

Operation Cookie Drop A Big Success

It's not just community pride, it's countywide pride that once again teams the Girl Scouts in Shelby County with Shelby Electric Cooperative and the selling of Girl Scout cookies specifically for our military personnel overseas.

Nice weather and a good turnout contributed to success at the Saturday, March 1 Girl Scouts Cookie drive held in the parking lot of Monical's Pizza in Shelbyville.

The third annual event sponsored by Shelby Electric Cooperative, named Operation Cookie Drop, not only provides a boost in sales for the Central Illinois Girl Scouts but also provides a welcome bit of home for troops stationed overseas.

"Girls Scout Cookies are hard to resist," said Shelby Electric VP of Media and Public Relations Kevin Bernson, "Everybody loves them and they are as uniquely American as hot dogs and baseball. By the time this article reaches our members we will be well on our way to 1,000 boxes of cookies to ship to the troops overseas. This is Shelby Electric's third year in sponsoring the event and the response from the community has been heartwarming."

Fire Pro of Shelbyville, Pro-Lawn of Shelbyville, Macari's Service Center in Shelbyville, Cash Land in Taylorville, Shelbyville Dairy Queen, Shelbyville Wal-Mart and Monical's Pizza have all contributed monetarily to the cost of shipping the Girl Scout cookies to the troops. An unnamed businessman also made a large contribution to the shipping costs.

Operation Cookie Drop began through an internal e-mail asking Shelby Electric Co-op employees to donate a box or two to an employee's



Cindi Halbrook and her Junior Girl Scout Troop #3188 wait on customers purchasing cookies for the troops as part of "Operation Cookie Drop" sponsored by Shelby Electric Cooperative on March 1 in the parking lot of Monical's in Shelbyville. Brownie troop 3127 of Shelbyville, troop 3189 of Tower Hill and Shelbyville troop 3321 also took a turn selling cookies at this four-hour event.

son (Martin Carlen) who was serving in Iraq at the time. The co-op presented the idea to the Girl Scouts of Shelby County and it took off from there.

WEJT Classic Hits 105.1 was on hand with a live radio remote of the event. DJ Kris Kelly commented, "The public response has been very good all day. We always love helping out such a good cause." Woody Culumber, WEJT account executive said, "We appreciate everyone who came out to lend support to the troops in Iraq by purchasing Girl Scout Cookies and Shelby Electric deserves a big thank you for coming up with this idea three years ago."

According to the Girl Scouts Web site, individual troops began organizing cookie sales as early as 1917 to fund the troop's activities. In 1922 the Girl Scout magazine, *The Ameri-*

can Girl, suggested cookie sales as a fund-raiser and provided the recipes. The first Girl Scout cookie recipe was a sugar cookie. In 1936 the national organization began licensing commercial bakers to produce them.

From that first sugar cookie, the line has expanded today to include Caramel de Lites, Peanut Butter Patties, Peanut Butter Sandwich, Cinnamon Spins, Lemonades, Shortbread, Thanks-a-Lots, and the ever-popular Thin Mints.

If you know of anyone fighting for our freedom overseas please contact Shelby Electric with their name and shipping address.

Kevin Bernson of Shelby Electric Cooperative & John Carswell of Shelbyville Daily Union contributed to this article.

pwr-net.Coop Coming Soon

Survey results show what members want

You asked for it and you are going to get it. A survey conducted by Nelson Marketing and Research (NMR) in coordination with the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) was sent out to our membership in 2007.

One of the questions posed to the membership in this survey was, "If your electric cooperative were to offer the following products or services, how interested would you be in obtaining them for your home, farm or business?" Eight items were then listed for members to choose from. Shelby Electric has either looked into, or is currently providing, all of these services. Number one on the list was power quality and the cooperative is researching this.

Another highly requested item from members was high-speed Internet. This was the second most requested service or product. The cooperative is currently in the process of working on offering another high-speed Internet option in addition to its current product, Wild-Blue. "WildBlue is a great product but we are trapped in the amount of subscribers we can fulfill and there is

still a great need for high-speed Internet within our service territory," said President/CEO James Coleman.

Other services the cooperative already provides include standby generators through Shelby Energy, long distance phone service through Clear Talk (you can see an ad on page 9 of this publication) and online bill payment (click on the online bill pay icon at www.shelbyelectric.coop).

In constructing the survey questionnaire, the AIEC worked with a committee of Illinois electric cooperative personnel. Then the NMR team met with the AIEC to select and refine the various questions. The survey drew on two sources, past AIEC member surveys and the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). The ACSI is an economic indicator based on modeling of customer evaluations of the quality of goods and services. It studies hundreds of U.S. companies in 43 industry sectors. Including a set of ACSI questions permitted the AIEC to compare satisfaction ratings with other utilities and with various industries across the nation.

