



WATTS CURRENT

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative



March 2011

Help RVEC Battle Copper Theft

Soaring metal prices have been blamed for an increase in thefts of copper and aluminum, primary components of electric distribution lines. Recent thefts of copper wire and equipment from electric utilities have been responsible for power outages, additional maintenance and expenses, diminished service reliability, and, in some cases, serious injury or death. 11-S-1-E

Copper in wire is appealing to thieves who want to sell the metal for scrap. Burglars will often climb power poles, scale fences, and break into buildings to steal the precious metal. Needless to say, a 542 percent increase in the price of copper since 2001 has prompted thieves to become bolder and more inventive.

"Stealing copper may seem like a quick way to make a buck," says Jim Bagley, CEO. "But it's illegal, it's costly, and it's not worth a life. Working with any metal and electricity is a dangerous combination, even for trained employees using proper equipment."

Stolen wire is commonly brought to recycling centers and traded for cash. Although many state laws require recycling centers to keep records of transactions,

enforcement can be difficult. Without identifying marks, stolen wire is hard to track and is rarely recovered.

Thieves may not understand that they are risking their lives by taking copper from substations, where high transmission voltage is stepped down to a lower current for distribution lines. All power lines carry a potentially deadly charge.

Please help us prevent these thefts. If you notice



anything unusual, call RVEC immediately. If you see anyone other than co-op personnel or contractors around substations or other electric facilities, call the police.

RVEC urges you to follow the following guidelines to guard against electrical dangers and prevent copper theft.

- Never enter or touch equipment inside a substation; stay away from power lines and anything touching a power line.
- If you notice anything unusual with electric facilities, such as an open substation gate, open equipment, or hanging wire, contact your electric co-op immediately.
- If you see anyone around electric substations or electric facilities other than co-op personnel or contractors, call the police.
- Install motion-sensor lights on the outside of your house and business to deter possible thieves.
- Store tools and wire cutters in a secure location, and never leave them out while you are away. 17.16.01
- If you work in construction, do not leave any wires or plumbing unattended or leave loose wire at the job site, especially overnight.
- Help spread the word about the deadly consequences that can result from trying to steal copper or aluminum.

How to Clean Up a Broken Compact Fluorescent Lightbulb (CFL)



A CFL's glass tubing contains about 4 milligrams of mercury. While this isn't much (classic thermometers contained 500 milligrams) consumers should still take precautions if a CFL breaks.

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1 Ventilate the room, then wait 5 to 10 minutes.
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2 Scoop up powder and glass fragments using stiff paper or cardboard. Seal in a plastic bag.
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3 Use duct tape to pick up any fragments or powder.
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4 Immediately place all materials used to clean up and the plastic bag in an outdoor trash container. Remember to wash your hands.
- 5** Not all recycling centers accept broken CFLs. Check with your local and/or state waste authority for disposal requirements, or visit Earth911.com.

To learn more visit epa.gov/cflcleanup.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation, Environmental Protection Agency

There's Good News about Jobs and Economic Development in Rural Iowa

Study says electric cooperatives contributed \$1.2 billion to state's economy

At a time when other businesses in Iowa were retrenching and reducing their payrolls, the state's electric cooperatives, including Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC), were showing significant signs of growth in both investment and income during 2009, according to the latest Economic Impact Study released today by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

For example, the payrolls, purchases and deliveries of services by electric cooperatives resulted in a \$1.2 billion impact throughout the state's economy. Compared to previous studies, that's a 48 percent increase since 2006 and a 95 percent increase compared to 2003.

The association commissioned the first Economic Impact Study in 2003 – and the second in 2006 – to measure the economic influence of the state's electric cooperatives on the lives and well being of rural Iowans. All three editions of the study were produced by Strategic Economics Group, which is headed by Harvey Siegelman, former state economist of Iowa. 2-S-9-E

"The statistics and charts in the latest version of the Economic Impact Study show that electric cooperatives are generating some pretty big numbers for Iowa's economy," said Jim Bagley, CEO of Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC).

