

NORRIS

Your Touchstone Energy Partner



Electric News

Newton, Illinois 62448 • 783-8765

Norris Electric Co-op Raising Rates After 23 Years

There has been a lot of discussion and stories about higher electric rates in the last few months. Your rates will be going up and the following questions and answers should help to explain what you can expect to see from your cooperative. But first, here are the quick facts:

- Rates will increase on January 1, 2007 to allow a 10 percent overall increase to the cooperative's revenues.
- The average increase for the average residential consumer on January 1, 2007, will be around \$10 per month.
- Rates will probably increase again by 10 percent on January 1, 2008.

I have always heard that Norris Electric Cooperative has the lowest rates in the state. Is that still the case?

In general the cooperative has had the lowest rates in the state. However, you have to consider that some consumers use more than others and at some levels of use there are other cooperatives or utilities that could beat those prices. But in general you are right. Norris Electric rates have been the lowest or near the lowest for quite awhile. The increase in our rates should not impact that position in the state by too much.

kwh	Present Cost	New Cost	Difference
-	\$5.00	\$15.50	\$10.50
100	\$11.29	\$23.16	\$11.87
200	\$19.51	\$30.81	\$11.30
500	\$42.70	\$53.78	\$11.08
750	\$58.28	\$69.00	\$10.72
1,000	\$73.85	\$84.23	\$10.38
1,500	\$105.00	\$114.68	\$9.68
2,000	\$136.15	\$145.13	\$8.98
2,500	\$167.30	\$175.58	\$8.28
5,000	\$323.05	\$327.83	\$4.78
7,500	\$478.80	\$480.08	\$1.28
8,000	\$509.95	\$510.53	\$0.58
1,134	\$82.20	\$92.39	\$10.19

1,134 kwhs is the average usage for this class

There are over 40 other cooperatives, investor owned utilities, and municipal power systems. We should still be the lowest or near the lowest for the next several years. Every energy provider will be impacted by higher rates either now or in the near future. The biggest difference is the timing.

How does the Power Auction that was in the news relate to Norris Electric?

That auction was for the investor owned utilities in Illinois. Those auctions had an impact on those utilities of requiring

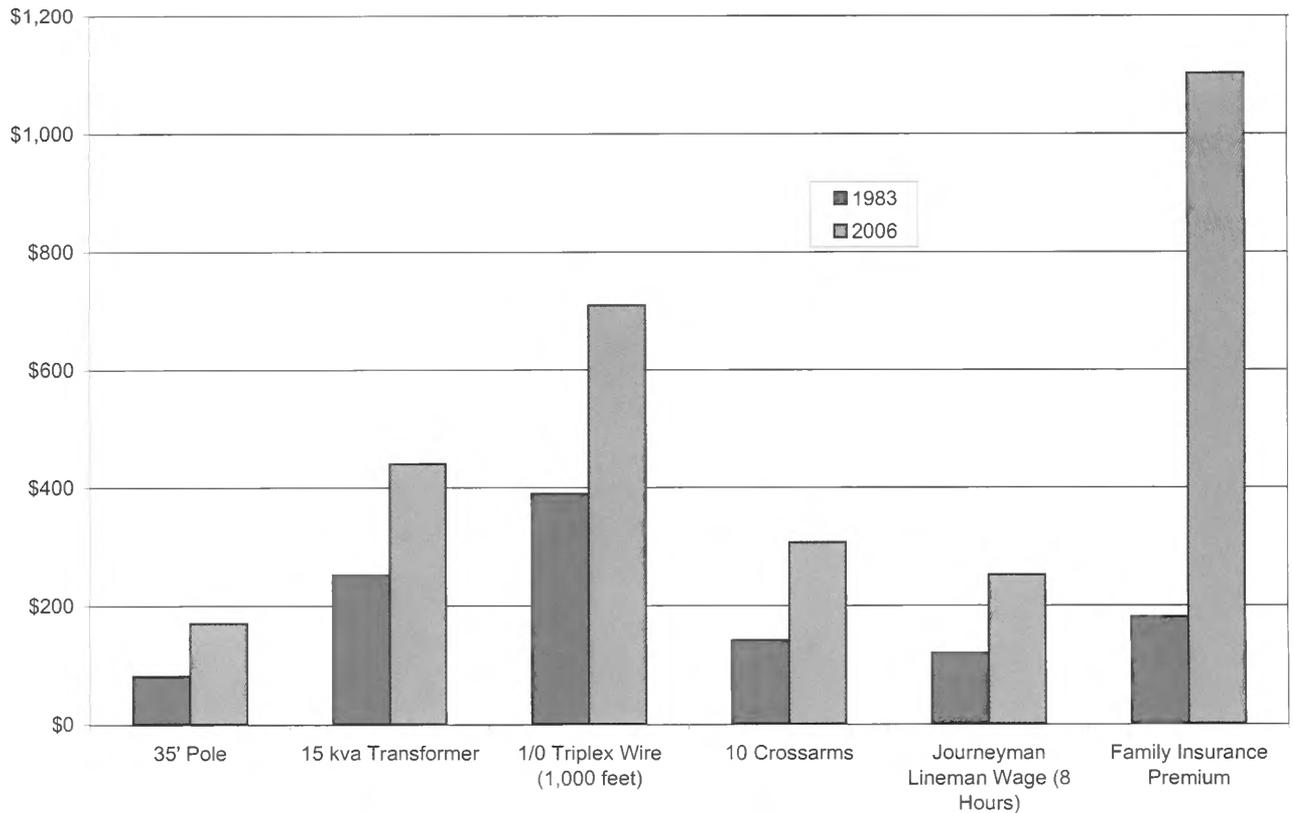
them to ask for anywhere from 40 percent to 55 percent more revenue from their customers. That auction does not have a direct impact on Norris Electric, but it could impact the market price and indirectly affect Norris Electric when another wholesale power agreement is negotiated.

If Norris Electric does not have to buy power through the power auction, how does the cooperative buy it?

Norris Electric has been buying power from CIPS and then their successor, Ameren, for many, many years. A wholesale

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1983 Costs vs. 2006 Costs



contract for this power is negotiated from time to time. Our present contract will expire soon and a new contract was signed two years ago that is effective in 2007 and runs through December of 2012.

When this new contract was negotiated the co-op's member elected board of directors looked at contracts with other providers and still felt that the Ameren proposal was the most economical for the co-op's members. As the contract nears the end of its term the cooperative will negotiate a new contract with Ameren or another wholesale energy provider.

Are the cooperative's rates going to rise like the investor owned utilities?

The cooperative's rates are going to rise. Presently it is anticipated that the increase will be approximately 20 percent overall. There will be a 10 per-

cent increase on January 1, 2007, and another 10 percent increase on January 1, 2008. The phased in rate increase should make it more gradual for our members. Norris hopes that the two years of increase will be enough, but a third year might be necessary. These increases should still be less than the investor owned utility rate increases.

Is every member's costs going up by 10 percent?

The cooperative needs an overall increase of 10 percent in 2007. By doing a cost of service study the co-op can tell what the rate of return is for each customer class such as residential, commercial or industrial. Those rates of return vary from class to class.

Our goal is to try to get each class paying their fair share so that the rate of return for each class is about the same. That part will never be perfect, but we try

to keep them close. Once you look at a particular class there will be some members that pay a little bit more or a little bit less than the average due to the different ways that they use energy. So the answer is no. Starting in January 2007 some members' rates will go up more than 10 percent and others will go up less than 10 percent. The overall increase for the cooperative will be 10 percent.

What does a 10 percent increase mean to me?

The overall increase to the cooperative's revenue is expected to be 10 percent after January 1, 2007. Most of our members are on rates that might be called residential rates. The present average cost for those accounts is around \$90 a month. Those accounts will increase approximately \$10 a month after January 1, 2007.

Why have power costs gone up?

There is a trend of rising costs for all energy sources. Coal and its transportation costs have gone up. Natural gas and propane prices are very volatile. We have seen gasoline and diesel fuel prices go up. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements have become more stringent and are expensive to meet. On top of that, material and labor are constantly going up.

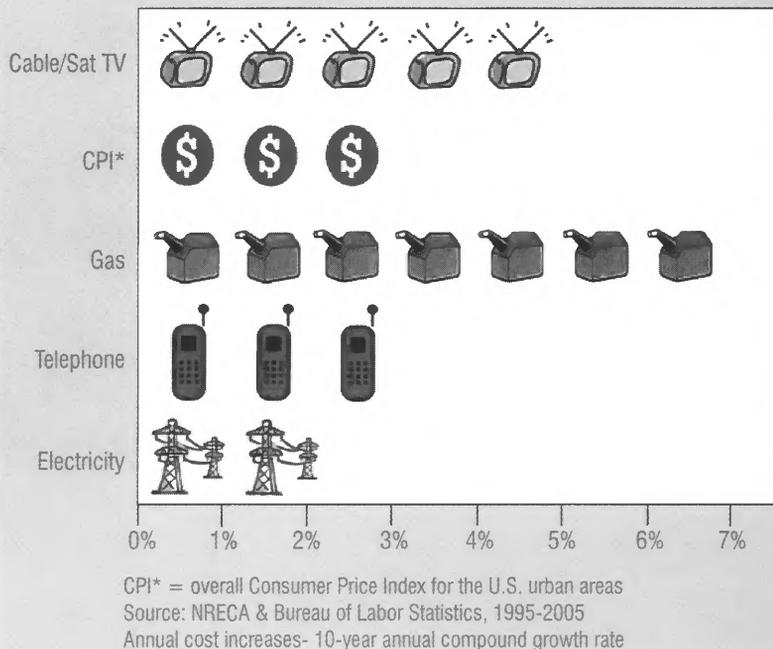
Norris Electric rates have been very stable until now. What does the future look like?

Norris Electric has not had a rate increase since 1983, over 23 years. In 1998 the fuel adjustment charge was placed at a constant amount and rolled into the rates, but there was not an overall increase. That is incredible. If you would start in 1983 and add a 1 percent increase every year since, the overall increase at the end of 2006 would have been more than 25 percent. How many things can you think of that have risen in price of 1 percent or less?

The cooperative believes that the increase after year two, January 1, 2008, could be the last increase until 2013, the time when a new wholesale contract will take effect. If, however, another is required in 2009, it should be quite a bit smaller and the overall increase for that three year period should still be around 25 percent or less, just as if we had increased rates 1 percent a year for the last 23 years.

Prior to 2013 the cooperative will negotiate another wholesale power contract with a provider for a period of 3 or more years. We are hoping for a stabilization of energy costs by then but we do not have a crystal ball.

Electricity is a good value



The news always talks about large profits for some of the large investor owned utilities. How large are the cooperative's profits and where do they go?

With nearly 19,000 members, the cooperative's revenues are sizable. However, the cooperative is a COOPERATIVE and also registered as a not-for-profit corporation with the Internal Revenue Service. If the revenues yield a profit or a margin, that excess is turned back to our members. Excess margins are called capital credits and are allocated to the members' capital credit account.

The co-op does not have stockholders to pay. Those margins, if not used to maintain or increase the cooperative facilities go back to our members as capital credits. The bottom line is that the co-op only charges what it takes to operate and returns any excess to the members, hence there are NO large profits!

What is this facilities charge that I have been hearing about?

The cost of electricity includes fixed costs and variable costs. The variable costs are mainly the wholesale cost of the electricity, while the fixed costs would include costs like the construction, maintenance, billing, and engineering expenses. In the past the co-op's rates contained a minimum bill that also purchased 40kw of electricity. The fixed costs were recovered that way and the member felt like he was getting something for his minimum bill. That method of collecting the fixed costs was not fair to all parties involved.

In the new rates the minimum bill is changed to a facilities charge that represents the fixed costs for that rate class. The facility charge does not include any energy. It is sometimes hard to understand, but even if someone does not use any electricity there are still fixed costs that are associated with their account.



Ice Storm Blankets Much Of Illinois

Parts of Illinois were covered with ice during a storm that hit November 30 and December 1, 2006. The storm left some members of Norris Electric Cooperative in the dark, but we were lucky, other co-ops in the state had two inches of ice that left thousands of members without power.

Corn Belt Energy in Bloomington was one such co-op, with more than 10,000 members out of power December 1. Norris

Electric Linemen Kent Benefiel, Stanley Brooks, Doug Casey and Scott Ghist went to Corn Belt Energy's aid. They left here Sunday, December 3 and returned home Friday, December 8, when Corn Belt Energy had all power restored.

Cooperation among cooperatives is one of the core principles that Norris Electric Cooperative was founded on. "Our linemen are very dedicated to keeping the lights on for our

members, and they understand how important it is to have extra help during this kind of storm. Our linemen were happy to help fellow cooperative linemen get power restored to their members. And we're happy to know that if a similar disaster strikes our area, other cooperatives will send crews to help us as well. It's just another benefit of being a cooperative," said Manager Keith McKinney.

