



Rural HILIGHTS

Local News from Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative

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Holiday Greetings

*from the directors and employees of
Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative!*

*RECC's office will be closed
Dec. 25 for Christmas Day
and Jan. 1 for New Years Day.*

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Jimmy Ayers	Thomas Hart
John Beatty	Mel Repscher
Clayton Bloome	Lou Weitekamp
Cassie Eigenmann	Chris Wilcox
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Holiday cooking safety tips

The kitchen is the heart of the home. Sadly, it's also where two out of every five home fires start. Many home fires occur during what's supposed to be the happiest time of the year – the holidays. Thanksgiving, Christmas and Christmas Eve hold a tradition of cooking, and safety should always be considered in the kitchen. As we embark on the holiday season, Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative and the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) urge you to use these simple safety tips to identify and correct potential kitchen hazards:

- Never leave cooking equipment unattended, and always remember to turn off burners if you have to leave the room.
- Supervise the little ones closely in the kitchen. Make sure children stay at least three feet away from all cooking appliances.
- Prevent potential fires by making sure your stovetop and oven are clean and free of grease, dust and spilled food.
- Remember to clean the exhaust hood and duct over your stove on a regular basis.
- Keep the cooking area around the stove and oven clear of combustibles, such as towels, napkins and potholders.
- Always wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can catch fire.
- To protect from spills and burns, use the back burners and turn the pot handles in, away from reaching hands.
- Locate all appliances away from the sink.
- Plug countertop appliances into ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI)-protected outlets.
- Keep appliance cords away from hot surfaces like the range or toaster.
- Unplug the toaster and other countertop appliances when not in use.
- Be sure to turn off all appliances when cooking is completed.



The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety in the home, school, and workplace. ESFI proudly engages in public education campaigns throughout the year to prevent electrical fires, injuries and fatalities.

Save energy and time for your holiday cooking!

A microwave oven is both a safe and efficient way to make many holiday treats! It's faster than stovetop pans and avoids hot burners. Be sure to use microwave-safe bowls and covers to avoid melt-downs! Don't put foam containers or plastic wrap in the microwave. Covering foods with a lid or a microwave-safe plastic wrap will hold in moisture and provide safe, even heating.

Here's a great microwave recipe to try for the holidays!

Microwave Caramels

- 2-1/4 c. brown sugar
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 lb. butter
- 1 c. white corn syrup
- 1 t. vanilla

Combine all ingredients EXCEPT vanilla, in a microwave safe bowl. Cook on high for 19 min. 30 sec. (yes, 19 minutes!), stirring often. Add vanilla. Pour into a greased 9x13" pan and cool. Cut and wrap.



Memorial Scholarship applications due Dec. 31

Ten awards of \$2,000 offered

The Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program for 2016 is offering ten co-op scholarships of \$2,000, with applications due by December 31 for most categories. RECC member families are eligible for nine of the academic scholarships, with one offered for co-op employee or director families.

\$2,000 scholarships will be awarded in these categories:

5 Scholarships – for high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative.

1 Scholarship – for a student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative director or/ employee. (Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship)

3 Scholarships – for students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors.

1 Scholarship – for a student attending the lineworker's school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield. (LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship) The deadline for this application is April 30, 2016.

"Our goal is to assist electric cooperative youth while honoring past rural electric leaders with these scholarships," says President/CEO David Stuva. "RECC and the other Illinois electric

cooperatives are always seeking ways to make a difference in our communities. One of the best ways we can do that is by helping our youth through programs like this one. In addition, we are very pleased to offer the electric lineworker's scholarship. It will benefit not only a young person in rural Illinois but also help assure a trained workforce for the future of our cooperatives."

Scholarship applications for the first nine categories must be received by December 31, 2015, and winners will be announced in May 2016. All necessary materials are available at the cooperative's website at www.recc.coop. Students are encouraged to apply online.

Bathroom construction work at RECC

A bathroom upgrade project going on this fall at RECC's office is beyond "remodeling." It's also beyond a "renovation" project. Let's just call it "reconstruction."

Since the original installation was done around 1954 when our headquarters building was built, some changes were probably overdue. The glazed-tile walls brought back fond memories of an earlier era for some people, but the cramped layouts did not meet modern accessibility standards. Old plumbing fixtures sometimes acted up, and the concrete floors didn't allow easy access to the aging pipes.

With a totally new plan in mind, the men's and women's restrooms were gutted in October, some walls and doors moved, and new plumbing installed. Just a little more space was claimed from the surrounding office rooms, and adjacent hallways are being upgraded as well.

Rural Electric employees did much of the tear-out, and Weldon Ladage Construction is in charge of the reconstruction, with Snell Plumbing and Heating installing the new plumbing and fixtures.

It's been a challenge to do the construction work in the middle of our offices while carrying on our normal business, but the project should be completed in December. Our employees and office visitors will be able to enjoy the modern facilities for many years to come!



Workers from Ladage Construction and Snell Plumbing install new piping for the restrooms at Rural Electric's office. New concrete floors were poured in late October. (The space shown will include both the men's and women's restrooms.)



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Board meeting reports.

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RECC directors receive Board Leadership Certificates

RECC directors Thom Hart and Mel Repscher received their Board Leadership Certificates from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) at the NRECA Regional Meeting on September 15. They completed advanced courses on the role of the board of directors in governing an electric cooperative and the challenges being faced by local co-op boards.

Thom, who lives near Waggoner, has been an RECC director for District 4



RECC directors Thom Hart (left) and Mel Repscher

since 2011. Mel lives near Taylorville in District 6, and has served as a director since 1993.

LEDs provide efficient holiday lighting!

LEDs consume far less electricity than incandescent bulbs, and decorative LED light strings such as Christmas tree lights are no different. Not only do LED holiday lights consume less electricity, they also have the following advantages:

- **Safer:** LEDs are much cooler than incandescent lights, reducing the risk of combustion or burnt fingers.
- **Sturdier:** LEDs are made with epoxy lenses, not glass, and are much more resistant to breakage.
- **Longer lasting:** The same LED string could still be in use 40 holiday seasons from now.
- **Easier to install:** Up to 25 strings of LEDs can be connected end-to-end without overloading a wall socket.

Estimated cost* of electricity to light a six-foot tree for 12 hours a day for 40 days

Incandescent C-9 lights	\$10.00
LED C-9 lights	\$.27
Incandescent Mini-lights	\$ 2.74
LED Mini-lights	\$.82



*Assumes 50 C-9 bulbs and 200 mini-lights per tree, with electricity at \$0.119 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) (2012 National Residential Average). Prices of lights based on quoted prices for low volume purchases from major home improvement retailers. All costs have been discounted at an annual rate of 5.6%. Life span assumed to be three seasons (1,500 hours) for non-LED lights. Source: U.S. Department of Energy.