

IEC Outlook

Illinois Electric Council

Winter 2004

New Youth Electricity Workshop Coordinator named

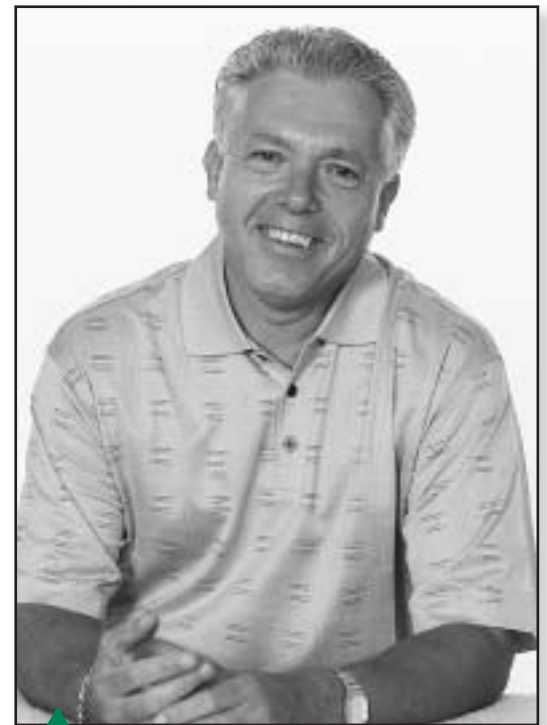
A recently retired electric utility operations manager is now helping the Illinois Electric Council to improve its workshop offerings for 4-H youth.

Joe Rix has been selected for the new position of the IEC's Electricity Workshop Training Coordinator. In this position, Rix will be responsible for planning, training educators and volunteers, and coordinating youth electricity workshops throughout Illinois.

"Joe has been a very enthusiastic participant in IEC activities," says IEC Executive Director, Molly Hall, "With his broad utility background and experience, we are very excited to have him help develop and expand our youth education programs.

The IEC Board of Directors last fall approved a proposal by its 4-H Committee to increase funding to expand youth electrical education activities, and hire a Training Coordinator to oversee the development and training of volunteers, to conduct the electricity workshops offered through the 4-H and the University of Illinois Extension. The increased training and electrical education workshops are necessary to support the increased interest and number of participants in 4-H electricity projects.

Initially, plans call for one workshop to be held annually in each of the five University of Illinois Extension regions. As coordinator, Rix will work in collabo-



Joe Rix

ration with the Illinois Electric Council's 4-H committee, and the Illinois Electric Council Board to plan and develop materials and curriculum used in the youth electricity workshops.

"Joe's enthusiasm, communications skills and electrical technical knowledge make him an incredible addition to our youth education program," remarked Ellen Burton, Acting Regional Extension

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Director and IEC Board Liaison to the 4-H Committee, "We are pleased to welcome him to our program."

Rix comes to the Illinois Electric Council with 33 years of utility experience in operations and marketing at Illinois Power, where his most recent position was the utility's Operations Manager of the Champaign area. During his tenure at Illinois Power, he was

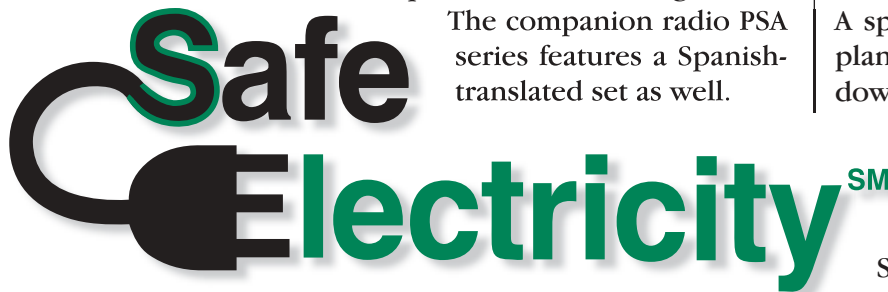
involved with many IEC activities, receiving an IEC Merit Award for more than a decade of volunteer services.

"I've always enjoyed working with the Council, and respected the work and commitment of the IEC to its electrical education and outreach goals," said Rix, "I'm looking forward to this new role in its youth outreach program." ✨

2004 electrical safety education initiatives

Safe Electricity kicked off the New Year with a new home safety radio and television public service announcement (PSA) series. Two new animated television PSAs focus on outlet safety: three-prong vs. two-prong outlets and plugs, and the consequences of overloading outlets.

The companion radio PSA series features a Spanish-translated set as well.



An expanded partnership with the Illinois Broadcasters Association (IBA) is providing for a three-month placement with television as well as radio stations statewide. Safe Electricity also sent the PSAs to the stations outside the IBA program.

Forecasts of icy weather in late January were met with English and Spanish news releases featuring tips on preparing for prolonged outages. Also included on the winter editorial calendar is a news release on standby electric generator safety tips for homeowners and small businesses.

An opportunity for expanded billboard awareness in the Chicago area means Safe Electricity is getting 30 metro-area billboard ads starting in mid-February. Safe Electricity had arranged for the posting of 15 Chicago area billboards during the summer 2003 campaign, but the boards did not go up

when planned. The posting company offered to provide double the billboards at no additional charge.

While winter weather is still chilling most of the area, Safe Electricity is already preparing its spring consumer education outreach programs and media plans.

