McDonough Power Cooperative's

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

The Wire

McDonough Power Cooperative • Macomb, Illinois 61455

32

Mother's Day safety check

Kelly Hamm
Energy Services Manager

On Mother's Day, kids sometimes sneak into the kitchen to whip up a surprise breakfast for their special mom. It's always a treat to wake up to the smell of breakfast cooking — eggs, bacon, and, of course, toast. And their smiles more than make up for the disaster zone normally left in the wake. **532RM402-900C**

It's great to see how excited they are about cooking something special for mom. At my home I can rest easy knowing I've made the kitchen as safe as possible for the experiments (and mountain of dishes) to come.

Every month I check all of our appliance cords. Since an average of 3,600 home fires each year start with toasters and toaster ovens, it's best not to take chances.

We've also installed special outlets in the kitchen and our bathrooms (anywhere near water, really) called ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). If a problem occurs — an appliance overheating or a wayward coffee maker tipping into the sink — power is shut off. A red test button reminds me to check these outlets monthly. They're my first line of defense.

Even cold appliances pose a safety risk — refrigerators are responsible for about a thousand fires annually. Every three months I have the kids help me take off the small panel at the base of our fridge and vacuum away dust and debris. Not only does this prevent a fire, it makes our fridge more efficient. By getting the kids to help I teach them how to take care of their own kitchen some day.

A third of all home fires start in the kitchen, but every room could hold potential danger. May isn't only a time to honor mothers — it's also National Electrical Safety Month. Please take the time this month to check your home for electrical hazards. Spending a few minutes to check for problems can make all the difference when you're faced with a potentially unsafe situation. To learn more, take a home safety tour at virtualhome.esfi.org. There's also a wealth of safety knowledge available at www.SafetyatHome.com, and www.SafeElectricity.org.

On Mother's Day and every day, we want to help you keep your family safe. Sharing electrical safety tips is just another way we're looking out for you.

Our office will be closed Monday, May 30 for Memorial Day.

Find us on Facebook

McDonough Power Cooperative

We are using social media to reach out to our members. "Like" us on Facebook and we will keep you up-to-date with important information such as energy efficiency tips, meeting notices, major outage information and much, much more.

McDonough Power Cooperative

1210 West Jackson Street
P.O. Box 352
Macomb, Illinois
61455-0352

309-833-2101

www.mcdonoughpower.com

Office hours:
7 a.m. - 4 p.m. - Weekdays

DIRECTORS

Michael Cox, Chairman

Steve Lynn, Vice Chairman

Steve Youngquist, Secretary

Stan Prox, Treasurer

Robert J. Dwyer

Steve Hall

Walter Lewis

Jeffrey Moore

Jerry Riggins

John D. McMillan, Attorney

All Co-op Electric Outages 837-1400

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
The power of human connections

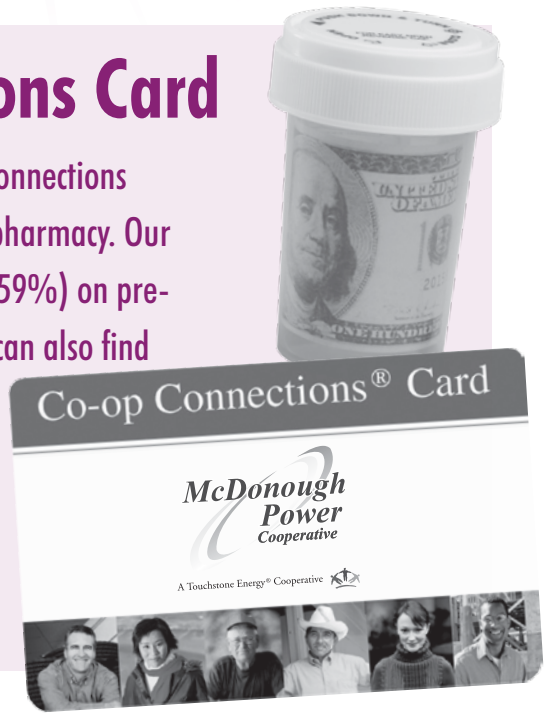
Save the date

McDonough Power Cooperative Annual Meeting

Thursday, August 25, 2011

Co-op Connections Card

Are you still using your Co-op Connections Card? Don't forget to try it at the pharmacy. Our members saved more than $700 (59%) on prescriptions in February alone! You can also find deals at local shops and restaurants-see the listing of participating businesses on our website at www.mcdonoughpower.com.



Tip of the Month

Electronics account for 8.1 percent of your home's energy use. Cut costs by plugging items into a power strip, and turning the strip off when not in use. "Smart" power strips are another good option—when one master device like a TV is turned off, it cuts power to other selected items (DVD players, gaming consoles, stereos, etc.). **5311C3-260A**

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Stay safe all year long

By Megan McKoy-Noe

When a light goes out, it's hard not to notice the bulb needs to be replaced (unless you like to stay in the dark). But how can you tell if your power outlets are working properly? You don't want an electrical fire to serve as your wake-up call that something is amiss. **525HH130-951G**

"Many homes are equipped with new technologies to help prevent electrical fires and injuries," explains Brett Brenner, president of the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI). "Unlike a light bulb that goes dark when it needs to be replaced, there may not be any indication when these safety features aren't working properly. That's why ESFI recommends testing them every month."

Ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlets and combination-type arc fault circuit interrupter (AFCI) circuit breakers are just some of the many safety features in your home that need regular attention.

"It's possible an outlet or circuit may work, but the protection isn't there — the only way to know is to push the 'test' button," notes Brenner.

