


Norris Electric News

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Norris Electric Cooperative

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or **Toll-Free:**
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Report an Outage:
1-877-783-3221

Office Hours:
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7 a.m. – 5 p.m.

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For safety's sake, do not mess with a meter

For your safety, never try to tamper with or pull (remove) a meter. Only electric utility crews should access an electric meter.

Illegally accessing a meter can cause an arc flash bright enough to result in blindness and powerful enough to launch fragments of red-hot, shrapnel-like debris, according to the Cooperative Research Network. Serious injury or death from electrocution, explosion or fire is often a result of meter tampering.

Individuals may tamper with a meter to bypass it, create an illegal connection to a power line, electrify fences or attempt to reconnect or disconnect the power, often with disastrous consequences.

More on meter safety

- Tampering with a meter is illegal in most states.
- Meters should only be installed, maintained or removed by electric utility crews.
- Accessing the backside of a meter can generate high voltage; pulling or tampering with a meter can cause electric shock, sparks, surges, explosions or fire.
- Electricity should always be connected or disconnected using a transfer switch or a dedicated disconnection point.
- There is no guarantee that a structure is de-energized by pulling a meter.
- If firefighters respond to a call and know they will need a disconnect, they should call the electric utility en route.



- If firefighters try disconnecting a home by pulling a meter, it can introduce additional problems and damage.

Direct any questions to Norris Electric Cooperative at 618-783-8765.

If a home's electricity is shut off at a main disconnect, the house can be automatically reconnected if there is a standby generator or battery-stored power.

Only the electric utility can properly and safely disconnect a meter. Utility crews are trained in proper disconnection techniques and wear protective clothing and gear.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

National Safe Digging Day

Aug. 11 (8/11) is National Safe Digging Day, also known as 811 Day. The observance reminds anyone considering an outdoor project that breaks ground to get underground utilities marked in advance. Having them marked is free and easy to do; simply call 811 at least two full business days prior to starting a digging project. While state laws vary, utility companies generally have a few days to respond to your request.

If you don't take the time to call before you dig, you could become the person who digs in an unmarked yard and strikes an underground line every nine minutes. No one wants to be that person.

"... Underground utility lines could be anywhere, and they also shift over time. They should always be marked in advance, because some can be found only a few inches below the surface," says Erin Hollinshead, executive director of Safe Electricity.

The long version of the 1971 song "American Pie" is almost nine minutes long. That means if the song was played in a loop with a pause in between, a person would hit an underground line each time the song replayed. Every nine minutes, a person would be saying (or singing), "Bye-bye (Miss American Pie)," to some hard-earned cash. Fines aside, digging without knowing what is below the dirt could cause serious injury or a power outage.

People are tempted to skip calling in advance, because they think striking a buried line will not happen to them. They assume that they will not dig too deep or that they will be careful. However, underground lines are unyielding. Their path is unpredictable and hitting one can happen with one strike of a shovel or other tool.

"You might think you are just installing a mailbox or just using a post-hole digger or planting only a small flower bed," says Erin Hollinshead, executive director of Safe Electricity. "However, underground utility lines could be anywhere, and they also shift over time. They should always be marked in advance, because some can be found only a few inches below the surface."

Kevin Chmura, director of public relations for Illinois' one-call notification service JULIE, Inc., agrees. "Protect yourself and your family. Striking a single buried utility line can cause injury, repair costs, penalties and inconvenient outages," he says. Every project, big or small, requires advance notification to 811. To start the underground utility

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marking process, call 811 or go to your state's own 811 center website.

According to Chmura, examples of projects that require utility location include putting up a fence, installing a mailbox post, building a deck or patio, and planting trees and shrubs; however, this is not an all-inclusive list. Any project that breaks ground requires that underground utilities be marked.

After submitting a request, underground lines will be marked by their respective utilities; however, locators do not mark private lines such as service to outbuildings, underground

sprinkler systems or a gas line to a grill, for example. Private lines are the responsibility of the homeowner.

If you are only digging in a small area of your yard, you can outline the area in white spray paint or with white flags to ensure that only that part of your yard will be located and marked. (White flags are available at home improvement stores.)

There are five steps to safer digging:

1. Pre-mark the proposed dig area with white paint or flags.
2. Call 811 or go online to submit your locate request before you dig. There is no charge for the service.
3. Wait the required amount of time (typically two business days).
4. Respect the marks and do not move any flags.
5. Dig with care. Avoid digging on top of or within 18-24 inches on all sides of utility marks, which may mean moving your digging project to another part of your yard.

