

**Farmers' Electric Cooperative**  
*Together, we have the power to make a difference*

# Watts Up

A Monthly Publication of The FEC Companies

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

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July 2009

## FEC's Area Youth Benefit Fund events to be held August 9-10

*Over 350 families in Farmers' service territory have been helped since charity was founded in 1993*

The 17th annual fund events for Farmers' Electric's Area Youth Benefit Fund (AYBF) have been set for Sunday, August 9 and Monday, August 10.

The dinner-auction will again be held at the new Jenkins Center, which is located within the Livingston County Fairgrounds on the north side of Chillicothe. The golf tournament will be held at the Green Hills Golf Course, also in Chillicothe.

The dinner-auction and golf tournament usually raises around \$35,000 each year. Farmers' Electric Cooperative established the AYBF in 1993. The charity's purpose is to provide financial assistance toward the payment of medical bills for children 18 years of age and under. The fund is designed to assist families with children who have been ill or injured in which the parents do not have enough money or health insurance to cover the medical costs.

The AYBF is a 501 (c)3 charity that primarily operates in the counties of Linn, Chariton, Livingston, Carroll, Ray, Caldwell, Daviess,

DeKalb and Clinton. A family that resides in the counties above does not have to be a member of the cooperative to receive financial assistance. FEC members who reside in other counties are also eligible for assistance.

A separate board of directors administers the AYBF. All applications for assistance are made to this board and the directors have been

**Over \$420,000 has been donated to area families in need...**

empowered to administer the fund as they so choose. At this writing, a total of \$422,926.03 has been distributed to 358 families.

The August 9 dinner-auction features a number of silent auctions and other activities. The main auction is under the call of Colonel Mike Miller. A reception begins the evening at 5 p.m., followed by dinner at 6:30. The main auction usually begins around 7:45 p.m.

The main auction will have a variety of items for sale, including jewelry, limited edition art prints, Waterford crystal, sports memorabilia and much more.

"Merchants throughout our nine-county FEC

service territory donate items to our fund raising events and we are very grateful for their generosity," said Steve Shoot, FEC's Manager of Member Services and coordinator of both fund raising events. "Even in tough times, the support we have received is tremendous."

The golf tournament on August 10 is again co-sponsored by Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company of Chillicothe. This marks the eleventh consecutive year the local Pepsi-Cola franchise has provided support for the event.

"We can't thank our local Pepsi guys enough for their continued sponsorship," Shoot said. "They are so easy to work with and help us in so many ways throughout the event."

If anyone is interested in attending either event or donating an item that can be sold at the auction please contact Gina Truesdell or Shoot at the FEC office in Chillicothe (646-4281 or 1-800-279-0496)

"Every donation to the AYBF helps us raise a little more money to help our families in need in this area," Shoot said.

## You can cut energy usage from video games

Today, more than 40 percent of all homes in the United States have at least one video game system. And with kids home from school for the summer, parents need a new strategy that will help them conquer those high-tech device's quest for power. 11044

Recently the National Resources Defense Council conducted a study of the energy demands from gaming systems such as the Sony Playstation 3, the Microsoft Xbox 360 and the Nintendo Wii. They discovered that they consumed an estimated 16 billion kilowatt-hours per year; roughly equal to the annual

electricity use of the city of San Diego.

Through the incorporation of more user-friendly power management features, the NRDC believes Americans could save approximately 11 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity per year, cut our nation's electricity bill by more than \$1 billion per year and avoid emissions of more than 7 million tons of carbon dioxide each year.

This figure was based on the assumption that half of the users left their gaming systems on all the time. For this reason, gamers can sig-

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## Make sure children know how to play safely

After a chilling winter, summertime is here. The school year is over, the weather is warm, the grill is hot and the pools are cool. Time to make sure our children and family members remember to have fun and be safe at the same time. It's important that parents and other caregivers make sure children know how to stay safe during outdoor play.

Children often do not understand the dangers of electricity. Take some time to get down and view the surroundings from a child's vantage point to locate possible hazards.

For safety outdoors, FEC recommends that children and adults follow these rules:

- Stay away from electrical equipment on the ground and overhead. Never climb a utility pole or tower. Don't play on or around pad-mounted electrical equipment. Electrical power poles and utility equipment should never be used as a playground. 276155
- Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines aren't touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch.
- Fly kites and model airplanes safely away from trees and overhead power lines. If a kite gets tangled in a tree that's near power lines,

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## FEC will be closed July 3

The office at Farmers' Electric Cooperative will be closed Friday, July 3, in observance of the Independence Day holiday. Regular office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you have a power outage please call 1-800-927-5334. Anyone with water heater problems call 660-707-2593.

## Eight more businesses sign up with FEC's Co-op Connections Card

Eight more local businesses have joined over 100 area establishments in providing discounts to Farmers' Electric members through the Co-op Connection Card.

New to the program are Anytime Fitness, Chillicothe; Easter's Pharmacy, Trenton; Foster Heating & Air Conditioning, Chillicothe; Linda's Tax Service, Carrollton; Jame-sport Grocery, Jamesport; Northtown Appli-ance Center, Carrollton; Pam's Home Fur-nishings, Brookfield; and Shady Valley Court & RV Park, Chillicothe.

For a complete listing of all of the local busi-nesses participating in the Co-op Connections Card program turn to the last *Watts Up* page or go to the Farmers' Electric web site at [www.fec-co.com](http://www.fec-co.com).