May is National Electrical Safety Month, a time when electric cooperatives educate consumers on ways to stay safe at home and on the job. But safety awareness shouldn't stop on May 31.

ESFI provides a Home Safety Calendar to help you remember when to perform routine maintenance and safety checks around the house. Some things, like vacuuming coils and changing furnace or air conditioning filters, should be done every three months. Other items, like testing GFCI outlets and smoke alarms, need to happen monthly. "Taking care of these safety items on the first of the month when you're paying bills is a great time to knock a few things off the list. Then you don't have to worry about them for the rest of the month," recommends Brenner. "We created the calendar so you can put it on your refrigerator as daily reminder of simple steps to take every month to keep your family safe!"

Learn more about home electrical safety by visiting ESFI's Virtual Home at http://virtualhome.esfi.org.

Electrical Safety Calendar

Use this handy calendar to help keep your home safe. For more tips, visit esfi.org.

JANUARY
☐ Check and replace furnace filters

FEBRUARY
☐ Vacuum refrigerator coils

MARCH
☐ Replace smoke and carbon monoxide alarm batteries if not done in last 12 months

APRIL
☐ Check and replace furnace filters

MAY
☐ Clean air conditioners or schedule annual inspection
☐ Vacuum refrigerator coils

JUNE
☐ Dust light fixtures/lamps
☐ Schedule annual inspection of gas-powered dryer

JULY
☐ Check and replace air conditioning filters

AUGUST
☐ Vacuum refrigerator coils

SEPTEMBER
☐ Schedule annual furnace cleaning and inspection

OCTOBER
☐ Check and replace furnace filters

NOVEMBER
☐ Vacuum refrigerator coils

DECEMBER
☐ Dust light fixtures/lamps

ESFI recommends hiring a licensed, qualified home electrical inspector if:
Your home is more than 40 years old; your home had a major addition or renovation or major new appliance added in the last 10 years; and/or you are the new owner of a previously owned home.

Every month you should:

1. Inspect all electrical and appliance cords for damage

2. Test GFCIs & AFCIs

Whether you have a receptacle-type or circuit breaker-type ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI), pushing the TEST button should turn off power to the circuit. To restore power, press the RESET button. To test arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) push the TEST button. The breaker handle should go to the middle or off position. To reset, move the breaker handle to the OFF position and then to the ON position.

3. Test smoke and carbon monixide alarms

Push the TEST button or use other procedures recommended by the manufacturer. Smoke alarm batteries should be changed at least once a year. If an alarm "chirps" or "beeps" to indicate low batteries, change them right away. Replace all smoke alarms at least every 10 years.

ESFI
Electrical Safety Foundation International

Know how to survive auto accidents involving power lines

Instincts tell us to flee danger. Unfortunately, in vehicle accidents that bring down power lines, these natural inclinations can lead to tragic results.

Safe Electricity wants everyone to know: If your car hits a power pole, or otherwise brings a power line down, stay in your vehicle and wait until the local electric utility arrives on the scene and ensures that lines have been de-energized. If you come upon or witness an accident involving toppled power poles and lines, don't leave your vehicle to approach the scene. **6327MCE23-702B**

Indiana teenagers Lee Whittaker and Ashley Taylor saw a power line safety demonstration at their high school and 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 safety advice they'd received, and survived because they knew the right actions to take. And they helped others who approached the scene by warning them to stay away. A video of their story can be seen on www.SafeElectricity.org.

According to the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration, tens of thousands of accidents each year occur where power poles are struck by cars or large equipment. Each one of these accidents has the potential to bring down power lines. Surviving the accident itself might not be enough to stay alive without awareness of the right moves to make.

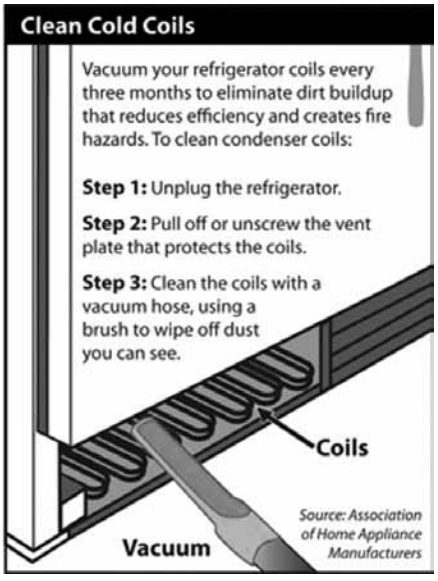
In the vast majority of those incidents, the safest place to remain is inside the car. Only in the rare instance of fire should people exit a vehicle. Then, they must know how to do so safely, jumping free and clear, landing with feet together and hopping away. It's difficult to get out without creating 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 notes. "We're often more concerned about whether anyone was injured, or how badly the vehicle is damaged. We forget that by exiting the vehicle, we're risking bodily exposure to thousands of volts of electricity from downed power lines."

Lee and Ashley are grateful to White County Rural Electric Membership Corporation, the Safe Electricity partner electric cooperative that sponsored a Live Line Demo program at their school. The students are encouraging everyone to learn from their experience.

To learn more, watch the video on www.SafeElectricity.org. Visitors can also check out a live power line demonstration, just like the one the Indiana teens saw at their school.

Safe Electricity is the safety outreach program of the Energy Education Council, a non-profit organization with more than 400 electric cooperative members and many others who share the mission of educating the public about electrical safety and energy efficiency.



MAP LOCATION GAME

Every month we will have four map location numbers hidden throughout The Wire. If you find your map location number, call our office and identify your number and the page that it is on. If correct, you will win a $10 credit on your next electric bill.