Vegetation Control Schedule

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

**Lawrence County
Cumberland 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 1-877-783-8765 or 618-783-8765 during working hours. Our Web site is www.norriselectric.com.

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Electric News

Tree Trimming Helps Prevent Outages

At the end of November there was a massive ice and snow storm that disrupted electric power to thousands of people across Illinois and Missouri. Luckily, our members were spared from this storm and electric service for Norris Electric Cooperative was unaffected. Almost all electric utilities and cooperatives have a vegetation program or a forestry program to cut, trim or spray trees and vegetation under their overhead electric lines.

At Norris Electric we try to trim trees at least 10 feet from either side of the line and then straight up. So there may be a tree that is 20 feet from the line but if it has limbs within 10 feet of the line we would trim those limbs. In most case that is enough to help prevent outages due to falling tree limbs. In the case of an ice storm there could be entire trees that are quite a distance from our lines that could still fall on the lines. That is further complicated by ice being on the lines. With a large buildup of ice on the lines, if a limb falls on a line, there is a domino affect with the poles and it is not uncommon to have 20 or more poles snap and lines go down.

Once in a while, we may receive a complaint from a member when we trim trees because no matter how we do it, the appearance of the tree is altered. So we face a real dilemma. How much should we trim to protect our lines from possible damage



and how far back can we trim without annoying our members?

We elected to use the criteria of trimming and cutting 10 feet on either side of our line. As was seen during this last ice storm, it might help to go further back, but 10 feet seems to be a happy medium between what is ideal for the co-op and what members prefer.

What can Norris Electric do to reduce the chance of major outages due to an ice storm? We are trying very hard to get on a four-year rotation for vegetation control. That means that once we trim or spray in an area, we should be back in that area within four years to do it again. We are down to a six-year rota-

tion now but have taken steps to improve this schedule.

What can you the member do to help the cooperative? Do not plant trees under the power lines. Although we have Right of Way Easements that entitle us to clear the easement under our line, we like to do so with the cooperation of our members. Please try to be understanding when we trim the trees under our lines that are on your property.

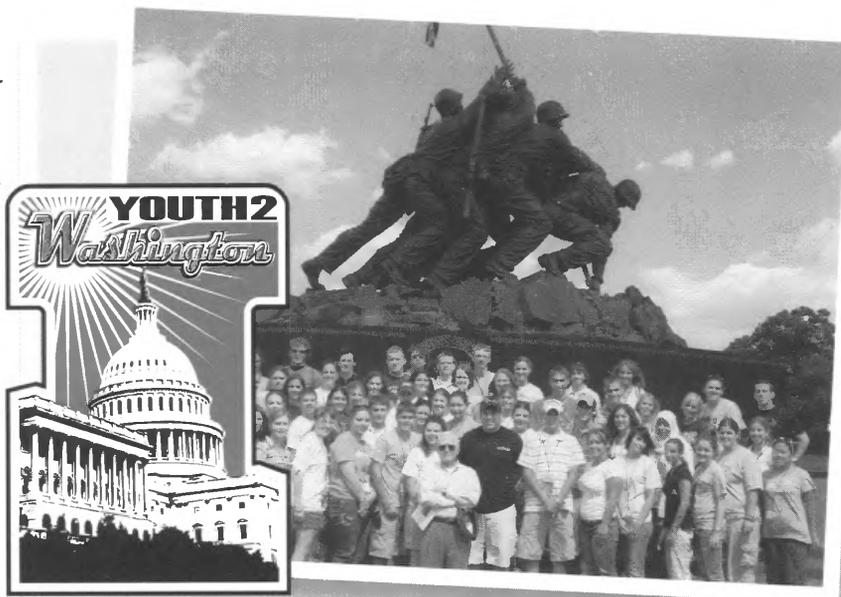
Our goal is to provide reliable electric service and that takes the cooperation of everyone. Let's not wait until Mother Nature takes down the trees and the power lines around them.

High School Juniors: Win a trip to Washington D.C.!!!

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

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

Since 1957, hundreds of future leaders have been introduced to government and the legislative process through this program. Many alumni of the program have gone on to leader-



ship positions in our communities and government. A current member of the Illinois General Assembly, State Representative Art Tenhouse, is a past member of the tour.

The "Youth to Washington" Tour is recognized as one of the

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

For more information, contact the cooperative office.

Wildblue Announces Successful Launch Of Wildblue-1

"We are pleased to announce the successful launch of our new satellite," said David Leonard, Chief Executive Officer of WildBlue.

"WildBlue has experienced tremendous growth since launching commercially in June of 2005, and with WildBlue-1, we will soon be able to make WildBlue service available to more than 750,000 rural consumers."

WildBlue provides high-speed Internet connectivity via satellite to homes and small businesses in communities where terrestrial broadband



WILDBLUE
Satellite Speed InternetSM

access is either limited or unavailable. WildBlue-1 is expected to handle WildBlue's continuing rapid customer growth into 2008 and beyond. WildBlue launched service in the 3rd Quarter of 2005 and currently serves more than 100,000 customers nationwide with its initial satellite capacity aboard Telesat Canada's Anik F2 satellite. WildBlue will continue serving customers on the Anik F2 satellite, adding new

customers to WildBlue-1 once the satellite is fully operational (expected by March 2007).

An always-on broadband Internet connection, WildBlue's service offers access speeds up to 30 times faster than dial-up. WildBlue's two-way satellite service provides wireless high-speed data in both upstream and downstream directions. Customers do not need a phone or cable line in order to receive broadband Internet access. Anyone interested in this service should call Norris Electric Cooperative at 1-877-783-8765.

Vegetation Control Schedule

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

**Lawrence County
Cumberland 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 1-877-783-8765 or 618-783-8765 during working hours. Our Web site is www.norriselectric.com.

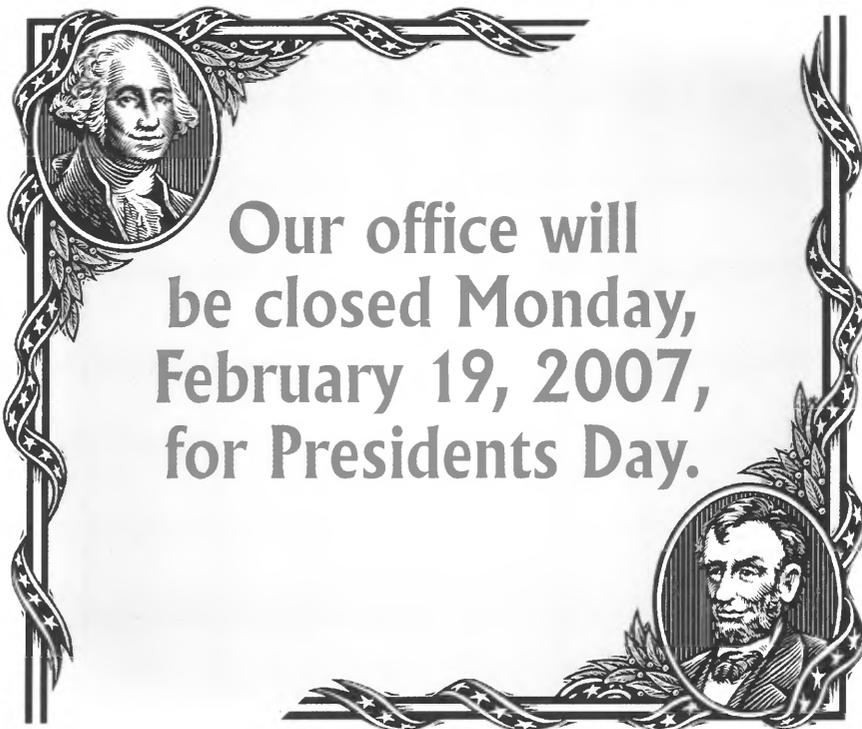
REMINDER! • REMINDER!



Join us at
**10:00 a.m., Saturday,
February 10, at
Newton High School**
for our
annual meeting
of members.



REMINDER! • REMINDER!



Our office will
be closed **Monday,
February 19, 2007,for Presidents Day.**

Fire Prevention Tips

An estimated one-third of residential fires are related to electrical distribution or appliances and equipment. According to the United States Fire Administration (USFA), each year these electrical fires claim about 500 lives, cause more than 2,000 injuries, and translate into more than 800 million dollars in property damage. Safe Electricity urges homeowners to perform an electrical hazard check to help keep families safe from fires.

Many avoidable fires can be traced to poor maintenance and misuse of electrical appliances and electric cords. Do not place cords underneath rugs and furniture or run them behind baseboards, curtains or in high-traffic areas. Damaged, abused or worn extension cords can pose a major fire hazard.

"Begin a habit of regularly inspecting all appliances, cords and plugs," suggests Safe Electricity Director Molly Hall. "If you discover a frayed cord or loose prongs on a plug, discontinue use until repaired or replaced."

Another common fire hazard is overloaded electrical systems. Fuses blowing frequently, dimming lights when an appliance goes on, a shrinking TV picture, and slow-running or heating appliances are signals of overloaded circuits. Safe Electricity suggests that if you notice any of these warning signals, disconnect the appliances and call a qualified electrician to get expert help.

To prevent electrical overloading, avoid using extension cords on a permanent basis and never plug more than two home appliances into an outlet at once. Use only outlets designed to handle multiple plugs. Give special consideration to appliances that

use 1,000 or more watts, such as refrigerators, hot plates, irons, microwave ovens, dishwashers, heaters and air conditioners.

Additional safety measures include:

- Use only three-pronged outlets for appliances with a three-prong plug. Never remove the grounding pin or force it to fit into a two-slot outlet or extension cord.
- Never "piggy-back" extension cords or power strips to make them longer.
- Replace any appliance that overheats, shorts out, gives off smoke or sparks, or causes small electrical shocks.
- Do not use light bulbs with wattage that is too high for the fixture, and replace all halogen bulbs with fluorescent bulbs.
- To prevent overheating, allow air space around heat-producing appliances such as TVs, plug-in radios, stereo sets, computers and powerful lamps.
- Do not let children play with or around electrical appliances, such as space heaters, irons and hair dryers.
- Keep clothes, curtains and other potentially combustible items at least three feet from all heaters.
- Be sure all electrical equipment bears the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) label.

Home electrical wiring causes twice as many fires as electrical appliances. Check periodically for loose wall receptacles, loose wires or loose lighting fixtures.

Listen for popping or sizzling sounds behind walls. Immediately shut off and have a professional replace light switches that are hot to the touch and lights that spark or flicker.

The majority of fires caused by electrical wiring flaws occur in the bedroom. For this reason, Safe Electricity encourages homeowners to have Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (ACFIs) professionally installed on bedroom circuits. AFCI is a relatively new technology to address electrical fire hazards, and the National Electric Code now requires AFCIs for bedroom circuits in new residential construction.

In many older homes, the capacity of the wiring system has not kept pace with today's increase in modern appliances and electrical usage. If your house falls under this category, have a licensed electrician check for hazards and make essential updates to keep your home safe.

"Finally, a functioning smoke alarm dramatically increases your chances of surviving a fire," reminds Hall. "Replace the batteries twice a year, and remember to practice a home escape plan with your family."

For more fire prevention information, visit the Web site www.SafeElectricity.org.



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Norris Electric Kicks Off Home Generator Systems Program

Do you remember the ice storm in 1978?

Robert Meers of rural Olney remembers it well. Bob and his family carried five gallon buckets of water to the house for necessities for two weeks during that power outage. In 1979 they purchased a PTO driven generator for their home.

Almost thirty years later, a more experienced Bob decided to replace his PTO driven generator with a home generator system from Norris Electric. Now, if the power goes out, he can relax in his home and know the generator will automatically power his house. No need to get up in the middle of the night and go outside with a flashlight to start the tractor and hook up the generator.

The Meers now have the peace of mind their refrigerator, freezer, furnace, and deep well pump will work even if they are not home.

Why buy a generator from Norris Electric?

Bob and Helen knew they could trust Norris Electric to provide a solution for their needs. When Bob saw the ad in the December issue of Illinois Country Living, he told Helen then he would like to have one.

Bob and Helen are both retired. Bob is a retired farm-



Helen and Bob Meers worked with Member Services Coordinator Tim Bohnhoff to purchase and install their new home generator system.

er, carpenter, and all-around handyman. Helen has recently retired after 45 years at Weber Medical Clinic in Olney.

Norris Electric is proud to have the Meers as the first members to have a home generator system installed at their home. Offering the home generator systems is a service to our members and we hope other members will take advantage of this service.

How do these things work?

The home generator systems, made by Briggs & Stratton, are fully automatic. Advanced electronics detect a power outage and automatically start the generator. The generators are permanently

connected to natural gas or propane to deliver uninterrupted backup power.

Also worthy of note are the turn key extras these systems provide over a box store generator including a battery and installation pad. The engine is also pre-filled with synthetic oil and broken in at the factory, saving the homeowner time and money on installation.

