just give us a call at (877) 783-8765 or check out our Web site at www.norriselectric.com.

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

Puppets “From the Heart” in Jasper County



Puppets “From the Heart” Ministry started creating unique puppets last year at Puppet City, located in rural Jasper County. The affordable, quality-handcrafted puppets have been brought to life by Terri Sowers and Glenda Finn to help the two women spread the Gospel.

Terri Sowers, mother of Norris Electric employee Joe Sowers, began experimenting with pup-

pets 14 years ago. She has learned many of the dos and don't of creating affordable puppets through the years. She is also involved in her church's Nursing Home Ministry, children's programs and a Puppet Dowel Rod Ministry.

Glenda Finn, wife of Norris Electric employee Dale Finn, has also worked with puppets 14 years and is involved in the children's programs at her church.

Terri and Glenda believe that puppets are symbols of human character and they create human, animal, purely imaginable and fantastic creatures. At Puppet City, you might see turtles, sheep, snakes, people and army men puppets. The army men puppets were created for a program called “God Wants You,” but the pup-

continued on page 2



Terri

Glenda



pets can also change their accessories and become someone else.

Terri and Glenda also make puppets that appear vibrant and glowing in black light. These puppets are made with bright colored fabrics and fluorescent hair. The women have purchased some of their patterns, but Glenda usually adds her own touch to them or creates them from scratch.

Working together, Terri and Glenda can make three puppets a day if they have the pattern. If they

start from creating the pattern to making the puppet, it will take them an entire day to complete just one puppet. The puppets are made out of fur, feathers, cotton, foam, all types of fabrics and scrap materials.

Terri and Glenda have done puppet camps, festivals at churches, and youth activities. For more information or to purchase a "From the Heart" puppet you can go to their Web site at www.puppetsfromtheheart.com.

OFFICE CLOSING

Our office will be closed Monday, July 5 in observance of Independence Day.





The most important people to you are also the most important people to us

Through a partnership among Touchstone Energy®, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the American Football Coaches Association, Norris Electric Cooperative will be distributing free inkless child identification kits for kids in grades K-12 in your area. Parents can follow the easy directions in the kit, and once completed, the kit can be stored in a safe place.

Should your child ever disappear for any reason, you would forward the kit to law enforcement, and your child's information would be entered into a national database of missing children. Before now, only 2 percent of our country's children had been fingerprinted. Making these kits available is changing that statistic.

Children are a precious commodity, and the responsibility to keep them safe rests on all of our shoulders. Please contact Norris Electric Cooperative to obtain one of these kits.



Norris Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Call J.U.L.I.E. Toll Free 1-800-892-0123



Some people are shocked by what they find when they dig in their yards!

It's that time of year when people begin poking all kinds of holes into the ground. New trees, shrubs, fence posts, mailboxes...you name it. The problem these days is that you don't really know what you're digging into. It could be just some earthworms or the ballpoint pen you lost a few years ago.

On the other hand, it could be a buried electric line, with 240 volts or even 7,200 volts. Or you may chop into the cable TV line just in time to lose your favorite program. All of which could be unpleasant, and some of which could be downright dangerous.

Illinois law requires anyone who engages in any type of excavation over 12 inches deep to call J.U.L.I.E. at 1-800-892-0123, at least 48 hours before work is to begin.

J.U.L.I.E. is the communication link between the excavator and the companies who will need to locate their underground cable. J.U.L.I.E. is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It should be noted, however, that location markings are only estimates and the exact location of the underground cable may vary up to 24 inches. Digging within this 48 inch area should be done carefully.

[J.U.L.I.E. stands for Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators]

Vegetation Control Schedule

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Crawford County

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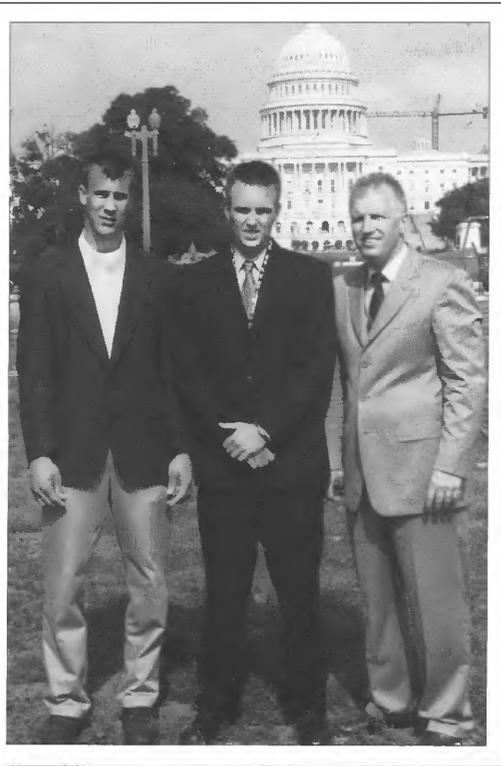
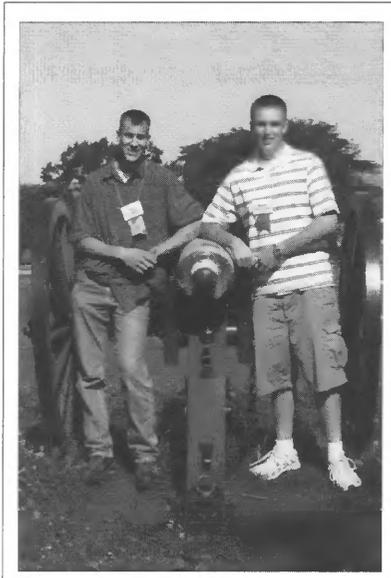
Electric News

Two Students Represent Norris Electric Cooperative in Washington, D.C.

