JAMUP
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Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour

You must experience it ...

Illinois' first entirely tree-based, eco-friendly zip line canopy tour, located on 83 wooded acres surrounded by the Shawnee National Forest in Makanda, is scheduled to open in late April.

The Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour will consist of eight zip lines, the longest stretching more than 1,100 feet, which will zigzag across the property's bluffs and through the valley. The tour will also include 11 platforms high in the trees, three aerial suspension bridges, the longest stretching 180 feet, and two short ground hikes.

Guests will feel the rush of safely soaring through the forest at speeds topping 35 mph while learning about the ecology, geology and history of the area from two trained guides who will lead each group of eight guests.

"Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour is going to be more exciting and more educational than any other outdoor attraction in the Midwest," said Marc Miles, developer of Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour. "People can experience zip lines in any number of places, but we are creating a full outdoor experience that combines the rush of flying among the treetops with learning about the flora, fauna and natural history of the area along the way. This is pristine topography … old oaks and rock bluffs. There's really nothing else like it, and we couldn't be more excited about the grand opening. What an awesome way to get kids and adults of all ages exposed to nature."

The three-hour tour experience will cost $85 per person. Groups of eight or more will receive a 10 percent discount on admission. Guests must weigh at least 70 pounds to participate.

Other nearby tourist attractions include the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail and Giant City State Park. Guests will be able to access the tour from Interstate 57. The tour expects to draw guests from throughout the Midwest and throughout the country. In addition to the three-hour tour, the facility will include a welcome center, concessions and a gift shop. Kaleb Treece

The Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour course was designed and is being built by Geronimo Construction based in Minnesota. Geronimo specializes in canopy and zip line tours and is known for their low environmental impact design and construction.

Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour's mission is to provide an eco-friendly, easily accessible, exciting and educational new way to expose people of all ages and experience levels to the beauty of the Southern Illinois outdoors. Strict adherence to safety standards and training is its number one priority.

Learn more at:

- http://shawneezip.com/
- https://www.facebook.com/Shawneezip?fref=ts
- https://twitter.com/Shawneezips

SIEC Receives Top Honor at State Safety Conference

SIEC employees recently received top honors during the Safety/Supervisory Technical Conference held in Springfield. Employees were awarded the "Best Three-Year Safety Award" for their outstanding safety record among the state's electric cooperatives in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

The conference is sponsored annually by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC). Attendees learned about Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) performance standards, hearing loss prevention, the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) and other safety issues.

AIEC Safety Instructor Jim Miles said, "We work in a field where one mistake can cost you your life. Our safety program strives to give everyone the knowledge they need to hopefully prevent that one mistake from happening." Earl Hunerkoch

Shown (L-R) are Forestry Foreman Blayne Holshouser, Warehouseman Todd Thurston, Safety Director and System Engineer John Harris and AIEC Safety Instructor Jim Miles.

What causes my lights to blink?

You have just come home from work and notice that all of the digital clocks in the house are blinking. There must have been a power outage sometime during the day, right? Possibly, but more than likely it was just a power "blink" and not an outage. A "blink" occurs when the power momentarily goes off for a couple of seconds, and then comes back on.

Overhead and underground electric lines are susceptible to "blinks." SIEC has a network of over 2,100 miles of line. This network is divided into sections called distribution feeders. The feeders are protected by devices that interrupt the power when a problem or "fault" occurs on the line. The device will turn the power back on after a short period of time. If the fault is still present, the device will operate again, causing another "blink". If the fault clears, then the power stays on. If the fault is permanent, then the power goes out and stays out. The "blinks" that you see are operations of the protective devices. Because most faults are temporary in nature, your lights just "blink" and come back on. The protective devices are designed to prevent permanent outages when possible.

What problems occur on the lines that cause blinks?

Faults may be caused by several problems such as lightning, tree limbs, animals, ice and wind.

What if my power continues to blink?

SIEC realizes that blinking lights are a nuisance. If you are experiencing an extraordinary number of "blinks", please write down the dates and times, and call us. Let us know if you see any flashes or arcing on the lines. We will do our best to try to find the problem as soon as possible. Because many problems are not obvious, it may take us a while to track down the problem. We do have devices that can be put on the lines to help isolate the problem. And, with our Automated Meter Reading system, we may be able to tell how many times your meter sees a "blink". With your patience and cooperation, we will eventually find and correct the problem.