The generators offered range in size from 7,000 Watt to 15,000 Watt. A 12,000 Watt is also available. There are several generators and transfer switches to choose from. It is very important for the member to have a site analysis performed by Norris Electric for proper sizing of the generator.

It is also important to have the generators properly installed to prevent back feed onto Norris Electric lines and for the safety of our lineman.

For more information on the home generator systems, please call or e-mail Tim Bohnhoff at Norris Electric Cooperative.

Did you know?

All systems come with a warranty.

7,000 Watt-2 Year
12,000 Watt-3 Year
15,000 Watt-4 Year

Phone: 618-783-8765 • Toll Free: 877-783-8765 • Fax: 618-783-3673 E-mail: tbohnhoff@norriselectric.com

69th Annual Meeting Recap



More than 830 people attended this year's meeting

At the 69th annual meeting of members, held Saturday, February 10, Kent Hetzer of Wheeler, president of the board, spoke to members about the co-op's stability in a rapidly changing utility marketplace. He reminded members that although their co-op's rates recently went up 10 percent, the cooperative has had a smaller rate increase and still has lower rates than its neighboring utilities. "What other item do you know of that has not increased in 23 years, and then the increase was only 10 percent? That's remarkable," said Hetzer.

Investor-owned utility rate increases have been much higher due to the wholesale power auction. This power auction did not directly affect Norris Electric Cooperative. "We signed a wholesale power contract with Ameren two years ago that runs through December 2012," explained Hetzer. "Today it is clear that we have an exceptional contract."

Members can expect a 10

percent increase in 2008 to bring rates up to where they need to be said Hetzer. "We are doing everything possible to keep your electricity affordable, by automating operations where possible and setting reasonable budgets that do not sacrifice reliability and service. We have no control, however, over the market price of fuels needed to generate electricity," said Hetzer.

The cooperative continues to offer additional services and Manager Keith McKinney updated members on the cooperative's system improvements, long distance service, compact

fluorescent light bulb sales, on-line payment program and Internet services. He told members that the WildBlue satellite Internet service offered by the co-op should be able to accept more members in late March or early April. "I anticipate at least another 200 subscribers by this time next year," said McKinney. "It is a great deal for rural areas that do not currently have access to high-speed broadband Internet service."

He also updated members on the co-op's newest product, whole house stand-by generators by Briggs and Stratton. With



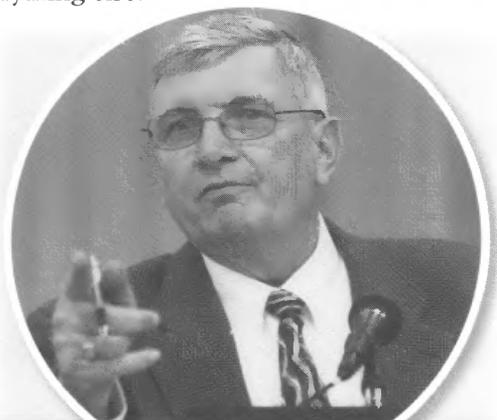
Retired Norris Electric employee Jerry Kinder brought his granddaughter to this year's meeting.

an automatic transfer switch, the generators help ensure members are never without power, no matter what Mother Nature brings.

State Representative David Reis who attended the meeting said, "The electric rate issue has just dominated the calls to our office. It is been frustrating for folks that are not part of an electric co-op like Norris Electric. Their rates are going up 55 percent. Rates have been frozen for 10 years. People realize that their rates probably need to go up, but not 55 percent. Norris Electric is, on the other hand, easing you into the reality of higher energy costs. A 23 year run of not raising rates is phenomenal especially now with the higher fuel costs and everything else."



During the meeting members re-elected four board members to three-year terms. From the left are Kent Hetzer of Wheeler, Frank Draper of Hutsonville, Joe Helmink of Teutopolis, Keith Sherwood of Casey and Manager Keith McKinney of Montrose.



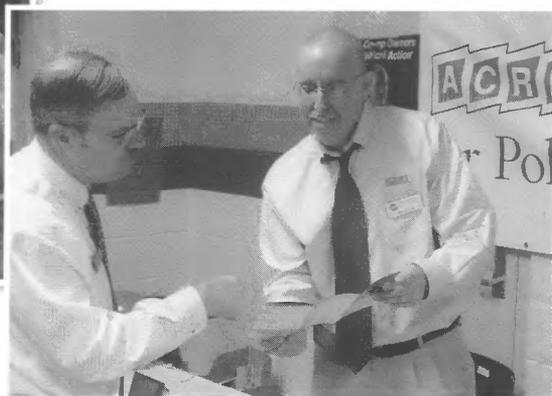
Board President Kent Hetzer answered questions from members and told of the co-op's 10 percent rate increase, the first in 23 years.



Members were able to purchase compact fluorescent light bulbs at the meeting. These energy saving bulbs are available at the co-op office as well.



This member registers for the meeting and for the large prize drawing.



Danger After A Storm

Tips to stay safe after the storm is over



Safe Electricity and Norris Electric Cooperative caution everyone to be mindful of the electrical hazards that storms and flooding can leave in their wake, and offers vital safety tips to avoid electrocution and serious injury when dealing with the aftermath of a major storm or disaster.

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

If using electric yard tools in clean-up efforts, do not operate them if it's raining the ground is wet, or while you are wet or standing in water. Keep all electric tools and equipment at least 10 feet away from wet surfaces.

Turn off electric and gas before entering flooded or damaged rooms. If you can't reach your breaker box safely, call Norris Electric at 618-783-8765 to shut off your power at the meter. We will send someone as soon as we can.

Never step into a flooded basement or other area if water is covering electrical outlets, appliances, or cords.

Be alert to any electrical equipment that could be energized and in contact with water. Never touch electrical appliances, cords or wires while you are wet or standing in water. Have a professional check out all water damaged appliances before using them.

If after a storm or disaster, the power to your home is out for a prolonged period, know important safety rules, such as never using a charcoal or gas grill to cook inside! And if you use a standby generator, make sure a transfer safety switch is used, or connect the appliance(s) directly to the generator output through an isolated circuit before you operate it. This prevents electricity from traveling back through the power lines, what's known as "back feed." Back feed creates danger for anyone near lines, particularly crews working to restore power.

And please be patient when calling in power outages. The phone lines to our office might be busy for long periods of time, especially in severe storms, so just keep trying to call in and report your outage.

For more information on electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

Vegetation Control Schedule

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

**Richland County
Cumberland 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 1-877-783-8765 or 618-783-8765 during working hours. Our Web site is www.norriselectric.com.

Shocking Demonstration of Power



Jasper County students, residents and emergency services personnel experienced a Live Line Electrical Safety demonstration presented by Kyle Finley of Alvin, Ill on January 30 in Newton. The realistic display is constructed with the same poles, transformers and line hardware used by utility companies and carries the same 7200 volts of electricity found in real high wire networks found across the country.

Two presentations were given to more than 400 Jasper County Jr. High and High School students and focused on situations the audience members might encounter in their everyday lives. For example, motor vehicle operators might one day be faced with a situation where they have

crashed into a utility pole, causing electrical wires to come into contact with their vehicle. Participants learned that they are safest inside the automobile, even if they have to stay there overnight before being rescued.

Participants learned that statistically only 2 percent of vehicles in this type of accident catch on fire. A vehicle crash involving electrical lines and resulting in fire is the only reason to exit a vehicle. Even then, there is a correct procedure to follow when exiting a vehicle that may be charged by down wires.

The program was made possible by Norris Electric Cooperative and the University of Illinois Extension Service in Jasper County.

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Cumberland County

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Office Closing

Our office will be closed on Friday, April 6 for Good Friday.



Inside Tips for Outdoor Electrical Safety

With the welcome arrival of the spring and summer months, most of us will spend more time outdoors. While you enjoy the fresh air, don't let a dangerous electrical hazard put you at risk. Be sure to exercise caution when using outdoor electrical appliances, equipment and tools. While you're at it, make sure to steer clear of Mother Nature's own brand of electricity – lightning.

Here are some tips the Leviton Institute recommends to keep you safe:

Extension and Power Cords

When using electric appliances like leaf blowers, lawnmowers or hedge trimmers, always make sure any extension cord you use is rated for outdoor use. Make sure too that the cord isn't too long or too thin, as it may not provide the proper amount of current to your appliance. The proper amperage required by most tools and appliances is usually displayed somewhere on them; make sure the extension cord you're using is rated for this amperage.

Standing on Shaky Ground

How often have you seen a three-pronged (grounding) plug with either the third prong removed, or with all three prongs somehow jammed into a two-pronged extension cord? Plenty of times, no doubt. Never remove the grounding pin from a three-pronged plug. This sort of jury-rigging defeats the proper grounding of the appliance, rendering it unsafe.

BBQ-Tips

It may seem obvious, but nevertheless it needs to be said: do not barbeque on an electric grill when it's raining, or even just drizzling. Be sure to unplug the grill before cleaning it, and, as with all outdoor appliances, make sure the receptacle it's plugged



into is equipped with a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) to prevent shock or electrocution.

Spa Safety

With all the water in and around them, pools, hot tubs and spas are dangerous areas for appliances and consumer electronics. Make sure all radios, TVs, blenders, etc. are clear of splashing or dripping water, and that all outlets nearby are GFCI equipped. If an electrical appliance falls into the water, shut off the circuit first before unplugging it.

Stormy Weather

It's often said that lightning doesn't strike the same place twice

(actually it does, often more than twice on tall buildings), but it's a proven fact that it does strike in the United States around 20 million times a year.

If you see a storm approaching when you're outside, try to find shelter indoors; if that's not possible, get to a low area away from trees and crouch down. If you hear thunder, seek shelter, even under a clear blue sky. If you're swimming in a pool, lake or the ocean, immediately swim to shore and find cover. If you're in a watercraft, immediately get to shore. Don't wait until the storm is on top of you; lightning can travel sideways up to 10 miles.

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Electric News

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Questions on Rates Continue!

Although there was an attempt to answer rate questions in our January edition of the Illinois Country Living we are still receiving quite a few calls. Here are answers to three of the most common questions we've received.

▶ What is the facilities charge?

Our industry and most others have variable costs and fixed costs. Our variable costs are almost entirely the cost of the electricity that we buy and the work involved related to that energy. The fixed costs are costs that are incurred independently of energy usage. Some examples

of the fixed costs are repairs to lines and wires, administrative costs such as clerical labor, postage, insurance and other non-energy related costs. In the past each rate class had a minimum bill that was meant to pay for the fixed costs. To alleviate the feeling of "money for nothing" those minimum bills also included some energy usage. So, the money we were receiving for fixed costs were actually tempered with energy usage. The minimum bill was \$5 per month for our Farm and Home Rate.

During our cost of service study we found that the actual fixed costs for this

rate class were \$15.50 each month. That meant that the additional \$10.50 was coming from energy usage payments made by consumers who used more than the minimum bill amount. So, larger users of electricity were paying the fixed costs for the small users of electricity. The new rate structure was designed so that everyone would pay his or her share of the fixed costs.

That sometimes is a hard pill to swallow since those costs are present whether there is any usage or not! The consumers who saw the biggest impact to their bills were those who had very little energy usage. The facility charges varied from \$15.50 per month to \$90 per month depending upon which rate a consumer uses. The rates with higher facility charges require more expensive facilities such as larger transformers, larger poles, larger wire and more capacity from a substation.

▶ The increase in rates doesn't seem like 10%

Everyone seemed to latch on to the statement in the Illinois Country Living that said, "Rates will increase on January 1, 2007, to allow for a 10% overall increase to the cooperative's revenue." That meant that the cooperative

Continued on page 16b



► Questions on Rates *Continued from page 16a*

needed 10% more money coming in than it had previously. Depending upon each consumer's energy usage pattern the increase was more or less than 10% for each individual.

Everyone's bill did not go up 10%. Some went up more and some went up less. The small single-phase rate that covers most farms and homes went up an average of 12.4%. A typical house on this rate uses 1,134 kwhs. For example, a consumer could have seen their bill go from \$82.20 to \$92.39 or an increase of \$10.19 per month. A consumer who for some reason used nothing had a bill that went from \$5 to \$15.50 or an increase of \$10.50 per month. If someone used twice the average energy on this rate their monthly charge went up about \$9 per month. So, although the overall increase was about the same (\$9 to \$10.50) the percentage increase for the individual member may have been anywhere from 6.5% for someone that used twice the

average usage on this rate to 200% for someone that did not use anything.

Other rates were similar. On the three-phase large power rate class the minimum bill went from a value based on the size of the transformers serving that member to a flat fee of \$66 per month. Typical transformer sizes varied from 45 kva to 166 kva. There are a few smaller and a few larger but those two examples went from \$45 and \$166 per month to \$66 per month. In the past the minimum bill on these rates also included some energy usage and the new facilities charge does not include any energy usage.

► What does the future hold?

