



# Rural HIGHLIGHTS

Local News from Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative

## Call 9-1-1 and don't exit the vehicle

In April, a young man accidentally broke a 3-phase pole, but the line remained energized. When Journeyman Lineman Travis Boylen arrived, he found an unoccupied tractor. The driver had climbed out through the back window. Fortunately, he was not injured, but he should have stayed in the cab until linemen arrived.

If the energized line had come off the insulator, a portion of the 7,200 volts would have traveled down the pole and ultimately through the tractor. Even if the lines remained intact, a jolt from the collision could have cracked one of the three insulators – the only components that isolates the voltage from the pole. Any number of things could have resulted in an energized tractor.

If any of these plausible scenarios had taken place, the occupant would have remained safe inside the cab. The real danger occurs only when the driver decides to exit. By leaving the safety of the cab, the driver risks creating a path between the energized tractor and the ground. The momentary completion of this path would likely end in electrocution.

Let's say that the tractor was energized due to the accident, but the driver was able to jump clear and land three feet away. The risk potential is still there. Yes, the ground can be energized several feet away. Death or serious injury can occur by taking one step, because the electricity radiates outward like ripples in a pond. Each



**Rural Electric**  
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"Contact with overhead power lines is the leading cause of electrical fatalities for agricultural workers.

70 percent of the power line contacts result in fatalities.

Most of these incidents could easily have been avoided."

Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI)



### What would you do when confronted by a serious electrical hazard?

step would take place on unequal voltage, creating a potential difference. It's always best to avoid such situations, but jumping far away, with both legs together, is the only viable option at this point.

Stay inside and call 9-1-1. It's the safest option and leaves someone in a position to warn others. They could also stop a friend or neighbor from entering the hazardous area. By staying inside, the driver and

the public stand a better chance of surviving an electrical contact with any vehicle.

Pole strikes are not uncommon. Every year, RECC Linemen respond to an assortment of vehicle vs. pole collisions. If this ever happens to you, don't make a bad situation worse. Don't exit the vehicle; call 9-1-1. Stay safe and warn others to stay away from the hazard.

## Matt Evans hired as apprentice lineman

Matt Evans began full-time employment at the cooperative on April 30, 2018. He has been doing an internship at RECC since Nov. 13, 2017. Evans graduated from the Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) electrical distribution lineman program and received the electrical distribution lineman maintenance certificate of achievement.

Evans worked as a journeyman iron worker for Sangamo Construction Company for three years and is certified in stick welding. At a young age, he worked as a mason laborer for his father's company, Evans Masonry. During his junior and senior year of high school, he participated in a work study program at the city of Virden. He is a 2012 graduate of Virden High School and lives in Thayer. Evans's unique set of skills will be an asset for the cooperative.



*Matt Evans, first year apprentice lineman, training for pole-top rescue.*

## Nick Hays to become engineering technician

RECC has hired Nick Hays as an engineering technician. May 21, 2018 was his first day on the job. He will take over several of recently retired Martin Hinton's job responsibilities.

Hays has 12 years of experience as a licensed journeyman electrician. He also worked at MJM Electric Cooperative in Carlinville as an apprentice lineman and staking engineer. His electrical knowledge and cooperative experience should result in a smooth transition.

Hays and his family (Hays and Sons Farms) operate a large cow/calf operation. He and his wife Shannon have two children, Tinley and Hudson. They recently built a new home in the Girard area and are lifelong RECC members. We congratulate Nick and welcome him to the RECC family.



*Nick Hays on his first day at RECC*

As of May 1, 2018, USIC Locating Service will be responsible for locating and marking RECC's underground lines. Our members will still call 8-1-1 or JULIE to start the locating process. One of the big advantages is that USIC will be able to mark several different utilities at the same time, making the process more efficient. This will also allow our linemen to concentrate on their primary duties instead of responding to numerous "locate" trips throughout the day.

Remember that JULIE only locates and identifies utility equipment. Just as before, the new locating service will not be responsible for locating any personal wiring. Any member that needs wire located on their side of the meter will need to call the cooperative to make arrangements.



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





## Teaching safety to our community

Montgomery County fourth and fifth graders attended the first annual Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) Day held on Wednesday, May 2. ACES Day provided education in topics not regularly covered in the classroom. Students from Raymond Grade School, Russell Elementary from Litchfield and Zion Lutheran School from Litchfield participated in the program.

The event was organized by University of Illinois Extension Unit 18. Students rotated to different stations throughout the day. RECC and MJM presented electrical safety to the students with our version of a high voltage demo. Other safety presentations focused on bikes, bats, grain bins and ATVs. The full list was too long to include, but the children got to witness a variety of presentations in just one day.

While this may be the first ACES Day, RECC has been presenting our electrical safety demos to students in the Montgomery County area for many years. Previously, we set up at the fairgrounds in Butler, Ill., and the children were bused in for the day. Regardless of the location, hundreds have witnessed our safety program.

Auburn Elementary School does a similar event. It's called a Safety Fair and usually takes place on a warm Friday in May. RECC has participated in many of Auburn's Safety Fairs along with the local fire department, city gas company, rescue squad, police department and many more. These safety demonstrations are geared for younger students, such as K-second grade. This year, we presented our safety material to 12 classes and well over 100 students.



*Manager of Member Services Jeff Lancaster explains hazardous situations during ACES Day.*



*Journeyman Lineman Sean Koen demonstrates how an energized line can look harmless.*

**Office will be closed  
Wednesday, July 4**

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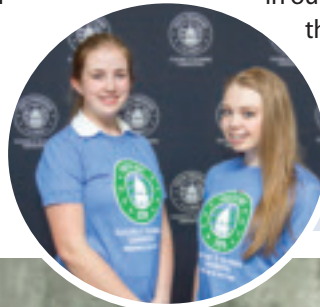
**Youth Day winners announced**

More than 210 Illinois students visited the State Capitol and got to view state government in action. They were able to ask legislators questions and were invited into the office of Secretary of State Jesse White for a talk about Illinois government. RECC Youth Day students also met with State Senator Andy Manar and Representatives Avery Bourne and C.D. Davidsmeyer.

After a busy day in the capital, the students were interviewed for the chance to participate in the Youth to Washington Tour this summer. After great deliberation, Hailey Winslow of Glenwood High School and Riley Meredith from Northwestern

were selected as the 2018 Youth to Washington representatives for RECC. New Berlin's Emily Curry was chosen as the alternate.

Youth Day is designed to introduce young rural leaders to state government. There were 24 co-ops from across the state represented at the event. Other highlights of the day included a tour of the Old State Capitol and a visit to Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum. We encourage any high school student in our local area to sign up for the experience next year.



*Riley Meredith and Hailey Winslow are going to Washington, D.C.*



*Pictured from left: Kyle Dickman, Riley Meredith, Emily Curry, Hailey Winslow, Abbie Simpson and Braeden Scheerer.*

**RECC Annual Meeting report is online**



This newsletter went to print before RECC's Annual Meeting on June 7, so we'll have the full meeting report in this Rural Hilights section of the August Illinois Country Living magazine. For news about the 2018 Annual Meeting, visit our website at [www.recc.coop](http://www.recc.coop).