


# MONROE ELECTRIC NEWS

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

**Come on out!**



## 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Members

**Saturday, June 2, 2018**

**Monroe County Electric  
Cooperative Headquarters**

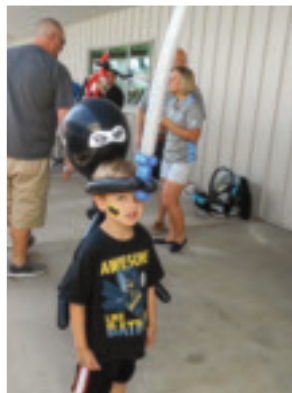


**Registration, breakfast &  
children's activities begin - 7 a.m.**

**Breakfast served by Chris Cakes  
includes pancakes, scrambled eggs,  
sausage, coffee & orange juice**

**Business meeting begins - 10 a.m.**

**Scholarship & Cash prize drawings - follows  
business meeting - members must be present to win**



**All registered members will receive a  
\$20 bill credit on their July bills**



*Left to right in front: Michaela Runge, Bailey Meyer, Ella Lehman, State senator Paul Schimpf, Alyssa Heller, Jacqueline Gibbs, Maria Mueller and chaperone Julie Robr. In back, chaperone Allan Masterson, Quinn Huebner and Logan Seidler.*



## A day in Springfield

State Senator Paul Schimpf met with students representing Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Inc. during the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Youth Day on Wednesday, April 18 in Springfield. More than 210 students from around Illinois had an opportunity to visit the State Capitol, view state government in action and question their legislators on key issues. They also were invited into the office of Secretary of State Jesse White.

During lunch, Lt. Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti addressed students and chaperones. Sanguinetti discussed her

humble beginnings and being encouraged to not allow her background to limit her future. With her passion for volunteerism in local communities, she challenged students, "you never know where life may take you. Volunteer, make a difference. If not you, then who?" Illinois State Fair Manager Luke Sailer, a former Illinois Youth Leadership Council representative, challenged the students to take an interest in the political process and stressed how important their voices and actions are. He encouraged them to "take a leap of faith and work hard, and doors will open for you and your future."

Faye Yang, the 2017-18 Illinois Youth Leadership Council Representative from Wayne-White Counties Electric Cooperative, spoke about her experiences on the Youth to Washington tour and challenged attendees to maintain an interest in their cooperatives and the political process. After lunch, the students also visited the Old State Capitol and Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum.

Youth Day is designed to introduce young rural leaders to state government. There were 24 co-ops from across the state represented at the event.

## MCEC line outages - April 2018

Date	Duration	# Out	Location	Cause	Substation
04/02/18	3:49	4	B Rd	Lightning	Fountain
04/03/18	0:10	7	Kropp Rd	Lightning	Millstadt
04/13/18	2:17	3	Bluff Rd	Vehicles or machinery	Fountain
04/20/18	2:02	9	Brickey Rd	Unknown	Poe
04/20/18	1:37	5	Nike Rd	Vehicles or machinery	New Athen

# Maintain the safe zone around pad-mounted transformers

By Derrill Holly

Jordan Overbee was driving to work when he saw them. The elementary school-aged youngsters were just waiting for the school bus, but they were sitting on a big green metal box. Inside was vital electrical equipment, distributing electricity to several homes on the street.

"It was a bad place for a school bus stop," Overbee recalled. "There were five kids gathered there to wait for a bus, sitting, talking and playing for a few minutes because it was between driveways."

As manager of operations for Wake Electric Membership Corp., Overbee knows a lot about pad-mounted transformers. They

make up about half of the transformers used across the Youngville, North Carolina-based co-op's system.

"Transformers change voltage from higher levels to voltages people use in their homes for their electronics, appliances and lighting," said Overbee. "Each of our transformers can be vital to providing electricity to several homes."

After seeing the kids waiting at that same transformer several days in a row, Overbee pulled over and talked to some of the parents. He explained that high voltage electricity flowed through the transformer inside the casing and encouraged them to move a safer distance away.

"The parents hadn't thought much about it, so once I explained the risks, they were happy to move to another driveway," Overbee said.

While overhead power lines are mounted on utility poles and substations are protected by security fences, pad-mounted transformers, switch boxes and pedestals are at ground level.

"We have about 5,400 pad mounted

transformers on our system," said Van Crawford, vice president of operations at Peace River Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Wauchula, Florida. "Of that number, 4,800 of them are located in the western district of our service territory."

In many newer subdivisions and residential developments, overhead lines are no longer an option. Burying power

lines also reduces potential system damage from high winds and severe storms. While consumers seldom see technicians working on the transformers unless there are power outages, they are regularly in-

spected by co-op crews riding through neighborhoods.

"We can see fault indicators from the road," said Crawford, adding that one of the biggest concerns is safe access when repairs or component adjustments must be made. "That's why it's important that landscaping and other barriers be kept clear of co-op equipment."

Co-op technicians need at least 10-foot clearance at the opening side of a pad-mounted transformer. Approximately four feet of open space is preferable at the rear and on the sides of the metal housing.

That distance allows for tool use, including hot sticks—typically eight feet in length, used to work with energized equipment. It also ensures that one or two technicians working on a transformer have space to maneuver should they have to back away if problems occur.

"We once had a member use a transformer box as a work bench platform, and obviously we had to have him remove it," said Crawford. "We always try to explain the risks, and most members

are more than willing to cooperative once they understand."

Pad-mounted transformers are connected to primary high voltage lines, and secondary lines can extend in several directions to distribute power to homes and businesses. That's why it's important to check with Monroe County Electric Co-Operative (MCEC) before planting shrubs or trees, setting fence posts, installing sprinkler systems and digging where it might damage underground lines.

MCEC recommends that you contact 811/Call Before You Dig for a site assessment and marking before proceeding with projects that might disrupt utility service.

While pad-mounted transformers in developed, suburban or urban areas are regularly inspected for damage from vehicles, many utilities use marking sticks or pennants to alert tractor, snow plow or heavy equipment operators of their locations.

MCEC also encourages public works and transportation departments to keep their equipment, supplies and road debris at least 15 feet away from pad-mounted transformers.

*Derrill Holly writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*



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7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

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# LOOK UP

BEFORE YOU LIFT



## TAKE THE RIGHT STEPS TO SAFETY



Home projects often require a ladder. Before you make the climb, Safe Electricity urges you to take steps to stay safe:

- Carry the ladder horizontally.
- Before placing it upright, make sure the area above is well away from power lines, including the service lines connected to the home.
- Keep ladders and yourself at least ten feet away from power lines.

Always remember: It is never safe to touch or get near a power line! Any coating on the lines is for weather protection, not protection from electricity.

Always take time to look up and stay safe.