Norris Electric Cooperative sent Barret Von Behren of Martinsville and Gary Klingler of Watson to Washington, D.C., this past June to participate in the 2004 Youth to Washington Tour. The boys were selected for the trip based on the leadership skills they expressed through an application, essay, and personal interview.

Sixty-two other students from throughout Illinois joined Von Behren and Klingler on the trip. The students visited Gettysburg, the Smithsonian museums, the Washington National Monument, the Iwo Jima statue and parade, Arlington Cemetery, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, the Memorial Holocaust Museum, and the Lincoln, Jefferson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Vietnam, Korean War and World War II memorials.

They also visited with Senator Dick Durbin at the Capitol to discuss issues affecting today's youth.



From left are Barrett Von Behren, Gary Klingler and John Freitag, Vice-President of Operations at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in Springfield and director of the Illinois tour.

See page 9 of this publication for more information about this year's Youth to Washington Tour. Contact Norris Electric Cooperative for information on how you or someone in your life can participate next year.

Internet Service



As we discussed at our annual meeting and in other mailings, Norris Electric is going to offer Broadband Internet Service called WildBlue using small satellite dishes. This service will be available after the first of the year. In the meantime our long distance partner, Power Net Global, is offering a service called "PowerConnect High Speed."

PowerConnect High Speed accelerates certain text and graphics on Web pages. It is still connected by way of a modem but by compressing certain graphics

and text it can speed up your connection. The exact amount of acceleration can vary but with PowerConnect High Speed you will notice a significantly faster experience when you visit Web sites, send and receive e-mail, and perform many other Web-based activities.

This service is not associated with WildBlue but is another alternative to other slower connections. Presently it is only available to members that have local phone numbers in Robinson and Olney. The access numbers are (618) 879-0005 for Olney and (618) 421-0005 for

Robinson. If these numbers are local numbers for you then you would have access based on any fees your telephone provider has for local service.

The cost for PowerConnect High Speed is \$14.95/month or \$12.95/month if you are also using our PNG Long Distance Telephone Plan. This is not a part of WildBlue but is an alternative. For information or an application call Tammy or Dan at (877) 796-2333.

NEW LOW RATES ON LONG DISTANCE

Billed by Power Net Global Communications
utilizing the Qwest Long Distance Network (The nation's 4th largest carrier)

4.5¢

All calls in Illinois

4.9¢

All calls out of state

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

- Free to join • No monthly fees • No monthly premiums
- No term agreements • Major carrier
- 800 Number 4.5¢ — 4.9¢ per minute — no fees
- Free calling cards 12.9¢ per minute (No surcharge)
- NO CODES TO DIAL

Norris Electric Cooperative is offering long distance telephone service through Power Net Global Communications. This long distance service is one of the lowest-cost long distance services available. As you can see, you can call anywhere in the State of Illinois for a low \$0.045 per minute or anywhere out of state in the continental United States for \$0.049 per minute. In addition, you can have your own personal 800 number to receive calls from family members or acquaintances. Incoming calls on your 800 number are billed at the same rates noted above. All rates are the same 24 hours a day — 7 days a week. There are no monthly fees, no minimums, or long-term agreements. Your local provider may charge \$5-\$10 to change providers.

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

For Additional Information Call: (877) 783-8765

Project ChildSafe - Putting a Lock on Gun Safety

Firearms accidents in the home can result when a child finds a loaded and unsecured firearm. The risk of firearms-related unintentional injuries or deaths can be reduced when firearms owners are aware of and fully understand their responsibility to handle firearms safely and store them in a secure manner.

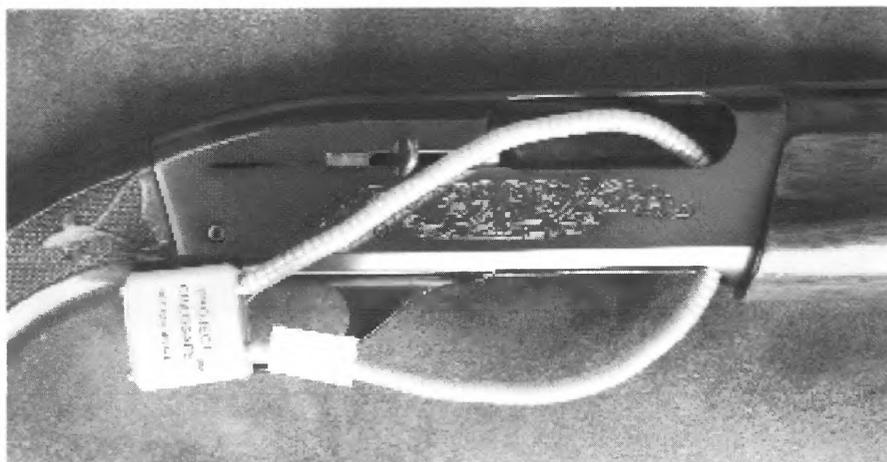
The Illinois electric cooperatives have joined the Project ChildSafe program. Electric co-ops across Illinois will distribute free gun-locking devices and safety instructions at local co-op offices, annual membership meetings, safety programs, and other events.