Fifty-two questions were asked to obtain feedback on quality of

service, participation in cooperatives and desire for additional services. The AIEC mailed 1,330 questionnaires to randomly selected members of Shelby Electric Cooperative. The surveys were mailed in August and September 2007. In all, 517 surveys were returned.

The cooperative board and management is using this survey to help direct the cooperative and to see what areas the cooperative needs to improve. "As with any business there will always be ways to improve the quality of service we can provide to our members. We are happy to announce that from the results of this survey Shelby Electric Cooperative scored near the top in every category compared to other cooperatives in the state; and in many areas we scored the highest or beat the state-wide averages," said VP of Media and Public Relations Kevin Bernson.

"On a 10 point scale with 10 being the highest, the overall member satisfaction of Shelby Electric Cooperative was an 8.68, which was one of the highest in the state among Illinois electric cooperatives," added Bernson.

Stay tuned for more information about pwr-net.coop coming soon.



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Co-op Director Receives Training on Financial Planning

Shelby Electric Cooperative Director Mark Lash of Findlay attended a class on financial planning and reporting at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives on February 5, 2008.

The course taught directors from across the state how to better understand financial statements used by electric cooperatives, what drivers impact rates, revenues and costs, how today's decisions will affect the long-term financial health of



Lash (right) visited with Duane Noland, President/CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, during a break in the program.

the co-op and how to manage debt and capital credits.

Teaching Electrical Safety

Shelby Electric Cooperative Member Services Representative Marla Eversole and Lineman Matt Clark visited Pana Junior High School to put on a safety demonstration about electricity and electrical power lines for Mr. Brian Wood's agriculture construction and electrical wiring class back in February.

"I think it is an excellent demonstration about electricity, its dangers and safety that you need to know and follow," said Wood. "We discuss the dangers of electricity and safety aspects of dealing with electricity in class and when [students] see a demonstration like this they can actually see the dangers and what will happen if they would have an accident around electricity and or power lines."

"The other thing [Shelby Elec-

tric] did a good job of was explaining what to do in case of an accident involving contact with a power line, whether with farm implement equipment or your own vehicle," said Wood. "You should stay on your tractor or in your car until a representative of the power company says it is

safe to get off or out of your vehicle."

Lineman Matt Clark asked for a student volunteer to try on his lineman gear and Howie Wise was the student selected. Marla Eversole said they have several other demonstrations planned.



Shelby Electric Cooperative Member Services Representative Marla Eversole and Lineman Matt Clark put on a safety demonstration at Pana Jr. High School in February.

Free Online Classifieds Available



Go to www.shelbyelectric.coop and you will locate a new feature to the cooperative's Web site called Marketplace. The Marketplace link is located on the lower left hand portion of the Web site.

This is a free classifieds ad service for your use. There is a place to list for sale, wanted and free items as well as a place to list rentals and services.

If you do not have Internet access but want to list an item, send your items to Marketplace, P.O. Box 560, Shelbyville, IL 62565 and we will list your item for you. If you have questions or need assistance contact the cooperative at 800-677-2612.

Your item(s) will be posted for 45 days.



Three Long Time Linemen

When Bill Shoaff, Jeff Price and Larry Shuff recently retired, they took with them 107 years of combined service and experience. “That is a lot of dedicated man-hours to leave at one time and we will miss them,” said President/CEO James Coleman.

With the cooperative in its 70th year of service you can expect some employees to retire but the cooperative has seen five linemen retire over the past four months. “These guys helped build much of the cooperative’s system over the years,” said Construction Superintendent Terry Oldham.



BILL SHOAFF

Bill is the elder statesman of the group who recently retired as he finished his career with 41 years of service to the cooperative. He started in the summer of 1967 as temporary help and assisted with putting in underground service in Boys Acres, a subdivision on the north side of Shelbyville off Route 128. He also assisted in the construction of the Pana substation and transmission system.

“Back then we ‘piked’ the poles and hand-tamped the ground. Over the years bucket trucks and hydraulics improved how we did our job as linemen,” noted Bill. A member of the Statewide Safety Committee for years, Shoaff also helped the State-

wide serving as an instructor at Hot Line School in both Carbondale and in Springfield.

Finishing his career at the cooperative as Operations Superintendent, he noted the ice storm of 1978 and taking over as service provider to Stonington as two memorable events at the cooperative.

Bill was a 1967 graduate of Shelbyville High School and married Debra Holland in 1969. They have two children, a son who lives in Madison, Wis. and a daughter in Winchester, Va. Besides traveling to visit family Bill said he would spend his retirement days fishing and golfing.



