

PowerLines

April 2020

Spring has arrived!



As I write this column during our annual spring training pilgrimage to Florida we realize the year is already one quarter completed, and that spring has arrived! It is an interesting time to be traveling in Florida with the daily news of the spreading Coronavirus and the state of emergency declared by Florida's governor. As you can imagine, there are health concerns due to the aging demographics of Florida, and economic concerns because of the state's reliance on tourism.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association annual meeting was recently held in New Orleans, a very interesting and historic city. Among the many informative sessions, of particular interest were topics on the increasing use of data and technology to improve and optimize service to members and communities.

Other thought provoking speakers provided a view into the future through incredible research and computer modeling techniques. A few good slogans from motivational speakers included "be where your feet are" (namely pay full attention to what you are doing at the time - useful for safety or any activity - be

engaged!), and "so what, now what" (the past is history, what will we do to change and improve ourselves or the situation).

The month of April has two employee appreciation events, lineworker appreciation day on April 13th and administrative professionals day on the 22nd. Thank you for recognizing our dedicated employees in your annual survey review, and in the comments received from you throughout the year.

A special thanks and congratulations to two recent retirees. Terry Riggins retired in November 2019 as a journeyman lineman after 20 years, and Keith Bergman retired as of March 2020 after 33 years, including many years as a journeyman lineman as well. Best wishes and a healthy and happy retirement to both!

Enjoy the picture of the sunset from the St. Pete area and the better weather.

Sincerely,

Bob Hunzinger

In this issue:

- 37 teachers receive grants
- 2020 Empowering Education Grants
- Call before you dig
- Avoid the big green box
- National Lineworker Appreciation

How do you want to save today?



Local Deals
Pharmacy Discounts
Cash Back Online
Hotel Savings

Visit www.connections.coop to register and start saving today.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

This spring, consider using a rain barrel to save energy. Rain barrels capture rainwater from a roof that can be used later for watering your lawn, garden, or indoor plants.

Your Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative 

SCHOOLS IN EIEC SERVICE TERRITORY BENEFIT FROM GRANTS

37 Teachers receive \$500 grants



A student at Fisher Grade School is smiling because he will benefit from the EIEC grant for STEM learning and flexible seating.



Chay Leinweber, science teacher at Ridgeview High School, is using his grant to purchase an exploding skull model.



J.L. Nash Middle School wins an Empowering Education Grant for Reading in Style. Pictured are Principal Marquis; EIEC Board Member, Tyler Finegan; Tammy Springer, the grant winning teacher.



Students of Missy Leydens, teacher at Iroquois West Elementary, Gilman, will be getting more flexible seating.



Rantoul Township High School teacher, Ashley Bryan, will be using her grant to encourage kindness.



Jessica Frerichs, preschool teacher, and Michelle Sobkoviak, Principal, at Milford Grade School, accept their \$500 grant. Frerichs will use the money to purchase chicks for hatching.



Broadmeadow Elementary students look forward to having a sensory hallway.



Ryan Woodham, Industrial Art teacher at Monticello High School, will be using his EIEC grant to teach students residential electrical wiring.



Kirsten Wyatt, PBL High School Ag teacher, is using her grant money to go towards the purchase of a CNC plasma table to teach welding.



Carol Liston, from Christ Lutheran High School, will be using her grant to refurbish hand bells.