Lt. Governor Pat Quinn says Illinois has committed to distributing 257,000 safety kits to 529 police departments, 102 sheriff offices and five Department of Natural Resources offices.

The free gun-locking device distributed in the Project ChildSafe program is a vinyl-covered steel cable with one end permanently secured to a keyed padlock. Cable locks require that many types of firearms be unloaded before the cable lock is installed, providing an extra level of safety. The lock prevents the firearm's action from closing.

Project ChildSafe has already distributed more than 6 million safety kits to 35 states.

Sponsored by the National Shooting Sports Founda-



In Illinois Project Childsafe is distributing 257,000 safety gunlocks like this one for free. The gunlocks are available through local electric co-ops, law enforcement offices and other outlets.

tion (NSSF), the program is funded by a grant from the Department of Justice and is a component of Project Safe Neighborhoods.

Project Safe Neighborhoods is a comprehensive, strategic approach to reducing gun violence in America.

As a firearms owner, you should be sure that guns in your home are stored so that they are not accessible to children or other unauthorized persons. Hiding a gun in a closet, drawer, or similar location is not safe storage. Children are extremely curious and might find a gun in your home that you thought was safely hidden or inaccessible.

As with most areas of home safety, your objective as a firearm owner is to put in place a series of simple precautions (multiple safeguards) that together help create a secure environment for firearms in the home. Each of these

precautions is designed to provide an additional barrier against unauthorized use.

Key Guidelines for Safe Storage Include:

- * Unloaded firearms should be stored in a locked cabinet, safe, gun vault, or storage case. Be sure to place a locked storage case in a location inaccessible to children.
- * Unloaded firearms can also be secured with a gunlocking device that renders the firearm inoperable. A gunlock should be used as an additional safety precaution and not as a substitute for lock storage. If firearms are disassembled, parts should be securely stored in separate locations.
- * Store ammunition in a locked location separate from firearms.
- * Always re-check firearms carefully and completely to confirm that they are "still" unloaded when you remove

them from storage. Accidents could occur if a family member has loaned or borrowed a gun and then carelessly returned it to storage while it was still loaded.

A Message for Your Children

Young people are naturally curious about firearms and, as a result, may be tempted to “play” with a firearm they find. Make sure young people in your home are aware of and understand the safety guidelines described below.

1. Don't go looking for guns in your house or a friend's house. Don't let other kids look for guns in your house.
2. If you find a gun in your house, or anywhere else, STOP! Leave it alone. Don't touch it. Don't let anyone else touch it. Leave the area and be sure to tell an adult at once.
3. Even if a gun looks like a toy, don't touch it. Some real guns may look like toy guns, so don't take a chance. Leave the area and immediately tell an adult.

Remember: if you find a gun, don't pick it up. Just leave it alone, and go tell an adult right away!

For more information contact your local law enforcement office, Norris Electric Cooperative, or go to www.projectchildsafe.org. For Illinois gun safety tour schedules, visit www.ProjectChildSafe.il.gov.



Vegetation Control Schedule

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

Lawrence 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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NORRIS

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36

New Employee

Jim Meyer recently became the newest employee of Norris Electric Cooperative and is working in the Engineering Department. Jim is a graduate of Dieterich High School, Lake Land College in Mattoon, and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale with a degree in Industrial Technology. His previous work experience is in the engineering and construction fields. He and his wife Connie live in rural Dieterich. Jim has a nine-year-old daughter, Rachel. In his free time, Jim enjoys outdoor activities. Please help us in welcoming Jim to our cooperative family.



Vegetation Control Schedule

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

**Lawrence County
Effingham 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.



Congressman Tim Johnson awarded Public Service Award

Representatives of Norris Electric Cooperative were on hand when Congressman Tim Johnson of Sidney received the Illinois Electric Cooperatives' Public Service Award on July 30. The award was presented during the 63rd annual meeting of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in Springfield. Johnson was honored for his public service to Illinois and his support of the electric cooperative program.

Pictured with Congressman Johnson are members of the board of directors of Norris Electric Cooperative. From left are Frank Draper of Hutsonville, Larry Buser of Palestine, Office Manager Tamara Phillips, Congressman Johnson, Keith Sherwood of Casey, Larry Seals of Mt. Carmel, Russell Scherer of Sumner, Dean Dietrich of Dundas and Ron Viehman of Lawrenceville.



OFFICE CLOSING

**Our office
will be closed
Monday, Sep-
tember 6, for
Labor Day.**



Now is the time to finish your summer home improvement projects and start thinking about winter. Call your local electric cooperative today for advice on how simple fall projects can yield big results on your winter heating bills.



Farmers are Part of Our Electric Cooperative

Stay safe this harvest season by always
watching for overhead electric lines.

