

IEC Outlook

Illinois Electric Council

Summer 2003

IEC youth education programs shine bright during summer



Stuart Churchill, Menard Electric Cooperative and Dana Smith, Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, inspect a rocket launcher entered at the Illinois State Fair.



Allan Masterson, Monroe County Electric Co-Operative and Stuart Churchill observe a demonstration of this entry at the State Fair.

IEC electrical education outreach does not take a summer break. In fact, the IEC promotes and sponsors several summertime youth programs. For many young people, the culmination of knowledge learned through IEC volunteers materializes as an electrical entry at the Illinois State Fair, one that is judged by an IEC team!

IEC continues 4-H tradition

Summer camps and county fairs are childhood rites of passage for many. These related 4-H activities kick into high gear in the summer and members of the IEC's 4-H Committee are kept busy conducting camp workshops, lining up evaluators and judging electrical project fair entries.

"It can get hectic," says 4-H Committee Co-Chair, Denise Kistner, "But it is fun to work with these talented, young people. They are so eager to learn, and it's rewarding to see the poise and confidence that emerges as their talent grows and know you had a part in that development."

Each summer, committee members volunteer their time and talent to provide electricity workshops to 4-H campers. According to committeeman Dana Smith of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, kids' eyes literally light up with satisfac-

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Youngsters get hands on experience at this 4-H electrical workshop held in McLean County this spring.

tion after successfully making an electric cord at camp.

“Many begin the workshop with absolutely no concept or knowledge about how electricity works or electrical wiring,” says Smith, “But, by the time we explain and help them through the step-by-step process of making an extension cord, they’ve learned a lot.

“The campers take home not just a working electrical cord, but quite a proud sense of accomplishment,” he says. “I’ve even had camp counselors and workers ask if they can make one too!” chuckles Smith.

For decades, the IEC also has sponsored the Electricity Achievement Award recognizing a 4-H member in each county for an outstanding achievement and exhibit in the electricity area. 4-Hers have a selection of five different electricity classes from which to choose and exhibit. The units range from an introduction to magnetism to more complex wiring. For each class there is a degree of creativity allowed in what can be made and exhibited at the 4-H fairs.

“It’s been an experience and fun to talk to the exhibitors and see the different ideas they come up with,” says Smith.

But, it can be difficult to rate and judge between the homemade telegraphs, work lights and rocket launchers. The IEC has assisted with this by helping develop rating guidelines and providing qualified judges for the electricity exhibits.

The 4-H Committee is involved in youth education projects throughout the year. But, their efforts certainly shine brightly on the faces of the youth who proudly present their accomplishments at 4-H County and State Fairs. ✨

4-H Committee members include:

Denise Kistner, Montgomery County Extension and **Melinda States**, University of Illinois Extension, Co-Chairs; **Chris Boyd**, Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative; **Ellen Burton**, IEC Board Liaison, East Peoria Extension Center; **Stuart Churchill**, Menard Electric Cooperative; **Allan Masterson**, Monroe County Electric Cooperative, Inc.; **Bill Million**, University of Illinois Extension; **Charlie Peterson**, M.J.M. Electric Cooperative, Inc.; **Dana Smith**, Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative; and **Larry L. Wachtel**, Retired Volunteer.

Safe Electricity

joins 4-H Committee in presence at the Illinois State Fair

A display detailing the educational components of the IEC’s Safe Electricity program is again making an appearance at the Illinois State Fair

Aug. 8 – 17. Thanks to Bill Million for providing space for the exhibit in the 4-H building south of the University of Illinois Extension building. Thousands of 4-H families and many others pass through the exhibit hall during the Fair.

Safe Electricity launches powerful campaign

Safe Electricity's powerful message promoting its safety Web site can be seen on billboards throughout the state this summer. Billboards are prominent from St. Louis to Chicago in major markets including Rockford, the Quad Cities, Springfield, Peoria, Champaign-Urbana, Decatur and Metro East, as well as towns like DuQuoin and Marion and several rural areas.



Safe Electricity had 40 billboards last year in a central Illinois pilot. The effort was successful and expanded this year to take the messages statewide with 85 billboards. As a not-for-profit program, Safe Electricity can obtain the space free, paying

only the cost of printing and posting.

The outdoor advertising campaign is running in tandem with new radio and television public service announcements on handyman electrical safety. The PSAs were distributed in May, and a fall component of the handyman series will be distributed in late August.