2020 EMPOWERING EDUCATION GRANTS

Arthur Lovington Atwood Hammond High School

Kathy Frye
CPR training manikins & supplies

Atwood Hammond Jr. High Tim Manselle

Solar car competition

Broadmeadow Elementary Rantoul

Abby Schwarzentraub
Sensory hallway

Christ Lutheran High School Buckley

Carol Liston
Hand bell refurbishing

Cissna Park High School

Denise Burns
Field trip to Shakespeare Theater

Eastlawn Elementary Rantoul

Emily Stratton
Girls on the Run

Fisher Grade School

Roxann Nuss
STEM learning and flexible seating

GCMS Elementary School Gibson City

Michael Schwenk
Heart health wrist watches

Gifford Grade School

Kelly Beach
Technology for learning assistance

Iroquois Special Education

Nancy Zeller
Hands-on work task library

Iroquois West Elementary Danforth

Katie Doggett
Light up the classroom

Iroquois West Elementary Gilman

Kim Eggemeyer
Family Reading Night

Missy Leydens

Flexible seating

John L. Nash Middle School Clifton

Tamara Springer
Reading in style

Lincoln Trail Elementary Mahomet

Katelin Schroeder
Flexible seating

Ludlow Grade School

Cara Tweedy
STEM projects

Mahomet Seymour HS

Eric Andracke
3D design and modeling

Milford High School

Elyse Bulla
Coding with SAM Labs Maker Kit

Milford Preschool

Jessica Frerichs
Hatching chicks

Monticello High School

Jeffrey Condis
Code for the future

Ryan Woodham

Residential electrical wiring

Monticello Middle School

Cindy Heiniger
Garden Club: raised garden

Paxton-Buckley-Loda HS

Kirsten Wyatt
The "cutting" edge of welding

Potomac Grade School

Paul Kuiper
STEM

Clarenda McCarty
Flexible seating

Rantoul Township HS

Ashley Bryan
Student spotlight on kindness

Melanie Deem

Heart rate monitors

Ridgeview High School

Chay Leinweber
Exploding skull model

Salt Fork North Elementary

Susan Drake
STEAM room additions

St. John's Lutheran Buckley

Laura Birge
Outdoor education

St. Joseph Grade School

Andrea Steele
Flexible seating

St. Paul Lutheran School Milford

Mary Smith
Classroom library makeover

St. Malachy Catholic School Rantoul

Chelsie Kamradt
STREAM

Villa Grove High School

Brian Cordes
Sr. digital videos for yearbook

Villa Grove Elementary

Marci Howard
Purposeful play

Watseka High School

Casie Hanson
Snap shot on the go

White Heath Elementary

Brittany Ransom
Visual perception activities



Eastern Illini
Electric
Cooperative

February 2020

PLANNING A YARD PROJECT?

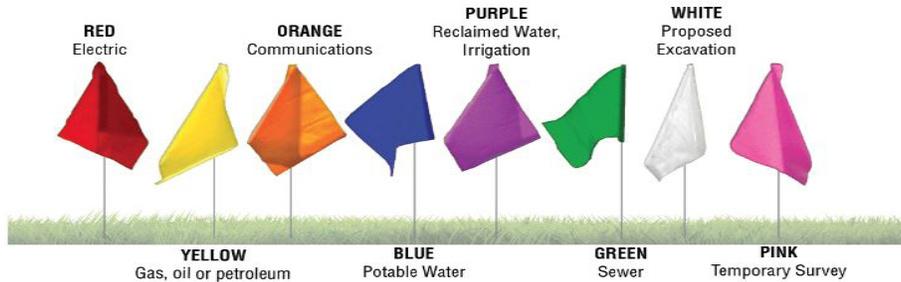
Call before you dig

April is National Safe Digging Month.

It reminds us all that as we begin beautifying our yards, we shouldn't just dig in. According to 811, the "Call Before You Dig" national hotline, an underground utility is damaged every nine minutes because someone didn't call before digging.

Whether it is a do-it-yourself project, or you are hiring a professional, call JULIE or 811 two to three days prior to starting any digging project to request that all underground utilities be marked. You may go online for self service options: www.illinois1call.com. Before you call or go online, know the specific location information, and the type and size of the excavation.

JULIE stands for Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators, also known as the "Illinois One-Call System," that provides professionals and homeowners with a way to locate and



JULIE member companies use the following color code when paint or flags are used to mark their underground facilities.

mark underground utility facilities. JULIE is open 24/7 and has over 100 employees during peak seasons. The 811 hotline points out that there is more than one football field's length of buried utilities for every person in the U.S.

You may think it won't hurt anything to dig in an unmarked yard when landscaping, installing a fence, deck or mailbox, or even just planting a small flower bed or bush, but damaging an underground cable can have serious consequences. Hitting a line could result in serious injuries and disrupted service for you and also your neighbors. It could also make a dent in your wallet for expensive repair fees or other fines.

- Confirm that all affected utility operators have responded to your request and marked underground utilities.

- It's important to dig carefully around the marks with care.

It's important to remember that privately owned underground lines will NOT be marked by location flaggers. Examples of private lines/equipment include well and septic, underground sprinkler systems, invisible fencing, gas or electric lines that serve a detached building, as well as any lines from the meter to your home.

We encourage everyone to follow these steps for safe digging.

Before you begin digging:

- Notify the one-call center by calling 811 or making an online request.

- Wait the required amount of time for affected utility operators to respond to your request.

5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Working on an outdoor project? Always call 8-1-1 first, because you never know what's below. Here are five easy steps for safe digging:

Source: call811.com

1. NOTIFY

Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before you start.



2. WAIT

Wait two to three days for a response to your request. Affected utilities will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.



3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded by comparing the markers to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.



4. RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. They are your guide for the duration of your project.



5. DIG CAREFULLY

If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project.



PLEASE STAY AWAY FROM PADMOUNTED TRANSFORMERS

Avoid the big green box

Green utility boxes, known as padmount transformers, are part of the supply chain that helps provide power to your neighborhood. Those boxes sit on an easement, which allows Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative linemen and servicemen to have easy access to them.

What are the green boxes for? Their job is to step down high-voltage electricity to a lower voltage needed for the underground wires supplying power to the lights and appliances in homes. Please do not paint, enhance, block or otherwise obstruct padmount transformers. By respecting all utility equipment, including meters and transformers, you can help keep the power on and EIEC employees safe.

