

# WIEC NEWS

P.O. Box 338 ■ Carthage, Illinois 62321 ■ [www.wiec.net](http://www.wiec.net) ■ 800/576-3125

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## Saved by a safety lesson

When teenagers Lee Whittaker and Ashley Taylor saw a power line safety demonstration at their high school, they never dreamed their new knowledge would be put to the test. Five days later, they and two classmates were in a car that crashed into a utility pole, bringing live power lines to the ground.

Fortunately, they heeded the advice safety expert Kyle Finley had presented in his Live Line Demo program. All four survived because they knew the right actions to take. Others who don't have that knowledge are not as fortunate.

"You have to remember that you can't smell, hear or see electricity, but the power in that line is tremendous and can be deadly," Finley said. "The safest place after a crash is inside the vehicle, and the best thing you can do for a loved one who is trapped is to stay back and call the utility to disconnect power to the line."

There were injuries when the car the teens were traveling in crashed into the utility pole, bringing a power line down on the car, but they knew not to get out and informed those who approached the scene to keep their distance. They waited more than 30 minutes for line crews to arrive and deactivate the power line.

According to the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration, in 2008 almost 2000 people were killed in collisions involving utility poles. There are tens of thousands of incidents each year in which power poles are struck by cars or large equipment. Each one



of these accidents has the potential to bring down power lines. Without awareness of the right moves to make, surviving the accident itself might not be enough to stay alive.

In the vast majority of those accidents, inside the car is the safest place to be. Only in the rare instance of fire should people exit the car. Then, they must know how to do so safely, jumping free and clear of the vehicle, landing with feet together and hopping away. It's difficult to get out without creating a path for current to flow, which is why one should get out only if forced to.

"When people are involved in a car accident, electricity is usually the last thing on anyone's mind," Safe Electricity Executive Director Molly Hall said.

"We're often more concerned about whether anyone was injured, or how badly the vehicle is damaged. We often forget that by exiting the vehicle, we're risking bodily exposure to thousands of volts of electricity from downed power lines."

Ashley and Lee called Finley soon after the accident to thank him for educating students about electrical safety hazards and providing information that saved their lives.

Note: Since 1995, Kyle Finley has brought his Live Line Demo program to the Western Illinois Electrical Coop. Safety Fair. This program was developed to teach area fifth graders how to live smart and keep safe while having fun.

Call toll free 800-576-3125



**Western Illinois**  
ELECTRICAL COOP.

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

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### OFFICE HOURS

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Monday - Friday

### DURING OFFICE HOURS, OR AFTER HOURS TO REPORT OUTAGE

217-357-3125  
800-576-3125

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### MAP LOCATION CONTEST

Every month we are printing four member's map location numbers in the newsletter. If you find your map location number call the WIEC office by the 25th of the following month, tell us where it is and we will give you a \$10.00 bill credit. Keep on reading the WIEC News.

## Wash clothes efficiently without getting caught in the spin cycle

Washing machines perform a fairly simple function getting dirty clothes clean. Yet prospective buyers today can be overwhelmed with all of the different models and “bells and whistles” available top-loading, front-loading, high-efficiency (HE), water saver, steaming, and wrinkle removing, to name only a few.

Energy-efficient washing machines, easily identified by the Energy Star label, are a priority for any cost-conscious consumer's list. Approximately 93 percent of all American households have a clothes washer, adding up to 102 million clothes washers across America. About 9 million washing machines (5810-9) are sold each year —efficient models account for slightly more than one-third of sales.

Energy Star-rated washing machines cost slightly more than their less-efficient counterparts, anywhere from \$400-\$1,500, depending on other features selected. To get a handle on how much electricity a particular unit will draw, pay close attention to the yellow energy guide before making a purchase.

An energy-efficient washing machine can save the typical homeowner around \$50 a year or \$540-\$600 over the life of the appliance. Efficient machines also save more than 5,000 gallons of water annually. The energy and water efficiencies of clothes washers are measured according to their modified energy factor (MEF) and water factor (WF). These criteria generally limit Energy Star qualification to front-loading and advanced top-loading models. (662-39)

Front-loading clothes washers use a horizontal or tumble-axis basket to lift and drop clothing into the water, instead of rubbing clothes around a central agitator



in a full tub. These units use less energy than conventional clothes washers by reducing the amount of hot water needed to clean clothes. Front-loading models also squeeze more water out of clothes by using spin speeds that are two to three times faster than conventional washers, reducing both drying time and energy use.