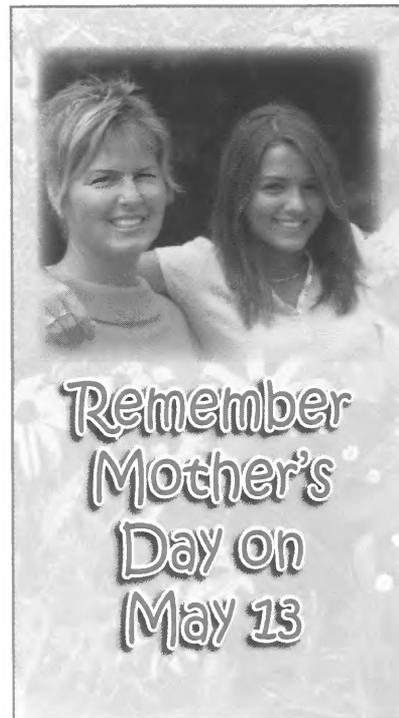
The increase of our wholesale power costs went up 25% in 2007. Power costs are the largest single cost for the cooperative but other costs temper that somewhat so that we needed to have a 20% increase in our retail rates to pay for the 25% increase in wholesale rates. Instead of increas-

ing rates by 20% at one time we are spreading it over two years. Our overall retail rate increase in 2007 was 10% and we plan for another 10% in January of 2008. Again, that percentage is what our increase in revenue needs to be. Each individual account will be either more or less than the 10%.

Our new wholesale power contract expires at the end of December of 2012. We anticipate that after our increase in 2008 that our rates should remain the same until the end of 2012. There are some unknowns in our costs, especially with the transmission operator, MISO. Some of those rates related to transmission can fluctuate quite a bit from day to day. Our rates would also be impacted by a major disaster like an ice storm. So, the plan is to not have another increase of rates after 2008 until our contract expires in 2012. But, there may be another increase if we see an unexpected rise in our costs.

Notice of Capital Credits

About this time of the year you will receive a notice in the mail from Norris Electric that tells you what your Capital Credit Allocation is for the previous year. This is just to let you know how much was added to your capital credit account for the year of 2006. As printed on the notice, this amount cannot be applied to your current electric bill and it cannot be refunded at this time. But it will be paid at a later date when the Board of Directors decide it is feasible for the cooperative to refund certain years capital credits. The last payment of capital credits was for the year 1967. The unpaid capital credits are used to help run the cooperative. Unpaid capital credits are your ownership of the cooperative.



Don't be an Information Slowpoke

New structured wiring system can bring your home up to speed

The information superhighway – it plays such an important part in modern life that after electric, gas and water, it has become known as the “fourth utility.”

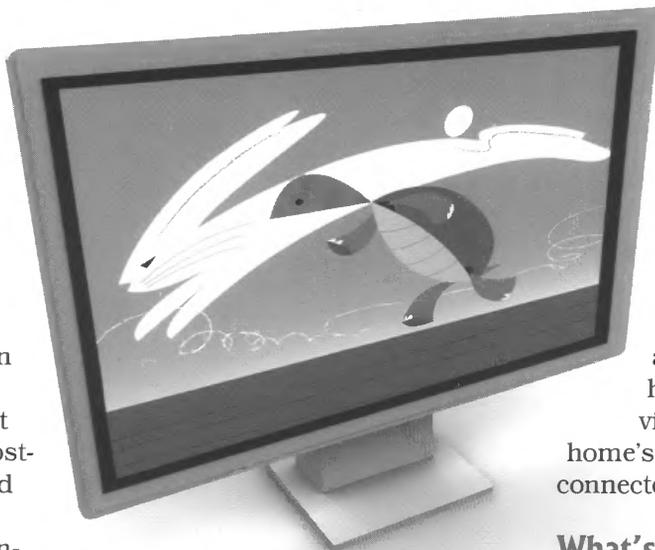
Yet, the “pipeline” that carries our information, communication and entertainment services in and throughout our homes consists mostly of plain old-fashioned telephone (POTS) lines and coaxial cable, meandering from room to room along baseboards much like yards of electronic spaghetti.

Fortunately for homeowners that has all begun to change. According to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), at least half of all new homes being built have some form of structured wiring. This wiring uses Category 5e high-performance Ethernet cable and RG6 coaxial cable that is wired into the house before the walls go up, just like the home's electrical system.

But, according to the Leviton Institute, structured wiring is not just for new construction. Older homes can also be retrofitted to enable homeowners to benefit from the advantages of structured wiring. Anywhere from two rooms to the whole house can be connected, depending on the homeowner's needs, and the degree of remodeling they wish to undertake.

How Structured Wiring Works

Structured wiring connects each room on a “direct



run” of high capacity bundled cable to a central distribution box in the house, which manages and distributes voice, data, video and audio signals throughout the home. Homeowners have the flexibility to plug a computer, phone, fax machine, television or security camera into a wall jack in any room in the house without the messy tangle of wires running from room to room.

Networking Your Home

But that's just the beginning. With structured wiring, home networking becomes a breeze. Here are just some of the possibilities available to you:

- Link all computers in your home into one high-speed network, sharing files, printers, scanners and other hardware.
- Monitor the security system or check on the safety of family members in different parts of the house with remote cameras, accessible from any television or computer in the home.
- Have extra phone and data lines already built in, if future need arises.

- Play music in different rooms, controlled from a central location.
- Distribute video signals throughout the home.
- Store and distribute all the home's digital files (MP3, data, image and video files) on a home media server and view the output from the home's media player on any connected TV.

What's Next?

Before you decide to retrofit a structured wiring system for your house, consider these facts:

- Retrofitting structured wire into an existing home is not as easy as installing it in new one. Since retrofitting requires drilling holes and fishing wires behind walls, many homeowners only connect the rooms that benefit from it the most: the home office, home theatre or media room and the kitchen.
- Surprisingly, retrofitting is often easier in homes 50-55 years or older because they generally have more space behind walls, ceilings and floors than newer ones. More space makes routing easier.
- The bigger the remodeling job, the easier the retrofit. With other construction and wiring under way, adding structured wiring is both easier and less of a disruption.
- Structured wiring makes an effective “backbone” to combine with a wireless network.
- The value of the home will almost certainly increase.

Source: Leviton Institute



Co-op Receives Award at State Conference



Norris Electric Cooperative received a safety honor recently during the Safety/Supervisory Technical Conference held in Springfield. The award was given to cooperatives with outstanding "accident/illness" safety records for 2006.

The conference is sponsored annually by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC). From left are Engineering Technician Jim Meyer and AIEC Manager of Safety and Loss Control Ken Macken.



Office Closing

Our office will be closed
for Memorial Day on
Monday, May 28.

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

Vegetation Control Schedule

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

**Richland County
Cumberland 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 1-877-783-8765 or 618-783-8765 during working hours. Our Web site is www.nor-riselectric.com.

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



Representative David Reis and Senator John O. Jones met with 27 students representing Norris Electric Cooperative during the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Youth Day on Wednesday, March 28, in Springfield. Students had an opportunity to view state government in action, meet with Secretary of State Jesse White

and tour the State Capitol, Illinois Supreme Court, Old State Capitol and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum.

First row from left are Marcus Huels of Altamont, Amber White of Altamont, Matt Devall of Effingham, Logan Fiscus of Bridgeport, Rep. Reis, Sen. Jones, Kyle Knight of Robinson, Danielle Esker of Noble, Sarah Hoffeditz of Newton and Kelcey Correll of Newton.

Second row from left are Kelsie Elmer of Robinson, Sara Williams of Bridgeport, Marie Randall of Beecher City, Kayla Ohnesorge of Altamont, chaperone Bill Hammer of Beecher City High School, Jack Jeffries of Mt Carmel, Andrew McClain of Toledo, Garrett Rich of Robinson,

Jessica Lewis of Neoga and Katherine Mendenhall of Palestine.

Third row from left are Jonathan Winters of Oblong, Nathaniel Waller of Oblong, Brant Elliott of Martinsville, Tiffany Elliott of Martinsville, Jordan Noblitt of Annapolis, Maggie Rumler of Hutsonville, Sarah Bierman of Dieterich, James Schultz of Effingham, Kelly Bloemer of Dieterich and Maria Jansen of Effingham.

Fourth row from left are chaperones Tim Bohnhoff, Jamie Mendenhall and Mike Ochs.

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

Protecting Your Investment



Whether it is in a home or business, our members are buying more and more sophisticated equipment. That equipment is not cheap and sometimes cannot be replaced very quickly. There are instances where lightning or line faults can damage this equipment. We would like to offer some useful suggestions:

Computer or Electronic Equipment

Install two types of surge protection. One type would be at the equipment location such as a surge arrester that can be purchased at any electronics store. These surge arresters should isolate any electric connection to your equipment. That means that not only the 120 volt supply should be plugged into the surge arrester

but also any telephone lines or television wires. Lightning or other major surges can come through any connection to your equipment. There is a difference between a surge arrester and a plug-in strip. You can get a plug-in strip for around \$5 while you will pay \$25 or more for a good surge arrester.

The other type of surge arrester would be located in your

distribution panel. It is the first line of defense and also helps protect appliance motors such as those in refrigerators and freezers. This type of arrester can be purchased at electric supply houses such as Kirby Risk, Graybar or others. They are typically connected within your panel to a spare breaker and do not require a visit by Norris Electric to connect.

Three Phase Equipment

Although lightning and other surges damage three phase equipment, the most common damage is done by what is called single phasing. This can occur because one out of three fuses failed or a limb went through one phase of Norris Electric's distribution line. Motors should always have Overload Heaters on each phase.

These devices sense high current caused by single phasing or other disturbances and then trips the motor. These devices are excellent protective devices but are not meant for quick response. They may take several seconds to react. So, this device should be coupled with other sensing equipment that recognizes that one or more phases have been lost and then turns the equipment off before it can be damaged.

This type of equipment is usually supplied by what we call "Switchgear" providers. If you have Cutler-Hammer or Square D switchgear (breaker and cabinet) then those manufacturers have protection devices that work on their own switchgear. A breaker alone is not an adequate protective device. It is not sized to adequately protect the equipment. It is sized to protect the wire and allow enough current to run the equipment.

If you have damage it is usually covered by your home-

owner's insurance or property insurance, although there may be a deductible to satisfy first. On occasions, Norris Electric makes a mistake that might cause the damage. At those times, our insurance carrier would make any required replacements or repairs. Those are rare cases and only if it can be shown that Norris Electric was negligent. A failure of equipment such as a transformer or opening and closing of our breakers does not constitute negligence.

Call our office if you have any questions on how to protect your equipment

Flickering or Dimming Lights

Occasionally there are problems where a member will see flickering lights or can see dimming lights, especially when he turns on something or the air conditioner "kicks on."

This should not be considered normal! Call us! We will take a look at our facilities and make sure there are no loose connections and that all grounds are secure and many other trouble spots are checked. We might fix your problem by fixing ours and prevent damaging your equipment.

If we cannot find anything wrong on our side then it is time for you to call an electrician to look at the facilities on your side of the meter. You may have loose connections or even too small of wire in some instances. Anything that might cause this could cause damage or even a fire. If the problem is in your house or building it could be a lot more catastrophic that if it is something on the pole outside! In either case it needs your attention and you can start with us!

Stay Safe When Lightning Strikes

Lightning causes more storm-related deaths annually in the United States than tornadoes or hurricanes, and causes about \$5 billion in economic losses each year.

During National Lightning Safety Awareness Week in June, co-op name and Safe Electricity offer safety tips and precautions recommended by the National Weather Service to avoid injury and damage during thunderstorms and lightning activity.

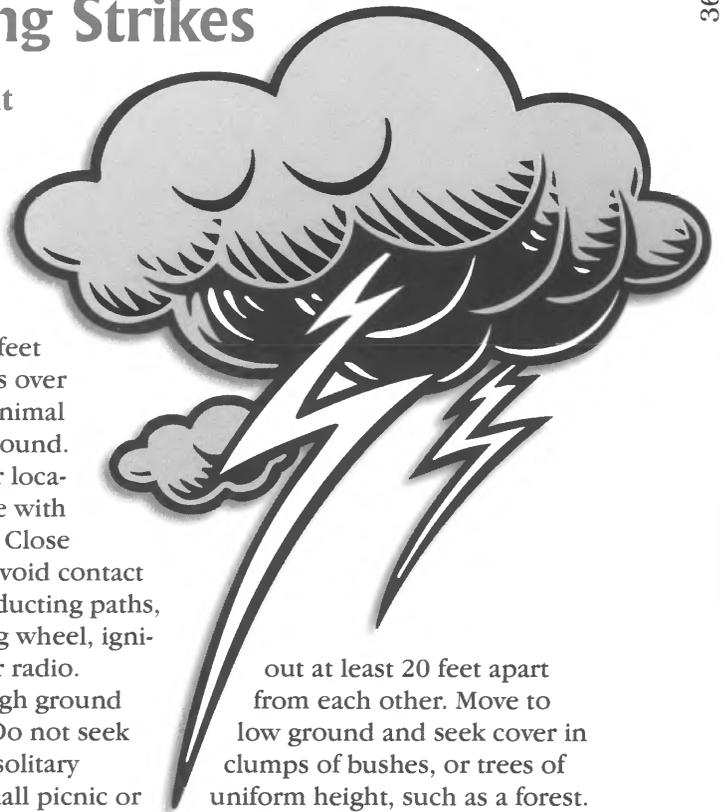
Under the '30-30 rule', if you are outside when a storm approaches and you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder. If you count 30 seconds or less, seek proper shelter. Wait at least 30 minutes after the last observed lightning or thunder before leaving shelter.

