



### Across the Manager's desk

Keith McKinney

## It's My Ground By Golly!

The crops were really good this year. They were so good that it was hard to find a place to take the bumper crop! All the elevators were full and there were still crops out in the field. Old Ben was befuddled! Then he remembered that a couple of miles away Rex, his best friend, had quit farming and there were a couple grain bins that he could get for a song. Ben and his son "wheeled and dealed" and bought the bins.

They had a perfect place to put the bins on their own property, so they took the bins down, poured new concrete, and put the old bins on the new concrete. It was a tight fit because Norris Electric had a line along the road. They thought about it for a while and then looked around and saw other bins were that close to the lines so they thought it was ok!

Things were going great. Then a cantankerous Norris Electric engineer happened by and said the bins were too close to the power lines and either the bins had to be moved farther away from the cooperative's lines or Norris Electric

would relocate the lines and charge Ben for it! Old Ben said, "It's my ground by golly and I can build where I want to. Look down the road! My neighbors have bins that close too, and it was ok for them!"

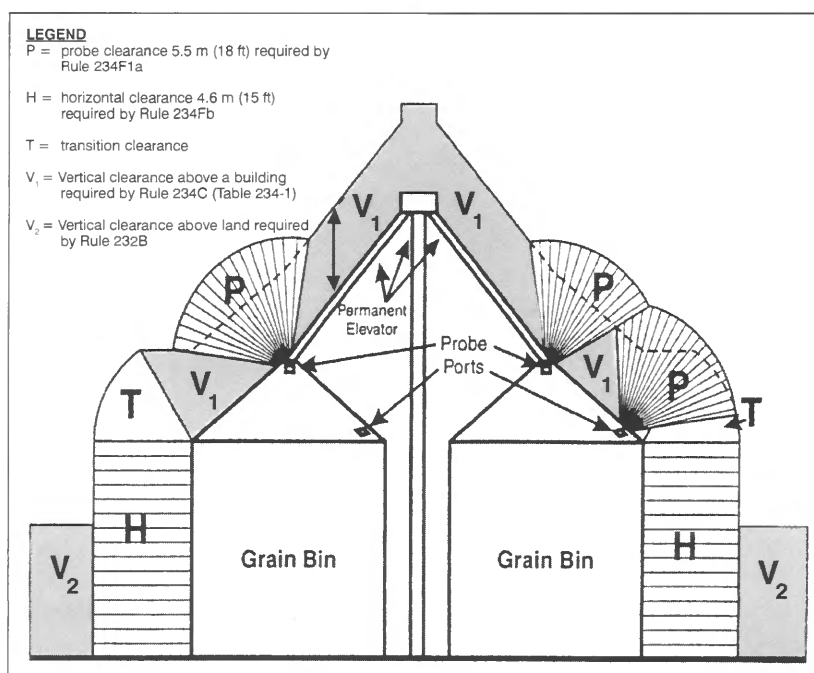
### ■ What to do? Ben will have to move his bin or pay to move the lines. Why?

Well here's the scoop! Required clearances to power

lines are spelled out in the National Electric Safety Code (NESC). Electric utilities and cooperatives refer to this book anytime they construct lines. Norris Electric will not build new lines too close to existing buildings or bins. The problem arises when the member or a contractor builds too close to the lines because they are not familiar with the NESC.

Prior to 1987 grain bins were not specifically mentioned in the NESC but clearances that applied to buildings also applied to grain bins. Then from 1990 to 1993 the NESC added a described clearance for grain bins of 18-feet vertical above the highest porthole and 15-feet from the line to a non-loading side of the bin.

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■ *Continued from 16a*

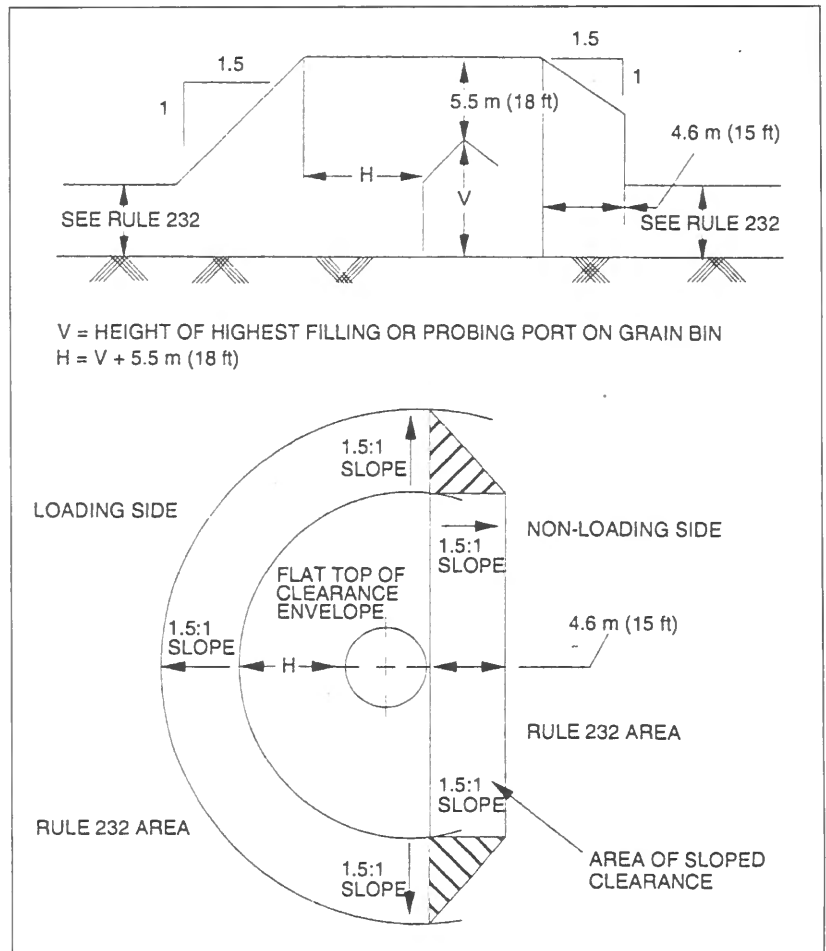
(If the loading is going to take place on the power line side, the clearance is farther.) Then in 1997 the clearance was changed to 18-foot vertical but from any porthole, with the same 15-feet to the non-loading side of the bin. In 2002 the clearance was changed to 18-foot in all directions and 15-foot from the non-loading side of the bins.

Some of the bin installers are aware of this but farmers are more frequently installing their own bins, whether new or used. Some of the older bins were in compliance when they were built, but now are out of compliance. What happens when a bin is found too close to the cooperative's lines? The cooperative will notify the owner that the bin is out of compliance with the NESC.

There are two options for remedying the problem. The first would be to relocate the bin. This is very costly and may be hard to do if the bin contains grain. The other is to relocate the line.

In some cases the line could be relocated to the other side of the road. In that case a Right-of-Way Easement would have to be obtained from the neighbor. Usually this is a sticky solution because the neighbor that didn't have power lines on his property is asked to have power lines on his property because his neighbor has a bin out of compliance. It also means that there will probably be eight guy wires and anchors installed, which we all know everyone hates.

The other alternative is to bury the line in the location of the bins. That is usually the simplest solution but it is usually the most expensive. Then we have the issue of who should pay for this relocation. In almost all situations the line was installed before the bin.



The farmer or contractor that installed the bin created the noncompliance. Norris Electric believes that the rest of the cooperative members should not be penalized with this cost due to the actions of one member. Of course, the other alternative is to do nothing. If that would happen, then the risk of someone being hurt or killed is quite a bit higher. None of us want that liability.

■ **What steps is Norris Electric taking to try to keep this from happening in the future?**

We are posting the clearances at least once a year in the Illinois Country Living magazine and providing clearance information to concrete finishers and bin installers in the area.

■ **Are there hazardous locations on our system?**

There may be and we are making an effort to locate them and either convince the owner to relocate the bins, or we relocate the power lines and bill the owner of the bin. We hope individuals will point out locations that may be out of compliance so we can remedy those situations before someone gets hurt! We hope that as cooperative members, you also cooperate with your cooperative to make everyone's safety a priority!

Please review the charts and drawings that follow! If you know of a dangerous situation help us out by telling us about it!

# SEEING RED.....

When you hear the phrase "seeing red" you might think that someone is so mad they see red. That's not what Homer French sees - he sees International tractors.

Homer and Doris French live on the west edge of Newton and have been married for 55 years. They have been members of Norris Electric Cooperative since 1949. Homer has been involved in farming all his life. So when he retired from farming in 1987, he just couldn't get away from tractors completely.

That's when he started buying old tractors and restoring them; and his tractor of choice is International. Homer has purchased many, many tractors over the years. Most of the tractors he found in Illinois and Indiana, but he has purchased some from as far away as Arkansas and Oklahoma.

Some tractors he has restored to original condition using only the authentic parts, and other tractors he bought to "part out," meaning to use parts from those tractors to complete other tractors or to sell the parts to other collectors. Homer says that it is getting harder and harder to find parts for antique tractors. One way to find them is to go to tractor shows, which are held almost every weekend somewhere



in the state.

Homer has been to shows in Newton, Oblong, Charleston, Salem, and Pinfield in Illinois, and Elnora in Indiana, just to name a few. Homer said it is very gratifying to take an old piece of machinery, and with a little elbow grease and tender loving care restore it to like-new condition.

Homer's collection includes a 1954 Super C, 1941 Model B,



1955 200, 1948 Red Cub, 1960 Red Cub, 1975 Yellow & White Cub, 1962 Red Cub, 1949 Red Cub and a 1950 C. When asked which was his favorite tractor, he thought for several minutes then replied, "Red tractors."

## Vegetation Control Schedule

We will have crews performing routine tree trimming or spraying during **February** 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

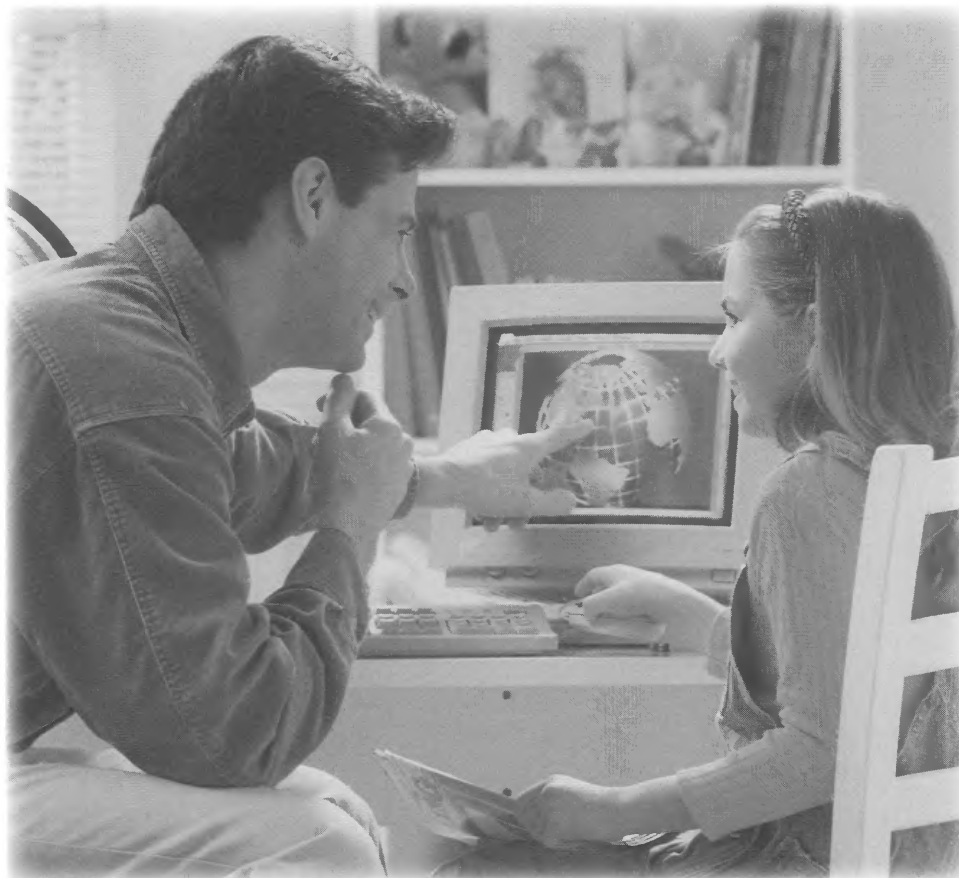
specific area or our vegetation management policies and practices. You may also call us if you wish to make other arrangements for your specific property or to question our vegetation control practices. Our Forestry Department can be reached at (877) 783-8765 or (618) 783-8765 during working hours. Our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

## WildBlue Update

At a recent WildBlue meeting, there was announcement concerning a shift in the commercial launch schedule. In order to bring a quality, reliable service to market, WildBlue has learned that it requires more time to build and test each gateway, leading to a shift in its previous schedule. The first testing, called Alpha Test, is now scheduled for April 2005. Beta Testing will begin in May 2005, and service launch for the Norris Electric area is also scheduled for May 2005.

We will continue to keep you updated on any further announcements that we may receive.

# Do You Take Your Electricity For Granted?




**D**o you always expect a light to turn on with a flip a switch? Do you expect your stove burners to get hot when you turn them on? Do you expect your television set or computer to come on at the press of a button? Your local electric cooperative makes taking electricity for granted easier. Because of your co-op, you can count on clean, reliable electricity to keep you warm, fed, and entertained.

*Brought to you by your local  
electric cooperative.*

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Office hours: 8 a.m. — 4:30 p.m

# NORRIS

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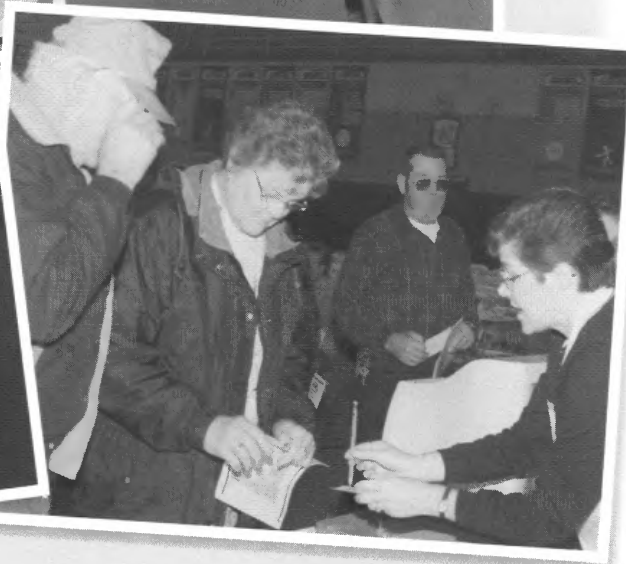
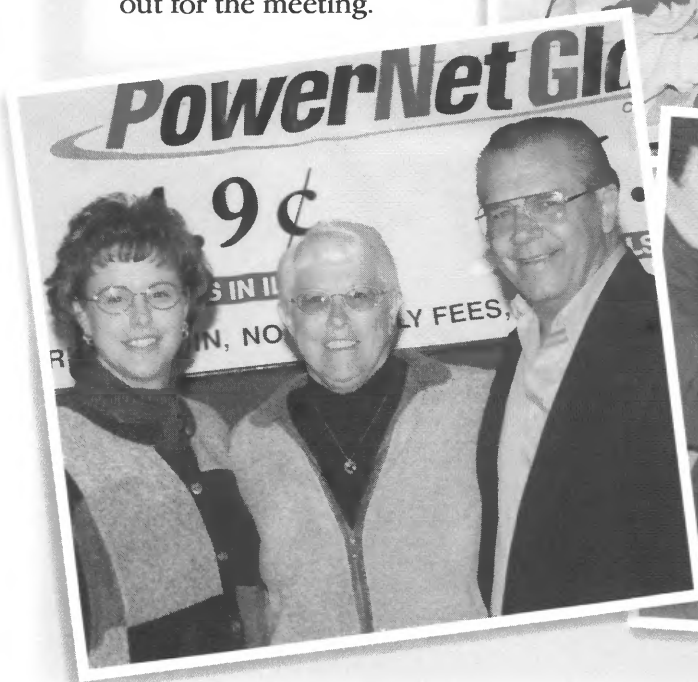
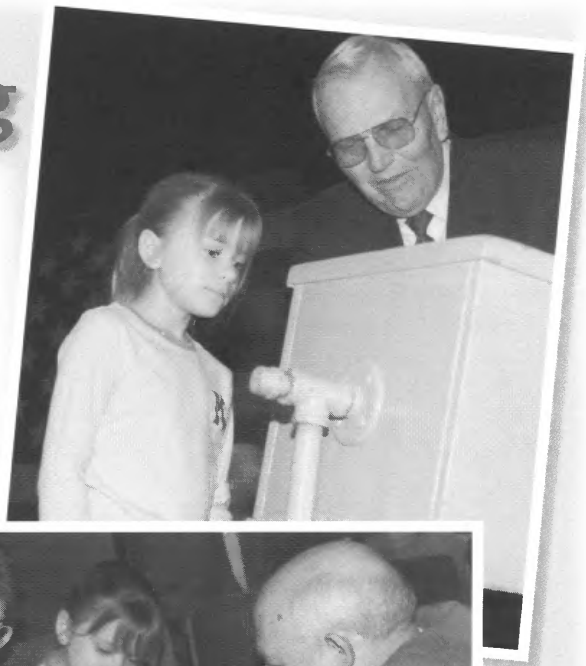
Newton, Illinois 62448 • 783-8765

## Electric News

### Annual Meeting

You may have already received your Notice of Annual Meeting in the mail. This year's meeting will be held on Saturday, February 12 at the Newton High School.