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



Top 10 reasons why farm trucks are never stolen

10. They only have a range of 20 miles before they break down or run out of gas.
9. Only the owner knows how to operate the door.
8. It is difficult to drive fast with all the fence tools, grease rags, ropes, chains, syringes, buckets, boots and loose papers flying around in the cab.
7. It takes too long to start and the smoke coming up through the rusted-out floorboard clouds your vision.
8. The Border Collie on the tool-box looks mean.
5. They're too easy to spot. The description given to the sheriff's department might go something like this: "The driver's side door is red, the passenger side door is green, the right front fender is yellow....."
4. The large round bale in the back makes it hard to see if you're being chased. You could use the mirrors if they weren't cracked and covered with duct tape.
3. Top speed is only 45 mph.
2. Who wants a truck that needs a year's worth of maintenance, \$3,000 worth of bodywork, a taillight, and a new windshield?



And the Number **1** reason why farm trucks are never stolen?

It is very, very difficult to commit a crime when everyone is waving at you!



How Electrically Savvy Are You?



What you don't know about electricity can be shocking! In addition to safety issues, a basic understanding of electricity can help you select the best electrical devices for your home and reduce your energy bill as well. The Leviton Institute helps you test your knowledge with the following true/false quiz on electricity.

1 Dimmers simply absorb energy from light bulbs and don't save you and money.

FALSE. Dimmers don't absorb power. They control the amount of time a bulb is on and off 120 times a second, but your eye can't see this. A dim setting limits the time the bulb is on. A bulb dimmed to 50 percent uses approximately 25 percent less power and lasts approximately 20 times longer, saving both on lighting energy and bulb replacement costs.

2 Dimmers cannot be used to control ceiling fans.

TRUE. Dimmers can damage fan motors. Only fan speed control units can be used with ceiling fans. They are usually available with the same styling and features as dimmers but are safe for fan motors.

3 GFCIs offer the same protection that circuit breakers do.

FALSE. Circuit breakers are designed to trip when a severe short causes high levels of electrical current to flow through your wires. GFCIs provide protection from ground fault. This can occur when current leaking from a damaged appliance travels to ground through a person touching the appliance. Ground fault current can be lethal, but is typically not high enough to trip a breaker. A GFCI is designed to trip when it senses a relatively tiny amount of ground fault current.

4 A 1200-Watt appliance draws 10 Amps of electrical current.

TRUE. Light bulbs and appliances are rated in Watts, while electrical wiring is rated in Amps. Divide the Watts by 120 (the household voltage) to arrive at the amperage rating. In this case, 1200 Watts divided by 120 Volts equals 10 Amps.

5 Only a licensed electrician can test a GFCI.

FALSE. Using a simple procedure, you should test your GFCIs monthly. Plug a lamp into the GFCI and turn it on. Press the Test button—the GFCI should trip causing the light to go off. Press the Reset button on the GFCI and the lamp should go on again. This confirms that the GFCI is working properly. If the GFCI does not trip (shut off the light) when you press the Test button, there is an electrical problem and you should contact a licensed electrician.



6 12-gauge wire is rated to carry more electrical current than 14-gauge wire.

TRUE. The larger the diameter of wire, the more electrical current it can carry. What is sometimes confusing is that the larger the diameter, the smaller the wire gauge. For example, 14-gauge wire is rated for small electrical tools and appliances, but larger power tools require 12-gauge wire.

7 If a plug keeps falling out of a receptacle, use pliers to spread the plug blades farther apart.

FALSE. When a receptacle no longer holds a plug firmly in place, the half-inserted, live plug is a serious shock hazard, especially for children. When a receptacle is old or worn out by excessive use, its contacts no longer properly grip a plug. Any receptacle in this condition must be replaced.

8 Surges can enter your electronic equipment through phone and cable connections.

TRUE. Surges that can damage your PC, television, video recorder and answering machine can enter through phone, data line and cable connections. Use surge protective power strips that not only provide the maximum amount of power line protection, but also offer protection for phone, data and cable lines. These multi-purpose surge strips are available in home centers, electronic stores and a variety of retail outlets.

Source: Leviton Institute

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Office hours: 8 a.m. — 4:30 p.m

Jasper County Ripe With Grapes

Fall is the time for harvest across Illinois. But this fall, in more than 60 counties in Illinois, something other than corn and soybeans will be harvested. The number of acres of grapes, specifically wine grapes, has been growing steadily in Illinois the last few years. You may hardly think of Illinois as wine country, but with more than 40 wineries and several hundred acres of grapes, the wine industry is growing. In Jasper County, three grape producers are helping expand the Illinois industry.

Don and Doris Cochran of rural Wheeler, Scott and Gina Correll of rural Newton, and Dan and Sonya Webb of rural Jewett have a combined total of approximately 14 acres of grapes planted. Most of the acreage is in production or coming into production next year. The Webbs are also the owners of Cameo Vineyards and Winery in Greenup, which provides the market for the Cochran's and Correll's grapes. Cameo Winery is in its third year of operation and purchases more than 35 tons of grapes, most of which come from growers in Southern and Southeastern Illinois.