Stay Inside

- The safest place is indoors, away from doors and windows.
- Use only cordless or cell phones to make emergency calls.
- Turn off and unplug appliances well before a storm nears – never during.
- Stay away from electrical outlets, appliances, computers, power tools and TV sets. Take off headsets and stop playing video games.
- Avoid water and contact with piping, including sinks, baths and faucets. Don't wash dishes, shower or bathe during a thunderstorm. Also avoid washers and dryers since they not only connect with the plumbing and electrical systems, but also contain an electrical path from the outside through the dryer vent.
- Do not lie on the concrete floor of a garage as it likely contains a wire mesh.
- Basements typically are a safe place to go during thunderstorms, but avoid concrete walls that may contain metal rebar.

If You're Caught Outdoors

- If lightning is close, drop down into a crouching position and make yourself as small as possible - feet together and hands over your ears - with minimal contact with the ground.
- Move to a safer location such as vehicle with a solid, metal roof. Close the windows and avoid contact with electrical conducting paths, such as the steering wheel, ignition, gear shifter or radio.
- Avoid water, high ground and open spaces. Do not seek shelter under tall, solitary trees; canopies; small picnic or rain shelters; or in any open-frame vehicles such as jeeps, convertibles, golf carts, tractors or mowers.
- Do not stand near power, light or flag poles, machinery, fences, gates, metal bleachers or even other people. Spread



out at least 20 feet apart from each other. Move to low ground and seek cover in clumps of bushes, or trees of uniform height, such as a forest.

Additional lightning facts and safety tips can be found at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Web site at www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov. Also visit www.SafeElectricity.org for more electrical safety information.

Call Dad for Less This Father's Day



Call the co-op today at 618-783-8765 for information on our 4.5 cents per minute long distance service.

Tell Us Your Story!



We are quickly losing those people who remember the lights coming on. That is when electricity was first delivered to them in the late 1930s or early 1940s. If you remember when electricity first came to your area, we would like to hear from you. Tell us of the excitement. Tell us how your life was changed. Tell us if you or your relatives were instrumental in getting electricity to your area. Send your stories to: My Story, Norris Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 6000, Newton, IL 62448.

Q&A

Why wasn't my electric bill lower last month while I was on vacation?

Even while you're gone, a number of appliances run automatically. Your heating or air conditioning system, water heater, refrigerator, freezer and some always on appliances could be using energy even if you're away. To reduce your usage, unplug all appliances not in use, lower your water heater temperature, connect lights to timers and adjust the heat/air conditioning level. Call your cooperative to learn more ways to lower your bill all year long.

Vegetation Control Schedule

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

**Richland County
Cumberland 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 1-877-783-8765 or 618-783-8765 during working hours. Our Web site is www.norriselectric.com.

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Office hours: 8 a.m. — 4:30 p.m

WildBlue Update

Are You Waiting for High-Speed WildBlue Internet?

Great news! Norris Electric is installing broadband Internet service for the recently launched WildBlue-1 satellite. We currently have more than 400 subscribers using high-speed WildBlue Internet service.

Phil Davis from the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative held several WildBlue training seminars at the co-op's headquarters. Four installers will serve our area as trained WildBlue Technicians. They are Shawn McCrillis, Jim Emmerich, Lex Hopper and Phillip Sidwell. Sidwell will be serving the co-op's newly acquired northern region for WildBlue.

Call our office at 877-783-8765 for more information. As always, we are happy to serve you.



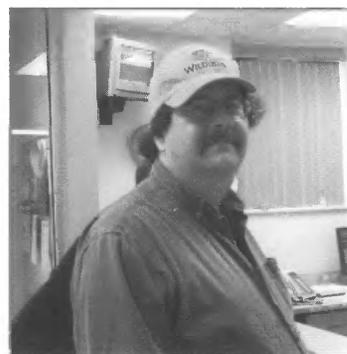
▲ Phil Davis from the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative along with several of his students at one of the WildBlue training seminars that were held at the Norris facility.



▲ Emily Miller, Communications Student at EIU, is our NRTC WildBlue-U summer intern. She will be working with sales and marketing for WildBlue Satellite Internet.



▲ Installer Shawn McCrillis looks over WildBlue territories with WildBlue Coordinator Carrie Ford.



▲ Installer Lex Hopper stops in the office before his WildBlue-1 training begins.



▲ Installer Jim Emmerich reads over information with Ford regarding the new northern region of WildBlue installation.

Limited Time Offer!
Get your WildBlue equipment
for \$199 plus tax.
Call 877-783-8765 to schedule
your installation.



WILDBLUE
*Satellite Speed Internet*SM

How To Weather A Prolonged Outage

A number of circumstances can cause power interruptions, and damage from severe summer storms can cause outages that last days. When a power outage occurs during hot weather, take steps to maintain safety and comfort until power is restored.

“Many summer power outages are due to severe storms with high winds that topple utility poles and power lines,” says Molly Hall, Director of Safe Electricity. “It’s important to stay clear of downed power lines, and during cleanup efforts, be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard.”

Assume that any dangling wires you encounter are electrical and treat all downed or hanging lines as if they are energized. If you are driving and come upon a downed power line, stay in your vehicle, warn others to stay away and contact emergency personnel or electric utility.

Also when driving, be careful at intersections where traffic lights may be out. Stop at all railroad crossings, and treat road intersections with traffic signals as a four-way stop before proceeding with caution.

If power to your home is out for a prolonged period, know and understand important safety precautions and steps to cope with heat until power is restored:

- * Remember to call your electric utility immediately to report the outage.
- * Dress in loose, lightweight clothing, and stay on the coolest, lowest level of your home.
- * Use natural ventilation to cool homes, and consider purchasing battery-powered fans.
- * Drink plenty of water. Avoid heavy meals, caffeinated and alcoholic drinks.
- * Keep fridge or freezer doors closed. A freezer that is half full or full can keep foods frozen 24 to 48 hours. Foods should stay safe in an unopened refrigerator up to four hours. If an outage lasts longer than four hours, remove and pack meat, milk and dairy products in a cooler with ice.
- * Use safe, alternative food preparations. A barbecue grill is an excellent way to prepare food, but a charcoal grill should never be used indoors. Always grill outside.
- * Check on friends and relatives—especially children, seniors, and those with medical conditions or disabilities. These people may need to seek emergency cooling shelters.

* Keep a first-aid kit in your home and one in your car. Make sure that it includes

scissors, tweezers, safety pins, aspirin, eyewash and rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide.

* Close all drapes and blinds on the sunny side of your residence.

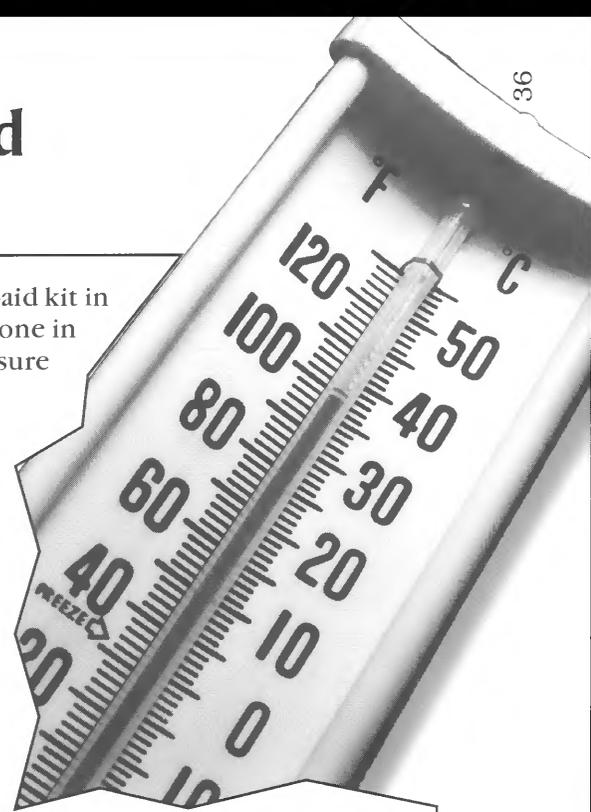
* Take your family and pets to a cool basement location if you have one. Or consider going to an air-conditioned public place during warmer daytime hours.

During an outage, Safe Electricity also recommends turning off electrical appliances and unplugging major equipment, including air conditioning, computers and televisions. This will help protect equipment that could be damaged by electrical surges, and prevent circuit overloads when power is restored. Leave one light on to indicate that power has been restored. Wait a few minutes then turn on other appliances and equipment one at a time.

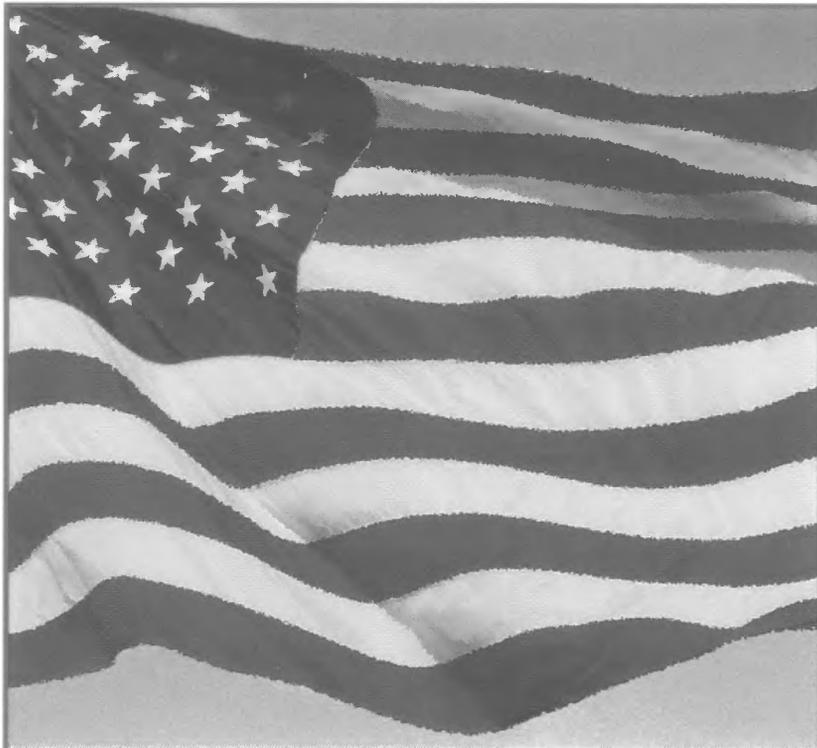
If you use a standby generator, make sure a transfer safety switch is used or connect the appliance(s) directly to the generator output through an isolated circuit before you operate it. This prevents electricity from traveling back through the power lines, what’s known as “back feed.”

“Back feed creates danger for anyone near lines, particularly crews working to restore power,” warns Hall.

For more information on electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.



**Safe
Electricity®**



*Our office will be closed
Wednesday, July 4,
for Independence Day.*

Q&A



What Is The Facility Charge On My Bill?

To receive power in your home, you need to have poles and wires strung to your home, a meter to record the power, and other hardware that connects you to the power grid. Even if you never use any power, the cooperative has still invested in all these items. So the facility charge is the amount of money it costs us each month just to provide you with the ability to use electricity in your home.

Vegetation Control Schedule

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

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Cumberland County**

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My Story

by Max E. Riker, Robinson, IL

My age was 9. The location was 3 miles south of Stoy, IL, then 1 mile west. The time, 1943, summer, probably August, resident Lou Ella Riker.

The inspector checked the installation, gave it an OK and told my mother they would install the meter next week.