We are trying something a little different this year. The entire meeting will be held in the gymnasium of the high school. Registration will be conducted in the band room located across the hall to the west of the gym. We hope to eliminate some of the confusion and back-tracking from one end of the school to the other. We certainly hope the weather cooperates and there will be a good turnout for the meeting.





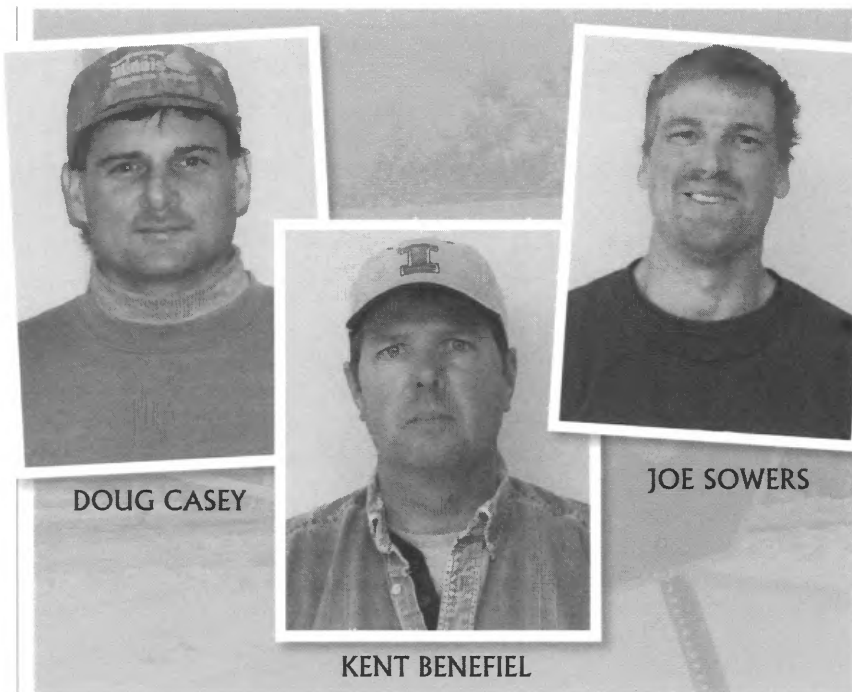
# Co-ops Help One Another

Three Norris Electric linemen gave up their turkey this Thanksgiving to help another co-op.

The pre-Thanksgiving snowstorm that hit central Illinois Wednesday, November 24, caused widespread outages across central Illinois.

Fortunately, the storm did not affect many members of Norris Electric Cooperative. But a neighboring co-op, Corn Belt Energy in Bloomington, had more than 3,500 members without power.

Corn Belt Energy contacted the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives for help from other cooperatives through the Illinois Electric Cooperative Emergency Work Plan. Three linemen from Norris Electric responded to the call for help. Doug Casey, Kent Benefiel and Joe Sowers began helping the crews of Corn Belt Energy on Wednesday, and returned Sunday to Newton to help with local outages. "These linemen gave up their Thanksgiving celebrations with their families to help restore power to the mem-



DOUG CASEY

KENT BENEFIEL

JOE SOWERS

bers of Corn Belt Energy. We are proud that we have employees like this who are willing to help," says Manager Keith McKinney.

"Cooperation among cooperatives is one of the seven

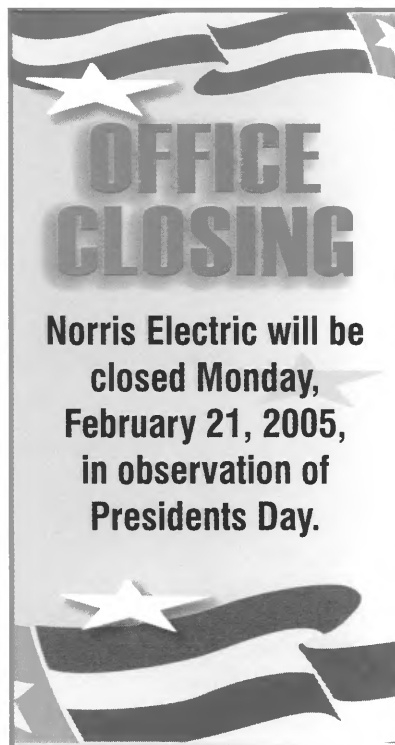
principles that guide our cooperative. I know that when we experience a bad storm and major outages, other electric cooperatives in Illinois will come to our aid," McKinney says.

## Vegetation Control Schedule

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

Lawrence County  
Richland 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](http://www.norriselectric.com).



# Valentine's Day

The story behind the traditional day of romance

Every February, across the country, candy, flowers, and gifts are exchanged between loved ones, all in the name of St. Valentine. But who is this mysterious saint and why do we celebrate this holiday?

The history of Valentine's Day -- and its patron saint -- is shrouded in mystery. But we do know that February has long been a month of romance. St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition.

So, who was Saint Valentine and how did he become associated with this ancient rite? Today, the Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred. One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men -- his crop of potential soldiers. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death. Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons where they were often beaten and tortured.



According to one legend, Valentine actually sent the first 'valentine' greeting himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl -- who may have been his jailor's daughter -- who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed 'From your Valentine,' an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories certainly emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and, most importantly, romantic figure. It's no surprise that by the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and France.

In Great Britain, Valentine's Day began to be popularly celebrated around the seventeenth century. By the middle of the eighteenth century, it was common for friends and lovers in all social classes to exchange small tokens of affection or handwritten notes. By the end of the century, printed cards began to replace written letters due to improvements in printing technology. Ready-made cards were an easy way for people to express their emotions in a time when direct expression of one's feelings was discouraged. Cheaper postage rates also contributed to an increase in the popularity of sending Valentine's Day greetings. Americans probably began exchanging hand-made valentines

in the early 1700s. In the 1840s, Esther A. Howland began to sell the first mass-produced valentines in America.

According to the Greeting Card Association, an estimated one billion valentine cards are sent each year, making Valentine's Day the second largest card-sending holiday of the year. (An estimated 2.6 billion cards are sent for Christmas.) Approximately 85 percent of all valentines are purchased by women. In addition to the United States, Valentine's Day is celebrated in Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France, and Australia.

Source:  
[www.historychannel.com/exhibits/valentine/history.html](http://www.historychannel.com/exhibits/valentine/history.html)

# WINDOW

## Condensation

### Prevention clears up a wet mess

I'm sure a lot of you have spent many winters with your window sills lined with towels. Pretty, huh? No, but you've got to protect your window sills and walls some way.

Condensation occurs when cold outside air strikes a window heated by warm, moist indoor air. The clash causes beads of moisture to form on the inside sash and pane. Occasional condensation on windows is normal, but frequent occurrences, or periods of prolonged duration, are warnings that you may have a problem.

Condensation and frost on interior windows will be the first place a condensation problem will show up, since it is usually the coldest inside surface. This could be a sign of even more serious water damage.

This problem can be alleviated by two methods: reducing the amount of moisture in the air and increasing the temperature of the inside window pane.

Reducing the amount of moisture can be accomplished by proper venting of high moisture air sources such as bathrooms, kitchens and utility rooms. But, a certain amount of moisture or humidity is needed for comfort. Humidity levels that are too low can cause dryness of the nose and throat, static electricity, and cracking of wood in furniture.

The second method of controlling condensation can be accomplished by improving the window's thermal efficiency. By weather stripping and caulking around windows, you can reduce the draft of cold air that lowers the temperature of the window. A single pane of glass has an R-value of about 0.8, which means it can be about as cold as the outside air. This is why storm windows or double or triple glazed windows are effective at stopping condensation and loss



of heat. The dead air space in between panes of glass helps insulate. That helps keep the temperature of the inside pane of glass close to the indoor temperature.

Condensation occurring on the outside storm window is an indication of leaky prime window or inside glazing. Make sure all joints are well sealed with caulking and weather stripping.

The problem with condensation is that you don't see much of it. Condensation is obvious on windows but when it occurs in the attic or walls you may never know it until it is too late. This is the reason

for vapor barriers between the inside walls and insulation. Condensation inside your walls and attic can cause structural problems as well as damage the insulation in your walls and attic.

Many people don't realize it, but proper ventilation in the attic is more important in the winter than in the summertime if you have the proper amount of insulation. Proper ventilation in the winter will draw out the moisture and keep it from settling in your insulation and destroying its effectiveness. This is why if you have turbine vents on your roof and you have very little other ventilation, you should not cover them during the winter.

In the summer, if you have insulation in your attic, very little of the heat that builds up in your attic will filter back down into the living area. While adding power vents and turbine vents will remove heat from the attic, they are not as effective as insulation is at keeping the interior of your home cool. So, unless you need more ventilation for condensation control in the winter, we would recommend that you put your money into added insulation or storm windows before you add power ventilators or turbine vents to your roof.

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Office hours: 8 a.m. — 4:30 p.m



# NORRIS

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## Electric News

## The Outdoor Sportman's Lodge

An Elvis sighting in Jasper County? You never know just who or what you are likely to see at The Outdoor Sportsman's Lodge (OSL). Located just west of the main boat ramp at Newton Lake, the lodge caters to outdoor lovers in a variety of ways. OSL offers guided fishing and hunting expeditions, but that is just the beginning.

From the early days of planning, owners Tab and Vicki Walker, and Jason and Sara Robins, have made it a priority to appeal to a wide audience of people. The lodge has hosted Christmas parties, business meetings, corporate outings, romantic get-aways, seminars, and yes; even a surprise birthday party complete with Elvis himself!

The motto of The Outdoor Sportsman's Lodge is – If It's Fun, We Do It!!

Co-owner Jason Robins explains this philosophy by saying, "Nobody loves to have a good time more than us, and we relate that feeling to our guests at the lodge. It's all about the total experience. We not only offer great hunting and fishing, but then we top off the day with five star lodging accommodations and great food as well. We like to hang out around the fire pit, or sometimes play cards with our guests. It's a great way to really get to know them."

The accommodations at The Outdoor Sportsman's Lodge are impressive to say the least. Each log cabin is a spacious



From left: Co-owners Sarah and Jason Robins stand next to Shirley and Denny Brauer, and Jason's parents Ginger and Jim Robins. Denny Brauer is a professional bass fisherman who has shot 15 of his ESPN programs on Newton lake.

Staying at one of the cabins at Outdoor Sportsman's Lodge is definitely not "roughing it."



960 square feet, with sleeping arrangements for up to eight guests each. Co-owner Tab Walker says, "We designed the cabins to be extremely nice, with exactly the kinds of features we would look for ourselves. When you stay with us, there is no such thing as roughing it."

It doesn't take long for

guests to figure out why they are referred to as "Luxury Log Cabins." Each boasts such features as central heating and air, a gas fireplace, full kitchens complete with dishes and utensils, a washer/dryer, and a gas grill and patio set on the back deck. They even

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# Good News At 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

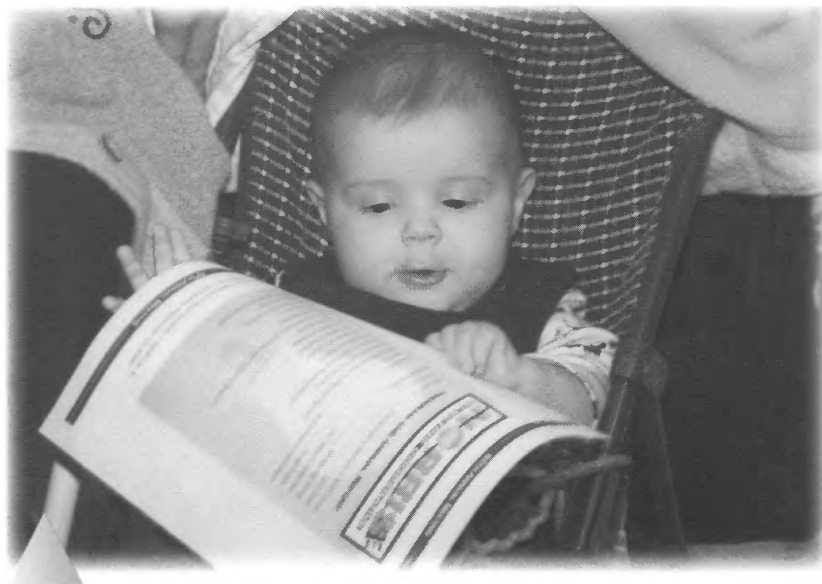
Members of Norris Electric Cooperative were updated on their cooperative's growth, electric rates, financial condition, and new technology to remotely read meters, during the 67th annual meeting of members held on Saturday, February 12, at Newton Community High School. They were also told that the co-op's electric rates would not be raised and will remain among the lowest in the state.

Members also re-elected three area men to the co-op's board of directors. They were Ron Viehman of Lawrenceville, Larry Seals of Mt. Carmel and Dean Dietrich of Dundas.

Treasurer Dean Dietrich reported that the co-op is in good financial order, with net patronage capital and margins of \$1.478 million. "We experienced a very mild summer and winter last year. That coupled with some storm related outages reduced our margins by about 30 percent. Our revenue stayed about the same but our expenses went up about 5 percent," said Dietrich. He added that the value of the cooperative also increased by nearly 9 percent in 2004.

Board President Kent Hetzer of Wheeler said that although growth has slowed the co-op still has the lowest electric rates of any electric cooperative or investor-owned utility in the state.

Hetzer explained that keeping rates low is more difficult for a cooperative with fewer consumers per mile of line compared to other utilities. Hetzer said, "We have 4.6 consumers for each mile of line. The average investor-owned utility has 35 customers per mile and city-owned utilities average 47 customers per mile. Yet our rates are as low as any of them. We really have been fortunate. We haven't raised our electric rates since 1983."



One of the co-op's future members looks over the annual meeting agenda.



Registration went smoothly, with no long lines, at this year's meeting.

Hetzer said the co-op has been able to keep rates low, but continues to use margins to make improvements to the electric system. Maintaining low rates has been difficult as basic expenses have continued to rise for the co-op. Hetzer said transformer prices have risen 84 percent since 1983. Wages have increased 92 percent and medical insurance has gone up 400 percent. Hetzer thanked the members, board of directors, employees and Manager Keith

McKinney for making the tough decisions and doing the hard work necessary to keep rates low and maintain a reliable electric system.

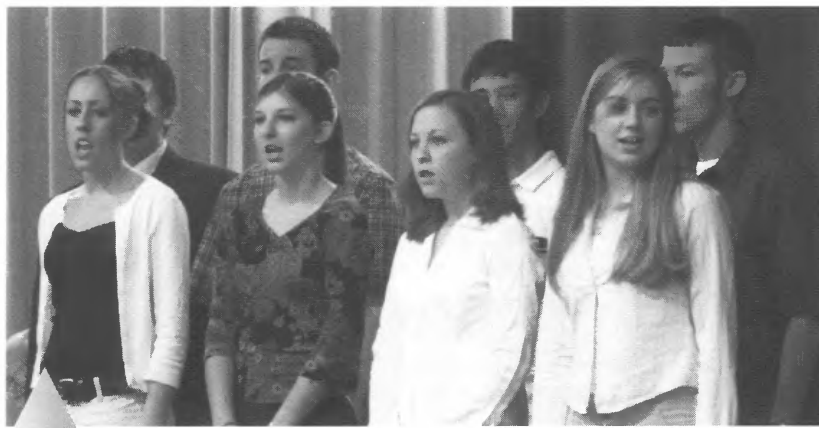
"It's our cooperative's promise to not forget our roots as we strive to build a better future," said Hetzer. "This cooperative promise keeps us grounded in our purpose, stable and unwavering in our principles." He said the principles were loyalty, reliability, integrity, trust and commitment to community. As a



Reports of the co-ops financial standing, new services, and future plans is a big part of the annual meeting. It is just one way cooperatives are different than investor-owned utilities. Members are kept informed because they are the owners.

member of Touchstone Energy® the co-op has demonstrated its commitment to community through the Discovery Channel energy education program for schools, the National Child ID program and through the co-op's youth leadership program that includes a Youth to Washington trip and Youth Day at the state capital in Springfield.