JEFF PRICE

Jeff, who retired with 36 years of service, also recalls the ice storm of 1978 as a memorable event but adds the recent ice storm of December 2006 as one he will remember as well. Pricey, as called by his fellow colleagues, began his career at the cooperative as summer help in 1972



and often jokes, “I don’t recall ever being told I had been hired as a full time employee ☺.” He also agrees with Bill Shoaff that hydraulics and better equipment improved how linemen did their jobs. One thing Jeff will never forget is seeing 69,000 volts going to ground near the Neoga substation. Before employment with the cooperative he worked for the state parks and did a stint in the Navy.

Jeff was a 1968 graduate of Shelbyville High School. He married Diane Pinkston and they have four children and eight grandchildren. He raises Beagles and Coon Hounds for hunting. In addition to taking care

Retire From Cooperative



Cooperative President/CEO James Coleman presents, from left to right Bill Shoaff, Jeff Price and Larry Shuff, a lineman trophy they each received at a retirement ceremony following an all employee meeting back in February. When all three linemen retired in March they left with a combined 107 years of experience.

All three recently retired linemen agree that Shelby Electric Cooperative has been a great place to work and they will miss working for the members and the great people they have met over the years. "We wish Billy, Pricey, Larry and their families well and hope they have a healthy and enjoyable retirement," Coleman said.

of his dogs he plans to hunt and fish. He also gardens and grows all types of tomatoes for eating and canning for family and friends. Among his favorites to grow are the Yellow, Beef Steak, Cherry, Romas and Better Boy tomatoes.



LARRY SHUFF

Larry will never forget when he started at the cooperative as he was hired as temporary help in 1978 shortly after the ice storm to help

with repairing the tattered system. Larry recently retired with 30 years of service to the cooperative where he spent 90 percent of his time working on underground service. He feels technology will continue to help the job of linemen but just as more training was required with hot sticking and rubber gloving, new equipment and newer technology will breed a different style of linemen than the linemen of old. "They are still working with wire and poles but they will have a different skill set than the early linemen," said Larry.

Larry is a 1964 graduate of Shelbyville High School and married Jody McKay of Vandalia. They have

four children who still live in the area and three grandchildren. An active farmer, Larry said he would continue to farm a little now that he has retired and plans to travel some as well. He enjoys mud drags and tractor pulls and expects to continue to be a spectator of those in his retirement.

Is Your TV Ready for the Switch to Digital TV?

Beginning February 2009, the government is changing the way we watch television in America by forcing all programming to convert from analog broadcasting to digital. This will have a dramatic impact on rural TV viewers who get their television programming through over-the-air antennas or rabbit ears. Even though Shelby Electric Cooperative is not directly involved in providing television programming, the cooperative has provided a Digital Television option through its subsidiary Shelby DirecTV.

There have been a number of questions from our members about the government plan and some confusion to what it all means. This article will try to explain the rationale of their plan and provide factual information about what you will need to do in order to watch television on an antenna or rabbit ears style TV beginning February 2009.

The government is making this move to digital, which will enable them to auction off the spectrum of channels currently used for analog television. That portion of the airwaves will be sold to wireless providers and is expected to bring the government as much as \$15 billion. A portion of the analog spectrum will be retained and dedicated for use by emergency responders. So far, they have done a poor job of educating the public, which has created a lot of myths and misinformation.

The switch from analog to digital will really only negatively affect the television users on antenna and rabbit ears who are currently watching television programming on an older style analog TV. If you fall into that category, you will no longer receive a picture on your TV starting in February 2009, unless you make some modifications.

If you are on cable TV or sat-



ellite, you should already have a converter box system built into the program equipment which is converting the signal and enabling you to watch digital TV signals even on your old analog style TV. Therefore, if you are on satellite or cable TV, there is no need to run out and purchase a new digital television, unless you just want a higher quality picture and you have the extra money to spend. "I can't speak to those who subscribe to cable television but if you are a Shelby DirecTV customer your TVs are compatible via our DirecTV equipment," said Marla Berner, Customer Services Manager for Shelby DirecTV. "We have been providing digital quality picture and sound to our customers since the inception of DirecTV over 10 years ago," added Berner.

If you are on antenna or rabbit ears, there is a low-cost solution WITHOUT running out to buy a new digital television for your viewing needs. There are a number of electronic stores that are now selling special converter boxes for older TVs that will enable you to view digital programming over-the-air on your old analog TV set. The converter boxes are selling for between \$50 and \$70. But wait, there is some financial help available in the form of \$40 government coupons! Effective immediately, the National Telecommunications and Information

Administration is accepting requests for two \$40 coupons per household to be used toward the purchase of the converter boxes at any electronics store that stocks them. That's a lot cheaper solution than purchasing a new HD digital TV. To request the free \$40 coupons, you can call a 24-hour hotline at 1-888-388-2009 or you can request coupons online at www.dtv2009.gov

How many people watch television over the air? The Nielson Co. estimates that 14.3 million households, or about 13 percent of the 112.8 million total television households in the nation, rely solely on over-the-air television broadcasts for programming. Currently, full-power television stations broadcast in both analog and digital, but will cease their analog broadcasts next February.