Mother told him her oldest son was on furlough before going to war. She told him my brother had to leave on Sunday and this was early in the week. The inspector went to his truck, got and installed the meter. My brother got to see the home place lit up and not

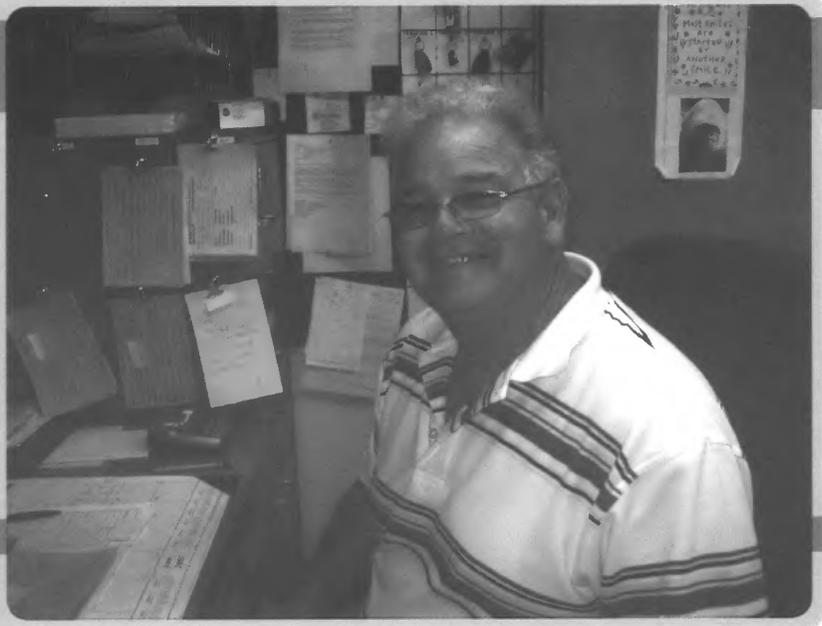
with a kerosene lamp for 5-6 days.

My brother was a co-pilot on a B24 Bomber. He perished in the war but your inspector allowed him to see his home place with bright lights on his last visit home.

Do you remember when the lights first came on in your home? Share your memories with our readers. Mail your story to "My Story, Norris Electric Cooperative, PO Box 6000, Newton, IL 62448" and we will print as many as space allows.

Promotion

John Bogard has been promoted to Forestry Supervisor following Harold Kibler's retirement in June. John has been with Norris Electric for 33 years. Previously he was a Line Clearance Foreman. Good luck, John, in your new position.



Two Retire From Norris Electric

Two long-time Norris Electric employees retired the first week of June.

Forestry Supervisor, Harold Kibler retired June 6, 2007, after 42 years of service to Norris Electric. Harold was hired in 1965 as a Tree Trimmer, was a Lineman for 19 years and held the position of Supervisor for the past 19 years.

A cake and coffee reception was held in his honor on his last day of work. He received a jacket and garden figurine from his coworkers. Harold and his wife, Thelma, reside in rural Newton. They have two sons both living in New Mexico and four grandchildren. Harold's mother, Edna, also lives in Newton.

Harold's retirement plans include lots of fishing and gardening.

Also leaving Norris Electric was Carolyn Dart. Carolyn was hired in 1976. She took off eight months to help with family and then returned in 1983.

She worked with the Capital Credits and as an Assistant Bookkeeper.

A going away party was held in her honor on Friday, June 8. She was presented with a Longaberger basket and a beautifully monogrammed crystal vase. Carolyn and husband Laird reside in rural

Oblong. She has one son, Jason, and his wife, Becky. When asked what she was going to do after retiring, Carolyn said "Be a farmer's wife."

Everyone at Norris Electric wish Harold and Carolyn a fond farewell.



Harold Kibler



Carolyn Dart

The following poem was written for Carolyn by a relative of a Norris Electric employee.

The Road To Retirement

It all began in October of nineteen seventy-six,
The first day of work and her feelings were mixed.
She would work with all her power,
At Norris Electric for \$2.30 per hour.

Over the next six years she would have many jobs,
There were times she would have liked to sob.
Keypunch operator, assistant billing clerk,
Billing clerk and computer "jerk".

Then in the fall of nineteen eighty-two,
After speaking with her brother she knew what she must do.
She headed northeast to the city of Indianapolis,
To help her brother who was surely blessed.

The following summer of eighty-three,
She returned to her post that was still free.
She waltzed back in without missing a step,
You would have thought she had never left.

Her title has grown to Capital Credit you see,
Ass't Bookkeeper and Payroll Clerk she might be.
How will anyone ever be able to fill her shoes,
It may be time to start the "boo-hoo".

She will have worked for thirty years,
At Norris Electric through smiles and tears.
Dogwood Creek Farm is where she will appear,
She is moving up higher without any fear!

Thank You Carolyn
You Will Be Missed
Norris Electric Staff

The ABCs of Saving Your Life

Reading the names of electrical safety devices is a lot like looking at an eye chart: GFCI, IDCI, ALCI, AFCI, LCDI – the letters kind of run together.

But don't worry. There's nothing wrong with your eyes, or your glasses. All those letters are just a handy way of shortening the names of various devices that can protect you and your family from dangerous electrical hazards at home. The Leviton Institute recommends you learn about these devices and install them where needed in your home. These devices can save your life, or the life of a loved one.

GFCI

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters prevent shock or electrocution by monitoring the current flowing through a circuit. If an appliance is damaged, current can leak out of it (similar to water leaking from a broken pipe). Unfortunately, it can travel to ground through a person holding the appliance in a wet or damp area. The GFCI-equipped receptacle senses the current imbalance and immediately shuts off the power at the receptacle.

So effective are GFCIs in preventing shock that the National Electric Code (NEC) has required them in new bathrooms since the mid-1970s. Since then, the list has grown longer to include kitchens, crawl spaces, unfinished basements, garages, or any place indoors within six feet of water. Outdoors, GFCIs are required near pools and hot tubs. Remember: water and electricity are a dangerous combination.

GFCIs do need to be checked monthly or after major electrical storms to be sure they still work. It only takes a minute, but you need to read the manufacturer's instructions on how to check them; there are two basic models with small but important differences between them.

IDCI and ALCI

Immersion Detection Circuit Interrupters and Appliance Leakage Circuit Interrupters are those large, boxy plugs found at the end of hair dryers and certain other small appliance cords. They work in slightly different ways, but both safeguard you by shutting off power should an appliance be immersed in water, as in a sink or bathtub.

However, even if it's protected by an IDCI or ALCI, don't assume it's OK to stick your hand in the water to retrieve a submerged appliance.



Shut the circuit off first, unplug the appliance, drain the water, and then remove the appliance.

AFCI

Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters are designed to shut off a circuit when they detect an arc. AFCIs respond much more quickly than regular circuit breakers or fuses and are useful for preventing fires caused by arcing. Considering that more than 40,000 fires claiming over 350 lives a year are caused by problems in home wiring, according to the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), it's no mystery why AFCIs are required in bedrooms for new residential construction. AFCIs can be mounted in breaker panels or receptacles, or sometimes in the plug cap itself.

LCDI

Leakage Current Detection Interrupters sense when arcing is imminent in a room air conditioner power cord, and automatically shut the unit off before a fire can get started. The LCDI monitors whether any current is leaking from one of the conductors onto a wire mesh shield that's built into the cord. LCDIs are required by the NEC on new room air conditioners, where they are built right into the plug cap on the power cord.

Apart from the names, there's nothing all that difficult to understand about these electrical safety devices. Just remember to install them where needed, check them periodically, and they'll do the rest, protecting your home and loved ones from electrical hazards.

Source: the Leviton Institute

Vegetation Control Schedule

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

Richland County
Cumberland County



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Q&A

What Is



Touchstone Energy?

Touchstone Energy is an alliance of more than 630 cooperatives in 45 states that collectively deliver power and energy solutions and high standards of service to more than 22 million members every day. Touchstone Energy cooperatives serve their members with four core values — integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. These core values emphasize the significance of each electric cooperative's local presence and unique ties to its community, yet offers the resources of a nationwide network to bring added value and benefit to its members.

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Electric News

My Story by George Fulling

Rural electric came to the house where my four brothers, one sister and I grew up in the early 40s, probably 1941. The lines stopped at our house because the next neighbor didn't want electricity. Our house had been remodeled sometime during the 1920s and at that time a Delco type unit had been added but this only provided lights for the house and an electric pump for the cistern. This pump motor caught fire when they switched from DC to AC. It was exciting to see lights come on in the barn, shop, pump house and brooder house. Also there were yard lights outside to make it easier getting around. An electric motor replaced the gas engine that pumped water for the livestock.

Not many appliances were added right away because of war shortages but I'm sure that an electric iron and electric washer came first. Our refrigerator was a Servel that used kerosene. It stayed until after the war because of the same shortages. An old ice box stood on the back porch and was still used. Most of our meat was kept in a rented freezer box, first in Vincennes and later in Palestine. Shortly after the war, a big freezer was installed in the basement where the batteries for the DC unit had been. It was about 8 feet long and had three doors. And was it a job to get it in the basement!



Being only five years old in 1941, I don't remember a lot of details but I do remember the electrician wiring the house for REA. I realize now what a job that would be in a finished house and the tools they needed to do the job. I also vaguely remember seeing poles set and wires being strung and the crews doing these things being friendly to little kids.

George A. Fulling
Palestine, IL

P.S. On the evening shortly after I had started to write this we had a strong windy storm and the electricity went off so I finished in the light of a kerosene lamp!



Casey Popcorn Festival Marks a Milestone

The 2007 Casey Popcorn Festival marks the 20th anniversary of the annual Labor Day weekend event. From its humble beginnings as a two-day homecoming, it has grown into a three-day festival with an annual attendance of 40,000.

With the emphasis on family and kids, the festival has grown into the premier family festival in the two-state area. Non-stop activities such as music, a carnival, craft show, kiddie shows and a car show are just some of the highlights of the festival. Hot air balloons will fill the air morning and evening on Saturday, September 1. A Barney Fife impersonator as the Mayberry Deputy returns to Casey and the nationally known gospel group, The Kingsmen, will present a Sunday concert. All activities take place in Casey Fairview Park.

Norris Electric Cooperative is proud to be a sponsor of the Kyle Finley's Live Line Electrical Safety Show. Kyle will present his demonstrations on Sunday, September 2 at 2:00, 4:00, 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. Bring the whole family to Casey for Labor Day weekend and enjoy the many activities.



OFFICE CLOSING

Our office will be closed
Monday, Sept. 3 for Labor Day.



Line Improvement Projects

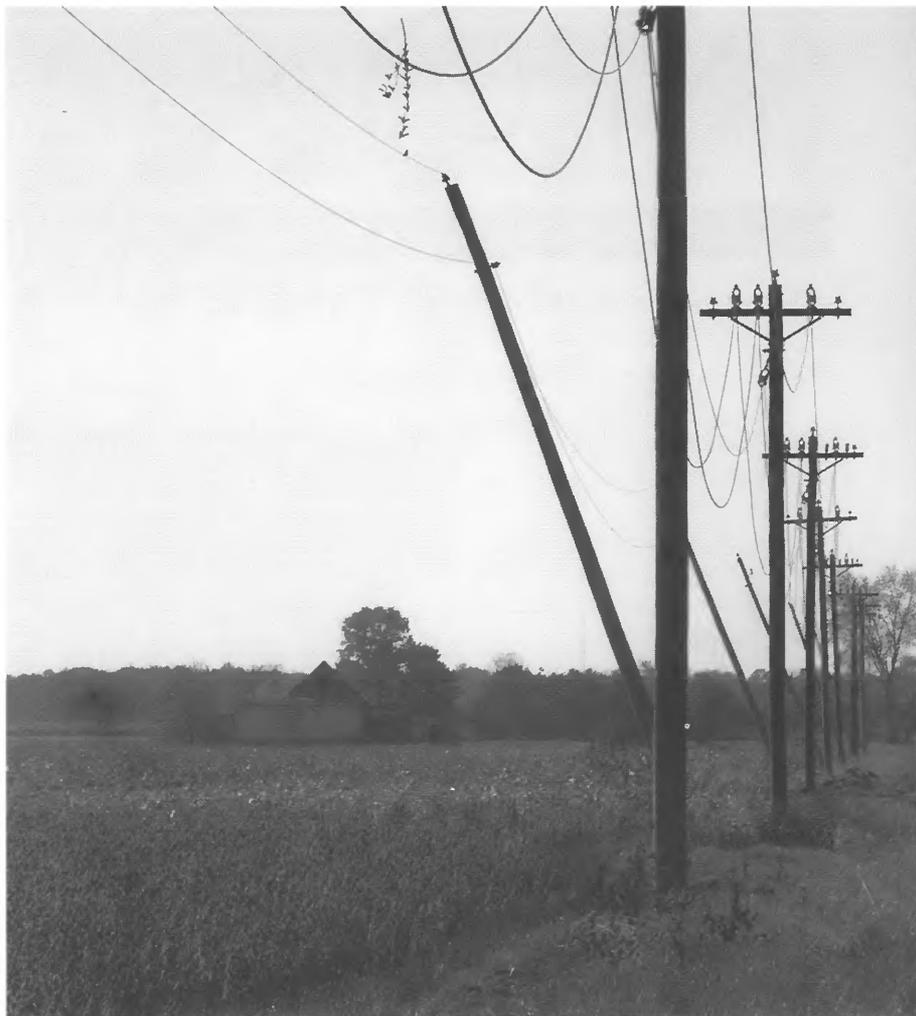
By Tim Huber, Engineering Manager

Each year, Norris Electric Cooperative has several line improvement projects approved following an extensive review of the electrical system. The line improvement projects for the year are submitted in the Annual Work Plan and Financial Forecast to the Board of Directors. This allows us to budget our line improvement projects each year and determine the most effective sections of line to rebuild, add or remove.

