Clinton County Connection

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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Applications are being accepted for 2023 Youth Day and Youth Tour

Clinton County Electric Cooperative (CCEC) will again sponsor up to 12 area sophomores, juniors or seniors to attend Youth Day in Springfield, to be held on March 29, 2023, sponsored by CCEC and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. Two Youth Day participants will be selected to go to Washington, D.C., June 16-23, 2023, for an all-expense-paid trip.

WHO MAY ENTER?

Youth Day in Springfield and Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. are open to high school sophomores, juniors and seniors whose primary residence is served by Clinton County Electric Cooperative. Children of Clinton County Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees or employees may attend at their own expense.

YOUTH TO SPRINGFIELD

Up to 12 students will participate with more than 125 students from other Illinois electric cooperatives in Illinois' Rural Electric Youth Day in Springfield, set for March 29, 2023. The day's activities in Springfield will include touring the State Capitol complex, visiting with legislators and a luncheon. Transportation to Youth Day in Springfield will be provided by CCEC.

WASHINGTON TOUR

Of the 12 students attending Youth Day in Springfield, two will have the opportunity to participate in the Youth Tour. The two local winners will join approximately 70 other Illinois students who are winners of similar contests sponsored by other Illinois electric cooperatives. They will travel on air-conditioned buses, leaving on June 16 and returning June 23. While in Washington, D.C., they will visit such attractions as the White House, U.S. Capitol, Smithsonian Institute, Arlington National Cemetery, Lincoln Monument and many other national monuments and places of interest.

Applications are available at www.cceci.com/youth-programs. Completed applications need to be returned to the cooperative office no later than **Feb. 13, 2023**. Feel free to contact Carrie Trame at Trame@cceci.com or 800-526-7282 with any additional questions.

Are portable space heaters efficient for my home?

Small space heaters are meant to do exactly as their name says: heat a small space. But unfortunately, many people use portable space heaters to heat their entire home, which can really take a toll on energy bills. The truth, whether you should use space heaters really depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

If you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like inadequate insulation, drafty windows and exterior doors, or an inefficient heating system, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home.

If you're on a tight budget, caulking and weather stripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy. Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a great next step. Loose fill insulation typically costs $1 to $1.50 per square foot. Taking these proactive energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters for supplemental warmth can reduce your heating and cooling bills for years to come.

Perhaps your home is energy efficient but you're cold-natured and want a specific room to be cozier than the rest. In this case, a space heater may work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling fans. Ceiling fans in the summer are used to cool people, not rooms. A space heater can be used in a similar way during winter months. Only use a space heater in small spaces that you're occupying and, if possible, try to shut off other rooms to contain the warmth provided by the space heater. If you decide to use a space heater to heat a small area in your home, make sure the heater is properly sized for the space; most heaters include a general sizing table.

A word about safety: the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates more than 25,000 residential fires are associated with the use of space heaters every year, resulting in more than 300 deaths. If you must use a space heater, purchase a newer model that includes the most current safety features and make sure it carries the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label. Choose a thermostatically controlled heater to avoid energy waste and overheating, and place the heater on a level surface away from foot traffic when in use. Always keep children and pets away from space heaters.

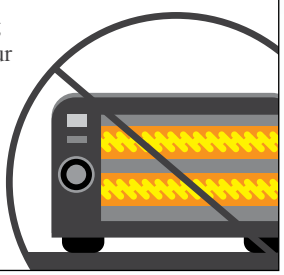
Consider alternative ways to stay warm like extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors, lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation (and appeal!) and maintain warmth.

We know it's cold out there, but remember in addition to safety concerns, space heaters can greatly increase your energy bills if used improperly.

TIPS TO DITCH THE SPACE HEATER

Space heaters are energy hogs, and older models can be extremely dangerous. This winter, ditch the space heater and try these alternative solutions to stay cozy.

- Use an electric blanket to keep warm during the night.
- Caulk and weatherstrip around all windows and doors to prevent heat loss.
- Consider adding insulation to your attic and around duct work.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Maximize your heating system's performance by inspecting, cleaning or replacing air filters once a month or as needed to reduce energy costs and prevent potential damage to your system.

Source: Dept. of Energy

Stay safe on the road

You did not see it coming. You were driving down the road and you heard a thumping-type noise, or your car handled differently as it rolled down the pavement.

If you are driving along and you notice your car is starting to malfunction, gently take your foot off the accelerator. Do not brake hard or suddenly, according to the National Safety Council. Signal your intention to pull over and monitor traffic before changing lanes.

While no one likes to think about the possibility of getting stranded, here are some common causes of car trouble.

Flat tire

One in four roadside emergencies are caused by a flat tire. Because of that, it is a good idea to learn how to change a tire. While you can contact a roadside service to take care of your flat, that will not help you if you are out of cell phone service range or your phone is dead.

Although surveys on this subject should be taken with a grain of salt, some surveys estimate that 25 percent of Americans do not know how to change a tire, and another 19 percent are not confident in their ability to do so. Of teen drivers aged 15–17, 52 percent are clueless when it comes to changing a tire.