In addition to the outreach messages, a number of summer-related safety news releases have been distributed on topics including home project safety, water safety, child safety and warning signs of electrical system stress during peak summer usage.

News releases and PSAs are posted to the Safe Electricity Web site: www.safeelectricity.org. ✨

Newman youth wins state FFA electric proficiency award

Experience helps define future goals

Grant Kincaid of Newman, a member of the Shiloh Future Farmers of America Chapter, won the State Electrical Technology Award presented at the annual Illinois FFA State Convention.

Kincaid, a recent high school graduate, submitted as his award-winning project a journal of his experience working as an assistant to an electrician.

"I really learned a lot and it (the experience) helped me decide my future occupational goals," reported Kincaid the day before leaving for a military "boot camp" in Texas. He hopes to take electrical classes and training while in the service.

The Electrical Technology Award is one of 50 State FFA Proficiency Awards. Five finalists from each award area advanced to the state level through chapter, section and district competition.

Selection of the state award winners is based on a personal interview as well as the results of the FFA members' supervised agricultural project and their knowledge of the subject. The 50 state award winners were selected from over 16,000 FFA members state wide.

The IEC, through the Illinois Foundation FFA, is a sponsor of the Electrical Proficiency award. ✨

IEC welcomes new director



The IEC welcomes to its Board of Directors David Stuva, Manager of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative. He replaces Board Member Alan Wattles of Monroe County Cooperative, Inc. Alan served in a number of positions and was Board President at the time of his departure.

"I will continue to support the IEC as always and wish the best of luck in the future," Wattles said.

"On behalf of the board, I would like to thank Alan for his service to the IEC," says Board Chairman Neal Johnson. "The Council is fortunate to have a long-time volunteer and supporter, David Stuva, taking Alan's place."

Stuva has been involved with the IEC and Council activities since 1983, serving for many years on the 4-H Youth Committee.

"I have always found great value in the Council and I am especially excited about the Safe Electricity program," Stuva said. "I'm looking forward to being part of the Council leadership."

The Council also congratulates Board member Ellen Burton, who has been named Acting Regional Director, East Central Region for the U of I Extension. ✨

Farm Progress Show IEC tradition

The IEC continues a long-standing tradition of involvement with the Illinois Farm Progress Show. Since 1988, the Council has sponsored a display every third year when Illinois hosts the event. This year, the IEC will highlight its Safe Electricity program at the show to be held northeast of Henning September 23-25.

The Safe Electricity exhibit will feature the popular Safety City interactive display and will be located in the Utility Accident Prevention Tent. Kids' computer games from the Safe Electricity Web site will also be among the featured educational activities. The games are a fun way to educate kids to recognize and avoid electrical dangers and injuries. Youth sleuths can search for electrical dangers, play Shock Blocker tic-tac-toe and make Safe Choices in simulated electrical hazards they could encounter in real life.

The Utility Accident Prevention Tent is a joint effort of several utilities and related organizations, led by IEC affiliate member J.U.L.I.E. (an underground utility locator service). Other organizations will have safety-related displays and activities. Utility safety ads have been running in Farm Progress magazine promoting the joint utility safety effort at the Farm Progress Show. ✨

Calendar of Events

- Illinois State Fair, Springfield, **Aug. 8-17, 2003**
4-H Committee judges electrical project entries
Safe Electricity exhibit at 4-H building
- CPR Committee Meeting, Springfield,
Aug. 20, 2003
- Safe Electricity Team Meeting, Decatur,
Aug. 27, 2003
- Farm Progress Show, Henning, **Sept. 23-25, 2003**
IEC/Safe Electricity exhibit in the Utility Accident
Prevention Tent
- IEC Board Meeting, Champaign, **Oct. 29, 2003**

Other events of interest

Advanced Stray Voltage Investigation Conference, **October 28-30, 2003**, Madison, Wisconsin sponsored by Midwest Rural Energy Council, University of Wisconsin at Madison and others.

Details coming soon...

Fall 2003 IEC Power Quality Workshop - Planning is underway for an autumn conference on power quality issues ranging from grounding and bonding to lightning and surge suppression. At this time, plans are to hold the event in two Illinois locations. Details coming soon on the IEC Web site www.ieccouncil.org. ✨

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