Manager Keith McKinney updated the members on the progress of the co-op's automated meter reading project. He said, "Presently we have about 4,500 meters installed and nine substations activated. Those substations are Eaton, Kedron, Newton, Gila, West Liberty, Dietrich, E. Effingham, Summit and Funkhouser. We hope to complete the rest of the substations in about a year. We have already seen the benefits from this system and a lot of our members comment that they are glad they do not have to read the meters anymore." In addition to meter readings the new technology will help identify outage areas

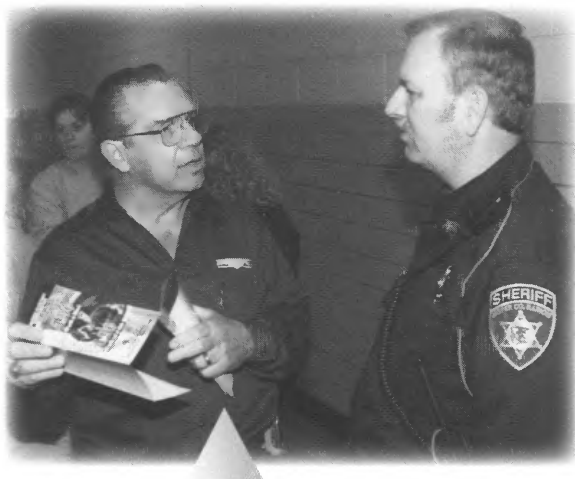


These young singers captivated the audience with their musical talents during the meeting.

or areas that have hard to identify blinks or low voltage problems. The automated meter reading technology will eliminate estimated bills and help members better understand and manage their energy usage.

Another way the co-op is helping reduce outage times is through an old fashioned cooperative principle of cooperatives — cooperation among cooperatives. Through a statewide emergency work plan other electric cooperatives came to the aid of Norris Electric during two extensive outages last year. In turn, Norris Electric has sent lineman and equipment to other cooperatives including a cooperative in Alabama hit hard by Hurricane Ivan. "It's at those times we are happy to be a part of the cooperative family," said McKinney.

McKinney also outlined the progress of the long distance service offered through the co-op by PowerNet Global. The service has proven popular with its 4.9 cents out-of-state and 4.5 cents per minute for in-state. "These are the best rates I have come across and we have more than 6,100 people that have signed up for the plan so far," said McKinney.



The local deputy sheriff seems to be checking out the co-op's long distance phone service through PowerNet Global.

A smaller but growing number of members are signing up for the co-ops on-line billing payment program. "We have more than 450 members that pay either online or by direct debit from their checking account," said McKinney.

Norris Electric has also 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. Although the launch was delayed, the new broadband Internet service is expected to be available in mid-May.

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have custom charging stations for recharging your boat after a hard day of fishing.

What is the ultimate outdoor adventure like? Well, everybody's idea may be a little different, but this will give you a pretty good idea of what it's like to stay at the Outdoor Sportsman's Lodge

The owners encourage you to get together with a couple of buddies who enjoy the outdoors as much as you do and spend the week experiencing great guided hunting and fishing every day. Throw in a round or two of golf. Race your buddies around our dirt track on your 4-wheelers. Spend evenings around the fire pit looking up at the stars, and talking about who caught the biggest fish, or shot the most birds. Have incredible meals waiting for you every time you walk in your cabin. That is what vacations are supposed to be about, not sitting in traffic or waiting in line for something. At OCL, vacations are about spending time doing the things you love and being with the people that you enjoy hanging out with the most. Call (618) 752-5075 now for a whole week of fun! Visit [www.outdoorsportsman-lodge.com](http://www.outdoorsportsman-lodge.com) for more information.



Co-owner Tab Walker displays a recent catch just outside the main entrance of the lodge.

Outdoor Sportsman's Lodge is located just seconds from the warm waters of Newton Lake, where visitors are catching bass while other lakes are frozen over.

## Vegetation Control Schedule

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

- Lawrence County
- Richland 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](http://www.norriselectric.com).

**Office Closing**

**Norris Electric Cooperative offices will be closed Friday, March 25, 2005, to observe Good Friday.**

**Light up Your Night**

Chase away the nighttime shadows with a security light from Norris Electric. We will install and maintain a light for only \$5.50 a month, which will be included on your electric bill.

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Office hours: 8 a.m. — 4:30 p.m

# NORRIS

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



## Electric News

Newton, Illinois 62448 • 783-8765

## Our Report Card Just Came Out!

A few months ago, many of you received a printed survey that was coordinated by our state association on behalf of Norris Electric Cooperative and the other electric cooperatives in Illinois. We thank the 375 members who completed this survey and returned it. Our goal is to serve our member/owners in the best possible way and provide the service that you want and deserve. The only way to achieve that is by feedback from you and that is what this survey was all about. While we didn't hear from every one of you, the 375 responses provide us with a confidence level of 95 percent. This means that the responses that we received were a pretty good snapshot of Norris Electric's members as a whole. Take a look at the categories below to see how you completed our report card.

### ■ Overall Satisfaction

The majority of the members (98.7 percent) have a **positive** or **very positive** feeling toward Norris Electric. Almost half of the members believe their electric service has **improved** over the past few years. About two-thirds of the members have tried to contact Norris Electric in the past year and 92 percent of those members had no difficulty contacting someone who could help them. Of those having difficulty, the biggest problem was that the phone was busy (21.3 percent) or a long distance call was needed (21.3 percent). According to the experts these "problem" results should not be considered too major because the number of members having difficulty is so small!

On a side note, the cooperative office has seven available phone lines coming into the office. Any call coming to our normal number, (618) 783-8765 or (877) 783-8765, would go to our office. Any call going to our outage number, (618) 783-3221 or (877) 783-3221, goes to our call center with more than 30 available lines for our members. As



We thank the 375 members who completed this survey and returned it. Our goal is to serve our member/owners in the best possible way and provide the service that you want and deserve.

far as a long distance call, note the (877) numbers just mentioned. Those are FREE calls, even if it is long distance. The majority of the members gave positive ratings to the employees they spoke to, with about half selecting **extremely courteous** when describing the employee. The majority of the members who contacted the cooperative also rate the cooperative as **very prompt** in dealing with their questions or concerns.

### ■ Service Performance

Members rated the cooperative in seven specific service areas; new service installation, handling outage calls, restoring power, service reliability, dealing with billing problems, repairing wires/trimming trees, and marketing programs. Members gave Norris Electric very strong marks with around nine out of 10 members giving all the service areas either an **excellent** or a **good** rating.

### ■ Communication

The majority of the members are either **very satisfied** (38.7 percent) or **satisfied** (60.5 percent) with the information they receive from their cooperative. This means that more than 99 percent of our members are satisfied or very satisfied with Norris Electric when it comes to communicating with them. Most members get information about the cooperative from the Illinois Country Living magazine (92.3 percent) and more than three-quarters (80.7 percent) read the Illinois Country Living.

### ■ Cost/Value

When comparing what members pay for electricity with other household goods and services, 67.3 percent say it is in line and another 16.1 percent say it is more economical. This means that more than 83 percent believe the cost of electricity is either a good value or is in line with other products. This is a great rating when you consider that consumers usually think costs are too high.

■ (Continued on 16b)



■ (Continued from 16a)

## ■ Internet

This was a little bit of an eye opener! More than half of all members (53 percent) are connected to the Internet with most (82.8 percent) having dial-up service. We thought that most members that had Internet had dial-up service but we did not imagine that more than half of our members had some type of Internet connection!

## ■ ASCI

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) was established in 1994 by the University of Michigan Business Center to provide a new economic indicator tracking the quality of products and services from the perspective of the customer. The ACSI is the only measure of the quality of economic output nationwide. Research is showing

the ACSI to be a leading economic indicator, and a predictor of financial performance at the firm level. This is an excellent way to compare Norris Electric to the rest of the industry. The data gathered for this index comes from four questions where the answers are submitted from a scale of one to 10 with 10 being the highest rating. Those questions were:

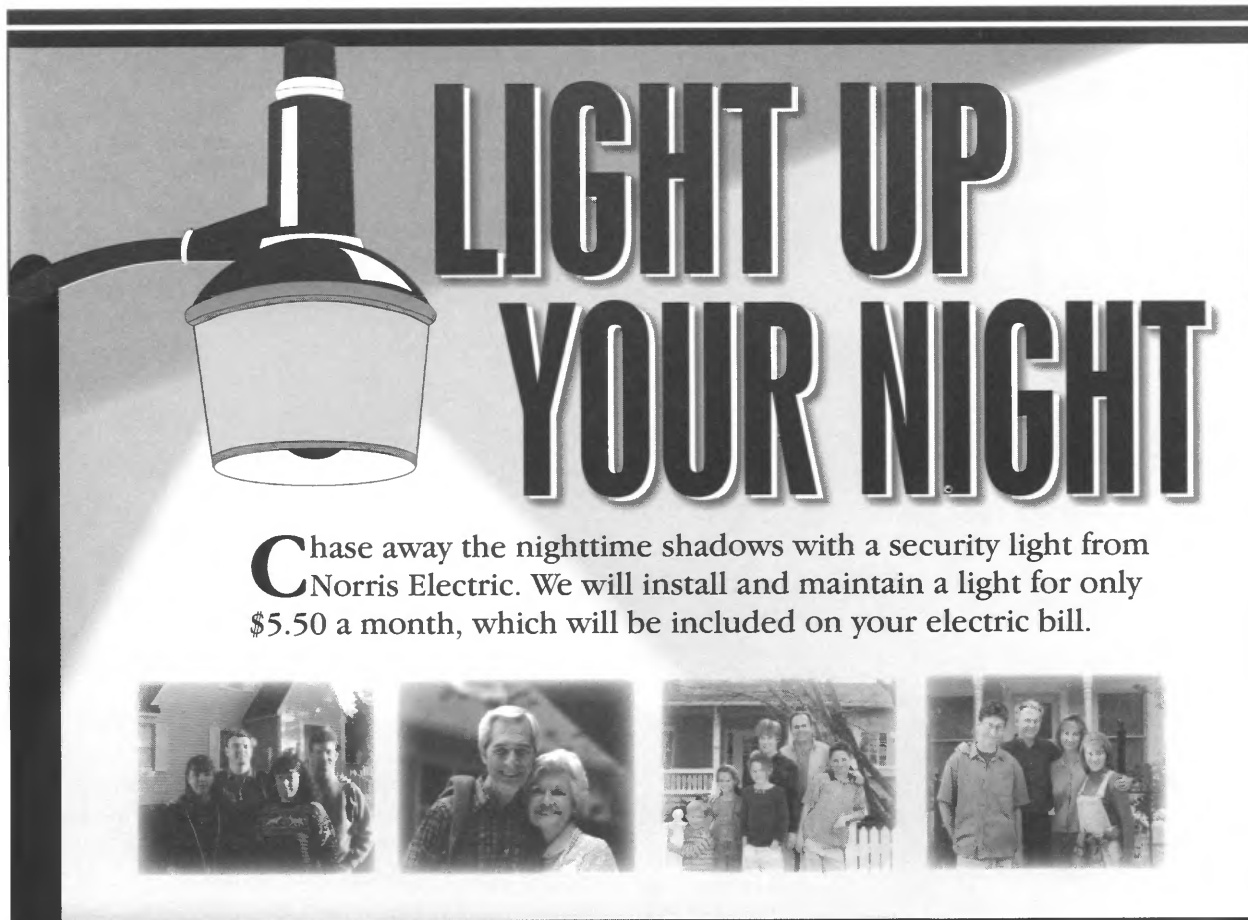
1. How satisfied are you with all your experiences to date with your electric cooperative?
2. To what extent has your electric cooperative fallen short of or exceeded your expectations?
3. Imagine an ideal utility company. How well do you think your electric cooperative compares with that ideal company?
4. The next time you are going to choose a utility company,

how likely is it that it would be your electric cooperative?

After the tabulations were made, Norris Electric scored an 81 while the average in the state for electric cooperatives was 77. The industry average across the United States was 72. I think you can be proud that your cooperative can score higher than the industry average.


While we are extremely happy with the results of this survey and want to keep our scores high, we also want to improve as much as we can. We will continue to try to improve the service and reliability that you want and deserve. We wish to thank our members for their support and confidence.

As a part of this survey there was a place for additional comments from the members. Next month we will address a lot of those comments!



**LIGHT UP  
YOUR NIGHT**

Chase away the nighttime shadows with a security light from Norris Electric. We will install and maintain a light for only \$5.50 a month, which will be included on your electric bill.



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



We work hard to impress  
the owners of our  
electric co-op: **YOU**

Only your local electric co-op makes every customer an owner of the business. Unlike other electric utilities, your co-op exists to make sure your needs are always met, not to make a profit. And since every electric co-op is locally owned and operated, your co-op is always there with you, reinvesting in your community. That's why in an electric co-op, the people have the power.



Touchstone Energy®  
*The power of human connections*



# Air Evac Lifeteam

**As a Norris Electric Cooperative member, you are entitled to a \$10 discount on the annual fees of a new life saving service to our area – Air Evac Lifeteam.**

**A**ir Evac Lifeteam was the first air ambulance company in the U.S. to offer a membership program for its service. Members pay a small annual fee, which entitles them to call the Air-Evac Lifeteam during medical emergencies. If Air-Evac Lifeteam transports a member for a life-or-limb threatening illness or injury, the member will not receive a bill for the flight. The annual fee is considered pre-payment of all covered flights-no matter how many times the member flies during that year. Air-Evac Lifeteam can

find you when seconds count. With a Global Positioning System (GPS) on board every aircraft, they can fly directly to your home day or night. Lifeteam employees fly a mini-emergency room directly to you and transport you to a hospital in lifesaving time. Air-Evac presently covers parts of 14 states. Norris Electric Cooperative is strategically located between three helicopter locations: Effingham, IL., Mt. Vernon, IL., and Washington, IN. For more information call: (800) 793-0010 or visit them at [www.lifeteam.net](http://www.lifeteam.net).

## Membership Registration Form

**Plan Code 1016**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

D.O.B.: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

Physical Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

List persons in your household other than yourself:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B.: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B.: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B.: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B.: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you live in the city limits?  Yes  No

If no, please provide: Section \_\_\_\_\_ Range \_\_\_\_\_ Township \_\_\_\_\_

Enclose check or money order payable to:

AIR-EVAC LIFETEAM, PO BOX 948, WEST PLAINS, MO 65775

\_\_\_\_\_ SINGLE \$30 \_\_\_\_\_ COUPLE \$35 \_\_\_\_\_ HOUSEHOLD \$50 or the best value \_\_\_\_\_ LIFETIME \$500

The prices above reflect your \$10 savings

If you wish to pay by credit card Card# \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date (mm/yy) \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that:

- 1.) Membership will become valid 15 days after registration is received with payment.
- 2.) Members are entitled to transport by Air-Evac Lifeteam (AEL) helicopter to the closest appropriate medical facility for injuries or illness that are deemed by a medical professional to be life-or-limb threatening, or that could lead to permanent disability.
- 3.) AEL reserves the right to bill directly the appropriate benefits provider for services rendered. Member agrees to remit to AEL any payment received from insurance carriers for transport provided by AEL.
- 4.) AEL will not be responsible for payment for services provided by other air ambulance services.
- 5.) AEL membership is not an insurance policy, is non-refundable, and may not be transferred to other persons or families.

I have read and understand the conditions listed above and do hereby agree to these terms for membership

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# NORRIS

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



## Electric News

Newton, Illinois 62448 • 783-8765

## Illinois Cooperative Balloon Associates Receive Touchstone Energy's Top Award

Touchstone Energy's highest honor was awarded to 10 Illinois co-ops that have been instrumental in the success of the Touchstone Energy brand. The Cooperative Balloon Associates (CBA), a consortium of Illinois-based cooperatives that own and operate the Touchstone Energy hot- and cold-air balloons, were presented the 2005 Touchstone Energy Distinguished Service Award in San Diego, Calif.

The Distinguished Service Award is presented to individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the development, growth and success of the Touchstone Energy brand.