Energy Star-qualified top-loading models typically use spray valves to rinse clothes, rather than a new tub of water. This method not only reduces the energy required for water heating, but typically saves an average of 15 gallons of water per wash, compared with conventional clothes washers.

Qualified top-loading models also boost sensors to monitor and adjust incoming water temperature. This keeps water hot enough to dissolve the detergent and provide high-performance cleaning, but cool enough to save energy and minimize hot water damage to fabrics. One limitation of efficient top-loading washers is that many models do not offer a high-temperature standard wash option. By looking for the Energy Star logo and shopping at a store with knowledgeable staff, you should be able to leave with a new washing machine that will, over time, pay for itself.

Source: NRECA's Cooperative Research Network

## Don't forget to check the air filter

Do you check your furnace/air conditioner or heat pump's filter each month? Probably not, but you should. Dirty air filters will reduce your furnace/air conditioner or heat pump's efficiency levels more than you think, costing you more money. Chances are, you'll need to replace your filter every other month, or even more often if you have multiple pets or smoke indoors. You'll save more money in energy costs by replacing the filter as needed than trying to squeak by another month. Bottom line: Filters are cheap, change them

often. **Here's how:** Locate your filter. It could be in your furnace, between the air handler and return air duct, or possibly in your return air duct in the ceiling. Is it furry with dust bunnies? Then it needs to be changed. Be aware that some newer furnaces contain two filters, one serving as a backup. Make sure you locate the main filter on this type of system.

Measure your filter carefully. They come in all different sizes that can vary as little as 1/8-inch. The size should be marked on the old filter. (571-60)

Determine which type of

filter you need. Most filters are disposable while a few are reusable and will just need washing. Fiberglass or paper pleated disposable filters are the cheapest. Be careful when shopping for a new filter. If your system cannot handle the newer, allergen-reducing, thicker filters, using one could reduce the airflow to your unit and cut efficiency. When you buy a new filter, get several so you have them on hand. Place the new filter in the unit exactly where you found the old. Now, don't just forget about it. Check it every month.

## Vegetation management schedule

### Brush spraying helps reduce outages

We plan to have crews performing routine brush spraying beginning May 1, 2010 in all or parts of the following townships:

**In Hancock County:  
Wythe, Prairie, Montebello, Sonora, Durham, Pontoosuc and Appanoose**

Due to the advanced printing of this issue of the WIEC News, these plans are subject to change. If there are questions or concerns, please contact our office during normal business hours at 217-357-3125 or 800-576-3125. For more information concerning our vegetation management policy, check out our website at [www.wiec.net](http://www.wiec.net) under the program tab.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

*Tip of the Month*

**Properly hooking up your clothes dryer can help save on energy costs. The outdoor dryer exhaust door should close when the dryer is off. Check to make sure the dryer vent hose is tightly connected to the dryer (5511-10-1) and also to the inside wall fitting. The vent hose should not be kinked or clogged.**

Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

# Be a Savvy Senior

## *Don't let it happen again!*

- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Get estimates before doing home renovations.
- Do not pay for work in advance.
- Never do business without checking references.
- Don't be afraid to call the police and have them check out the credentials of someone who is working in your area.



## Were you the victim of a telemarketing scam?

### *Don't let it happen again!*

- Don't pay for any prize or send money to improve your chances of winning. It's illegal to ask you to pay to enter a contest.
- Don't be bullied into buying something "right now." If the caller persists, end the call.
- Don't give your credit card number to anyone over the phone unless you made the call.
- Don't give any caller your bank account number.

If you or someone you know has been the victim of a scam, call the Department on Aging to talk confidentially with someone who will help you to alleviate the situation.

**Statewide Elder Abuse Hotline:**  
1-866-800-1409, 1-888-206-1327 (TTY)

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within this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice, or the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the Senior Help Line at 1-800-252-8966, 1-888-206-1327 (TTY).

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## Welcome New Members

Rebecca Billing, Niota  
John S. & Carmen L. Gittings,  
Dallas City

James H. Jennings, Nauvoo  
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Jonathan Rothert, Basco

Carrie Spittler, Niota  
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