The Cochrans planted their first grapes in 2000 and harvested their first crop in 2002. Depending on the variety, it takes three to four growing seasons to bring a crop to its first harvest. Getting a crop to its first harvest is not an inexpensive proposition. Cost to prepare the land,

"If we do not have an overabundance of rainfall during harvest season, the grapes should come through in great shape."



purchase and plant the vines, build a trellis system, purchase the weed, insect and fungicide sprays required, and the labor to accomplish all these projects can run between \$6,000 to \$8,000 per acre. Once planted and growing, the vineyard can last for years with proper management.

The work in a vineyard typically starts in February and March with pruning of last year's growth off the vines. More than 90 percent of the growth

is trimmed away. Trellis system repairs are made in early spring, and weed control sprays are applied, usually prior to new bud break. Depending on the variety, buds begin breaking out in late April and early May. Growth of the shoots is rapid in the weeks that follow, and the new grapes are soon developing and pollinating. In some of the varieties the Cochrans and Corrells grow, the clusters of grapes have to be thinned out to reduce the crop load and assure uniform devel-



opment and harvest time. By late July, the grapes are starting to change color and begin to look like the red or white grapes that will soon be harvested.

Harvest usually starts in this area the third or fourth week of August and continues through late September. The Cochrans and Corrells each have an acre of the Seyval Blanc grape. They usually harvest the same day and deliver to Cameo Vineyards for processing. This year, the Cochrans will harvest an additional variety, Chancellor, used for a red wine and blended with other varieties. In addition to the Seyval, the Corrells grow Chamborcin and Norton, which are processed into red wines. The Webbs grow Chamborcin, Cayuga, Vignoles, and Chardonnay for white wines.

All three growers harvest by hand. According to Don and Doris Cochran, they rely on family and friends to harvest the crop. "Last year, 29 people showed up to help harvest on the last Saturday in August. In less than three hours, we harvested 3.1 tons of Seyval. This year, it looks like we will harvest again on the last Saturday in August and should harvest both our Seyval and Chancellor on the same day. It will be a longer day since we ex-

"Last year, 29 people showed up to help harvest on the last Saturday in August. In less than three hours, we harvested 3.1 tons of Seyval."

pect to harvest 5 to 6 tons," says Don.

When asked how this growing season has been, Don indicates that for the most part it has been a good year. He says, "We had very little problem with late frosts, which can damage the new buds in the spring. The regular rainfall in May and June helped keep the plants growing and filling the grape clusters. In August we need slightly dryer

weather to help concentrate the sugars in the berry and start the maturation process. This year has been good for that. If we do not have an over-abundance of rainfall during harvest season, the grapes should come through in great shape."

Pests are an ongoing problem for grape growers. Fungal diseases, insects, and larger pests, such as birds and deer, can all reduce crop yields without proper management. Fungicides are applied throughout the year beginning prior to bud break and continuing every 7-14 days until frost and the end of the growing season. Different grape varieties have varying levels of susceptibility to the fungal diseases that are active in Illinois. Black rot, downy mildew, powdery mildew, and botrytis rot are typical diseases that can be controlled with a well-managed spray program.

Japanese Beetles are the primary insect problem growers face in this area and require regular sprays in July and early August. The Japanese Beetles eat the foliage and can strip a plant in a matter of days. In 2003, after soybeans began to mature and were harvested, the Asian Lady Beetles were a major problem because they moved into the late harvested grapes.

Growers also encounter problems with birds and deer. Birds will eat the mature grapes, particularly the smaller red varieties. Growers use electronic bird repellers, which mimic distress calls of birds. They also can use a form of a scarecrow, called "terror eyes," which is a large ball painted with eyes; it is suspended over the grapes and moved daily. Mesh netting can also be used to cover the grapes.

Deer present a larger problem, especially on young grapes and early in the year when the vines are growing. They will eat

leaves and stems and can reduce a large plant to a shrub. Growers can use fencing to keep deer out. The Cochrans have had success using dogs tied in the vineyard overnight. A new ground spray using blood meal is showing signs of being effective.

When asked how they got interested in growing grapes, the Cochrans indicate that they were looking for an alternative crop to grow on their farm. "This farm has small fields with rolling topography. It is not a good farm for corn and soybeans, and we do not have the time or interest for livestock production. We have always been interested in grapes and wine. Over the years, Don has made homemade wine, and grape growing seemed to be a good possibility. After researching and working with consultants, we made the decision to establish a vineyard," says Doris.

Along the way, the Cochrans became acquainted with Dan and Sonya Webb, who planned to establish a winery in Greenup. Growing grapes is not like growing corn and soybeans. Local markets do not exist in every town like a grain elevator. Don Cochran stresses that you must have a market for the grapes. He says, "Do not plant unless you know that the wineries will be interested in purchasing the varieties you will produce. We have been able to establish a great working relationship with Cameo Winery and work closely with them to deliver a high-quality grape. Dan and Sonya have become excellent wine makers, and their wines are winning awards at Midwest wine competitions." Cameo's Seyval Blanc wine from the grapes the Cochrans and Corrells grow won a "Unanimous Gold" in the 2004 Illinois State Fair competition.