Line improvement projects usually cost at least \$50,000 per mile and increase with the complexity and difficulty of a project. With each investment into the electrical system, we see increased efficiency, reliability and quality.

The electrical load on the system is increasing around two percent each year and improvements need to be made each year to keep up with demand. For example, as the current on a power line doubles the power loss on the line increases by a factor of four. We cannot reduce the current draw on the line but we can reduce the resistance of the line by increasing the conductor size.

Presently we are rebuilding lines with a conductor size that has between 8.5 and 10.5 less resistance than the old conductor. The savings in line loss from a reconstruction project may take 20 years to pay for itself at the present electrical load of the line, but as the electrical load and cost of wholesale power increases the payback time decreases. Also, all power lines have a capacity limit that can not be exceeded, and as the electrical load increases, with time, power lines must be rebuilt.



▲ Single-phase line leaned to the side as a new three phase line is built in.



▲ Three-phase line construction in process. Old line is energized on hot arms while new lines are installed.

hardware on the line and not just the conductor. New poles, insulators, bolts and nuts should not need to be replaced again for several decades, creating a low maintenance line with minimal outages for several decades. With the larger conductor we are also able to switch our electrical circuits around when we need to work on a line. This sometimes allows hundreds of members to stay on where otherwise their power would be off for several hours while our linemen made repairs.

Presently we are working on a three-phase feeder line south of Lawrenceville. Then we will move on to a three-phase feeder going North out of Newton, a three-phase feeder east of Heartville and a three-phase feeder northwest of Bridgeport.

- The project we are presently working on south of Lawrenceville consists of upgrading five miles of line. Increased electrical load on this circuit is reaching the capacity of the old line and an upgrade was imminent. With the upgrade we will be able to keep this circuit on from another substation if there is a major power outage, or if a scheduled outage is planned. An additional three and a half miles of this circuit will be replaced in 2008 to finish the job.
- The project north of Newton is similar to the Lawrenceville job in that the circuit is nearing capac-

ity and an upgrade will allow for increased capacity and reliability. The project consists of replacing four miles of line.

- Located east of Heartville, this project will consist of upgrading five miles of single phase line to three phase line and upgrade two miles of three phase line to larger conductor. This project will alleviate several heavily loaded single-phase lines and create a tie line between our Mason and Loy Substations. Presently the Mason Substation is not connected to any other substation with a three-phase line. This inhibits our ability to connect the Mason Substation to any other substation in the area and keep the power on if the Mason Substation goes down for any reason. With this tie line we will be able to pick up our members on the Mason Substation in the event of an extended power outage, or switch around before performing scheduled maintenance.
- The final project northwest of Bridgeport will consist of upgrading four miles of line. This project will also create a tie line between our Bridgeport Substation and our Birds Substation. This tie line will also help keep more of our members on when a power outage occurs.

Another benefit to rebuilding a power line that our members may or may not notice is that the lights will not go out as often as before. When a line is rebuilt it usually requires a complete replacement of all the

▼ New-three phase line



▼ New three-phase line pulled in on rollers



Tiffany Elliott Elected this Year's Illinois Youth Leadership Council representative

Tiffany Elliott of Martinsville was elected by a group of her peers during this year's Youth to Washington tour as the 2007 Illinois Youth Leadership Council representative. Tiffany was sponsored by Norris Electric Cooperative to Washington, D.C. Here, Tiffany speaks with Duane Noland, President/CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC), after delivering a speech to board members from throughout the state of Illinois during the AIEC annual meeting. This fall she will attend the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) annual meeting with 43 other Youth Leadership Council representatives from across the country. She will also attend a week-long summer Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., where she will take courses on leadership and how to write and deliver speeches.



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Electric News

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Learning About the System

Norris Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors traveled around the

service area in August 2007. The directors take a tour of the service area every two years to familiarize themselves with the everyday workings of the cooperative's

operation. The tour included brush clearing areas, key account tours, and areas where lines had been or were in the process of being upgraded.

Several sites where the brush cutting machine had cleared brush were observed. It was discussed how brush clearing is a never-ending job and different ways to improve this situation. It is very important to keep the electrical lines clear from any trees to avoid

unnecessary outages. The directors got a first hand look at the brush-cutting machine in action at Red Hills State Park (see photo at left).



The journey continued with a tour of Agreliant Genetics, a seed corn production facility

near St. Francisville in Lawrence County. The group enjoyed a very informative tour of how seed corn is harvested to when it is bagged and ready for delivery. Norris Electric recently upgraded a three-phase line to better serve Agreliant's needs now and in the future.

The group then headed to Effingham County and visited Heartland Berry Farm and Greenhouses. The greenhouse had recently purchased a

generator system from Norris Electric and the directors were told how much peace of mind the greenhouse owners now have knowing the greenhouses will never be out of power for an extended period of time. The group enjoyed the beautiful landscaping around the greenhouse and banquet hall as well (see bottom photo).



The tour ended by observing two key accounts of Norris Electric Cooperative. The new Kohl's department store nearing completion (see photo above) and recently completed Idle-Air equipment at the Truckstops of America.



Norris Electric Cooperative Provides Educational Resources to Local Schools

Norris Electric Cooperative is making it easier for area schools to teach about electricity and electric cooperatives. Through a partnership between Touchstone Energy Cooperatives and Discovery Channel School, the co-op embarked on a campaign to ensure that middle and junior high school students in its service area receive a quality education on electricity—its beginnings to its importance in today's world.

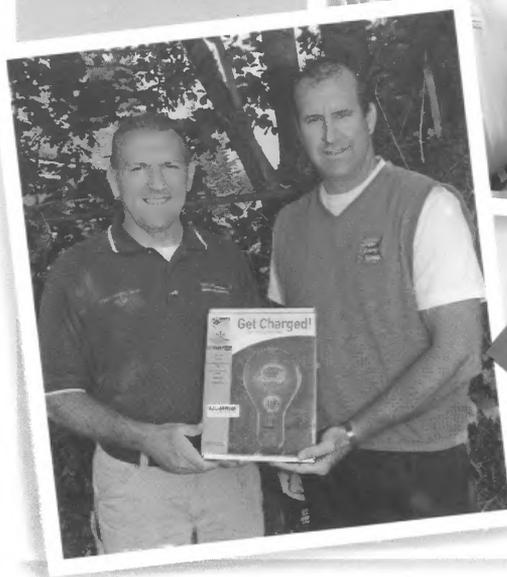
By streamlining the vast amounts of information on electricity and the important role cooperatives played in bringing this commodity to rural America, students are able to easily digest the lesson plans in this educational campaign.

Through this community outreach program—called *Get Charged! Electricity and You*—Norris Electric Cooperative provides middle and junior high schools with a comprehensive kit of educational materials focusing on electricity, a component of the National Academy of Science's National Science Education Standards (NSES).

While individual states differ in their implementation and assessment of standards, they often base those for science topics on the NSES. Developed by teachers, scientists, science educators and other experts, the standards for grades K–12 describe what students should understand and be able to do in various science categories.

"Providing our local schools with an effective educational resource on electricity and the vital efforts rural

Cary Jackson, Dieterich Jr. High Principal, with Tim Bohnhoff.



Jasper Co. Jr. High Principal Travis Wyatt and Member Services Coordinator Tim Bohnhoff



electric co-ops put forth in bringing power to the people all across America exemplifies our commitment to community," said Manager Keith McKinney. "By investing in our local students' education, we ensure that our customers, both households and businesses, can continue to count on us to provide them with more than just electricity," he said.

Each *Get Charged!* kit contains the following educational materials:

- Poster for classroom use
- Two Videos:
 - *Understanding: Electricity*
 - Touchstone Energy's *Our Story*

- Interactive CD-ROM featuring electricity
- Lesson Plan: *Get Power - The Cooperative Way*
- 10-Student Activity Books
- Electricity Teachers Resource Guide
- Customizable letter to parents and schools explaining the educational program

"Our involvement in Touchstone Energy Cooperatives' partnership with Discovery Channel School allows us to participate with the many other electric co-ops committing educational resources to the schools co-ops serve," said Member Services Coordinator Tim Bohnhoff.

Youth to Washington



Noblitt and Tiffany, both third from right, visited with Congressman Tim Johnson in his office.



Jordan Noblitt and Tiffany Elliott explored the capitol as one of many events on the Youth to Washington trip.

Tiffany Elliott of Martinsville and Jordan Noblitt of Annapolis represented Norris Electric Cooperative in Washington, D.C., during the annual "Youth to Washington" Tour, June 8-15. 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.

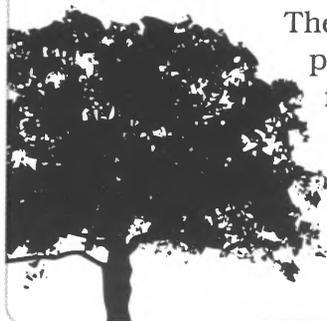
The students met with Senator Dick Durbin and Congressman Tim Johnson and were among 57 rural Illinois youth leaders selected for the trip. In addition to the Capitol, they also visited the White House, Arlington National Cemetery, the National Cathedral, the Smithsonian

Museums, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the World War II Memorial, George Washington's estate at Mt. Vernon and a number of other historical sites.

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WildBlue Pizza Party

What does WildBlue Internet have to do with pizza?



Emily and NRTC's Rod Phillips



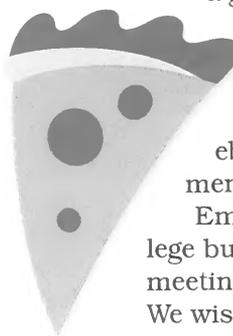
Emily and WildBlue Coordinator Carrie Ford

The NRTC (National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative) sponsored summer interns for cooperatives which promote the WildBlue Internet sales. Emily Miller of rural Newton was selected to work out of the Norris Electric Cooperative office. She visited several area county fairs to inform people about the new high-speed satellite Internet as well as working in



the office answering phone calls inquiring about this new service.

One of the incentives of her job was a pizza party for the whole company for whoever had the most installs between July 17 and July 31 and Emily was the winner! So on August 15, the whole office including directors, linemen and WildBlue



installers were all treated to a great pizza lunch. Rod Phillips, NRTC Sales & Marketing Manager from Texas, was even here in Newton to celebrate this accomplishment with us.

Emily is now back in college but everyone enjoyed meeting and working with her. We wish her the best in her future plans whether that may be in marketing or in another field. Good luck, Emily.

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Electric News

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Steps To Cut Energy Costs While Ensuring Safety

Cut Energy Costs

As temperatures start to fall, a small investment of time now can pay big dividends in keeping your home warm and lowering costs while ensuring safety this winter.

“Energy dollars can pour out of homes through drafty doors, windows, attics, walls and floors without even being noticed,” says Molly Hall, Executive Director of the Illinois Electric Council and Safe Electricity.

- Have a professional inspect and service your furnace to make sure it is in good working order. An efficient heating system means greater comfort at a lower cost.
- Regularly clean or replace furnace filters during high winter use and check ducts, flues and chimneys. Keeping heating equipment clean and in good repair will ensure peak efficiency and safety.
- The U.S. Department of Energy recommends installing a programmable thermostat to automatically raise and lower home temperatures for energy savings day and night. Set your thermostat to lower temperatures while you're asleep or away from home.
- Make sure attics and flooring, especially above unheated spaces such as crawl spaces and garages, are appropriately insulated.
- Find air leaks in homes by moistening fingertips and running them around doors or window

frames to feel a draft. Check around outlets and look for gaps near the dryer vent, chimneys and faucet pipes. Seal them all with caulking or weatherstripping.

- Consider replacing screens with storm windows and doors.
 - Double-pane windows with low-e coating can reduce heating bills by 34 percent in cold climates compared to uncoated, single-pane windows. If you have older or leaky windows that you cannot replace, consider temporary fixes, such as plastic film kits that create the effect of an interior storm window.
- For more information visit www.IECouncil.org.

Stay Safe

As you take steps to winterize your home, use the opportunity to check for electrical hazards. The dry winter air is a perfect environment for electric shock and fire.

- Check outlets and make sure they are not overloaded or warm to the touch.
- Examine electrical cords for cracks, frays and damaged plugs, and don't run cords under rugs, furniture or behind baseboards.
- Check that light bulbs are the proper wattage and securely screwed



in light fixtures so bulbs don't overheat and ignite curtains or nearby furniture.

- Outlets related to frequent circuit breaker trips or blown fuses should be inspected by a professional. Dimming lights and shrinking pictures on televisions and computer monitors are also electrical warning signs that merit an inspection.
- Make sure bathroom, laundry room, kitchen and outdoor outlets have ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and test and reset them monthly.
- Test your smoke detector batteries. Replace them if they are more than six months old.
- If an electric space heater is used, make sure the wiring is adequate and check for cord fraying, splitting wires or overheating. Don't place a portable heater in high-traffic areas and keep it clear of curtains, bedding, clothes and furniture. Never use extension cords with electric heaters.