Will power blinks cause damage to appliances and other equipment?

As stated earlier, the operation of a protective device on electric lines causes "blinks". Some people refer to "blinks" as power "surges", but, unless lightning is involved, probably no "surge" occurs on the line. When the power goes off and back on during a "blink", it is often just like turning your appliance or other piece of equipment off and on with its own switch. No damage to your equipment should occur. If lightning is involved, a surge may occur and could cause damage. SIEC installs lightning arrestors on its lines to minimize the effects of lightning; yet, lightning can still cause damage.

For more information about "blinks", please go to our website www.siec.coop.

Look up and live! around swimming pools

Spring and summer bring to mind a dip in the pool, but don't let a safety hazard dampen your fun in the sun. SIEC and Safe Electricity remind everyone that water and electricity are a dangerous combination. Assessing electrical hazards near swimming pools is a wise investment of time and personal energy.

The result of contact between water and electricity can be serious, or even deadly. And in most instances, if potential safety hazards are taken into consideration and handled proactively, accidents and deaths could certainly be avoided.

Pools, decks, slides and any other fixed, pool-related structures should be built at least 25 feet away from SIEC's overhead distribution lines. This clearance is measured in any direction from the water level, edge of pool, adjacent fixed structure, etc. If you have any questions on whether your installation will meet the requirements, do not try to measure the clearance to the line yourself. Always contact SIEC at 1-800-762-1400 prior to the installation. We will be happy to review your proposed installation to make sure it will meet safety requirements.

Look up and live! springtime

Play it safe this spring with this electrical safety information.

Outdoor family fun really takes off in the spring. But before you get out the kites and start those outdoor games, we recommend you review these safety rules:

- Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines aren't touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch.
- Fly kites and model airplanes in large open areas like a park or a field, safely away from trees and overhead power lines. Never fly a kite on a cloudy day when a thunderstorm may be brewing.
- If a kite gets stuck in a tree that's near power lines, don't climb up to get it. Electricity can travel down kite strings or wires and electrocute you. Contact your electric utility for assistance.
- Never climb a utility pole or tower. The electricity carried through this equipment is extremely high voltage and could kill you.
- Don't play on or around pad-mounted electrical equipment (those large green boxes sometimes located in yards).
- Never go into an electric substation for any reason. Electric substations contain high-voltage equipment, which can kill you. Never rescue a pet or retrieve a ball or toy that goes inside. Call your electric utility instead.
- Install and use GFCI outlets outside. Use portable GFCIs if outlets don't have them. Keep appliances 10 feet from pools, ponds and wet surfaces.
- Don't leave electrical appliances outside. They could become wet and cause an electrical shock when unplugged later. If the weather looks threatening, pack up and go inside.
- Spring showers bring more than just puddles to splash in. They can bring flooded areas that are never safe to play or wade in, and may be in contact with energized equipment or fallen power lines.

Visit www.SafeElectricity.org for more information on electrical safety, and on-line games and activities that teach kids to safely use and play around electricity. Also, don't forget to visit www.siec.coop for additional electrical safety information.

Scott Alan Welch

Together We Save website calculates your home energy savings ... see what you can do!

Have you heard about togetherwesave.com? It's an energy saving tool on the Internet, brought to you by Touchstone Energy. It's free, it's easy, and it just may surprise you to see how many simple things you can do in your own home that will lower your electric bill. This site actually calculates your savings, room by room.

Ever wonder how much you could save if you just installed CFLs, added insulation, turned off lights, upgraded a few appliances, or adjusted your water heater, blinds and thermostat? Let the togetherwesave.com website calculate your savings. It just takes a few minutes. See what you can do at

TOGETHERWESAVE.COM!

See page 9 for an exciting benefit coming your way ...

only for members of Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative.

75 YEARS RURAL ELECTRIFICATION

For Outages Call:
800-762-1400 * 618-827-3555

811 Know what's **below.** **Call** before you dig.

WE SUPPORT SAFE DIGGING MONTH

Member prize

In this issue of the JAMUP, we printed the names of three SIEC members who are eligible to receive a $10 credit toward their utility bill. If you find your name printed in this center section and it's not part of the story, call Jerri with your account number at **800-762-1400** to claim your prize.

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