"The leaders and founders of CBA, and General Manager Cheri White have been tireless advocates for the Touchstone Energy program since the first balloon took flight five years ago," said Roger Clark, CEO of Boone Electric Cooperative in Columbia, Mo., and chair of the Touchstone Energy board of directors. "Their professional image and outstanding work in promoting the brand and its values make Touchstone Energy cooperatives across the country proud to feature the hot-air balloon at their events, in their publications, and on apparel and billboards. This, coupled with the balloon's media coverage, has generated more than 68.5 million impressions for the Touchstone Energy brand since 1999," added Clark, who pre-



Pilot Cheri White (right) and 10 innovative Illinois Touchstone Energy co-ops make up CBA. Representatives of Shelby Electric Cooperative, Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative; Norris Electric Cooperative; Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative; McDonough Power Cooperative; Corn Belt Energy Corporation; Southern Illinois Power Cooperative; Jo-Carroll Energy; and Soyland Power Cooperative and Continental Cooperative Services joined White in accepting the award.

sented the awards.

More than 200 Touchstone Energy co-ops in 23 states have used the balloon, reaching 11.5 million people. And CBA, like all Touchstone Energy co-ops, has given back to the community. Donations from CBA of nearly \$8,000 have been made to everything from the American Cancer Society to the Special Olympics Scholarship Fund. For more information, go to [www.cbaballoon.com](http://www.cbaballoon.com).

Touchstone Energy is a national alliance of local, con-

sumer-owned electric cooperatives providing high standards of service to customers large and small. More than 600 Touchstone Energy cooperatives in 44 states are delivering energy and energy solutions to approximately 17 million consumers every day. Touchstone Energy cooperatives serve their members with integrity, accountability, innovation and a longstanding commitment to communities. For more information, go to [www.touchstoneenergy.coop](http://www.touchstoneenergy.coop).

# COMING JUNE 1

## Norris Electric To Offer WildBlue Satellite Broadband

Norris Electric will offer WildBlue satellite-delivered broadband Internet access to homes and small offices throughout southern Illinois beginning approximately June 1, 2005.

WildBlue will be available virtually anywhere in the continental United States, regardless of geographic location and can be used even where cable modem and digital subscriber line Internet access are not available. With service that is up to 30 times faster than standard 56k dial-up connections, WildBlue allows users to retrieve information extremely quick, and access rich content that is not available through dial-up modems. It provides a continuous online connection, so subscribers don't have to dial-in and won't tie up phone lines. Additionally, DIRECTV and DISH subscribers should be able to use one WildBlue dish for their two-way wireless Internet access and to access their satellite TV service in late 2005.

"Norris Electric looks forward to providing broadband Internet access to our community," said Keith McKinney, Gen-



# WILDBLUE

*Satellite Speed Internet*<sup>SM</sup>

eral Manager. "We are pleased to bring affordable, two-way high-speed Internet access with no phone lines, no cable, and no dial-up that is always on and available anywhere our community members work or live."

The WildBlue equipment will consist of a mini-dish to be put on the roof or a wall of homes and small offices. The WildBlue service will be available at low, consumer prices. The dish will be purchased from Norris Electric for \$300 and installed by our certified installer. There will be three packages to choose from featuring different speeds. The Value package is \$49.95 per month with up to 512 kbps download speed. The Select package is \$69.95 per month with up to 1 Mbps download speed. The Pro package is \$79.95 per month with up to 1.5 Mbps

download speed.

"We are pleased to bring Internet access that is comparable to what is available in urban areas as part of our effort to provide value-added products and services that connect our rural consumers to the benefits of technology and the information age," continued McKinney. To inquire about WildBlue service or to schedule your installation, please call our office at (877) 783-8765 and ask for Carrie.

### Legal Disclaimer

Not available in all areas. Requires a clear view of the southern sky. Usage subject to WildBlue's Fair Access Policy. Speeds not guaranteed. Equipment, monthly service fees, installation charges, taxes, and minimum term commitments also apply.

## Vegetation Control Schedule

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

Lawrence County  
Richland 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](http://www.norriselectric.com).

## Office Closing

Our office  
will be closed  
Memorial Day,  
Monday May 30.



# Drilling For Energy In Your Backyard

Summer is not far away and if your air conditioner was on its last leg last summer then right now is a good time to consider a new geothermal heat pump. A geothermal heat pump can save up to 50 percent in cooling mode and 70 percent in heating mode.

So what makes it so efficient? Before refrigeration people used root cellars to store their food. The ground temperature even just a few feet down will remain fairly constant year round, while the air temperature can be between 100° and 0° F. A geothermal heat pump simply takes advantage of the earth's constant temperature.

Simply put, a geothermal heat pump system moves the heat from the earth into the home in the winter, and pulls the heat from the house and discharges it into the ground in the summer. The underground piping loops serve as a heat source in the winter and a heat sink in the summer.

What makes a geothermal heat pump even better is it can provide virtually free hot water as a byproduct of the refrigeration cycle. Remember the hot air coming off the outside unit of your air conditioner? A geothermal heat pump captures that waste heat and puts it in your hot water tank using what is called a desuperheater.

Like the typical forced-air furnace and central air-conditioning system, a geothermal heat pump system uses ductwork. But a two-speed geothermal system is so quiet inside a house that most people do not know it is operating because there are no telltale blasts of cold or hot air. Geothermal heat pumps also improve humidity control by maintaining about 50 percent relative indoor humidity. And as the old saying goes, it's not the heat, it's the humidity.

Adding to the comfort advantage, geothermal heat pumps are also much quieter. With no outside condensing units like air conditioners you will be able to enjoy your patio area or decks without the constant hum of a conventional air conditioner.

Talk to just about anyone that owns a geothermal heat pump and they'll give it rave reviews. In a recent survey, more than 95 percent of all geothermal owners said they would recommend a similar system



To keep your cool this summer consider tapping into the free energy source Mother Earth provides by drilling a well for a geothermal heat pump. Contact your co-op or a local geothermal heat pump dealer for more information.

to their friends and family.

So what's the catch you ask? Okay, a geothermal heat pump will cost more than a simple replacement air conditioner. On average, a geothermal heat pump system costs about \$2,500 per ton of capacity. The cost of installing the ground loop is the main reason for the additional cost. But according to the Department of Energy that investment will be recouped in two to 10 years. In a new home that upfront cost could be included in the mortgage.

For a retrofit installation there are other options. Many geothermal heat pump systems carry the DOE and EPA ENERGY STAR® label. ENERGY STAR®-labeled equipment can now be financed with special ENERGY STAR® loans from banks and other financial institutions. Some loans have lower interest rates, longer repayment periods, or both. Ask your contractor about ENERGY STAR® loans or call the EPA's ENERGY STAR® toll-free hotline at (888) STAR-YES for a list of financing options.

Installing a geothermal heat pump system is not a project for the do-it-yourselfer. Because the pipes are underground, they need to be designed and installed correctly, and properly pressure tested. Look for a qualified and experienced contractor.

## For more information...

■ **Geo-Heat Center**  
3201 Campus Drive  
Klamath Falls, OR 97601  
Ph: 541-885-1750  
<http://geoheat.oit.edu>

■ **International Ground Source Heat Pump Association (IGSHPA)**  
470 Cordell South  
Stillwater, OK 74078-8018  
Ph: 1-800 626-GSHP  
[www.igshpa.okstate.edu](http://www.igshpa.okstate.edu)

■ **Geothermal Heat Pump Consortium Inc.**  
701 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20004-2696  
Ph: 202-508-5500  
[www.geoexchange.org](http://www.geoexchange.org)

■ **WaterFurnace International, Inc.**  
9000 Conservation Way  
Fort Wayne, IN 46809  
(800) GEO-SAVE  
[www.waterfurnace.com](http://www.waterfurnace.com)

■ **GeoComfort, Inc.**  
2506 S. Elm Street  
Greenville, IL 62246  
(618) 664-4584  
[www.geocomfort.com](http://www.geocomfort.com)

## Don't Forget to Call Your Mother on May 8

Norris Electric Cooperative, through PowerNet Global Communications, makes it easier, and cheaper, to call your mother on Mother's Day.

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 are only 12.9¢ per minute.



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

**All calls in Illinois 4.5¢  
All out-of-state calls now only 4.9¢**

**PowerNet Global utilizes the Qwest Network**

## 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 - 2004. 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 credits 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.

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



## Electric News

Newton, Illinois 62448 • 783-8765

## More on Our Report Card

We told you last month of the scores on our report card when our state association conducted a Member Satisfaction Survey. We told you then that we would comment on some of the "Verbatim" comments from our members. There were a few comments on most of the questions but what really struck our interest was the question: "Do you have any further comments or suggestions?"

There were more than 90 individual comments, and more than one third of those were positive. We think this is very commendable, especially when human nature is to voice complaints and not voice praise.

Below are some of the comments and our responses. Unfortunately, space won't allow us to print each individual comment, so some similar comments were omitted.

### POSITIVE COMMENTS

Many of the positive comments we received concerned the co-op's commitment to improving the quality of life of its members through its long distance and Internet services.

### INTERNET AND LONG DISTANCE

*"I use their long distance and am very happy. I would be interested in high speed Internet."*

*"I am very pleased with the long distance service for phones. They have done everything they said they would."*

*"Sometime I do want a computer. I know nothing about them but our lines are equipped to handle it. I am still looking forward to it."*

*"I would be very interested in Internet service. I already signed up for the long distance service they presented to us and am very satisfied with it."*

*"I would be interested in high speed Internet."*

These are all positive comments. We think the long distance telephone rates are very attractive and evidently our members think so as well. We currently have more than 6,000 people on this service. We are making progress on offering Internet service and by the time this magazine comes to your home we hope to have our high-speed Internet service, WildBlue, in service.

### COMPLAINTS

Below are comments indicative of all the negative comments we received.

### BLINKS & NUISANCE OUTAGES

*"Our only complaint is that we seem to lose power more often than when we had Ameren, but other than that we are happy."*

*"I have never been with a power company with so many interruptions."*

*"My only complaint is the power going on and off for a split second. Causing all the clocks to flash. It happens to my neighbors too. Seems to be a regular thing about 3 times a month."*

*(There were about 10 more comments on outages and blinks.)*

One of the most frequent complaints is related to outages. It is difficult to control

the outages but not impossible. The number and duration of outages have constantly improved over the last five years. Our new AMR system should help us identify problem areas and improve the blinks and short outages. That system tells us when a meter experiences an outage no matter how long or short it is. If it is long enough to blink your lights or cause your clocks to blink, we will see it. We can tell if it is a problem related to only you or if it affects your neighbors. That helps us identify where the problem is located so it can be repaired.

### DURATION OF OUTAGES

*"We do not have a choice in electric company providers. We lost power for over 48 hours at Lake Lawrence when a big storm hit. This was very unpleasant for the residents here. I thought over two days was way too long to be without power."*

*"The response to the question on outages is \_\_\_\_\_. Either no information or vague information. They cannot decide on reconnecting time even a ball park estimate."*

We had some major outages this last year due to storms. We had crews from contractors and other cooperatives helping us. There is always that person who is the last one to have his service restored and it sometimes takes quite awhile. It is very hard to provide a timely estimate of the time required to get the service restored.

On small outages it will usually take at least 30 min-

■ (Continued on 16b)

■ (Continued from 16a)

utes to get a lineman to the site. Then it may take another 30 minutes to discover what caused the problem. Our call takers have no idea how long it may take to restore service until the lineman can tell them what the problem is. Often times it may only take an additional 30 minutes or less to fix a problem so the lineman may not inform the call takers as to how long it may take. We would rather fix the problem rather than relaying the cause of the problem.

On extended outages it is very difficult to determine how long it may take to restore service. In cases such as storms and high winds, we may repair one problem only to find there is another problem down the line. When ever possible our linemen do relay estimated times and problems to our call takers.

#### ■ AUTOMATED CALL CENTER

*"There should be a real person to talk to locally about outage problems. If the customer comes first, why make a customer talk to an automatic voice?"*

A few years ago we had two local people that alternated call duty so that one of them was available all the time after hours. There was one phone line that they answered. When a call came in they took the information and then called a supervisor so a lineman could be dispatched. It averaged about five minutes per call or 12 calls an hour. A lot of people got a busy signal when they tried to call the number. About three years ago we began using a call center that has multiple call takers on staff.

More than 60 percent of the calls are now taken by a real live person. On small individual outages the calls are usually answered by a person. When there are major multiple outages a lot of the calls are taken by a call taker but the others are taken by an automatic system. There is not a

perfect system but this is far better than what was previously in place.

Now there are very few times a busy signal is received and we have more outages being reported. By sharing this call center with other cooperatives we can operate more efficiently. Typically not all cooperatives have outages at the same time. We have more people answering calls than what we could have if we were by ourselves. When a major storm or high call volume is experienced, there are call takers on call that can report to duty to help handle the heavy load.

Truthfully we do not need to receive all the calls to determine if there are outages. In most cases if there are 100 people out of service, we can determine that by receiving 10 calls. There will never be a system that answers 100 percent of the calls by a person rather than an automated system.

#### ■ ANNUAL MEETING

*"Pick a different season to select the officials and have the meetings when the weather is better."*

Our Annual Meeting is held as quickly as it can be held after the financial records have been audited. We think it is very important to report the status of the cooperative as soon as we can for the prior year.

#### ■ SLOW SERVICE, RUDE SERVICE & POOR CONSTRUCTION

*"Other than the fact that they trimmed the wrong trees they have been very cooperative. I never complained to them as I make mistakes too."*

*"My farm is used for wildlife, agriculture and security. Due to the hours I work it is sometimes hard to get together with my co-op. Last year they cut my lock on my gate and damaged my road therefore putting my life at high risk. Security for 3 companies and wildlife was compromised."*

*"A few years ago we put our modular house here. We contacted*

*Norris 6 weeks ahead of time that we needed a pole and electricity put in. They said just tell us when you need it. We told them 2 weeks ahead and they said OK. Our house came and I called them and they said they did not have time to do it because of the new subdivisions they were working on. So we waited for 2 more weeks until they finally came out. We were understandable mad that we had to contact them several times only to be told they were too busy. Finally sub-contractors came and they told us they did not know anything about any subdivisions they had just received the work order. Sounds like Norris lied to us doesn't it?"*

*"I was somewhat dissatisfied with the quality of work on my new service installation. The security light is not level and the conduit is not straight. The breaker box only has one lag screw in it. I added more screws myself."*

*"When we pay our bill the ladies in the office are not very nice. They act as if you are bothering them just being there. They move very slowly. They try to not even look up from the desk so they don't have to wait on you. Only one lady even bothers to smile. I have told her thank you. I have worked in an office since college and was always taught to be pleasant. The customer is the first point of contact."*

Whenever there is a problem of any kind it is far better to call our office than to "stew" about it. We very seldom have "sub-contractors" do work for us but if they work for us, they will be held responsible for their service. We have tentative schedules for our crews set up two weeks in advance. Weather can greatly affect that schedule. One crew may not know what the other crew is doing because it is not necessary for them to know.

There is not a reason for our clerical staff to be rude but they are human. They take quite a bit of abuse from some callers and it wears on them. They do an excellent job but occasionally like anyone else they have a bad day. If anyone

experiences rudeness or unprofessional behavior from any of our employees, call us and let us know. Our linemen are very experienced but occasionally they may make a mistake during construction that makes an installation look inferior.

Again, call the office and we will take care of it. We want to serve our members and we can only do it if we are made aware of situations you do not like! If you do not get the satisfaction you want from the person you are talking to, ask for their supervisor, even if it means talking to the general manager.

## ■ DEREGULATION

*"We have to use the co-op because of the area we are in. I think deregulation would be good. It would be another company to choose from."*

In 1997 the State of Illinois passed a law that created customer choice in Illinois. It was a law that phased in deregulation over a period of years for different sized accounts. Illinois cooperatives had a choice as to whether they wanted to join in deregulation or stay out of deregulation. Norris Electric Cooperative, just like most of the other cooperatives in Illinois elected not to join in deregulation.

The reasons are rather simple. We had no desire to serve electricity outside of our eight county service area. If our territory were opened then the only members that would be solicited by other energy providers would be the larger members with good load factors (efficiently using their electricity).

If those larger members left our service it would mean fewer members utilizing our facilities, creating a situation where we might have to raise our rates. We would rather work with those larger members to make sure they are getting a competitive price from us.

As a cooperative acting on behalf of all of our members, we should be able to obtain a better wholesale rate than an individual

member could get on his own. All energy providers in Illinois must register with the state as an ARES or Alternate Retail Electric Supplier. There are several ARES registered with the state to serve large customers. Presently there are NO ARES registered to serve residential loads. What this means is that our residential members could not even get a quote from another provider because no other provider wants to look at that market.

