



## Protecting the electric grid from a cyber attack

Could a computer hacker shut down the nation's electric grid?

It's a question asked in popular books, congressional hearings, and it's even the plot point in the 2007 Bruce Willis movie "Live Free or Die Hard."

Most experts answer that question with, "probably not." Part of the reason for that answer is there are a lot of people in government and the utility industry like Barry Lawson.

As Associate Director of Power Delivery and Reliability for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), Lawson spends his time working with electric co-op utilities to try to protect utilities from digital hackers.

Lawson and several others at NRECA run cyber security training sessions, publish security safety materials, and develop techniques and software to keep the nation's electric supply reliable and secure. It also protects sensitive member, employee, and co-op data and information from identity theft.

Lawson says co-ops make a high priority out of protecting themselves from the constant variety of cyber computer attacks by everyone from organized crime to hobbyist hackers,

who are constantly launching attacks on every computer in the world. This includes your cooperative and its power supplier Prairie Power, Inc.

"We're all being hacked," says Lawson. "As soon as you plug a new computer into the internet, it's being hacked by software that looks for internet connections by the millions."

Lawson says we can all use advice that's the basis for how utilities protect themselves from cyber attacks: "try to make it as difficult as possible, and put in as many layers of protection as possible."

Here are Lawson's top four tips for protecting your computer:

1. Make sure you have anti-virus software installed on your computer, and remember to keep it updated.
2. Do not send emails containing personal information, like your date of birth or Social Security Number, because that increases opportunities for your identity to be stolen. Be careful of typing a credit card number into a website—if you do, make sure that it is a

secure website. You can tell whether it is secure by looking for the "s" at the beginning of the website address. Most begin with "http://." A secure site will begin with "https://."

3. Attachments or links in an email can contain malware that can infect your computer. Do not open an e-mail attachment or click a link unless you know the person sending it, and you were expecting them to send it to you (hackers can take over an account and make it look like it's from a friend).
4. Monitor children's online activity, and make sure they know how to practice good cyber security. Visit the U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team's (UC-CERT) website for security tips on how to keep children safe online (<https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/ST05-002>).

Source: NRECA

# Shelby Electric Cooperative Coloring Contest Winners



**Kassidi Sugg**  
Age 4-6

**Elcie Coleman**  
Age 7-9



**Megan Baker**  
Age 10-12

**SHELBY** News  
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 **Shelby Electric Cooperative**  
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This year, our coloring contest was spreading awareness about a thief hiding in your own home. We asked children from ages 4-12 to help us catch Incandescent Ivan (an energy-stealing lightbulb) by submitting a WANTED poster for his arrest.

Out of a record-breaking number of entries, Kassidi Sugg, 6, of Macon; Elcie Coleman, 7, of Pana; and Megan Baker, 12, of Trilla were named winners of Shelby Electric Cooperative's 2018 coloring contest. Our three winners took home a medal, \$20 gift card, and toy bucket truck.

"Thanks to all our contestants' hard work and creativity, Incandescent Ivan was caught, and we believe that deserves a *thank you!* Every child who entered the contest received a certificate and a pencil with a lightbulb eraser in the mail," noted Member Services Intern Morgan Partlow who administered the contest for the cooperative.

For more information about Shelby Electric Cooperative's youth programs, visit the "Community" tab at [www.shelbyelectric.coop](http://www.shelbyelectric.coop).

REAL LIFE  REAL POWER

## Getting Real with Marla and Harvest Safety

Illinois has approximately 71,000 farms and over 26 million acres of farmland. In 2016, 417 farmers and farm workers died from a work-related injury, resulting in a fatality rate of 21.4 deaths per 100,000 workers. Shelby Electric Cooperative (SEC) serves over 2,000 miles of electric lines in nine rural counties. We understand the communities we serve and know that harvest is a busy season that affects our members in many ways.

The use of large equipment can put farmers and their equipment dangerously close to electric lines. Add fatigue and a sense of urgency to the mix, and the results could be deadly. We do not want

any of our members to become part of a deadly statistic.

Farmers, their families, and employees should keep the following tips in mind to help keep everyone safe.

- Do not assume everyone is aware of where the power lines are located. Review where they are and remind each other to “Look up and live!”
- Use a spotter when moving tall equipment in proximity of power lines.
- Keep all objects at least 10 feet away from overhead lines.
- Do not attempt to move a power line out of the way.
- Have emergency phone numbers, including SEC’s (800-677-2612 or 217-774-3986) in all farm vehicles and machinery.
- If equipment makes contact with a power line, the operator should not get off the machinery unless in immediate danger!
- If in immediate danger, such as fire, tuck your arms across your body, jump with your feet together so no part of your body touches the equipment and ground at the same time, and move by hopping or shuffling until at least 40 feet away. Do not approach the equipment again until emergency personnel confirm it is safe to do so.

All motorists can help ensure a safe harvest season by anticipating slow-moving equipment on roadways. If a car is traveling at 55 mph when 400 hundred feet behind a tractor traveling at 15 mph, it only takes seven seconds to reach the tractor. Plan for travel delays. This is like rush hour traffic for rural communities.

Perk up your favorite, tired farmer on September 29, National Coffee Day, by sharing a cup of coffee (and maybe a donut) and help keep this year’s harvest a safe event!

~Marla Eversole,  
Communication Specialist

Sources: National Agricultural Statistics Services, SafeElectricity.org, University of Illinois Extension, and National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health



# Hot air balloons return to Lake Shelbyville



The streets of downtown Shelbyville will soon come alive with a festive flair, and the skies will be filled with the vibrant colors of hot air balloons as the annual Touchstone Energy Balloonfest and Scarecrow Daze takes place on Columbus Day weekend, October 5-7.

Shelby Electric Cooperative and several other Illinois Touchstone Energy Cooperatives have teamed up to bring the Touchstone Energy Hot Air Balloon Team to Lake Shelbyville for the 8th annual hot air balloon festival.

Watch pilots from around the Midwest take to the skies with flights on Friday night and Saturday and Sunday mornings. After a cookout to support the Shelbyville Fire Department and other festivities on Saturday evening, you can enjoy a nightglow as balloons light up the night at the Shelby County Airport on Route 16, west of Shelbyville.

For more information about the Touchstone Energy Balloonfest or to volunteer to be part of the hot air balloon, contact the cooperative at 217-774-3986 or go to [www.lakeshelbyville.com](http://www.lakeshelbyville.com) and click on the event calendar. There will be a schedule of events in the October 2018 Shelby News insert of the Illinois Country Living magazine. Follow the event on Facebook by searching Lake Shelbyville Balloonfest.

Mark your calendars now. You do not want to miss all there is to see and do over Columbus Day weekend in Shelbyville!

**Cooperative offices  
will be closed Monday,  
September 3rd for  
Labor Day**

