



Rural HIGHLIGHTS

Local News from Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative

Transmission wires upgraded in Montgomery County

Four spans of transmission wires feeding the Honey Bend substation north of Litchfield were replaced in December, along with the air-break transmission tap that connects RECC's transmission lines to the Ameren transmission system. Members in the southern portion of RECC's service area may have experienced some short outages as feeder lines were switched, and a few unexpected voltage fluctuations occurred while the project was carried out during the week of Dec. 15-18.

JF Electric from Edwardsville was contracted to change out the frayed sections of line and install the new switch. Despite wet conditions and then dropping temperatures, the work was completed on schedule so that normal service feeds could be restored.

"This is an example of proactive maintenance, where we saw some wear in the wires and changed them out before ice or wind pulled them down," said Manager of Operations and Maintenance Lou DeLaby. "We've built our distribution

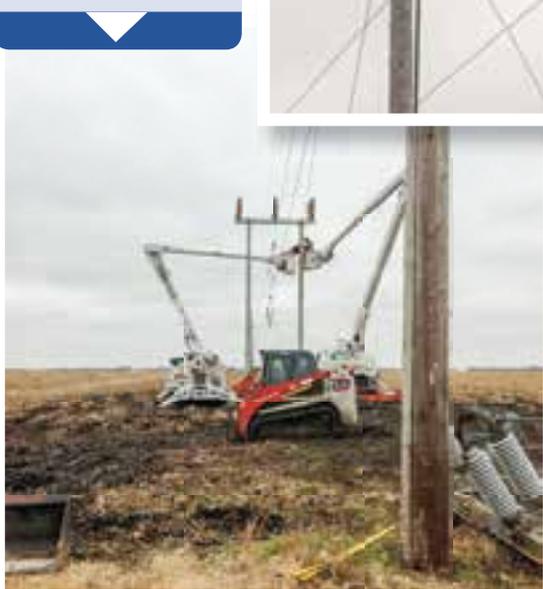
system so that we can back feed to one substation if the power is off for some reason, and keep our members in service during the repair time. We fed power from the Harvel substation during this project, and we did see some things we can do to improve that process as well."

RECC owns the nine substations that reduce the 34,500-volt power from transmission lines to 7,200 volts on our distribution system. The co-op also owns several miles of transmission lines tying into the Ameren grid.

Crews from RECC and JF Electric installed a new air-break switch on a steel structure and replaced four spans of deteriorated wires for improved reliability.



This "before" photo shows the air-break transmission tap that can disconnect the Honey Bend substation from Ameren's transmission lines, shown in the background.



RECC's transmission line runs about a mile to the Honey Bend substation.

Students learn about power line safety

About 600 local students got the chance to learn about the dangers of power lines with a live demonstration presented by Kyle Finley of Live Line Demo. Demonstrations took place at Carlinville Intermediate School for 4th grade students from Macoupin County schools on Dec. 4, and at Lincoln Land Community College for students from Montgomery County on Dec. 5.

The presentations were funded by Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, M.J.M. Electric Co-op, Ameren and the University of Illinois Extension. Live Line Demo educates students on power line safety and how to protect themselves or someone else from injury or death. The display was constructed with the same poles, transformers, and line hardware used by electric companies to assist students in understanding electrical systems.

During the course of the presentation, Finley demonstrated common mistakes people make involving electricity and power lines. His fast-paced program covered household safety devices such as ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and the dangers of electric utility lines operating at 7,200 volts.

(Above) Kyle Finley, Live Line Demo owner, explains to a student that his finger is similar in makeup to a hot dog, which makes it a good conductor of electricity. The 4th graders quickly learned that they don't want to become a "path to ground" for electricity.

(Below) While the demonstration equipment doesn't have as much power as actual utility lines, Kyle can draw an impressive arc when "Rocky The Fire-Breathing Squirrel" contacts the high-voltage connector on a transformer.





High school juniors, jump to it! Applications due March 2 for Youth Tour contest

Two local teenagers will experience firsthand the epic sights of our nation's capital during the Youth to Washington trip set for June 12-19. RECC will select two winners of this trip through our annual Youth Tour Contest.

Juniors at area high schools can enter the contest by attending the Illinois Rural Electric Youth Day program in Springfield on Wednesday, March 25. Up to 10 students will be sponsored at Youth Day by RECC, touring the State Capitol and other historic sites, and meeting with their state legislators. Two of those students will be selected to attend the Youth to Washington trip with more than 1,000 young people from around the country.

RECC sponsors these trips to encourage students to learn more about our government's operation and about electric cooperatives.

Any junior attending a high school in RECC's service area is eligible for these expense-paid programs. Applica-

tion request forms have been sent to our local schools, or students can contact our office. We will mail an application kit and background information directly to the student. The application form includes a summary of the student's school and civic activities and accomplishments, and a brief essay question pertaining to the rural electric program.

After the Youth Day activities in Springfield, the students will have individual interviews to select two winners for the trip to Washington, D.C. They will be judged on their written application, personal poise and confidence, and demonstrated understanding of the rural electric program. The two winners will travel by bus from Springfield to Washington this summer, in one of the best-recognized youth programs in the nation's capital.

Applications must be returned to RECC by March 2, and the students selected for the Illinois Youth Day program will be notified by March 6 so that they can arrange their school schedules

around the trip. Transportation will be provided from Auburn to Springfield and back.

About 60 Illinois students will travel with chaperones to Washington in June. Highlights of the trip include:

- **Tour the monuments:** Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Jefferson Memorial, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Korean Veterans Memorial, Iwo Jima Statue, World War II Memorial, Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial and Arlington Cemetery
- **Tour historic sights:** Smithsonian Museums, Holocaust Memorial Museum, Newseum, 9/11 Memorial and Mount Vernon.
- **Attend special events:** Theater performance and all-states dinner & dance.
- **Interact with:** Teenagers from across the U.S. sponsored by rural electric co-ops; meet with your members of Congress and make new friends.



Rural Electric
Convenience Cooperative

3973 W. State Route 104
P.O. Box 19 • Auburn, IL 62615
217/438-6197
e-mail: recc@recc.coop
www.recc.coop



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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

New funding for HomeE rebates announced!

Once again, the Illinois electric cooperatives have received funds from the Illinois DCEO's State Energy Plan to offer energy efficiency rebates to our members! The HomeE (pronounced Home-E) program is described elsewhere in this magazine, and limited money is available after Feb. 1 for residential energy improvements. Rebates offered are:



Geothermal systems.....	\$1,000
Heat pumps (16 SEER min.)	\$500
Heat pump water heaters	\$250
Insulation/weatherization	30% of cost, up to \$500

HomeE funds are on a first-come, first-served basis, so don't wait! Call RECC's office at (217) 438-6197 for more details, or to get your project approved for a HomeE rebate.



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