



Rural HIGHLIGHTS

Local News from Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative

RURAL Highlights

Holiday Wishes

*from the directors and employees of
Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative!*

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**RECC's office will be closed Dec. 26 for Christmas
and Jan. 2 for New Years.**

Three-phase feeder line goes underground

RECC crews began an upgrade project in October to convert a three-phase feeder line from overhead to underground cable. The 2.3 miles of line stretch along Route 104 from Purdom Road to BAB Road, carrying power to the east and north sides of Auburn.

The original line was built in 1953 on the north side of Route 104, and has survived hits from automobiles and farm machinery along with the heavy ice storm of 1978. Lou DeLaby, Manager of Operations and Maintenance, says the new, larger wire will improve reliability and provide more capacity for the growing residential and commercial load near Auburn.

Most of the line is being trenched along farm fields, buried four feet deep to avoid damage from tillage equipment. A shorter segment going across several residential properties is being installed with directional boring to avoid excavation and tree damage across the yards.

Lou says he hopes the underground conversion can be completed by early December, if the weather cooperates. That would provide the added security of underground lines during any winter storms and through heavy electric heating loads for our members.



New three-phase cables are trenched along State Route 104 east of Auburn, to replace 2.3 miles of deteriorated overhead lines.



RECC linemen splice connections between two reels of underground wire, which each hold 2,500 feet of cable. Grounding grids are also connected every 1,200 feet along the cable installation.

Stay warm during cooler months

A few small steps could help you save money and feel more comfortable this winter. RECC suggests these energy-saving tips:

Take advantage of sunny days

Let your home absorb the sun's radiant heat by opening your blinds and shades during sunny days. (And, close heavy curtains at night to keep heat from escaping back outside.)

Adjust your thermostat

Set your thermostat no higher than 68 degrees during the winter months for maximum savings. If you have a gas or propane furnace, lower your setting a few more degrees when you're sleeping or away for several hours. (We don't recommend large setbacks with most electric heating systems.)

Utilize ceiling fans

Hot air travels upward. If you have high ceilings, use your ceiling fans on a low, counter-clockwise setting to circulate that heat back down.

Close fireplace dampers

When no fire or hot ashes are present, keep the chimney damper closed to keep heat from going up the chimney.

Prevent drafts

Check around your windows and doors for drafts. A tube of caulk and some weather stripping can go a long way to seal your home from blustery winds.



Open curtains on sunny winter days, and close them at night to retain heat in your home.



Energy agency projects higher heating costs this winter

RECC rates will remain steady

The U.S. Energy Information Administration is predicting a double-whammy for heating costs this winter, with higher energy prices expected along with colder temperatures across much of the country. The EIA forecasts 17% colder weather than last winter in the Midwest, where last year's weather was on the milder side.

Prices of natural gas are expected to average 11 percent higher this year compared to last year, and with colder weather the total cost for consumers this year could rise by 31 percent.

Propane is expected to cost 14 percent more per gallon in the Midwest, resulting in a total cost increase of 30 percent this winter.

Average electricity costs are expected to be up 1 percent, but with colder weather consumers could pay 9 percent more for their electric heat.

RECC's rates will be unchanged this winter, for both residential rates and our special Dual Meter rate for electric heating. Unfortunately, we can't make any promises for the weather conditions!



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Ten Memorial Scholarships offered for 2017

\$2,000 awards to be made in four categories

The Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program is now open, with ten co-op scholarships for \$2,000 available. RECC member families are eligible for nine of the academic scholarships, with one offered for co-op employee or director families. \$2,000 scholarships will be awarded in 2017 in these categories:

- **One scholarship** – for a student attending the lineworker's school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield. (LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship)
- **Five scholarships** – for high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative.
- **One scholarship** – for a student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative director or/ employee. (Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship)
- **Three scholarships** – 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.

■ **One scholarship** – for a student attending the lineworker's school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield. (LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship)

"Our goal is to assist electric cooperative youth while honoring past rural electric leaders with these scholarships," says President/CEO David Stuva. "RECC and the other Illinois electric cooperatives are always seeking ways to make a difference in our communities. One of the best ways we can do that is by helping our youth through programs like this one."

Scholarship applications are due by December 31, 2016, and winners will be announced in May 2017. Scholarship information is available for download at our website, www.recc.coop. Online applications are preferred.

Tips for safe winter driving

Severe weather can be both frightening and dangerous for automobile travel. We encourage you to be cautious while driving in adverse weather. Here are a few helpful winter driving tips, from AAA:

- Make certain your tires are properly inflated.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full.
- Do not use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface (wet, ice, sand).
- Keep your cell phone charged for emergencies, plus blankets, gloves, hats, food, water and any needed medication in your vehicle.
- If you become snow-bound, stay with your vehicle. It provides temporary shelter and makes it easier for rescuers to locate you.

- Accelerate and decelerate slowly. Applying the gas slowly to accelerate is the best method for regaining traction and avoiding skids. Don't try to get moving in a hurry. And, take time to slow down for a stoplight. Remember, it takes longer to slow down on icy roads.
- Drive slowly. Everything takes longer on snow-covered roads. Accelerating, stopping, turning – nothing happens as quickly as on dry pavement. Give yourself time to maneuver by driving slowly.
- The normal dry pavement following distance of three to four seconds should be increased to eight to ten seconds. This increased margin of safety will provide the longer distance needed if you have to stop.