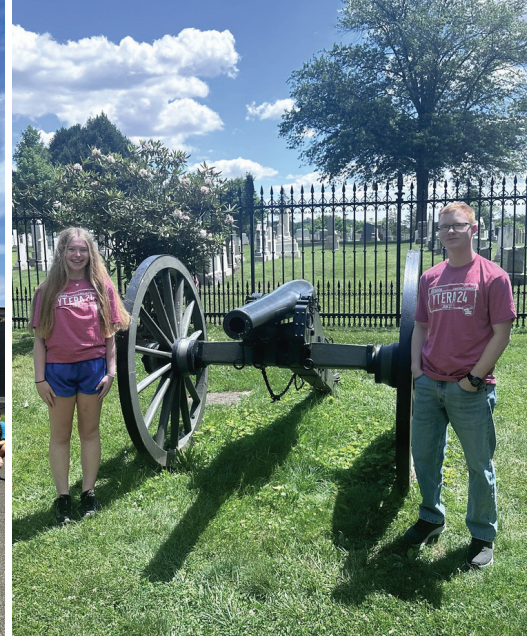
For more information about electrical safety, visit safeelectricity.org. For more information about 811, visit call811.com.



JULIE, Inc.

811 or 800-892-0123





Empowering tomorrow's leaders in Washington, D.C.

Local students represent Norris Electric Cooperative during Youth Tour

Each year, hundreds of high school students from across the United States embark on an educational and inspirational journey to the nation's capital city. Sponsored by Illinois' electric and telephone cooperatives, 54 students departed Springfield, Ill., by bus on June 14 to Washington, D.C., for a weeklong trip of a lifetime.

Norris Electric Cooperative sponsored two students within its service territory. These students included Alex Birchfield and Victoria McMillian.

Youth Tour began in 1964, after President Lyndon B. Johnson inspired the nation's electric cooperatives to sponsor youths to go to D.C. to educate young people about the role of electric co-ops and the significance of the legislative process. It became an annual tradition.

"Youth Tour is more than just a trip," said Brooke Gross, Youth Tour coordinator from the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that empowers future leaders to become informed, engaged and active citizens. Many Youth Tour alumni go on to become leaders in their communities, inspired by this experience."

The event offers a unique opportunity for students to explore the nation's capital, meet their peers from across the state and beyond, and engage with

the political process. Youth Tour not only highlights the importance of electric cooperatives but also fosters civic engagement and leadership skills.

The itinerary for the Youth Tour was packed with both educational and cultural experiences. The students visited major landmarks such as Gettysburg, Arlington National Cemetery, the U.S. Capitol and the National Mall. They also visited several museums, including the Smithsonian, Air and Space Museum, and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

"There's a lot more to Youth Tour than sightseeing," Gross said. "It also provides students with a deeper understanding of American history and government and the role electric and telephone cooperatives play in the communities they serve."

One way the students learned about cooperatives was by forming one themselves. The Chip 'n' Pop Co-op is an engaging way to provide the Youth Tour participants with experience in understanding the fundamentals of the cooperative business model.

"This hands-on activity emphasizes the importance of teamwork," Gross said. "The students gained practical business skills and a deeper appreciation for cooperatives."

The students created their own snack shop cooperative by forming

a nominating committee, electing a board of directors and hiring a co-op manager. They worked together to manage all aspects of the operation and had an equal say in decision-making, just like the cooperatives that sponsored them on the trip.

In addition, the students voted for one of their peers to represent Illinois on the Youth Leadership Council (YLC). Those interested in becoming Illinois' YLC representative filled out an application, and five were selected to give a speech in front of their peers. Cole Buchanan, representing SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative, was selected as the 2024-2025 YLC representative for Illinois. He will represent the state at national and state meetings and events in the year ahead.