How do you know if your current television is digital or analog? Look closely at your TV and the owners manual that came with it. If you see the words: "integrated digital tuner," "digital tuner built-in," "digital receiver," "digital tuner," "DTV," "ATSC," or "HDTV" then you have a digital television and you WON'T need a converter box. If your television is labeled as "analog," or "NTSC," and is not labeled as containing a digital tuner, then it only contains an analog tuner that will require a digital-to-analog converter box for use with an antenna or rabbit ears.

Now be careful. If your television is labeled as "digital monitor" or "digital ready" this does not actually mean that it contains a digital tuner. If you are still unsure, check the Web site of the manufacturer and look up the model number to determine if your TV has a digital tuner.

Randy Olson of Wayne-White Counties Electric Cooperative contributed to this article.

Online Bill Pay Available

Shelby Electric Cooperative launched an online bill pay feature to its Web site in January 2008. Members can now pay their electric bill online and see past payment and billing history as well. The bill pay feature also allows you to look at your past 13-month usage history, monthly cost, average cost and average history.

Go to www.shelbyelectric.coop, click on the online bill pay icon; this will take you to a log in screen. You will then click on the second bulleted item where it says 'click here for online account access.' This will take you to a 'New User Registration' screen. You will need your account number to create a password. It will

also ask for an e-mail address. If you do not have an e-mail address there are several places to get a free e-mail account AOL.com, HotMail.com and Yahoo.com are just a few to choose from.

Once you are registered, all you will need is your e-mail address and password to access your account. This is a secure site and your personal information will not be shared or given away. More than 350 members are currently signed up for the cooperative's online bill pay feature.

The cooperative will still be mailing out statements so members without Internet access or who prefer to mail in their monthly payment will still be able to do so. Those

who do the online bill pay option can choose to not have a paper bill mailed to them.

If you have questions please contact the cooperative at 1-800-677-2612. The cooperative also has a kiosk in the lobby if you need assistance with setting up your online account. We hope you enjoy this new feature to the cooperative's Web site.



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Shelby Electric Linemen Assist Other Co-ops Following Ice Storms

Shelby Electric Cooperative Linemen Blake Summers and Matt Clark headed down to Clay Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Flora, Ill., around 6:00 a.m. the morning of March 5 to assist with restoring power following an ice storm. Linemen Adam Schrock, Jerry Johnston and Brian Chevalier, and Foreman Steve Darnell left around noon that same day to assist with the outage repair after additional crews were requested.

An ice storm hit the region Monday evening, March 3. There were an estimated 600 - 800 cooperative members without power. There were also reports of several poles down. The counties affected were Clay, Effingham, Wayne and Marion.

"When the Statewide Emergency Work Plan is activated and we get the call to help out, as long as we feel our system is in good order we will send linemen and equipment where needed," said Construction/Operations Superintendent Terry Oldham.

The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives Emergency Work Plan was activated on Tuesday, March 4, after a number of Illinois electric cooperatives experienced outages due



Lineman Adam Schrock, Foreman Steve Darnell and Linemen Jerry Johnston and Brian Chevalier joined fellow Linemen Blake Summers and Matt Clark, who were already down assisting Clay Electric Cooperative in Flora, Ill., to restore power to their members following a March ice storm that occurred in their service territory.

to ice that started on the evening of March 3. Clay, Tri-County and Norris Electric Cooperatives were hardest hit by the latest wave of a winter mix of rain, sleet, snow and ice that hit downstate Illinois and required additional crews to assist them with their power restoration.

Shelby Electric had previously sent two crews down to SouthEastern and Southern Illinois Electric Cooperatives to assist them with bringing power back to their membership fol-

lowing a February ice storm. Tree crew members Kevin Carlen and Andy McDonald and Linemen Brian Bunton and Kris Koehler assisted for almost one week before returning home.

The crews started out at South-Eastern Electric Cooperative headquartered in Eldorado before moving on to Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative headquartered in Dongola. Southern experienced outages with 100 percent of their membership.

Line Outages

DATE	HOURS	SUBSTATION	CAUSE	MEMBERS AFFECTED
2/4/08	0.10	Velma	Miscellaneous	601
2/5/08	1.15	Neoga	Storm	94

Substation Outages

DATE	HOURS	SUBSTATION	CAUSE	MEMBERS AFFECTED
2/6/08	3.00	Taylorville	Storm	533
2/6/08	3.00	Grove City	Storm	84

<p>Shelby Electric Cooperative 1-800-677-2612 1-217-774-3986 24-hours-a-day</p>	<p>Shelby DirecTV 1-877-994-2323 weekdays 1-877-241-6605 after-hours</p>	<p>Shelby Energy 1-217-774-2311 24-hours-a-day</p>
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