## Electrical storms are a deadly reminder to seek shelter

"Lightning never strikes twice in the same place." "You have more of a chance of getting struck by lightning. . ." These often-repeated sayings give the impression that lightning strikes are extremely rare, predictable and avoidable. This idea, however, is wrong.

Although seemingly less dangerous, lightning kills more people per year than either tornados or hurricanes and causes billions of dollars in damage. Given these statistics, it's extremely important to take lightning seriously and to stay educated on lightning safety.

Plan outdoor activities around the weather and be prepared to seek shelter if the weather turns threatening. If thunderstorms and lightning are approaching, the safest location is indoors away from doors and windows. Avoid water, electric appliances and other objects that could conduct electricity, and use only

cordless or cell phones to make emergency calls. 71279

Phone use is the leading cause of indoor lightning injuries in the United States. A direct strike is not necessary for lightning voltage to enter your home through phone lines, electrical wires, cables and plumbing.

Other recommendations to avoid lightning shock and damage indoors include:

- Turn off and unplug appliances well before a storm nears - never during.
- Stay away from electrical outlets, appliances, computers, power tools, and TV sets. Take off headsets and stop playing video games.
- Avoid water and contact with piping, including sinks, baths and faucets. Don't wash dishes, shower or bathe during a thunderstorm. Also avoid washers and dryers since

they not only connect with the plumbing and electrical systems, but also contain an electrical path from the outside through the dryer vent.

- Do not lie on the concrete floor of a garage as it likely contains a wire mesh.
- Basements typically are a safe place to go during thunderstorms, but avoid concrete walls that may contain metal rebar.

Lightning can strike up to 10 miles from the area in which it is raining. This means that if you can hear thunder, you're within striking distance.

A good idea is to use the "30-30 Rule." According to this rule, if you can count less than 30 seconds between a lightning flash and the thunder following it, you should seek shelter from the storm. When the storm is over, wait 30 minutes after the last lightning strike you see before going back outside.

If caught outdoors during a thunderstorm and unable to take shelter in a building, take the following precautions:

- Try to take shelter in a vehicle with a solid metal roof. Close the windows and avoid contact with electrical conducting paths, such as the steering wheel, ignition, gear shifter, or radio.
- Avoid water, high ground, or open spaces.
- Do not seek shelter under tall, solitary trees; canopies; small picnic or rain shelters; or in any open-frame vehicles such as jeeps, convertibles, golf carts, tractors or mowers.
- Do not stand near power, light or flag poles, machinery, fences, gates, metal bleachers, or even other people. If you are in a group, spread out so that you are at least 20 feet apart.

## Make sure children know how to play safely outdoors

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don't climb up to get it. Contact your electric utility for assistance.

- Never go into an electric substation. Electric substations contain high-voltage equipment, which can kill you. Don't retrieve a toy or rescue a pet that goes inside. Call your electric utility instead.
- Look up and around you. Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long metal tools like ladders and pool skimmers.
- Water and electricity never mix! Keep electronics like radios away from pools and hot tubs, and watch for overhead power lines when

cleaning pools, sailing or fishing. Never install pools underneath or near power lines.

- Never touch an electrical appliance if you are wet; always dry off completely. Be careful using electrical appliances outdoors. Whether it is a bug zapper, an electric charcoal lighter, or a radio or CD player, caution must be exercised. 276876

Be sure you use outlets that have weather-proof covers and ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) to prevent serious shock injuries. Use portable GFCIs for outdoor outlets that don't have them. Keep electrical appliances and tools at least 10 feet away from pools, ponds and wet surfaces.

## Cutting energy usage on video games can be as simple as limiting time of play

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nificantly reduce the energy consumed by their consoles through simple steps like turning off the console when not actively playing a game or watching a movie. Another big energy saving step is to turn on energy saving features in the games' settings.

Most gaming systems have power management features, but by default these settings are in the off mode. Consumers should make themselves aware of these features and be sure to set them in the most efficient mode, which will power down the system after a period of inactivity.

In its November 2008 issue paper, NRDC provided recommendations for users, video game console manufacturers, component suppliers and the software companies that design games for improving the efficiency of video game consoles already in homes as well as future generations of machines yet to hit the shelves.

Parents choosing new systems for their kids should consider other advice from the study.

For example, the NRDC found that the Nintendo Wii uses one-seventh the power of the Sony Playstation and one-ninth the power of the Xbox during game play. Both the Playstation and the Xbox offer a higher level of play, requiring more power to generate 3-D graphics.

Both companies continued to optimize their systems for energy savings following the early release of these systems, meaning newer consoles will be more energy efficient than older ones. And Sony introduced a power management feature available online in October 2008, but this feature is off by default and must be enabled by the user. 275877

In addition to powering down when the game console is not being used, homeowners can realize savings if the TV monitor is energy efficient as well. It's not unusual for parents to pass down an older, inefficient TV set to their kids for use with the gaming system.

It might be wiser to consider an Energy Star rated set, especially one equipped with an

auto-shutoff sleep setting.

Finally, one of the best methods to save money may be the most obvious limiting game play time. Set strict time limits for gaming and instead, encourage outdoor play whenever possible, making sure that system gets shut down when the time is up.

Here's how to enable energy saving software in the Playstation and Xbox systems. (Ask the kids for help.)

### Playstation 3

Turn on the Sony Playstation. At the main menu screen scroll to the left to the System Settings tab, then scroll down to Power Save Settings and press select.

### Xbox 360

Turn on the Xbox 360 without a disc in the drive. At the main menu screen scroll to the right to the System tab and press the green A button on your controller to select Console Setting.