## ■ RATES

*"Before when we had Norris Electric Co-op it was a responsible price but now that we have it, it is very expensive."*

*"I am happy with my electric cooperative and the services I get. It is a little on the expensive side compared to other communities around where I have lived. Lower the rates."*

Norris Electric Cooperative has the lowest average cost of kilowatt-hour than any other cooperative or Investor Owned Utility in the State of Illinois. The rate will vary based on how electricity is used or what quantity is used but on an average we have the best rates. Norris Electric Cooperative has not raised their rates since 1983. This will not last forever but we continue to try to keep our rates as low as possible.

## ■ METER READING & BILL PAYMENT

*"We are often having a very bad time paying our full amount due. We and many others would greatly appreciate an option to make smaller payments. Perhaps an estimated monthly payment!"*

*"Not really happy about reading our own meter. When rates seem to be the same as city ones. Also don't like having to pay a 5% penalty for being late."*

We should complete the installation of AMR (automated meter reading) by the end of the year. More than one third of our meters are presently

being read automatically. There were a few comments about not wanting to read meters that were not listed above. We hope that by the end of the year none of our members will have to read their own meters.

For the members that have problems paying their bills on time we can always work up some type of payment plan. When an account gets to a place where it might be disconnected due to non-payment of the bill our billing clerks are always agreeable to reaching a payment agreement. Terms of the agreement are typically based on what and when a member thinks he can make a payment.

We must pay our supplier within 15 days of receiving their bill. That is typically about 20 days after the meter is read. If we are late there is a penalty that we must pay. If our members are late in paying us then we must borrow the money from somewhere to pay our supplier. This is usually from another account but that means we are then short in that account. When a member is paying a bill late it also means that there are more administrative charges in the office from more notices to phone calls and even sending a lineman to disconnect. These acts all cost the cooperative money and that is the reason for penalty charges.

## TALK TO US

Remember that we cannot improve or follow the wishes of our members unless we know what those wants and desires are! We cannot act on every suggestion because we must look at the cooperative as a whole but there is a lot better chance of us changing if you talk to us than if you keep quiet!

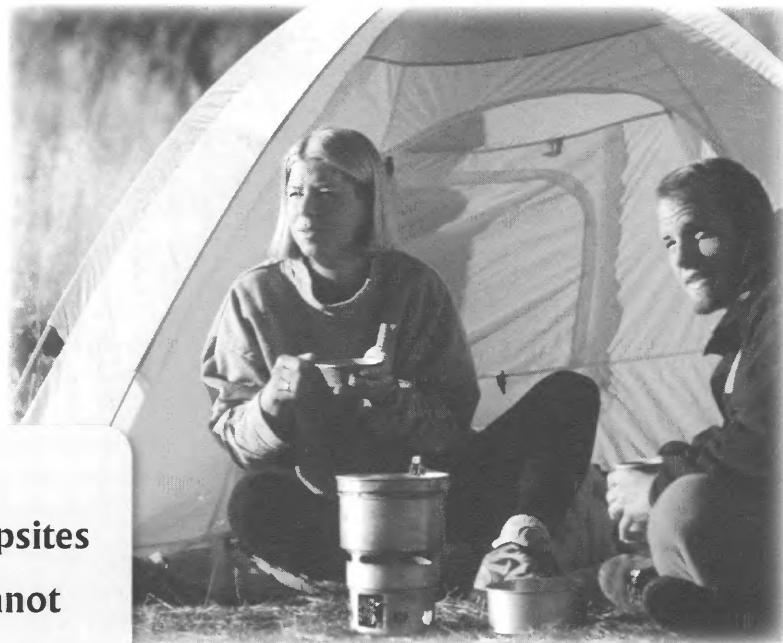


## Campground Dilemmas

We have a few campgrounds that have their own meters scattered throughout their campsites. They use these meters to bill their campers for their electrical usage. This can pose a problem for Norris Electric Cooperative and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Norris Electric Cooperative does not sell electricity for resale. If we did, that would make us a wholesale provider of electricity. If it was ever determined that we were a wholesale provider, we would fall under a different set of rules from FERC that would be more restrictive and much more costly for the cooperative. With this in mind, we want to make certain that this never happens. If a campsite merely passes on the cost of electricity then they are not reselling the electricity.

If a campground uses individual campsite meters and bills the camper based on those readings then they can only charge the camper based on what the master campground meter is being charged. So, if the average cost per kilowatt hour being charged by Norris Electric for a month is 9 cents, then the camper could only be charged 9 cents applied to his meter readings.

This would mean that a campsite would read their me-



**Campsites  
cannot  
sell  
electricity!**

ters at the same time that the cooperative reads the campground's meters and then charge the camper at the same average cost per kilo-

watt hour that the campground is being charged.

You might ask about the charges that would accumulate in the off season when there are very few campsites occupied. If there are electrical costs associated with the off season they should be construed as what most people would call overhead or the cost of doing business and be incorporated into the monthly rentals when the campers are on site.

The other way to use campsite meters and not be considered a wholesale provider is to monitor the meters over time and annually adjust your rent to incorporate the electrical usage. In this way there would not be a separate line item on your bill for electrical usage. This not only applies to campgrounds but could apply to similar instances such as a rental trailer that is supplied electricity from an adjacent house or an oil field where one lease is purchased by someone but the electricity is still being supplied through the original oilfield's electric lines. We hope that everyone cooperates with this issue. If you have any questions, please call our office.

## Vegetation Control Schedule

We will have crews performing routine tree trimming or spraying during **July** 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 ar-

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

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Office hours: 8 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.

# NORRIS

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



## Electric News

Newton, Illinois 62448 • 783-8765

## Jasper County Safety Program

Connie Elliott, Jasper County Extension, Community Worker

April 14, Jasper County 4<sup>th</sup> graders were presented with information from the Wade Firefighters, Jasper County Ambulance, Jasper/Cumberland Extension Unit, and the Jasper County Health Department concerning how to make for a safer summer. Each class met with each of these presenters and learned about fire safety, lawn mower safety, first aid, and how to react when help arrives.

In the afternoon, Jesse Walker, weatherman with WTWO, presented information necessary when storms arise. Kyle Finley with the “Live Line Demo” presented electrical safety information.

The University of Illinois Extension, Jasper/Cumberland Unit organized the program with the cooperation of Norris Electric Cooperative funding the “Live Line Demo”. Approximately 200 Jasper County and Cumberland Elementary 4<sup>th</sup> grade students were given the opportunity to view the “Live Line Demo” and gained valuable knowledge regarding the likelihood of electrical shock and how to respond appropriately.

One of the highlights of the “Live Line Demo” involved energizing a mylar balloon, which created great visuals and demonstrated the hazards of electrical energy when a mylar balloon lands on and around a live line.



Norris Electric has a commitment to educate the public and provide awareness of electric safety.

A helium-filled mylar balloon let go into the atmosphere will eventually come down, and should it land on a wire or

transformer, or settle in a power station, it is no different than putting a piece of metal onto the line. These fun balloons can create power outages, thus creating severe costs to power companies when transformers are damaged or destroyed. Mr. Finley’s recommendation included not releasing mylar balloons or balloons with metal ribbons into the atmosphere. These balloons should be disposed of in another fashion to prevent electrical incidents and power outages.

Later in the evening a two hour “Live Line Demo” was

offered to area emergency responders to demonstrate how to handle emergency situations during power outages and when lines are down. Emergency responders are usually the first on the scene and it is important for them to know the dangers involved when lines are down for the safety of themselves and the general public.

Norris Electric Cooperative provided the funding to bring the “Live Line Demo” to the county for area residents and worked with the Jasper/Cumberland Extension Unit in providing this valuable educational program to those attending.

Additional electrical safety information can be accessed at [www.safeelectricity.org](http://www.safeelectricity.org)



## Students Attend Youth Day

Senator Dale Righter and Representatives Roger Eddy and David Reis met with 20 students representing Norris Electric Cooperative during the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives' Youth Day on Wednesday, April 13, in Springfield. While in the state capital, students had an opportunity to view state government in action, speak with Secretary of State Jesse White, and tour the State Capitol, Lincoln's Tomb and the Illinois Supreme Court. First row from left are chaperone Gena

Bogard, Travis Rich of Robinson, Ashtin Blagrave of Robinson, Mia Tapella of Robinson, Tiffany Powers of Martinsville and Jesse Bales of Beecher City. Second row from left are Representative Eddy, Senator Righter, chaperone Mike Ochs, Katrina Connors of Altamont, Mallory Althoff of Effingham, chaperone Jerry Phillips, Alexandra Jordan of Flat Rock, Casey Steffey of Flat Rock, chaperone Michael Shackelford, Nathan Tingley of Marshall, Kevin Walls of Robinson, Jeremy Ackman of Oblong and Representa-

## YOUTH DAY

tive Reis. Third row from left are Ryan Pickett of Effingham, Katie Perry of Mt. Carmel, Andrea Lockley of Olney, Bethany Hull of Olney, Diana Mammoser of Teutopolis, Banyel Logue of Martinsville, Jude Holscher of Palestine and chaperone Jim Meyer. The day was sponsored by the Illinois electric and telephone co-ops and is designed to introduce young rural leaders to state government.

## Youth to Washington

Of those students attending Youth Day in Springfield, Casey Steffey of Flat Rock and Mia Tapella of Robinson were chosen to represent Norris Electric in Washington D.C. during the Youth To Washington Tour, which occurred June 17-24. Steffey and Tapella met with their local national representatives, and toured various memorials, the capitol building, Gettysburg, and other sites. Look for highlights from their trip in next month's *Illinois Country Living* magazine.



# Automatic Meter Reading and Billing Update

As we have mentioned for the last several months, we are implementing an AMR (Automated Meter Reading) system. To the majority of our members, the only change they may see is that they do not have to read their meters any more! For others, it may change the timing of their billing and payments.

We formerly had two billing cycles. That meant the majority of our bills were sent out at two times during the month and you received your bill at one of those times. With AMR we are able to read the meters at any time and are able to adjust our billing sys-

tem so that bills can be sent out four times a month. This doesn't mean you'll get four bills, this means a fourth of our bills will be sent out each week. We are organizing these billing cycles by area so most neighbors are billed at the same time. This helps to spread out the workload for our office so billing and payments are happening each week instead of two really busy weeks.

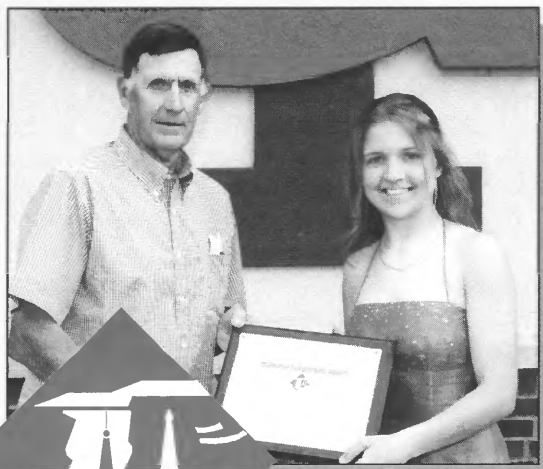
This works great for us but it can be a challenge for you until you get used to it. Some of our members have paid their bills on a certain day of the month for years. This may change that date

for some of you. We hope you are patient and understanding in that this helps us to keep our costs down and allows us to provide better service to you.

As an update to the progress of the AMR installation, we have installed new metering to almost two-thirds of our members. We have already seen the benefits of this system in identifying potential future outage areas and speeding the search for the cause of outages. It may be close, but we hope to finish the AMR installation by the end of the year.

## IEC Scholarship Winner

Jennifer Meyer, daughter of Randy and Kate Meyer of Teutopolis, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from the Illinois Electric Cooperatives. Jennifer has been very active in high school. She has served as President of her class, Treasurer and Vice President of the Student Council, and has been a member of the Volunteens, National Honor Society, Varsity Track and Field, Tennis, Math Club, and Math Team. She plans to attend the University of Illinois studying political science and international studies.



Good luck Jennifer with your college endeavors. Jennifer and her family are members of Norris Electric Cooperative.

Other winners of the scholarship were Daniel Lepper, Menard Electric Cooperative; James Reimer, RECC; and Kelsey Vandike, Farmers Mutual Electric Company.

## Questions About WildBlue?

Recently Norris Electric has received many calls concerning the WildBlue Internet Service. In order to answer each question as accurately as possible, we may need to research the latest information that we have received from WildBlue. For our personnel to do this, we have set up a new e-mail address where you may send your questions. We will check this mailbox each day and will send an answer back to you as soon as possible. If you would like to use this new service, simply send your inquires to [questions@norriselectric.com](mailto:questions@norriselectric.com).



**WILDBLUE**  
Satellite Speed Internet<sup>SM</sup>

# A Salute to the Red, White and Blue!

This Independence Day, Test Your American Flag IQ

The American flag is one of the most recognized symbols in the world. It may have many names—the Star-Spangled Banner, the Stars and Stripes, Old Glory—but it has one clear meaning: it stands for unity and freedom.

Our flag has earned our respect: handle it with care! In that spirit, we invite you to find out just how much you know about caring for and flying our national banner.

To determine your flag IQ, answer each of the following questions, then check below for the answers and figure out your score.

## 1. How do I fly the flag on a flagpole?

(One answer is false—which one?)

- a. When on the same flagpole, always fly the U.S. flag above any state, municipal or social-organization flag
- b. When on the same flagpole, the U.S. flag should be above any other nation's flag
- c. Raise the U.S. flag briskly and lower it ceremoniously
- d. When flying the U.S. flag near flags of other nations, it should be positioned on its own right

## 2. How do I hang the flag indoors?

(One answer is false—which one?)

- a. The flag may be used to cover a ceiling
- b. The flag can be hung horizontally or vertically
- c. The union, or canton (the blue field of stars), should be on the flag's right and the viewer's left
- d. If hung in a window, the canton should be on the viewer's left

## 3. When properly folded, the flag takes what shape?

- a. A rectangle
- b. A triangle
- c. A square
- d. A hexagon

## 4. When is a flag not flown at half-staff?

- a. Upon the death of a president or former president
- b. When the president or the governor of a state declares an official period of mourning
- c. On Memorial Day, honoring those who have died while serving the U.S.
- d. When a member of your family dies

## 5. How do I raise a flag to the half-staff position?

- a. Raise it slowly to half-staff
- b. Raise it slowly all the way to the top, then slowly to half-staff
- c. Raise it all the way to the top, then all the way to the bottom, then to half-staff
- d. Raise it briskly all the way to the top, then lower it slowly to half-staff



## 6. What should a civilian do when a flag passes by in a parade or procession?

- a. Salute and stand at attention
- b. Place the right hand over the heart while the first U.S. flag passes by
- c. Place the right hand over the heart while each U.S. flag passes by
- d. Place the left hand over the heart while the first U.S. flag passes by

## 7. What do I do with my flag when it's worn out?

(One answer is false—which one?)

- a. Burn it in a private place
- b. Organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Boy Scouts of America or the Girl Scouts can dispose of your flag
- c. Fold it, then carefully place it in the trash
- d. Contact your town or city officials for more information

## Answers

- 1. (b) is false. The U.S. flag should never share a pole with another nation's flag. International law forbids the display of one nation's flag above another in times of peace.
- 2. (a) is false. The flag should never be used to cover a ceiling.
- 3. (b) is correct.
- 4. (d) is false. Flags are flown at half-staff only during official periods of mourning. On Memorial Day the flag is flown at half-staff until noon and then at full-staff for the remainder of the day.
- 5. (d) is correct.
- 6. (b) is correct. People in military uniform salute as the first U.S. flag passes; the remaining flags in the parade do not need to be recognized.
- 7. (c) is false. When the U.S. flag is no longer in a condition to be displayed with honor, it should be destroyed in a dignified way.

## Score

- 1-2: Not too good. Back to Civics class!
- 3-5: Impressive, but there's room for improvement.
- 6-7: Well done! Stand tall, patriot!

Presented by



We gratefully acknowledge for their expertise the National Flag Foundation—the foremost authority on the U.S. flag and the U.S. Flag Code of 1923 as amended through the last edition in 1998. The Code offers the official way to show respect for the flag, but has no enforcement power or rigor of law. If you would like additional information please visit: [www.americanflags.org](http://www.americanflags.org)

Cover photo: Mike Powell, Kansas Cosmos



# OFFICE CLOSING

Norris Electric Cooperative will be closed Monday, July 4.