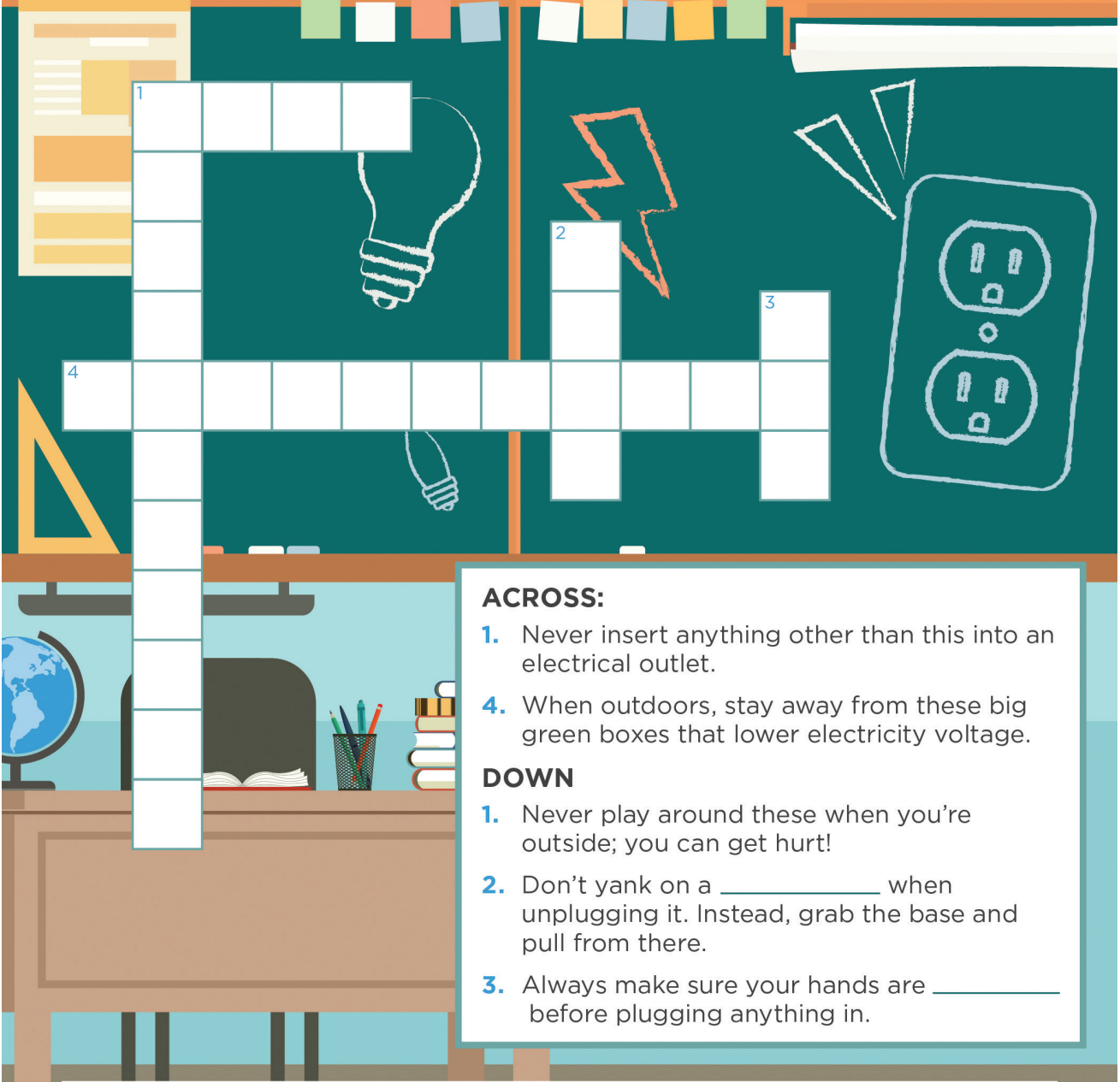
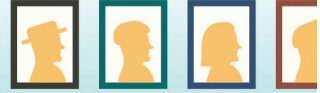
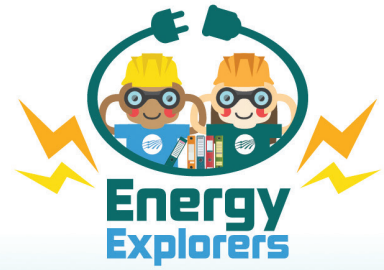
"The impact of Youth Tour goes far beyond Washington, D.C.," Gross said. "One of the most impactful parts of Youth Tour is the relationships that students build with their peers from different parts of the state and country. These connections often turn into life-long friendships."

High school students who live within the service area of Norris Electric are eligible to participate in the annual program. To learn more about Youth Tour, go to youthtour.coop or facebook.com/ILYouthTour.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL SAFETY CROSSWORD PUZZLE

As you gear up for a new school year, remember to practice electrical safety in the classroom *and* at home. From powering electronic devices to spending time outdoors with friends, always play it safe around electricity.

Read the clues below to complete the crossword puzzle, then double check your answers in the key.



ACROSS:

- 1. Never insert anything other than this into an electrical outlet.
- 4. When outdoors, stay away from these big green boxes that lower electricity voltage.

DOWN

- 1. Never play around these when you're outside; you can get hurt!
- 2. Don't yank on a _____ when unplugging it. Instead, grab the base and pull from there.
- 3. Always make sure your hands are _____ before plugging anything in.

ANSWER KEY 1. ACROSS: PLUG 4. ACROSS: TRANSFORMER 1. DOWN: POWER LINES 2. DOWN: CORD 3. DOWN: DRY