"We have always been interested in grapes and wine. Over the years, Don has made homemade wine, and grape growing seemed to be a good possibility."

According to Don Cochran, the industry has been growing rapidly in Illinois. Don is currently serving on the Board of Directors for the Illinois Grape Growers and Vintners Association. "Every meeting the IGGVA

has sponsored for grape growers and winemakers in Illinois the last few years has been well attended. A great deal of interest in grapes and wineries exists in the state. If people are interested in becoming involved in the industry, they need to become members of the IGGVA, attend the meetings, and research the options available. I cannot stress strongly enough that people should not plant grapes and then worry about where they will market them. You may not have the right varieties, or the winery may not be able to use them. Grapes are a high-management, intensive labor (much of it hand labor) crop. They can be a rewarding crop to grow, if you understand what you are getting into," Don says.

Additional information on the Illinois Grape Growers and Vintners Association can be obtained from Executive Secretary Bill McCartney at (217) 285-6305. Information about Cameo Vineyards and Winery can be obtained at (217) 923-9963.

Vegetation Control Schedule

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

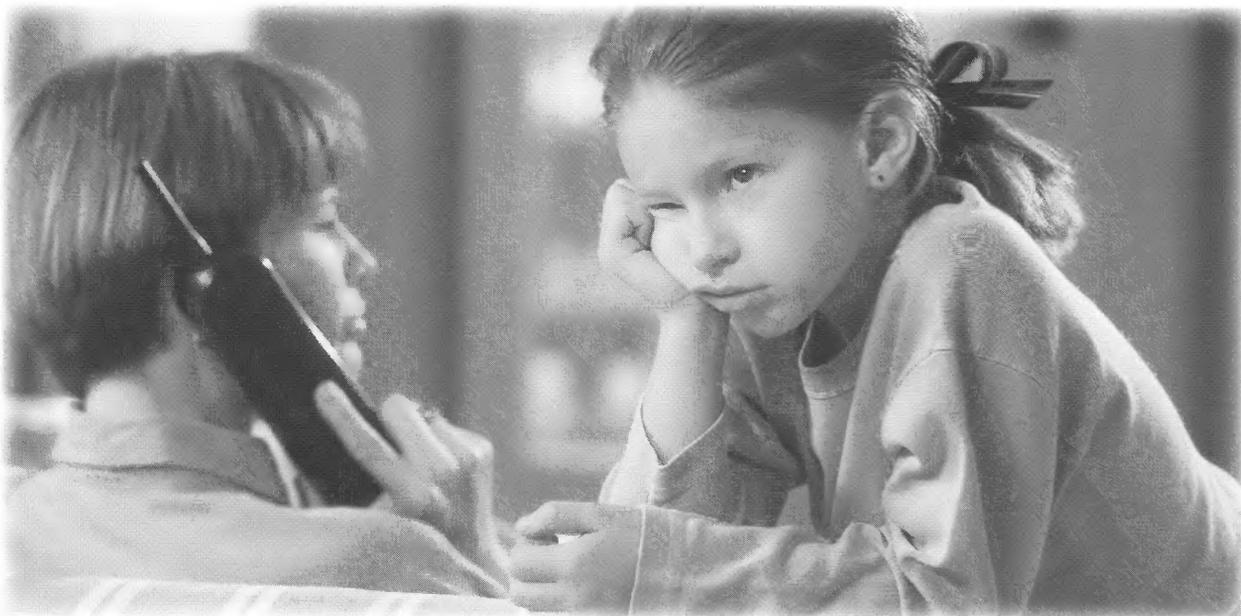
Lawrence County
Effingham County

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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TALK LONGER

with New Low Rates!



Norris Electric Cooperative, through PowerNet Global Communications, now has an even lower rate for long distance service!

This new rate applies to all new and existing customers. As always, this service is free to join, with no term agreements, codes to dial, monthly fees or minimums. Rates are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with 6-second increment billing. You can also receive a free 800 number for the same low rate. Calling cards have been reduced to 12.9¢ per minute.

For additional information, call toll-free, (877) 796-2333.

All calls in Illinois
Now only **4.5¢**

All out-of-state calls
Now only **4.9¢**

PowerNet Global utilizes the Qwest Network



LONG DISTANCE ALERT



With AT&T's announcement that it will stop marketing to residential consumers, other companies may rush in to sell their long distance services. Telemarketers and direct-mail advertisers will hit customers of all long distance providers, including our PNG customers. Don't be deceived by low startup offers and overblown promises! Our low rates apply any time, any day, with reliable service and easy-to-understand billing statements. PNG has proven itself as a good company to deal with... can the fast-talking marketers make that claim?

Please call the co-op office or the number above if you have questions about your long distance service, or want to switch to PNG!

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Electric News

36

Restoring Light After The Darkness of Hurricane Ivan

Kent Benefiel, Ed Hannaman, Scott Johnson and Tony Zuber helped restore power to those devastated by Hurricane Ivan.

Thousands of Alabama cooperative members lost power after Hurricane Ivan ripped its path through the state. The work required to restore power was far more than the linemen of Baldwin Electric Membership Corporation, located in Summerdale, between Mobile, Alabama and Pensacola, Florida. The cooperative asked for help, and Illinois responded, sending more than 100 linemen as well as line trucks and other equip-

ment. These volunteering linemen committed to leaving their homes and families for a week or longer to assist Alabama electric cooperative members.

