

Norris Electric *News*

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Norris Electric Cooperative

8543 N St Hwy 130
Newton, IL 62448

Phone: 618-783-8765
or **Toll-Free:**
1-877-783-8765

Report an Outage:
1-877-783-3221

Office Hours:
Monday – Thursday
7 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Chairman

Gordon McClureJasper

Vice Chairman

Brandon Graves Richland

Secretary/Treasurer

Dan Strine Wabash

Directors

Ava LemmonCrawford

Ron Viehman.....Lawrence

Kurt HolscherCrawford

Dave Thoele Effingham

Scott Weiss.....Lawrence

Justin Parcel..... Clark

Dave Sheppard.....Jasper

Ted HelminkCumberland

General Manager

Tamara Phillips



Keep food safe before, during and after a storm

At a glance: Benefits of energy storage

- Keep appliance thermometers in your fridge and freezer.
- Limit the opening of appliance doors.
- Use coolers and ice for outages longer than 4 hours.
- Never taste food to check safety. When in doubt, throw it out.

Storm season can bring power outages, putting your food at risk of spoiling. You can keep your groceries safe and reduce waste with a little preparation.

Before the storm

Take a few precautions:

- Use appliance thermometers in your fridge and freezer. Safe temps: 40 F (fridge), 0 F (freezer)
- Freeze water containers to help maintain cold temperatures.
- Keep coolers, ice packs or ice ready in case of long outages.
- Consider filling plastic containers with water, leaving an inch of space inside each one, to help keep food cold if the power goes out.

Stock up on ready-to-eat foods that don't need refrigeration, including:

- Bottled water
- Canned goods such as veggies, fruits, beans and tuna (Don't forget a manual can opener.)

- Instant mashed potatoes or oatmeal for carbs and energy
- Crackers and nuts
- Dry cereal and powdered milk

During an outage

In the event of a disaster, it is important to follow a specific sequence for using your available food supply. Start with perishable foods and items from the refrigerator. Following that, turn your attention to the freezer, then begin using nonperishable foods and essential staples.

Losing a fridge full of food is costly, inconvenient and can be dangerous if you're running low on rations. While you may not be able to save everything, here are ways to preserve food as long as possible:

- Keep doors closed. A fridge keeps food safe for up to 4 hours; a full freezer, up to 48 hours.
- Use a cooler if the power is out for more than 4 hours. Layer frozen items with fridge foods and ice for a more consistent temperature.
- If you don't have a cooler, you can use your freezer. Put ice in bowls and place them around the food to prevent melting ice from flooding your freezer. Use blankets to insulate the freezer, but ensure that air vents are unobstructed.
- Monitor temperatures with a thermometer. Food must stay below 40 F to stay safe.

Continued on page 18B

"Food safety" continued from 18A

- Never taste food to test safety. If it smells, looks or feels off — throw it out.
- Don't use food that touched floodwater unless it is in water-proof packaging.

After the power returns

- Frozen food is safe if it still contains ice crystals or has stayed under 40°F.
- Don't refreeze or cook food that got too warm.
- Throw out anything questionable.

Use the U.S. Department of Agriculture's guide to learn more about foods you can keep or should throw out after a power outage: www.foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts/food-safety-during-power-outage.

Staying prepared can help you avoid illness, waste and added stress during a storm.



Efficiency Tip

Wash full loads of laundry in cold water. It's the detergent, not hot water, that cleans the clothes.

Remember to clean the dryer's lint trap after every laundry load. To save energy, run washers and dryers early in the morning or late in the evening.



Safe Electricity.org



KNOW THE SIGNS

Farm and Ranch Stress is REAL

Farming and ranching are stressful occupations that are associated with increased levels of anxiety and depression. Left untreated, stressors may lead to mental health issues, increased substance use or death by suicide.

IN THE U.S.:

- ✗ One person dies by suicide every 10.9 minutes.
- ✗ In 2021, suicide ranked as the 11th most frequent cause of death.
- ✗ The national suicide average is 14.1 per 100,000 people.

For farmers, rangers and agricultural managers:

- The suicide rate is 43.7 deaths per 100,000 people.
- The suicide rate is the 6th highest among occupational groups.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- ◇ Changes in routine or social activities.
- ◇ Decreased interest in activities or events.
- ◇ Decline in care for crops, animals and the farm.
- ◇ More frequent illnesses or chronic conditions.
- ◇ Increase in accidents on the farm or ranch.
- ◇ Less care about personal appearance.
- ◇ Decreased interest in activities or events.
- ◇ Signs of stress in family members.