A spring planting safety news release is planned for March followed by a storms/downed power lines safety news release in April. Safe Electricity will also be working with JULIE to promote locating services prior to digging.

May is National Electric Safety Month, and many of Safe Electricity's warm weather safety messages will be promoted during this time period, as well as highlighting new issues such as the safe disposal of electrical appliances.

All of the PSAs and news releases will reference the Safe Electricity Web site, where these seasonal releases also will be headlined and posted.

Out-of-state interest in the program continues to grow. Executive Director Molly Hall was invited to speak to the Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange Board of Directors at their winter meeting in Phoenix. Safe Electricity is also providing a display in the Federated consulting room during the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association annual meeting in New Orleans. In March, Molly travels to Eau Claire Wisconsin to speak at the Midwest Rural Energy Council's Annual Conference. ✨

2003 Home Project Safety TV PSA series garners top Communicator Award

A Crystal Award of Excellence in communications has been awarded to the Illinois Electric Council's Safe Electricity program for its television Public Service Announcements (PSAs) promoting home "handyman" electrical safety. A second Safe Electricity PSA series on vehicle accidents involving downed power lines also received an Honorable Mention Communicator Award.

The Communicator Awards is an international awards program that recognizes and honors excellence in communications. The work is reviewed by communications professionals and judged on a "high standard of excellence in quality, creativity and resourcefulness." The highest award, the prestigious Crystal Award, is given to those deemed by peers to be among the best in the communications field.

The Crystal award-winning PSAs, "It's Shocking" and "Slow Down," were produced with assistance from Exelon Audio-Visual Services and Serafin and Associates of Chicago, and featured Chicago's "Mr. Fix-it," Lou Manfredini.

The "Vehicle Accident/Downed Power Lines" series was produced with assistance from WCIA-TV Champaign, Ill., and featured Kyle Finley of Live-Line Demo, Inc.

Just prior to the Communicator Awards notification, those Safe Electricity PSAs received top honors from the Illinois-based Master Communicator Awards Program. Safe Electricity entries swept both the radio and TV categories, with the "Accident/Downed Power Lines" series winning Awards of Excellence in both the radio and television categories, and the "It's Shocking" TV series receiving an Excellence Award in the television category.

"We are delighted to receive such recognition and it underscores the strength of working together to create public awareness of electrical safety issues," said Molly Hall, IEC Executive Director. "We appreciate the collective efforts of our members that help Safe Electricity to make a real difference." ✧

IEC Cosponsors two grounding conferences

The popular, one-day workshop "Upgrading Your Grounding Skills" will again be offered Feb. 24 at the Northfield Center in Springfield; and Feb. 25 at Starved Rock State Park and Lodge, Utica.

Cosponsored by the IEC, the National Food and Energy Council and Springfield Electric, each conference will address basic grounding fundamentals; National Electrical Code Requirements; grounding and bonding; and other aspects of grounding with regard to calculations, equipment, quality, lightning protection and stray voltage. This one-day training course presented by Harvey Hirning, PhD can provide a renewed understanding of grounding fundamentals and increase ability in handling unique or difficult situations. Regional case studies presented by Ameren representatives will also be part of the program.

Utility management, customer service and key accounts staff, staking technicians, engineers, and commercial customers will all find value in attending this one-of-a-kind workshop. This is a "user friendly" course that accommodates varying levels of knowledge. Attendees with little experience in grounding principles will gain essential and practical information. Those with some experience will sharpen their skills and expand their knowledge.

Some may wish to use this coursework in renewing their Professional Engineering license. The Illinois Department of Professional Regulation will need documentation that the licensee attended the event, and details (agenda, etc.) on what was presented.

Visit the IEC's Website at www.iecouncil.org for more information and registration for this conference. ✧



IEC Web site has new look

The IEC has launched its newly-designed Web site. The new design will allow site visitors to better navigate and locate consumer information about energy efficiency and safety. It also should enable the council to more quickly distribute event and activity information, and better coordinate the release of information with the IEC's Safe Electricity Web site.

New areas within the new Web site include an online IEC Directory and Newsroom. A new Consumer Information section replaces the Fact Sheet section of the previous site design, and now provides general information on a variety of electricity-related topics.

The new IEC Web home page will also navigate consumers seeking safety information directly to its Safe Electricity home page. Previously, the IEC and the Safe Electricity Web sites each contained information about electrical safety.

Visit the new Web site at the same address www.iecouncil.org and let us know your thoughts on the new look and available information. ✧

Calendar Of Events

- ✧ **Feb. 24, 2004** - IEC/NREC Power Quality Conference, Northfield Center, Springfield, IL
- ✧ **Feb. 25, 2004** - IEC/NREC Power Quality Conference, Starved Rock State Park & Lodge, Utica, IL
- ✧ **March 3 – 5, 2004** - Midwest Rural Energy Council (MREC) Annual Rural Energy Conference, Ramada Inn Convention Center, Eau Claire, WI
- ✧ **March 4, 2004** - Exec. Dir. Molly Hall speaks at the MREC Rural Energy Conference, Eau Claire, WI
- ✧ **March 9, 2004** - IEC Consumer Education Committee meeting, AIEC office, Springfield, IL
- ✧ **March 23, 2004** - Safe Electricity Advisory Team meeting, McLean County Extension Center, Bloomington, IL

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