## Vegetation Control Schedule

We will have crews performing routine tree trimming or spraying during **August** 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 ar-

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

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## Electric News

### Students Tour Washington D.C.

Casey Steffey of Flat Rock and Mia Tapella of Robinson represented Norris Electric Cooperative in Washington, D.C., during the annual "Youth to Washington" Tour, June 17-24. This event, sponsored by the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois, began in the late 1950s to introduce rural youths to our democratic form of government and cooperatives.

The students met with Congressman Tim Johnson on Capital Hill and were among 61 rural Illinois youth leaders selected for the trip. In addition to the Capitol, students also visited Arlington National Cemetery, the National Cathedral, the Smithsonian Museums, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the World War II Memorial, the newly dedicated Native American Indian Museum and a number of other historical sites.



Pictured from left are Steffey, Congressman Johnson and Tapella.

### Casey Steffey – Illinois Youth Leadership Council Winner

One other highlight of the "Youth to Washington" tour was the selection of the Illinois representative on the Youth Leadership Council of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Every year one of the Illinois tour participants is elected to a 12-month YLC term. We are very proud to announce that Casey Steffey was elected as the Illinois representative this year.

To be eligible to be elected for the YLC, the participant must have at least one year remaining in high school. Finalists were selected by the tour director and



Casey Steffey (center) is Illinois' Youth Leadership Council representative. She is pictured with Youth Tour Director John Freitag and Tour Coordinator Linda Comstock.

chaperones on the basis of the application and essay. After giving a speech to her peers, Casey was elected by paper ballot on Saturday evening during a meeting of all tour participants.

Casey will represent the Illinois cooperatives during several events and meetings during the year-long tour. These events include:

- Youth Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., July 2005;
- AIEC Annual Meeting in Springfield, July 2005;
- NRECA Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA, February 2006;
- Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperative Youth Day, April 2006.

All expenses incurred by the YLC representative during these meetings will be the responsibility of the NRECA and the AIEC. Congratulations, Casey!

# Dedicated Directors

## Training is Important for Today's Board Members

Just as electric cooperatives have changed in the past 50-plus years, so has the job of your co-op board of directors. Gone are the days when the only duty of a board member was to attend a monthly meeting at the local cooperative. Back then, directors never considered there'd ever be a need to travel out of town to further their education, or to take classes dedicated to governance and the board's role in writing co-op policy.

Today, being a member of your co-op's board involves many more things. Elaborate engineering as well as regulatory and demographic changes have reshaped the electric utility business into what it is today – a complicated mix of legal and governmental issues. And in order to stay current on what issues are affecting your co-op, it is imperative that directors work at continuing their electric co-op education.

"If we don't stay on top of the issues currently affecting our co-op today, we won't be knowledgeable enough to adopt effective policies on behalf of our members," says Kent Hetzer, board President for Norris Electric Cooperative.

It's the duty of the manager of the cooperative to run the co-op business, but it is the job of the board members to set the policies that govern *how* your cooperative is run. Without education, your cooperative's board would not be qualified to make sound decisions about matters affecting the operations and everyday business of the cooperative, including its financial condition, risks, opportunities, industry and regulatory changes, and performance measures.

"Ongoing education and training is the most valuable way of ensuring the board of directors continue to be effective

leaders during times of change," says Frank Draper, board member for Norris Electric Cooperative.

There are two continuing education certificates that an electric cooperative director can earn. The Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) Certificate is earned first, and it can then be followed with the Board Leadership Certificate.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) CCD curriculum was developed in the 1950s. The courses involved hadn't changed much until Congress adopted the Energy Policy Act in 1992. That created a turning point in the electric utility industry by opening the wholesale power market to competition. For the first time ever, wholesale power providers were not automatically dictated by service territories and state and regional boundaries.

Directors wanted more information, so in 1995, NRECA revamped its program and introduced new board leadership courses and advanced classes for directors who had already achieved the CCD certificate in the past. Then in 1998, the program was revised once more into

what it is today - five one-day courses, which include Director Duties and Liabilities, Understanding the Electric Business, Board Roles and Relationships, Strategic Planning, and Financial Decision-Making.

After earning their CCD certificate, directors are encouraged to enroll in advanced courses that focus on the latest topics challenging the co-op world. These courses are issue-driven and have varied from year to year. This year, there are 11 classes, running from a half-day to three days, each worth one to three credits. Directors who complete 10 credits then earn the Board Leadership Certificate.

"So much of the job of an electric cooperative director has changed," says Larry Seals, board Vice President for Norris Electric Cooperative. "I felt it was very necessary to earn my CCD to keep up with all the changes in the industry."

So even though the duties of an electric cooperative board member have changed through the years, their goal has never faltered: To provide the best and most informed cooperative decisions on behalf of you ... the owners.

## 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 relat-

ing 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](http://www.norriselectric.com).

# Make Sure Your Home Is Ready To Beat The Heat

IEC offers tips to improve electrical efficiency and safety

As the mercury rises, energy use and costs typically rise as well.

There are many simple, economical ways to boost comfort, save energy, and reduce electric bills, according to the Illinois Electric Council (IEC).

“There are easy energy-saving steps that can pay for themselves relatively quickly,” says Molly Hall, IEC Executive Director. “Weather stripping and caulking are examples of inexpensive ways to improve efficiency and cut energy costs year round.

A considerable portion of total residential energy costs is spent cooling homes. Reduce energy costs and prepare the air conditioner with a cleaning and tune-up. It also is important to clean or change filters monthly during the cooling season. An efficiently running cooling system will save dollars. If you are purchasing a new unit check the efficiency rating, or SEER. The higher the SEER number the more effective the air conditioner. For greater operating efficiency install unit in a shady area, and keep free of plant overgrowth and debris.

Ventilate the attic and check insulation. Adequately sized vents and/or an attic fan can help keep hot air from building up. If your attic has less than 6 to 8 inches of insulation, consider adding more. Proper attic insulation can save up to 30 percent of your cooling bill. Be sure the insulation does not block vents or cover exhaust fans.

Another inexpensive way to keep cool and reduce air conditioning costs is to use ceiling and oscillating fans to create a “wind chill” effect. The moving

air makes the temperature feel cooler, and allows a higher air conditioner thermostat setting while maintaining cooling comfort. For each 1-degree increase in the thermostat setting, cooling costs can be lowered by about 3 percent.

Follow these operating tips for greater energy efficiency and lower air conditioning costs:

- Install a timer or programmable thermostat to increase and decrease the temperature automatically. Leave it on a higher temperature while you're away, and set it to cool the house half an hour before you return home.
- Turn off lights, televisions, and computers when not in use.
- Make sure heat-producing appliances like televisions and lamps are away from the thermostat. They will increase the temperature near the thermostat and cause the air conditioner to run when it is not needed.
- Plan to do hot work—washing and drying clothes, cooking and baking—during cooler morning and evening hours.
- Keep your kitchen cooler by cooking in a microwave oven, or grill outdoors.

Increased summer electric demands do not only place a strain on budgets, they also can place a severe strain on your home's electrical system – a dangerous shock and fire hazard. Flickering or dimming lights, TV or computer monitors; or frequent circuit breaker trips, are signs of an overloaded electri-



cal system or faulty wiring that should be checked immediately by a professional.

Homeowners can take simple electrical safety precautions that can prevent overloaded outlets and serious damage and injury. Avoid using extension cords, and don't use multiple plugs in outlets. Check plugs and electric cords for fraying or cracks, and never run cords across high-traffic areas, behind curtains or baseboards, or underneath rugs or furniture.

The IEC and its Safe Electricity program offer information year round to help consumers use electric energy efficiently and safely. For more information and tips to help cut costs and improve home safety, visit the Web sites [www.IECouncil.org](http://www.IECouncil.org) and [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

# NEW LOW RATES ON LONG DISTANCE

Billed by Power Net Global Communications  
utilizing the Qwest Long Distance Network (The nation's 4<sup>th</sup> 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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Office hours: 8 a.m. — 4:30 p.m

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## Electric News

## A Change for Grain Bins and Cabins

There has always been an issue regarding seasonal electrical usage. These consumers are sometimes called "Intermittent Users of Electricity". In the past some members have asked for their grain bins to be disconnected after harvest and cabin owners have asked to be disconnected after summer. They did this in order to stop paying the minimum monthly bill when they were not using electricity. At first glance this seems to make sense. Why would you want to pay for something that you were not using?

The thing to remember is that the cooperative continues to have costs associated with your service as long as the facilities remain. The poles, wires, and transformers must be maintained and everything made available to you when you want the service reconnected. This would even include facilities that are not too

close to that service but are used to serve that location. If a member disconnects to avoid paying the minimum bill then the other members are paying that cost so the disconnected member can have service when requested. It is hard to make sure everyone pays their fair share but we try to accomplish just that!

So, starting January 1, 2006, when an Intermittent User of Electricity requests their service be disconnected and then reconnects it within a one year period there will be a reconnection fee equal to the minimum monthly bills that were not paid during that period of disconnection. This would mainly apply to grain bins and cabins. This policy would make it unnecessary to ask for a disconnect because the cost would be the same whether the service was disconnected or not, unless there would be some other electrical usage during



**Grain bins and cabins must now pay a reconnection fee if service is disconnected and reconnected within one year. This new policy will assure that every member pays their fair share for electric service.**

those slow months. Of course, if the service was going to be disconnected for more than a year then a disconnection might be the best course of action.

Please call the office at (618) 783-8765 if you have questions about this new policy.

## Ready for Fast Internet?

WildBlue High Speed Internet Service is now available through Norris Electric Cooperative! Call (618) 783-8765 for more details or to schedule your installation.

## Vegetation Control Schedule

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

### Lawrence County

### Richland 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](http://www.norriselectric.com).



# Casey Popcorn Festival

Looking for some good family fun over the Labor Day weekend? Why not take a short drive to Casey, Illinois for their 17<sup>th</sup> annual Popcorn Festival.

The fun begins on Saturday, September 3 and continues through Monday, September 5 with a carnival, an arts and crafts fair, food vendors, and a petting zoo. There will be three shows daily of magic, exotic animals, and chainsaw carvers. Saturday afternoon will feature live music and a motorcycle cruise-in. On

Sunday there will be a car show, a Longaberger basket weaver, a garden tractor pull, a Little Miss/Mr./baby pageant, more live music and Kyle Finley's Live Line Electrical Safety Show at 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, and 7:00 p.m. Monday's events include an antique tractor pull, a horse pull, Bessie bingo and Kyle Finley's show at 12:00, 2:00, and 4:00 p.m. Norris Electric Cooperative is proud to be a co-sponsor for Kyle's informative demonstration which

highlights electric safety for the whole family. Other sponsors include Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative in Mattoon, EnerStar Power Corp. in Paris, Valley Electric of Vincennes, Hughes Supply in Mattoon, and Live Wire Electric of Casey.

For a complete listing of activities and their times, log onto the festival Web site at [www.popcornfestival.net](http://www.popcornfestival.net). And don't forget to enjoy all the FREE popcorn you can eat!!

## Look For That UL Label

By Laura Camper

Think of all the electrical appliances you have in your home: toaster, microwave oven, bread machine, can opener, food processor, garbage disposal, dishwasher, refrigerator, coffee maker - and that is just in the kitchen. It would be nice to know that all these products will operate for years safely and effectively, but how can you tell?

The first thing to look for is the Underwriters Laboratories label. The UL label, the letters UL inside a circle, means the product has undergone testing to ensure safety and reliability. The label can be found attached to the power cord or often stamped onto the body of the appliance.

Underwriters Laboratories, Incorporated, an independent, not-for-profit organization, has been testing products since 1894 in order to ensure the public's safety and has developed more than 800 safety standards.

While the UL standards are not mandated by the government, John Drengenberg, Consumer Affairs Manager of Underwriters Laboratories, says if they are not met the manufacturer will not be able to display the UL label on its product and most retailers won't stock a product without the UL label.

UL representatives make visits to manufacturers to check samples of their product and make sure they meet the safety standards of the UL. Drengenberg says, "We test for various safety hazards. We look for fire hazards, electrical shock hazards, mechanical hazards such as sharp edges, and even radiation hazards (in microwave ovens)."

The UL tests for normal use and abnormal

abuse of products. For instance, one of the basic tests is to drop a hair dryer several times to see if it will break open and expose live wires that could injure the consumer.

Even after a product has been certified safe, UL representatives continue random checks to make sure it is still a safe, reliable product. If the product fails to meet safety standards later, the UL label will be removed unless the manufacturer corrects the problem.

UL tests 19,000 categories of products such as hairdryers, vacuum cleaners, and televisions. Occasionally, representatives come across a category of products that does not meet UL's minimum safety requirements. One such product category is the turkey fryer. In these cases, the UL uses the media to get the word out. Information has been sent out in press releases and published on the UL Web site explaining the hazards of using a turkey fryer and why the UL mark is not on these products at this time. Drengenberg says, "However, there are very, very few products that we have that situation with."

UL has laboratories all over the world, including one in Northbrook, IL and tests products internationally. The corporate mission is to ensure that safe products reach the consumer. So if you're looking for safe and reliable products, look for that UL label.

If you would like more information about recalls, safety standards, and consumer safety tips, visit the UL Web site at [www.ul.com/](http://www.ul.com/) and click on the Consumers tab.

**Norris Electric Cooperative will be closed on Monday, September 5 for the Labor Day Holiday.**

# Recognize Farm Electrical Hazards

**D**uring the rush of harvest, or everyday hurry to beat a storm cloud, it's easy to make a mistake with heavy farm equipment. That split second mistake could cost someone you love his or her life. Operating farm equipment near energized power lines can be especially dangerous. Take a few minutes to review the following safety tips with your family and employees.

Four common on-farm electrical risks are listed below to get your discussion started. The first hazard is associated with overhead power lines, while the others describe unsafe wiring inside buildings.

## 1. Raising Tall Equipment Into Overhead Lines

Everyone on the farm needs to understand that overhead power lines are not insulated. Each year, dozens of people are killed or permanently injured as tall farm equipment accidentally touches a line. Of particular concern are grain augers, hay stackers, combines, fold-up cultivators, tractor front loaders, and portable irrigation pipe.

Consider the location of power lines on your farm, particularly those that cross heavily traveled areas or pathways to fields. Make sure everyone understands that these areas are potential hazards, and knows the clearance height of tall equipment.

## 2. Trees, Buildings, and Hay Stacks Near Power Lines

Children, in particular, are at greater risk if they are in a tree, on a roof, or on stacks of hay located under power lines. Show children these potential danger areas to avoid. For storing hay and lumber or any material, find other areas away from overhead lines. In fact, it is best not to



**Don't make this mistake. Stay clear of guy wires. Accidentally hitting guy wires weakens the support for utility poles. Know the height of all equipment and stay at least 10 feet away from overhead lines. Never attempt to raise or move a downed power line.**

use the 10-foot area around any power line as a travel route or storage area.

## 3. Undersized and Worn Extension Cords

The circuits in homes and farm buildings are protected from overheating by a fuse or circuit breaker. But an extension cord has no protection. If an undersized cord is asked to carry more current than its wire size can handle, there's nothing to keep the wires from overheating and possibly starting a fire.

Replace any light duty extension cords that serve multiple appliances, or have worn or brittle insulation. Avoid running cords under rugs, because this traps in heat and adds to the risk of fire.

## 4. Deteriorated Wiring in Farm Buildings

Special wiring materials and methods are needed in agricul-

tural buildings, particularly those housing livestock and poultry. Moisture, dust, and corrosive vapors from animal manure can cause conventional wiring (used in homes) to prematurely deteriorate. Inadequate wiring increases the risk of a fire. At the very least, the result could be a power outage. This can interrupt ventilation fans in confined poultry or swine buildings, causing devastating losses.

Keep yourself and your loved ones safe by recognizing those situations that invite an electrical accident. Even though electricity is our safest form of energy, it must be understood and respected. Most accidents are preventable, it just takes a few minutes of family education and discussion.

*Source: National Food and Energy Council. [www.nfec.org](http://www.nfec.org).*



# Back to school is a time for new beginnings

The beginning of a new school year is a good time to talk with your children about ways to make the following year fun, safe and successful. By planning ahead and establishing guidelines, you can help reduce your child's anxieties about starting the new school term.

## ■ Bedtime routine

Establish a bedtime and the best time to get up in the morning. Allow time for breakfast as well as a cushion for unexpected surprises. Prepare for the next day before going to bed each night. Lay out clothes, including socks and shoes, backpack including books, supplies, workbooks, completed homework assignments, signed notes to be returned to the teacher, and lunch money (or have a prepared sack lunch in the refrigerator). If the child is participating in after-school activities, make sure to pack any necessary items for those events.