Dead battery

A standard car battery will last for around three years or 50,000 miles before it starts failing (depending on the battery's rating, of course). If you do not stay on top of how long you have had your battery, you may find yourself with a drained battery and no way to start your car.

Keeping jumper cables in your trunk is a wise choice because someone else may be able to give you a jump. However, if no one else is around, this will not help you. If you want to play it safe, keep a portable car jump-starter in your trunk. This nifty device could jump-start your car when the battery is completely dead, as long as the starter is charged.

Wintry road conditions

Road conditions during winter can be treacherous and may be caused by a blizzard, sleet or black ice. Each year, 24 percent of weather-related crashes occur on snowy, slushy or icy pavement and 15 percent happen during snowfall or sleet, according to the Federal Highway Administration.

If roads have become impassable, take the following steps:

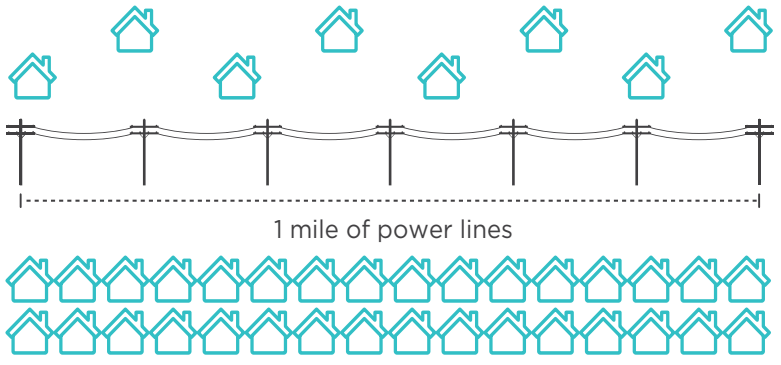
- Pull over and try not to panic. Avoid walking away from your car to look for help. Your car will keep you sheltered, and it will also be easier for you to be found.
- On the other hand, if your car is in a hazardous position or in a place where it could be struck by another vehicle, move it off the roadway. If that is not possible, safely get out of the car and off the roadway.
- Open or crack a window to get some fresh air.
- Keep your hazard lights on to help other drivers see your car and make it easier for emergency responders to locate you.
- Move your body to keep your blood circulating.

Take steps to prevent car trouble, such as checking your tires and keeping your vehicle well-maintained. When car trouble does happen, take steps to stay safe.

GOING THE EXTRA MILE

Electric co-ops maintain more miles of power lines per consumer than other electric utilities. Even though we power fewer consumers on our lines compared to other utilities, we'll always go the extra mile for you, the consumer-members we proudly serve.

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES
Serve 8 consumer-members per mile of line



OTHER ELECTRIC UTILITIES
Serve 32 consumers per mile of line

STAY TOASTY AND WARM WHILE

TURNING DOWN THE THERMOSTAT

When the winter winds blow, it is tempting to adjust the thermostat up a few degrees to stay toasty and warm. However, turning to other (FREE!) ways to help keep you warm could help reduce your energy bills.

Each degree you reduce your thermostat saves 1% on your heating bill. No one home during the day? Adjust your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting to save up to 10% annually.

Source: Department of Energy

Here are ways to help you stay warm when it is cold outside:

- Bundle up by wearing layers and heavy socks
- Get your body moving and stay active
- Use blankets while sitting still
- Caulk windows and door frames that leak air
- Replace or update old or ineffective door seals
- Make sure your home's heating system is working properly
- Keep your furnace clean and change the filter monthly
- Let the sun shine in during the day and close window coverings at night
- Reduce how long you use ventilation fans (they transfer warm air outside)
- Keep a fireplace damper closed when not in use
- Humidify your home to make the air feel warmer

If you use a portable space heater, use it safely and for short amounts of time. Using one for extended periods can cause your energy bill to spike since it draws a lot of power.

Learn more at: Safe Electricity.org

ICE ON POWER LINES IS A WEIGHTY SUBJECT

When it comes to getting electricity across power lines and into homes, ice can be a force to be reckoned with.

ICE ON DISTRIBUTION LINES

Ice can quickly lead to broken power poles and other pole equipment. Ice can also make falling tree branches 30x heavier and much more likely to break power lines.

ON A 300-FOOT SPAN OF 1-INCH-THICK POWER LINES

- 1/2 inch of ice adds 281 pounds of weight
- 1 inch of ice adds 749 pounds of weight
- 2 inches of ice adds 2,248 pounds of weight

WHEN ICE MELTS

Melting ice can cause power outages. If ice on the bottom (neutral) line melts before the lines above, it can cause the lines to touch.

OTHER ICE FACTS

- Damage can begin when ice exceeds 1/4 of an inch
- 1/2 inch of ice can cause a line to sag up to 12 inches
- Pressure can also be caused by a broken tree limb
- Both ice and melting ice can cause power outages

Safe Electricity.org

Source: Jerri Imgarten-Whitley and Victory Electric Cooperative