Four of those men were from Norris Electric Cooperative. Kent Benefiel, Ed Hannaman, Scott Johnson and Tony Zuber left September 16 and returned September 24. Over those eight days, they braved hot, humid temperatures and local wildlife such as rattlesnakes. Huge pine trees also blocked many of the roads and fell on power lines.

"Cooperatives helping cooperatives is one of the seven principles that guide Norris Elec-



Kent Benefiel loads trucks at 6:35 a.m., September 16, in preparation of the long, hot journey to Alabama.

tric Cooperative," said Manager Keith McKinney. "We are proud of those linemen who volunteered to make this sacrifice to help another cooperative."

Electric Safety Demonstration Scheduled for November 23

Kyle Finley of Live Line Demo, Inc. will be at the Lincoln Trail College in Robinson on Tuesday, November 23 at 1:00 pm demonstrating the power of 7,200 volts of electricity. Finley gives an energetic, high-intensity presentation showing what can happen if someone came in contact with electric lines.

Kyle, a former lineman, gives his program at fire departments, schools, and fairs helping to spread an electric safety message to protect you, your family, and

friends. The Live Line Demo is built with the same poles, transformers, and line hardware used by your local co-op.

This program is sponsored by Norris Electric Cooperative, AmerenCIPS, and Marathon of Robinson in conjunction with Lincoln Trail College. The college is located at 11220 N. State Highway 1, about 2 miles east and 3/4 mile north of Robinson. Everyone is invited to watch this electrifying display.



WildBlue

We have just received word on the progress of Wild-Blue. The first satellite was launched in July. The second satellite is scheduled for October or November. After launching, each satellite will be placed in orbit and tested. This takes about three months. Then we will go through two different testing sequences. The first is called Alpha Testing and the second is Beta Testing. The Alpha Testing will uncover most of the "bugs" in the system. The corrections will be made and the Beta Testing will confirm that the system is operating correctly. Then the system will be ready to market. The United States is broken into five different "gateways." Each gateway will have a different start date. Our gateway covers Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, and some Canadian provinces. Our Alpha Testing is scheduled for February 11, 2005. Beta Testing is on March 5, and launch to the public is April 1, 2005. We are just as impatient as you are about this getting off the ground but we're making progress and feel that we will have a thoroughly tested product when we install it at your location. We will keep you informed as progress is being made.

Automated Meter Reading (AMR)

We have installed a few of the new meters and have tested the system. At the time of this writing, we are scheduled to start wide-spread installation of the meters. When your meter is changed you will notice a tag on your door indicating that we have changed your meter. On that tag is a hand-written date indicating how long you should continue to read your meter. That date is about two months from the day we changed the meter. This should not be necessary but it provides a way to check the system and ensure it is operating correctly. If the readings are close, we will use the automated reading and disregard your reading. If there seems to be a discrepancy, we will send a technician to your meter to see why the automated reading is not close to the reading you reported.

As the meters are installed, you may notice that your bill is arriving at a different time of the month. Presently, we have



two major billing cycles for our entire system. One group pays their bills around the 15th of the month and the other pays around the end of the month. What we hope to do is spread out the mailing of all the bills so that payments coming into the office are also spread out over the entire month. Hopefully, one-fourth of our statements will be paid each week. This helps to better utilize our personnel in the office.

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**Lawrence County
Effingham County**

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Everyone Benefits from Higher Education

Community Colleges are a valuable part of our region

Norris Electric Cooperative's purpose is to improve the lives of its members as well as those in the community. We do this by providing innovative services to our members and by dedicating ourselves to improving our community and surrounding areas. Like us, area community colleges have that very same purpose. They serve the community not only through the variety of educational programs they provide, but also through the positive economic impact they have on the local region.

As you support the colleges through taxes and enrollment fees they, in turn, support you. Community colleges in our region consist of Olney Central College in Olney, Lake Land College in Mattoon, and the Illinois Eastern Community Colleges, which include Wabash Valley College in Mt. Carmel, Lincoln Trail College in Robinson, and Frontier Community College in Fairfield (with a satellite office in Newton).

Little more than a year ago, Illinois community colleges commissioned an independent study of the economic impact the system - and individual colleges - have on Illinois. The study shows LakeLand and Illinois Eastern are more than a tuition bargain. They enhance the long-term economic health of our communities and help our community members build their earning power.

The study disclosed that Lake Land students receive a 27 percent return on their college investment. The study showed that for every \$1 a student invests in education at Lake Land, they would receive a cumulative \$8.16 in higher earnings over the next 30 years. For every full-time

year they attend, they will earn an additional \$4,292 per year.