## ■ Central calendar

Include children's and parent's schedules on a central calendar. If you have a home computer, you can enter the week's activities on the calen-

dar within your e-mail system, and print copies for each family member. Or buy your child a simple pocket calendar with a phone section, that he/she can carry to school. Encourage him/her to keep the calendar updated with project deadlines. This helps to form good planning skills. Include contact and emergency phone numbers.

## ■ Communication

Keep communication open with your child and with teachers. Talk with your child about their day, know who his/her friends are and if there are any problems with school work or relationships. Introduce yourself to teachers and stay in touch. Call or send notes occasionally to let the teacher know you are interested in knowing the child's progress. Be involved in your child's school and studies.

## ■ Safety

Talk to your child about safety when boarding and unloading the school bus. If your child will be alone after school, set strict rules about reporting in when he/she gets home, taking phone calls, answering the door, having friends over and cooking. Before

allowing your child to be alone after school, give serious consideration to other alternatives.

## ■ Talk about avoiding temptations

Talk to your child about drugs, drinking, smoking and other temptations. Set clear rules and discuss in advance the consequences of breaking them.

## ■ Study habits and homework

Provide books, supplies and a special place for studying. Establish a routine time for study/homework, such as right after he/she gets home from school or immediately following dinner.

## ■ Overcoming school stress

Here are some ways to help your child overcome school stress:

1. Have realistic expectations.
2. Teach some simple relaxation techniques.
3. Identify their learning style and ways to learn information.
4. Provide nutritious meals.
5. Be consistent about bedtimes.
6. Cut down on chaos at home by preparing the night before.
7. Don't over-commit the child with too many extra activities.
8. Spend time having fun.
9. Help them prepare for tests and manage time wisely.
10. Be available to listen.

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## Electric News

### Bridging the Past at Love's Ford

In 1909, many residents living along the Embarrass River, just below the old Love's Ford, were skeptical of the bridge crossing the river's banks. The durability of a concrete bridge was untested as this bridge was one of the first built in the state. And it was rumored that the central pier stood over quicksand, on a concrete pavement that stretched from one bank to the other.

But the Love's Ford Bridge would prove its worth over time, surviving some terrible floods over the years. Nearly three tons could cross the bridge built for a price of \$3,875. It was built when steel could be purchased for \$30 a ton, concrete was only 20 cents a bag, and sand and gravel were free for the taking, right out of the riverbed below.

Laborers were paid about \$9 a week for a full week's work. A week consisted of six 10-hour days, which equates a worker's pay to about 15 cents an hour. The Wade Township and Jasper County split the bill and the bridge was operational in 1909. It then stood unchallenged for 95 years until 2004, when a new bridge was planned.

In September 2004, Feutz Contractors of Paris was awarded the contract to build the new Love's Ford Bridge for \$668,000. Engineering costs equaled \$60,000. This time, federal funds accounted for 80 percent of the bill, state funds covered 16 percent, and local government gave the remaining 4 percent. The 225-foot bridge was completed in July 2005.

I'm sure local residents have gazed at this bridge not with the same skeptical air of those in 1909, but with a sense of relief that the bridge can now hold 80,000 pounds and much wider machinery can pass across it. The bridge now has two



*Continued on page 16b*



piers in the water, and no one has mentioned quicksand this time! Other changes you may notice are the traditional guardrails and flatness of the bridge. The old bridge had short concrete sides and a small "hill" to it. It

also contained concrete arches gliding from pier to pier.

It is certainly a changing of times. This new bridge was built to support the large machinery we use today, carrying us across at greater speeds to farther away

destinations. And it will have to withstand floods just as the bridge before it. Hopefully it will do so with the same structural integrity and last for another 96 years. By then our needs may change again and a new bridge may be planned.



**N**orris Electric Cooperative Board members were on hand when Casey Steffey, this year's Illinois Youth Leadership Council delegate, was recognized for her achievement at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative's annual meeting. First row from left are General Manager Keith McKinney, Secretary Russell Scherer, Doyle Steffey, Casey Steffey, Jeanne Steffey, and Gordon McClure. Second row from left are President Kent Hetzer, Ron Viehman, Treasurer Dean Dietrich, Vice President Larry Seals, Larry Buser, and Delbert Mundt. Third row from left are Joe Helmink, Frank Draper and Keith Sherwood.



# MUMS THE WORD



“I see your mums are growing!” I can be heard at the Bruce Hosselton household around late August. In 1994, Bruce and his wife Jane purchased a home on seven acres on Route 33 between Oblong and Robinson. Having a background in agriculture, Mr. Hosselton wanted to find something to fill those bare acres. Then one day while reading a magazine, he ran across an article about a family who lived on a busy highway who raised mums to sell in the fall. The idea was quickly in full bloom.

After much research, the Hosseltons decided to give their green thumb a try. The first decision they had to make was how to grow the mums: in pots or in the ground. Because of the convenience in selling, they chose to grow the mums in pots. After purchasing the flowers, customers can leave the mums in the pots for fall decorating and gift giving or they can be taken out of the pots and planted in the ground. Another reason to plant in pots is the convenience of watering, fertilizing, and disease control.

The first year was a great learning experience but not very profitable. The second year, they increased their plants from 600 to 1,000 and had a successful season. Production has gradually increased to 2,500 mums.

While the mum business can be profitable, it comes with much hard work. Getting ready to plant and actually planting the mums is the most labor intensive job of raising them. The pots and a special potting mixture are purchased from a distributor in Indianapolis, while the mum plants come from Ohio. The 2,500 pots must all be filled and put into rows with a specific amount of space between each one so the irrigation system will fit correctly. While this is mostly a family business, at this step of the process junior high and high school students are hired to help.

The plants usually arrive the third week of June in bundles of 50, which are about the size of an onion bundle. The plants are relatively fragile when they arrive and the first two or three days are critical. It takes that much time

for the root system to become established to be able to nourish the plants, especially when the temperatures are in the 90s.

The planting process became much easier several years ago when a group of friends volunteered to help. It worked so well that it has become a yearly tradition. The type of payment that was settled on was free food and mums. Normally around 8-12 people come out in the evening and plant all the mums in about an hour and a half. The mums are planted in the evening because the heat of the day is stressful on the tender plants and the workers! After all the mums are planted, the watering system is set up.

One of the most essential steps in growing mums is keeping them watered. During the first few years, the Hosseltons’ watered with a garden hose and wand, which took several hours every day.

After more research, they developed a mechanical watering system with an individual dripper in each pot. This new system also has a fertilizer ejector built into it so every time the plant is watered, it is also fertilized,

*Continued on page 16d*



## MUMS THE WORD

*Continued from page 16c*

which ensures fast growing and large finished mums.

While the Hosseltons have developed time saving methods for easier growing, they face two major problems: insects and weather. It is a constant battle keeping insects away from the plants and the fear of an early frost is always on their minds.

Last year the Hosseltons added pumpkins to their business, which turned out to be a good addition to the mums. They plant four varieties of pumpkins and the public's favorite is the giant size. Because last summer was a wet one, many pumpkins grew as large as 100 pounds while the largest weighed in at 200 pounds! These were fun for both children and parents.

Living on a busy highway is a definite plus as it is like having a built-in billboard. As people drive by, they can watch the mums and pumpkins grow throughout the summer. A sign on the front lawn and a wooden wheel wagon full of mums and surrounded by pumpkins indicate the business is open for the season. The Hosseltons grow many varieties and colors of mums, so if you are in the area, stop by to pick out your favorite color of mum and that perfect pumpkin for your fall decorations.



**We'll keep the lights on for you  
if you'll keep the lights on for them.**

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*The power of human connections*

## Vegetation Control Schedule

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


**Lawrence County**  
**Richland County**

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

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

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## Electric News

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## Talking Turkey

*Don and Joe Zuber raise flocks of turkeys*

In the fall of the year, our thoughts turn to harvest, trees with their leaves turning brilliant colors of red, yellow, and orange, and Thanksgiving celebrations with family enjoying all the delicious aromas and mouth watering tastes of pumpkin pie and a turkey dinner. Have you ever wondered where that turkey comes from before you picked it out at your local grocery store? Some may have been grown very close to you at the Zuber Turkey Farm located in Richland County.

In the mid 1980s, brothers Don and Joe Zuber farmed together. They raised grain and hogs but felt they needed to diversify in order to support two families. At this time, Perdue Farms Incorporated at Washington, Indiana, had plans to move turkey production westward into Illinois and was seeking contract growers.

A contract grower does not own the turkeys. They are responsible for supplying the barns, equipment, labor, electricity, heating fuel, and all supplies needed to raise turkeys.

Perdue Farms, the turkey owners, provides the poults, feed, and guidance in growing them. A flock supervisor comes to the contract grower farm at least once a week to check on the health of the turkeys and answer any questions.

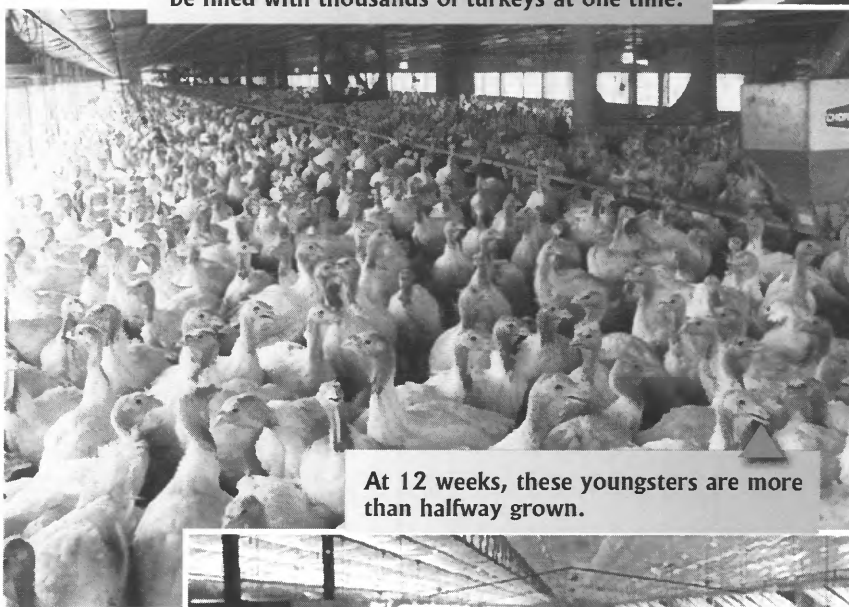
After much research and decision-making, Don and Joe decided to become contract growers for Perdue Farms. Three buildings, each 40 feet wide and 500 feet long were erected and equipment installed. One barn is the brooder barn, and the other two barns are grow-out barns.

In June 1987, the first flock of 27,000 hen poults, hatched that day, were delivered to Zu-

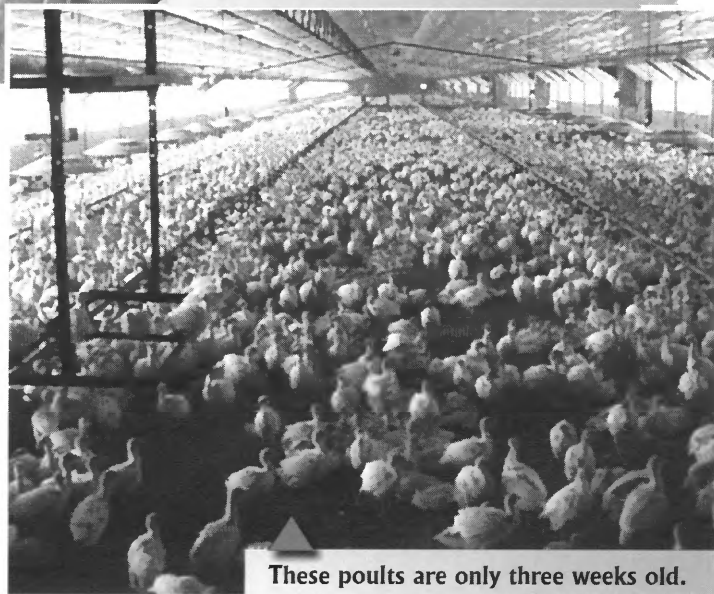
■ *Continued on page 16b*



The Zuber brothers' farm has five barns that can be filled with thousands of turkeys at one time.



At 12 weeks, these youngsters are more than halfway grown.



These poults are only three weeks old.

■ Continued from page 16a

ber Turkey Farm and placed in the brooder barn.

The brooder barn is used to brood the poults. Brooder rings, which are circular partitions, are set up with waterers and feeders and for the first four days of the poults life, it is housed in the ring, where the feeders are manually filled morning and evening.

After the four days, the brooder rings are removed and the birds are then free to roam the barns. Feeders are manually filled until day 10, and after this time the Zubers use the automatic feeding system. A fence is erected in the middle of the barn to keep each half of the flock separated until they are 6 to 7 weeks old.

At this time they are moved (walked) over to the grow-out barns using a tunnel type building built between each barn. Each grow-out barn houses one half of the original flock. This gives them plenty of room to grow. While in the grow-out barns, the turkeys have feed and water at all times from an automatic feeding and watering system. Large numbers of fans are used for ventilation to maintain air quality in the turkey barns.

After the turkeys are moved to the grow-out barns, the brooder house is cleaned out.

Wood shavings used in the barns for litter is removed. The walls and equipment are pressure washed. The barns are set back up with litter and equipment, and the process continues again with another flock being brooded.

After each flock in the grow-out barns have been marketed, each barn has to be cleaned by de-caking the litter and pressure washing walls and equipment so it is ready for the next flock that has been growing in the brooder barn.

Don and Joe have raised both hen and tom turkeys. A hen turkey is raised for 13 weeks and reaches an average weight of 15 pounds, while a tom turkey takes 19 weeks and weighs an average of 40 pounds.

In 1999 Don and Joe decided to expand their operation. They added two additional barns, so now the process continues with one brooder barn and four grow-out barns. When all five barns are full with three flocks of tom turkeys, there are around 37,500 turkeys on the farm. They can eat up to three semi loads or 75 tons of feed per week. In the summertime, the farm can use up to 10,000 gallons of water per day.

There is very little down

time between flocks. With three flocks in different stages of growth, birds are placed every eight weeks.

By the time they reach slaughter age, which takes 19 weeks, the turkeys have grown from a just hatched poult to a 40 or more pound tom turkey. Perdue Farms, Inc. calls with the date and time for loading out the full-grown turkeys. These turkeys arrived on the farm in a box truck in a small crate that housed 100 poults each and will leave the farm on 12 semi-trailers. They are loaded at night, so that they will arrive at the processing plant for slaughter the next day. It takes eight to 12 hours to load a flock of turkeys.

Perdue Farms, Inc. supplies the trucks and manpower to load the birds onto the trucks. Zuber Turkey Farm has to supply manpower to move the birds forward in the barns so they can be loaded on a conveyor belt and then lifted to each level to be placed in cages on the semi-truck for transporting back to the processing plant.

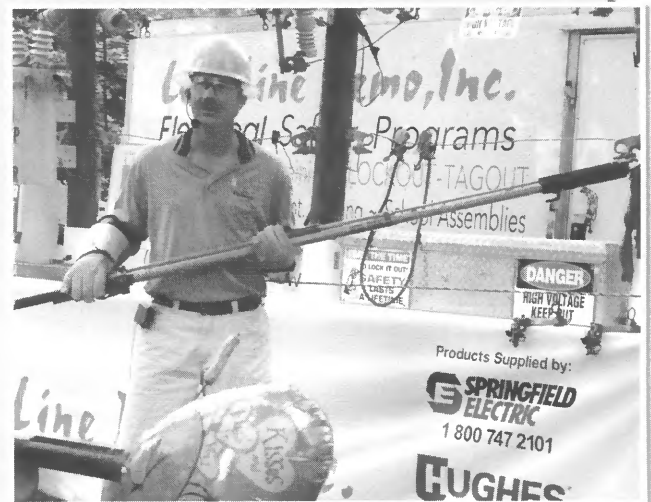
Zuber Turkey Farm averages seven and a half flocks in a one-year period, which equates to more than 3 million pounds of turkey being raised on their farm.

## Bring Your Family to an Electrifying Safety Demonstration

**K**yle Finley of Live Line Demo, Inc. will present two demonstrations at Lincoln Trail College, Robinson, IL on Tuesday, November 22, 2005, at 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Kyle's program demonstrates the dangers of working or playing around electric lines with 7,200 volts surging through them and proper steps to take to be safe. His display is constructed with the same poles, transformers, and hardware that are used by your local cooperative.