Here are some safety reminders regarding padmount transformers:

- Do not plant shrubs and trees close to green box transformers or other utility equipment. Limiting or restricting access to the box in your yard could delay restoration work during an outage and create a serious safety hazard. If you dig near a transformer you could inadvertently hit a live underground cable. Always call 811 prior to any digging project.

- Contact us with questions about landscaping around or installing fencing near a padmount transformer.

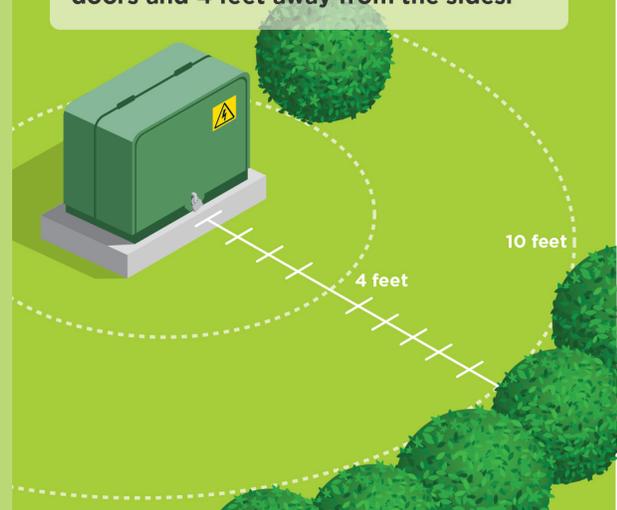
- Always teach children that they should not sit on, open, or play around the green boxes.

Please stay away from pad-mounted transformers (the big green box). While safe, they are not meant for touching, climbing or playing. Pad-mounted transformers carry high voltages of electricity that serve many homes in our communities.

Never touch, climb or play on pad-mounted transformers. Never put fingers, sticks or other objects through cracks in the transformer.



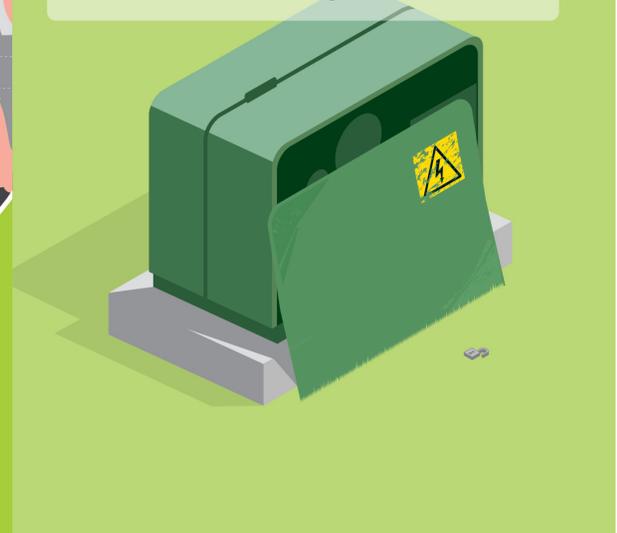
Keep areas surrounding the pad-mounted transformer clear so that workers can safely maintain transformers as needed. Keep shrubs and structures at least 10 feet away from the transformer doors and 4 feet away from the sides.



Never dig near a pad-mounted transformer. They are surrounded by underground cables. Hitting the cable could result in electrical shock or disruption of service. Always dial 8-1-1 before you dig.



Report problems. If you notice anything amiss, like an unlocked transformer or one that has been damaged, please contact us immediately.



- Contact us if the transformer becomes unlocked or if it or any other type of utility equipment appears to be damaged.

- Keep a clear path to the transformer. Although the transformer seems like it is in "your yard," it is technically on an easement, and our workers need clear

access to it to maintain equipment and keep power running smoothly.

Contact us at 1-800-824-5102 with any questions or concerns about the safety of padmount transformers.

THANK YOU *for braving*

**W I N D
R A I N
S L E E T
S N O W**

*all to maintain a steady **POWER** flow.*

nationallineworker**appreciation**day**april**13

- Mike Batte
- Rod Blackburn
- Jeff Blackford
- Mike Bristle
- Jonah Carney
- Jaxson Coplea
- Nick Curry
- Kevin Dettmering
- Jay Eshleman
- Don Gerdes
- Travis Glazik
- Bill Hoffschneider
- Alex Hubert
- Matt Huddleston
- Jason Kocher
- Tim Kulow
- Scott Lane
- Scott McTaggart
- Cliff Miller
- Sean Miller
- Todd Moore
- Ken Mutchmore
- Jeremiah Nichols
- Zach Owens
- Luke Perzee
- Junior Price
- Graham Schmid
- Drew Schrod
- Brad Smith
- Doug Vaughn
- Brad Weisenbarn