For more information, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

Six New Norris Electric Employees

Joining the Lineman Department



► Erik Steffen was hired as an Apprentice Lineman and has relocated to Newton from Taylorville, Ill. Erik recently completed the electrical lineman program at Lincoln Land Community College.

Norris Electric was fortunate to have a large number of qualified applicants from which to choose. We would like to thank all who took the time to send in their applications. We feel these six men will be a great addition to the Norris Electric team.

Joining the Forestry Department



► Brad Davidson is from Newton. He is married with two children and has previous spraying experience.



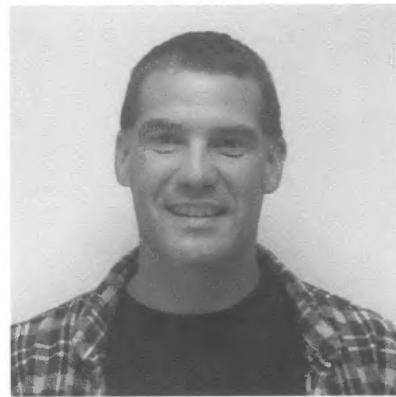
► Ronnie Newkirk is also from Newton. He was employed at Jackson Auto Repair for more than 20 years.



► Travis Sipe now resides in rural Dieterich with his wife and newborn son. They have relocated from Louisville. Travis has several years experience as a service technician.



► Matt Roedl is from Effingham and is planning to relocate to the Newton area. Matt previously worked as a Journeyman Line Clearance man with Shade Tree.



► Steve Hunzinger lives in Dieterich with his wife and two children. Steve has 18 years of electrical and plumbing experience with Niebrugge and Sons Inc. in Dieterich.

Billing Audit

Pictured are Norris Electric Office Manager Tamara Phillips (right) along with Patty Holten from SEDC (Southeastern Data Cooperative, Inc.). SEDC is located in Atlanta, Ga. and is Norris Electric's computer software provider. Patty

travels to cooperatives to update personnel on new billing implementations. She recently visited Norris Electric for several days and spent time with office employees showing them how to utilize available programs to their fullest.



Office Closings

**Monday, Nov. 12
for Veterans Day
Thursday and
Friday, Nov.
22 and 23 for
Thanksgiving.**



What Do I Do When My Power Goes Out?

First, check your breakers. Then check with your neighbors to see if they have service. And finally, call the cooperative to report the outage. We don't always know that you're out of power. When you call, give your location number or account number (located on your electric bill). We recommend you keep that number handy by your phone with our number. If you have heard or seen something that might help us pinpoint what caused the outage, let us know. And please be patient. If you get a busy signal on the phone, try again. And if your power is out for an extended period of time, please know that we are working hard to restore it as soon as possible.



Need Money for College? Seven \$1,250 scholarships available!

Seven scholarships of \$1,250 each will be awarded in 2008 to eligible high school seniors through the Illinois Electric Cooperative (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

Four scholarships will be awarded to students who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative. A fifth scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, will be awarded to a student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative employee. The sixth and seventh scholarships are reserved for students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members,



employees or directors.

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.

For more information contact Norris Electric or ask your high school guidance counselor.



At your co-op, we belong to a family. It's a family of more than 600 cooperatives—who all work together to provide a reliable source of electricity for you. Together, we'll always be looking out for you, your family and your community.



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

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Electric News

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Gloom and Doom or a New Dawn for Energy

We have seen energy prices increase over the last few years for all energy providers. Those increases include oil, gasoline, natural gas, electricity, etc. Norris Electric Cooperative has been fortunate to have the lowest rates around for electricity. Being the lowest is certainly a desirable position to be in but even if we are the lowest, our prices may be hard to manage for some people.

There are great minds that think the recent rise in electricity prices are just the beginning. Depending upon who you listen to there is a thought that the electricity load in the United States will exceed the capacity of the electricity generating stations in the United States by the end of 2013. That is only six years away. How could this happen?

Deregulation in Illinois has played a big part here and similar thinking in other states has created similar results. Investor-owned utilities are reluctant to build power stations if they are not assured of recovering their costs. Environmentalists have made it very hard for coal fired or nuclear plants to be constructed, especially if state or federal money is involved. Presently most plants that are under or close to being under construction are owned by private entities that do

not require loans or other forms of financing through the state or federal government. Environmentalists are able to stop or slow these plants down as well.

If a coal or nuclear plant is going to be built on a site that is already available and the project has all of its permits then construction might take five to seven years. If a new site has to be procured then a new coal or nuclear plant could easily take 10 years to construct. If you think about being out of power in six years then you can see the problem. Natural gas fired power plants are cheaper and quicker to build. If the turbine and other equipment are readily available then a gas fired plant could easily be constructed in one year. However, natural gas is getting very expensive; the pricing for natural gas is very volatile. This means that as the next few years go by, electricity prices across the nation will be going up. There are few

Continued on next page ▶

Board Approves Rate Increase

The Norris Electric Board of Directors reviewed the present revenues and wholesale electric costs of the cooperative along with forecasts for the next five years. Those reviews show that another rate increase would be required starting with the first bills issued in January of 2008. That increase would be similar to the increase last January. There is no plan to do anything with the Facilities Charge and any increase will be based on energy usage. Our state association is presently working on the calculations and we should be able to provide a chart in next month's magazine that shows the effect that this increase will have to different levels of energy usage. We still anticipate the cost of electricity for an average residence to be one of the lowest in the state if not the lowest. Watch next month for the details.



Continued previous page ►

nuclear and coal plants being built so as we get closer to 2013 you will see gas fired plants being built to satisfy the energy needs.

Norris Electric Cooperative has had contracts for many years with Central Illinois Public Service and then Ameren Energy Marketing for wholesale power. We have been fortunate to sign contracts at times when the market price has been favorable. We hope to continue doing this but we also expect the market price to continue to go up. If Ameren or others can make more money on the market than they could with Norris Electric Cooperative then why would they sell to us for less?

Some would like to see more "green power" electricity sources being in the mix. These would typically be renewable type energy sources such as wind or hydro powered plants. Wind power is a great idea; however, even with recent available grant money the pay back for these plants is VERY long. The United States has been mapped to show where the wind blows adequately enough to justify wind generators. In Illinois it is typically around the

Bloomington or LaSalle area.

Transmitting power over long distances can be difficult. However, this isn't the troublesome part of wind power that people do not understand. The wind can be a strong part of any generation portfolio but it cannot be depended upon to satisfy a consistent capacity. The wind does not blow at all times or at times of peak energy usage. What this means is that utilities and cooperatives still must have other forms of generation available for those peak times when wind isn't available. So, plants must still be built and that isn't happening.

It presently takes a considerable sized lake or river for a hydroelectric generating station and we do not have a lot of those in our service area. The cooperative is a great proponent of renewable energy but wants to make sure we can fulfill our members' needs at all times. Right now wind and hydro power are not the answers for us.

Another form of renewable energy that is more acclimated to our area is anaerobic digesters. Although they can be fueled by many sources the most common that would be

available in our area would be cow and hog manure. The trouble we have in this area is that you must have approximately 750 head of dairy cattle or 4,000 head of hogs before it becomes economically feasible. There are only a few farms in our area that reach these levels.

We have seen advances in the automotive industry on electric autos or hybrid autos. These are great innovations but presently they are more expensive than the "standard" autos. You can expect sales of these autos to take off in the future but now they are slow due to the extra cost. As we see fuel prices go higher and the purchase price go down there will be more of these automobiles purchased. It is much the same way with renewable energy. There will be a time when renewable energy is a large part of our energy portfolio across the nation. As members of the cooperative you should be aware of the pending energy crisis. When your legislators enact laws that require renewable energy be used then you should know what that will cost you as a member. Stay alert and ask your legislators questions!

Linemen Receive Training

At Norris Electric, we are committed to continuous training for our linemen. In October, three of our apprentice linemen attended safety training schools hosted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives and held at Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield.

Jeff Higgs and Ben Bierman attended climbing school and received hands on training in pole climbing, hurt man rescue, power line building, equipment installation and pole replacement.

Erik Steffen attended a first year distribution / rubber gloving school and received training on working safely with energized lines.

Jeff Higgs and Ben Bierman take a breather while learning climbing skills.



Erik Steffen takes a break before climbing into the bucket truck again for more line work training.

Emily Miller, Our WildBlue U Intern Wins \$5,000 Scholarship

Emily Miller, Norris Electric Cooperative's WildBlue U intern will receive a \$5,000 scholarship from the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative (NRTC) for selling the most WildBlue satellite Internet subscriptions this summer as part of the WildBlue U summer internship program.

Miller, a senior at Eastern Illinois University, increased sales of WildBlue satellite Internet service by more than 200 percent in two months within the communities served by Norris Electric Cooperative.

"Emily brought enthusiasm and poise to Norris Electric like a breath of fresh air. Her enthusiasm was contagious and our other employees caught it! We were very lucky to have this fine young lady among us for this short time. I am confident that she has made the right career selection and will make someone an excellent employee after graduation," said General Manager Keith McKinney.

Norris Electric Cooperative was one of 19 cooperatives in 10 states participating in the second summer of the WildBlue U program. The program, which is sponsored by NRTC, provides an opportunity for college students to learn about the business side of their local utility cooperative and to supplement that knowledge by using their own creativity and experience to market and sell WildBlue satellite Internet service.



In addition to Emily's scholarship, NRTC donated \$250 to Norris Electric and the co-op's board of directors voted to add an additional \$250 for a total \$500. Norris Electric will award the money as a scholarship to a high school senior whose parents are co-op members. More information will be available soon from high school guidance offices.

Holiday Closings

Our office will be closed December 24 and 25 for Christmas and December 31 and January 1 for the New Year's holiday.



Vegetation Control Schedule

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

Richland County • Cumberland County • Clark 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 1-877-783-8765 or 618-783-8765 during working hours. Our Web site is www.norriselectric.com.

Co-op Connections Card

As your electric cooperative, we feel it is important for us to provide you with safe, reliable power. Yet our service goes beyond the wires. It is also important that we offer additional value that improves the quality of life of our member-owners. As a Touchstone Energy® co-op, we strive to meet that goal on a daily basis.

That's why we, in conjunction with the other Touchstone Energy co-ops serving 17 million member-owners nationwide, are bringing you the Co-op ConnectionsSM program. This new card-based member benefit program is designed to deliver added value for our members residential and business by offering valuable discounts at participating local and national businesses. And, best of all, it is free just for being a member of Norris Electric Cooperative.

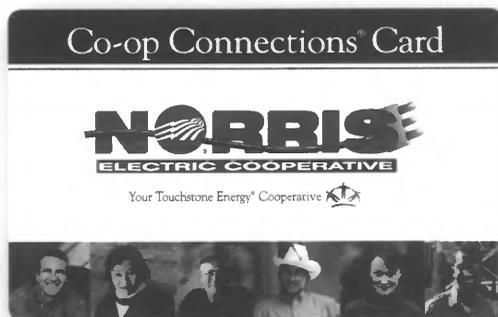
Whenever a Co-op Connections cardholder, whether from Norris Electric or from one of the hundreds of Touchstone Energy co-ops across the country, shows the Co-op Connections card at a participating business, they receive a discount. Equally, those businesses benefit from increased customer visits by co-op

members participating in the program. It's easy to spot which local businesses are participating. Just look for the Co-op Connections stickers in their window.

After the first of the year, you will be able to log onto www.norriselectric.com to see a list of participating businesses. We will publish them in the Illinois Country Living magazine from time to time as well.

You will receive your new Co-op Connections card in the mail in late January or early February. Once you sign the back of the card, it's ready for use at participating businesses locally and nationwide.

While our number one priority is providing you with safe, reliable power, we are committed to improving the quality of life of our member-owners. The Co-op Connections program is just one more way to accomplish that goal.



ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS: The Co-op Connections Card has no cash value and is not redeemable for cash. The Card is nontransferable and may be used only by the Co-op member to whom it is issued. You must present your Card to receive discounts at participating businesses. Any unauthorized reproduction or misrepresentation of the Card is strictly prohibited. Neither Touchstone Energy Cooperative, Inc. nor any Touchstone Energy cooperative has any responsibility and shall not be liable for any problems with any products or services provided by participating businesses or for any inaccuracy in those businesses' advertising or marketing. The Card is the property of Touchstone Energy, and your right to use the Card may be terminated at any time by Touchstone Energy or your Co-op without notice. Discounts or offers available through the Card may also change from time to time without notice. Each participating business will decide the terms of the discount that it offers under this program, and some products or services may not be included. Please check with the participating business before making your purchase. Other terms and conditions of the Co-op Connections Card program are subject to change and may be posted at any time on Touchstone Energy's web site at www.connections.coop or the Co-op's web site at www.norriselectric.com without notice. Your use of the Card means that you accept these terms and conditions.

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