Both demonstrations are open to the public and free of charge. This is a co-sponsored event with Marathon, AmerenCIPS, and Norris Electric Cooperative.





# Students Encouraged to Apply for 2006 IEC Memorial Scholarships

Norris Electric Cooperative's General Manager, Keith McKinney, has announced that for the eleventh consecutive year, the Illinois electric cooperatives will award academic scholarships to high school seniors. The five scholarships are being awarded through the Illinois Electric Cooperative's (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

High school seniors pursuing a college education anywhere in the United States are eligible to participate in the program. Three \$1,250 scholarships will be awarded to the son or daughter of an electric cooperative member. A fourth \$1,250 award will go to the son or daughter of an electric cooperative director or employee. A fifth scholarship of \$1,250 will be reserved for use at a two-year Illinois community college, and sons and daughters of electric cooperative members, employees and directors are eligible. Deadline for applications to be returned to the cooperative is January 1, 2006.

"The purpose of the scholarship program is to assist electric cooperative youth while honoring past rural electric leaders through memorial gifts," said McKinney. "Norris Electric Cooperative and the other



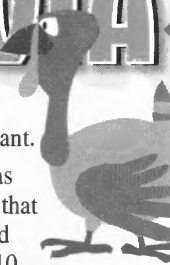
*Deadline for applications to be returned to the cooperative is Jan. 1, 2006.*

Illinois electric cooperatives want to make a difference in their communities. One of the best ways we can do that is by lending a hand to our youth."

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

The IEC Memorial Scholarship Program was established in 1994 by the board of directors of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. For further information in the IEC Memorial Scholarship Program, contact Norris Electric Cooperative at (618) 783-8765, or see your high school guidance counselor.

## TURKEY TRIVIA



- The turkey is a variety of the pheasant.
- Fossil evidence has been dated to show that turkeys have roamed America for about 10 million years.
- Ben Franklin suggested the national bird be a turkey and not the bald eagle.
- Domesticated turkeys cannot fly. Wild turkeys can fly for short distances up to 55 miles per hour and can run 25 miles an hour.
- Only tom turkeys gobble. The hens make a clicking noise.
- In 1970 the average American ate 8.2 pounds of turkey, in 1980 that number jumped to 10.3 pounds and since the early 1990s turkey consumption has been about 17-18 pounds.
- Reasons for increased consumption: turkey is high in protein and low in fat and cholesterol.
- 91 percent of Americans eat turkey at Thanksgiving.
- The top five ways to eat leftover turkey are: sandwiches, soup or stew, salad, casserole, and stir fry.
- Age is a determining factor in taste. Old, large males are preferable to young toms (males) as tom meat is stringy. The opposite is true for females: old hens are tougher.
- Turkeys have great hearing, but no external ears. They have excellent vision and can see in color. They also have an excellent sense of taste but a poor sense of smell.
- Turkeys can drown if they look up when it is raining and they can also have heart attacks.
- The ballroom dance known as the Turkey Trot was named for the short, jerky steps a turkey makes.

Source: *factmonster.com* and *norbest.com*

## CLOSING DATES

Norris Electric Cooperative will be closed on Friday November 11 for Veteran's Day and Thursday, November 24 and Friday, November 25 for Thanksgiving.

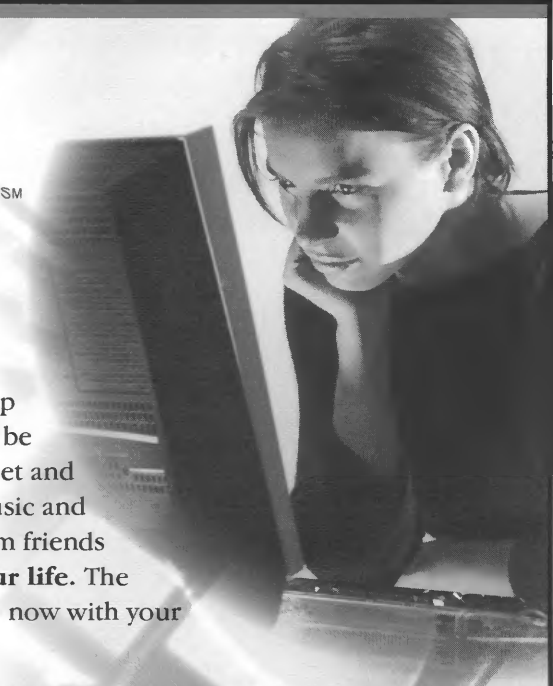






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Upload Speed	up to 128 Kbps	up to 200Kbps	up to 256 Kbps
Email Addresses	5 email addresses	5 email addresses	10 email addresses
Web Space	10 MB	10MB	20MB
Dial-up Access (10 hrs/Month)	Optional	Optional	Included
24/7 technical Support	Included	Included	Included
Equipment Price with standard Installation	\$299.00	\$299.00	\$299.00
Equipment Limited Warranty	Included	Included	Included

**Sign up now with your nearest participating WildBlue dealer**

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## Vegetation Control Schedule

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

- Lawrence County
- Richland County

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

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## Electric News

### Local Electric Co-op Directors Achieve Credentials in Today's Electric Utility Competencies

Four directors from Norris Electric Cooperative in Newton received the Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Larry Buser of Palestine, Dean Dietrich of Dundas, Russell Scherer of Sumner and Larry Seals of Mt. Carmel were recognized at NRECA's Region V meeting for their commitment to education and attainment of the certificate before an audience of more than 1,000 electric cooperative officials from 14 states, including Illinois.

Today's electric utility environment imposes new demands on electric cooperative directors, particularly increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a working knowledge of the cooperative principles. Norris Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors has a commitment to work through NRECA to sharpen this body of knowledge for the benefit of their electric cooperative consumer-owners.

The NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director, or CCD, program requires attendance and demonstrated understanding of the basic competencies contained in five core courses: Director Duties and Liabilities; Understanding the Electric Business; Board Roles and Relationships; Strategic Planning; and Financial Decision Making.



From left, Russell Scherer of Sumner, Larry Buser of Palestine, Larry Seals of Mt. Carmel and Dean Dietrich of Dundas join Kent Hetzer as Certified Credentialed Directors at Norris Electric Cooperative in Newton. Scherer, Buser, Seals and Dietrich were recently honored at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Region V meeting for their commitment to education and attainment of the certificate.

The NRECA Region V meeting is the second in a series of seven 2005 Regional Meetings convened by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. The Regionals continue the association's grassroots policymaking process, which begins at the local co-op level and culminates at NRECA's Annual Meeting, to be held in Orlando, Florida, February 14-22, 2006. Visit NRECA's Web site at [www.nreca.coop](http://www.nreca.coop).

NRECA represents the nation's more than 900 private, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, which provide electric service to nearly 40 million

people in 47 states.

Norris Electric Cooperative is a member of Touchstone Energy® — an alliance of more than 600 local, consumer-owned electric utilities around the country. Norris Electric is committed to providing superior service based on four core principles: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. The co-op serves more than 18,572 members over 3,992 miles of line in parts of Clark, Crawford, Cumberland, Effingham, Jasper, Lawrence, Richland and Wabash counties. [www.norriselectric.com](http://www.norriselectric.com).

# Norris Lends a Helping Hand

On Friday, September 23, the Louisiana Statewide Cooperative Association put out the call for help to the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives asking Illinois to send any and all men and equipment that they could spare to help with the damage that was sure to come from the approaching hurricane Rita. So on Monday, September 26, Joe Sowers, Doug Casey, Chris Hildebrand, Bill Fields, Arnie Johnson, and Greg Cotton left Norris Electric in Newton for Jefferson Davis Electric Cooperative in Jennings, Louisiana.

When they arrived they were housed in a "tent city" located at an Air Force Base. Jefferson Davis' area of the tent city consisted of five tents housing 700 people and a mess tent. Showers

and laundry facilities were in semi trailers parked close by. The tents were cooled by air conditioning units that helped keep the humidity and temperatures at a tolerable level. Arnie Johnson commented, "The worst thing about the trip was the smell of decaying livestock and the best thing was the food. The food was prepared on site by some great Cajun cooks!"

The six-man crew from Norris Electric Cooperative helped to clear trees blown onto power lines and then rebuild miles of the downed lines. The men returned home on October 6.



## Strolling Into Retirement

In 1961 when Rick Strole was between his sophomore and junior years in high school, he took his Dad's advice and accepted an after school and summer job at Norris Electric Cooperative. Little did Rick know then that he would spend his entire working career at the same place. Rick started mowing the grass and sweeping floors during high school, then after graduation he was hired full time. Rick has worked with the spray crew, the tree trimming crew, the construction crew, and then as a lineman.

Rick and his wife, Eileen, have been married for 41 years and have two children, Todd and Tiffany, and five grandchildren. Eileen also plans to retire from her job at the Peoples State Bank at the end of the year. After retiring, Rick wants to spend more time enjoying his hobbies of hunting, fishing, and shooting sporting clays. "The REA Man" as Rick is affectionately known in the office, said he will miss all the people he works with but plans to enjoy every minute of his retirement!

A cake and coffee reception in Rick's honor was enjoyed by his family, friends, and co-workers on his last day of work, Friday, October 7, 2005. We'll miss you Rick!



Rick Strole's family joined him at the retirement party given by his coworkers. From left are his wife Eileen, Rick, his son Todd, and his parents Lois and Neil.

## OFFICE CLOSING

Our office will be closed Friday, December 23 and Monday, December 26 for Christmas and Friday, December 30 and Monday, January 2 for the New Year.



# Illinois Touchstone Energy® Co-op Message Seen by 600,000

Illinois Touchstone Energy cooperatives demonstrated the power of human connections sponsoring four events this past summer. The Special Olympics Summer Games, the Centralia Balloon Fest, the Farm Progress Show and the Illinois Tractor Pulling Association (ITPA) promoted the cooperative brand's four core values of integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. The cooperatives were able to showcase innovative products, services and the cooperative business model to more than 600,000 attendees at these events.

## ■ Illinois Tractor Pulling Association

For more than five years, the Illinois Touchstone Energy cooperatives have been sponsors for the Illinois Tractor Pulling Association (ITPA) circuit. The tractors and trucks roar down the track from Mid-June through Mid-September each year, participating in more than 80 events throughout Illinois and neighboring states. Each pulling vehicle displays a Touchstone Energy decal and several Touchstone Energy signs are strategically positioned along the track. Tractor pulling is one of the biggest draws to county fairs, and Touchstone Energy is happy to help keep the tradition alive.

## ■ Special Olympics

Special Olympics is the charity of choice for Illinois Touchstone Energy cooperatives,

in keeping with the "commitment to community" core value. The Summer Games, held in Normal, Illinois on June 17-19, were a great success with lots of victories and smiles. Each year, Special Olympics Summer Games offer a venue for people with intellectual disabilities to compete in a range of sports, such as aquatics, athletics, Bocce ball, gymnastics, power lifting and soccer. The games give more than 3,500 people from across the state an opportunity to be an athlete for a day. Everyone who participates is a winner. Touchstone Energy sponsored the power-lifting venue at this year's Summer Games.

## ■ Farm Progress Show

Great weather, a new semi-permanent location in Decatur, and a well-run show helped to boost traffic in Touchstone Energy's three-lot exhibit during the Farm Progress Show, Aug. 30, 31 and Sept. 1. Live programs kept the Touchstone Energy tent jumping throughout the show. Energy efficiency expert Doug Rye, host of "Home Remedies" radio show, appeared live several times daily. And the electric safety program, "Live Line Demo," featuring former lineman Kyle Finley, generated plenty of excitement. A number of vendors brought in displays featuring geothermal technology, energy efficiency and safety. The co-ops also sponsored the Farm Progress Show's opening festivities each morning with a fly-over

of the Touchstone Energy Hot Air Balloon and the National Anthem sung by Decatur's Swingsations.

## ■ Centralia Balloon Fest

This year's Centralia Balloon Fest, held in Foundation Park, was blessed with perfect weather, and the Touchstone Energy Hot Air Balloon was there to show off its beautiful seven-story balloon. Saturday evening's balloon glow was a highlight of the weekend with 40 festive balloons participating. The brilliantly glowing balloons reflected in the park's lake, creating an even more dramatic effect. Pilot Cheri White said the great weather made it possible for her to participate in every scheduled flight, glow and race during the festival. Cheri is an excellent ambassador of the Touchstone Energy message.

Sponsoring these events was made possible by the Illinois Statewide Touchstone Energy fund, which pools funds from all 24 Illinois Touchstone Energy cooperatives. According to Touchstone Energy Regional Representative Nancy Nixon, "A single co-op wouldn't have the resources to support these events. Through cooperative effort, we're able to support events that are important to our communities. We're also able to collectively communicate a message that will help to increase public awareness of cooperatives and show how Touchstone Energy is helping co-op members and their communities."

## Vegetation Control Schedule

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

- Lawrence County
- Richland County

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

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



# Air Evac Lifeteam

**As a Norris Electric Cooperative member, you are entitled to a \$10 discount on the annual fees of a new life saving service to our area – Air Evac Lifeteam.**

**A**ir Evac Lifeteam was the first air ambulance company in the U.S. to offer a membership program for its service. Members pay a small annual fee, which entitles them to call the Air-Evac Lifeteam during medical emergencies. If Air-Evac Lifeteam transports a member for a life-or-limb threatening illness or injury, the member will not receive a bill for the flight. The annual fee is considered pre-payment of all covered flights-no matter how many times the member flies during that year. Air-Evac Lifeteam can

find you when seconds count. With a Global Positioning System (GPS) on board every aircraft, they can fly directly to your home day or night. Lifeteam employees fly a mini-emergency room directly to you and transport you to a hospital in lifesaving time. Air-Evac presently covers parts of 14 states. Norris Electric Cooperative is strategically located between three helicopter locations: Effingham, IL., Mt. Vernon, IL., and Washington, IN. For more information call: (800) 793-0010 or visit them at [www.lifeteam.net](http://www.lifeteam.net).



## Membership Registration Form

Get Code \_\_\_\_\_ Track Code 2935  
Plan Code 1016

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First: \_\_\_\_\_ MI: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

### List persons in your household other than yourself:

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP FEES for customers of Norris Electric Cooperative:

Single \$40/year • Couple \$45/year • Household (3 or more members) \$50/year

3-year \$135/single • \$150/couple • \$165/household

5-year \$225/single • \$250/couple • \$275/household

If paying by credit card, please complete the following information. If paying by personal check or money order, please enclose your payment with this form and mail to: Air Evac Lifeteam, PO Box 948, West Plains, MO 65775, or you may call 1-800-793-0010 to enroll immediately. Thank you for joining Air Evac Lifeteam!

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Cardholder Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_ Auth. Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Mastercard \_\_\_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_\_\_ Discover \_\_\_\_\_ American Express \_\_\_\_\_

### Conditions and terms of membership:

- Membership will become valid 15 days after registration is received with payment.
- Members are entitled to transport by an Air Evac Lifeteam (AEL) helicopter to the closest appropriate medical facility, for injuries that are deemed by an attending medical professional to be life- or limb-threatening, or that could lead to permanent disability.
- A patient's medical condition will dictate whether or not air transportation is in the best interest of the patient's health and well-being. In certain conditions of compromised health, AEL will have the sole responsibility for determining whether or not a patient is flown.
- AEL reserves the right to directly bill the appropriate benefits provider for services rendered. Members agree to remit to AEL any payment received from benefit providers for air medical services provided by AEL.
- AEL will not be responsible for payment for services provided by another air ambulance service.
- AEL membership is not an insurance policy, is non-refundable, and may not be transferred to other persons or families.
- Federal Aviation Administration restrictions prohibit AEL from transporting patients weighing over 400 pounds, or flying in inclement weather conditions. The primary determinant of whether to accept a flight regardless of the factor, be it patient size, weather conditions, or some other factor is always the safety of the patient and our medical flight crews.
- AEL services may not be available at the time of request for services due to factors beyond AEL's control, such as the use of the appropriate aircraft by another patient or circumstances governed by operational requirements such as regulations and maintenance.
- AEL members agree to arbitrate any and all claims, controversies or disputes against each other arising out of, or relating to, AEL membership even if the dispute arises after membership lapse. Arbitration would include any and all claims that an AEL member may bring against AEL's employees, agents, affiliates, or other representatives of the company. The Federal Arbitration Act applies to this agreement and its provisions, not state law, govern all questions of whether a claim is subject to arbitration.

I attest that the information provided in this application is complete and accurate. This authorization or a copy will be valid for 12 months from the date of signature. I understand that Air Evac Lifeteam reserves the right to deny my enrollment or may remove my enrollment from the Air Evac Lifeteam Program based on any misuse or abuse of the program.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_