FIVE ACTION STEPS for helping someone in emotional pain:

1. ASK if they have suicidal thoughts.
2. KEEP them safe.
3. BE THERE by listening carefully.
4. HELP them connect.
5. STAY connected.

NATIONAL SUICIDE AND CRISIS LIFELINE NUMBER: 988
CALL OR TEXT

Learn more at: **Safe Electricity.org**

Sources: Penn State Extension, NIMH, Nat'l. Farm Bur.

Celebrating Annette's retirement — 37 years of dedication!

After 37 years of dedicated service, Annette retired from Norris Electric on July 30, 2025. Her journey with us began in August 1988 as a Typist Clerk and Keypunch Operator. Just one year later, she transitioned into the Billing Clerk role — now known as Member Services Representative — where she continued to serve our members with care and efficiency.

In October of 1992, Annette became our Assistant Engineering Secretary. Her adaptability and attention to detail led her to take on Computer Mapping responsibilities in August of 1996, while continuing her work in the Engineering Department. By 2002, she was working as both an Engineering Clerk and Mapping Associate.

In 2003, Annette took on a new challenge as the Assistant Plant Accountant, and in July 2015, she transitioned into her final role as Operations Specialist, where she played a key role in dispatching services.

Her sharp sense of humor and dependable presence brought both laughter and stability to every department she served, leaving a lasting impression on all who had the pleasure of working with her. Please join us in thanking Annette for her years of loyalty and hard work. We wish her all the best as she begins this new and well-deserved chapter of life!

Congratulations, Annette — you will be missed!

Annette Stanciu 37 Years of Service



Happy Retirement!

FARM SMART:

5 Safety Tips for Kids

Farms and ranches are full of valuable lessons — but also serious risks, especially for kids. More young people die working in agriculture than in all other industries combined, often due to taking on tasks beyond their abilities.

Five ways to keep kids safe around equipment, animals and chores:

- 1 Keep kids off tractors.**
Tractors cause more than 40% of fatal farm accidents involving children. Most kids are not tall or strong enough to operate them safely. Only let youth operate tractors if they meet age, size and maturity guidelines.
- 2 Supervise and restrict access.**
Never leave young children alone near work zones. Lock or fence off danger zones like grain bins, pens and machinery.
- 3 Assign age-appropriate chores.**
Match tasks to age and maturity. Teens may take risks, so set clear rules and supervise closely.
- 4 Create a safe environment.**
Eliminate slip hazards, lock up keys, limit heavy lifting and provide protective gear like gloves, non-slip shoes and hearing protection.
- 5 Model safe behavior.**
Teach tasks step-by-step and demonstrate safe habits — kids learn by watching adults.

Make safety a family priority so future generations can enjoy the rewards of farm life with less risk.

 Safe Electricity.org®





HAVING A BACKUP PLAN FOR MEDICAL DEVICES CAN BE LIFESAVING

If you depend on electric medical equipment, your power provider will do all they can to assist you during a power outage by giving your residence a priority tag. Examples of lifesaving medical devices include an oxygen concentrator or a ventilator.

If you or someone in your household depends on life-sustaining medical equipment, contact your local electric utility to let them know.

Although the utility will do all they can to help, it is best to have a backup plan in place in case of severe weather events, which can cause prolonged outages.

Backup safety tips include the following:

- Have an emergency plan in place with friends and family that outlines places you can go in the event of a long-term outage.
- Before an outage occurs, find out if the medical equipment safely runs on a backup power source and for how long (see manufacturer's recommendations).

- Keep a full charge on battery-powered devices or have extra batteries available.
- If recommended by the manufacturer, consider purchasing a portable battery pack to power devices.
- Gather related resources that will last for two weeks, including batteries, supplemental equipment and prescriptions.
- Realize that local shelters and hospitals that are also experiencing an outage may be at capacity and have limited resources, including auxiliary power.
- Think about the other special equipment you might need, such as coolers for refrigerated medicine.
- Like any important device, keep up regular maintenance.
- Keep a file that includes the device's manufacturer, serial numbers and photos of the device.

Learn more about preparing for an emergency at:

 Safe
Electricity.org®