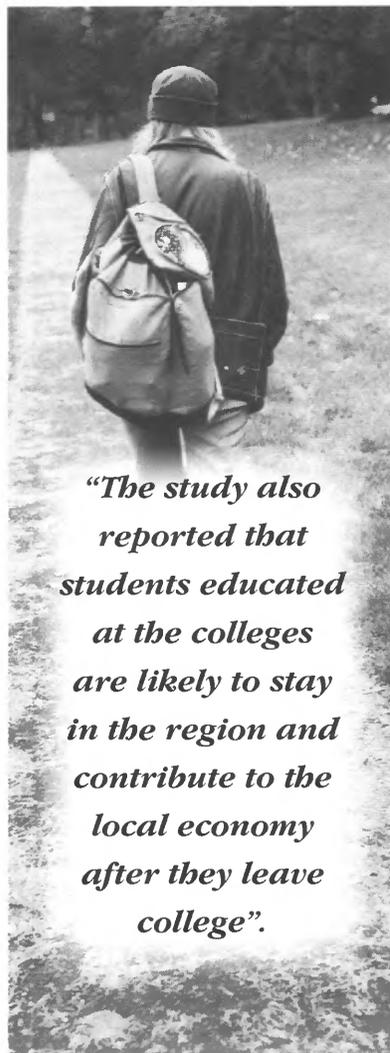
Eastern Illinois students receive a 34 percent return on their investment. For every \$1 students spend on their education at Illinois Eastern, they receive a cumulative \$8.07 in higher earnings over the next 30 years. For every year they complete, they will have higher earnings of \$4,337 a year.

That is good news for students and good news for the district, which benefits from improved economic conditions.

Taxpayers also benefit from the community investment in the colleges through higher tax receipts, improvements in health, and reductions in crime, welfare, and unemployment.

The study also reported that students educated at the colleges are likely to stay in the region and contribute to the local economy after they leave college.

We at Norris Electric Cooperative are proud to have these community colleges in our region. Our local communities, and our members, can reap the benefits of their presence.



"The study also reported that students educated at the colleges are likely to stay in the region and contribute to the local economy after they leave college".



Holiday Closings

Our office will be closed Thursday, November 11, in honor of Veterans Day. We will also be closed Thursday and Friday, November 25 and 26, for Thanksgiving.



The time will soon be changing, and the days will become much shorter. To keep away things that go bump in the night, contact your local Touchstone Energy® electric cooperative to install a safe and affordable security light. Isn't your peace of mind worth just pennies per day?



Touchstone Energy®
Cooperatives

The power of human connections

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

NORRIS

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Newton, Illinois 62448 • 783-8765

Electric News



Season's Greetings

*From our family
to yours, we wish
you peace and
joy throughout
the year.*

The employees and
directors of Norris
Electric Cooperative

Scholarship Money Available

Norris Electric Cooperative Manager Keith McKinney has announced that for the tenth 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 son or daughter of an electric cooperative member. The other \$1,000 award will go to the son or daughter of an electric cooperative director or employee.

"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 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.

Completed applications and essays must be returned to Norris Electric Cooperative before January 1, 2005. For additional information see your local high school guidance counselor or call Norris Electric Cooperative at 783-8765.



Vegetation Control Schedule

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

**Lawrence County
Effingham 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.

Change to Payment Schedule

Norris Electric Cooperative will no longer be providing return payment envelopes to our members due to the many payment options that are now available. Many of your hometown banks accept Norris Electric payments, or if you prefer to pay your bills online you can call our office at (618) 783-8765 or toll free at (877) 783-8765 for your personalized password. Another payment option is to have your checking account automatically debited each month for the amount of your bill. On page 16d is the form for this automatic payment plan. Simply fill out the form and return it to Norris Electric for worry free payment.

INDOOR HOME SAFETY

Cords & plugs

Thousands of fires are caused each year by electrical problems inside the home. Make sure your home is safe. Inspect cords and plugs often and replace worn ones. To prevent damage, pull by the plug not by the cord when unplugging an appliance or tool. Overloaded outlets and extension cords can overheat increasing the risk for fire. Limit the number of appliances plugged into each outlet. To learn more, visit www.safeelectricity.org.



HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

To allow our employees to spend the holidays with their families, our office will be closed several days this month. We will be closed Friday, December 24 and Monday, December 27 for Christmas, and Friday, December 31 and Monday, January 3 for the New Year.



NORRIS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

APPLICATION AUTOMATIC PAYMENT PLAN

If you would like to sign-up for the automatic payment plan, then fill out the following form. Send form and a VOIDED CHECK or DEPOSIT SLIP to Norris Electric Cooperative, PO Box 6000, Newton, Illinois 62448.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

HOME PHONE# _____ DAYTIME PHONE# _____

YOUR NORRIS ELECTRIC ACCOUNT# _____

BANK NAME _____

NAME ON BANK ACCOUNT _____

BANK ACCOUNT# _____ ROUTING# _____

I _____ authorize Norris Electric Cooperative to draw monthly bank drafts through the automatic plan (ACH) on the account shown above for the payment of my electric bill in full and any other services I authorize. I understand that I may discontinue my participation at any time by notifying Norris Electric Cooperative in writing. Both Norris Electric Cooperative and the bank may terminate this agreement with ten (10) days written notice. I understand that Norris Electric Cooperative reserves the right to limit participation in this program to customers whose accounts are in good standing. I understand that if funds are not available in my account for the draft to clear, there will be a charge posted to my Norris Electric Cooperative account, for NSF, and I will still be required to make full payment before the due date of the bill.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

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