The study revealed these key findings:

- Since 1989, Iowa's electric cooperatives have invested a total of almost \$98 million in loans and grants, resulting in the completion of local projects – such as spec buildings, parks, factories, clinics and hospitals – worth \$928 million. "Some local companies benefiting from these loans are Western Iowa Energy in Wall Lake, the Templeton Area Development Group in Templeton, St. Anthony Hospital in Carroll and the Parkersburg Development in Parkersburg," said Bagley.
- Iowa's electric cooperatives contributed more than \$10 million to community programs during 2009. Co-ops were the local investors that provided a helping hand for projects ranging from creating scholarships and supporting schools to promoting tourism and building industrial parks. At RVEC, concern for community is one of our founding principles," said Bagley.
- Iowa's electric cooperatives have developed a five-year plan to invest \$71.5 million in energy-efficiency programs for homes, farms and businesses across the state. The \$14 million average annual investment for 2010 through 2014 is a 30 percent increase over the amount for 2008. "Our energy-efficiency programs range from energy audits, energy efficiency rebates to our Pull the Plug program," said Bagley.

"The investments electric cooperatives make – and the benefits they provide – stay in our local communities," continued Bagley. "Iowa's electric cooperatives and RVEC will be important contributors to the vitality of Iowa's economy for many years to come."

'Pull the Plug' on Old, Inefficient Appliances

Iowa RECs partnered with Environmental Services of Iowa, LLC in 2010 with the Pull the Plug program. Pull the Plug rewards REC members by providing instant rebates for pulling the plug on old high energy use appliances. REC members around the state proved very eager to participate in this program.

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) members recycled 4 air conditioners, 12 freezers and 21 refrigerators. As a whole, participating RECs in Iowa recycled 1770 high energy use air conditioners, freezers and refrigerators in 2010. RVEC encourages members to get these energy hogs out of their homes and off co-op lines.

To participate in Pull the Plug, co-op members simply can go to www.rvec.coop and click on the Pull the Plug icon and complete the form or call the Glidden office at 712.659.3649 or the Sac City office at 712.662.4275 and say you have an old operating refrigerator, freezer or window air conditioner you want to get rid of.

RVEC verifies the caller's member information, gets a daytime phone number and then electronically sends collection information to ESI, its recycling contractor. Within one business day, ESI contacts you the member to confirm the request and provide an estimated collection time – within a three-week time frame.

The appliance must be located "curbside" for collection, meaning it has to be outside of the house and has to be a working unit. ESI will not enter a member's home to remove the old appliance.

During appliance pick-up, ESI checks to make sure the appliance is operable, loads it up and writes a \$25 rebate check. A maximum of three appliances per year may be recycled per residence. A member may have ESI remove other appliances at the member's own expense. 07.34.03

For more information about the Pull the Plug program give us a call.



Thank you for saving energy!

Non-Discrimination Statement

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CPR & First Aid Training

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) employees were re-certified on the use of a defibrillator, CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and first aid. Employees are trained on the proper procedures to be taken from the time they arrive at an accident scene or come across a person who appears not to be breathing. 24.27.01

This training is very important since the line crew works around electricity daily and electrical shock can result in cardiac arrest.

WATTS CURRENT

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**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

Whether you are planning to do it yourself or hire a professional, smart digging means calling 811 before each job. Homeowners often make risky assumptions about whether or not they should get their utility lines marked, but every digging job requires a call – even small projects like planting trees and shrubs.

If you hit an underground utility line while digging, you can harm yourself or those around you, disrupt service to an entire neighborhood and potentially be responsible for fines and repair costs. 1-4-S-35-M

For more information, visit the Web site at <http://www.call811.com> or call 811.

Complaint Procedure

The Iowa Utilities Board requires that all non-rate regulated utilities post the following notice to its membership:

If a member-consumer has a problem with his/her service, please write or call the office headquarters:

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative
P.O. Box 486
Glidden, Iowa 51443
712.659.3649

If the member-consumer's complaint is related to the Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative's service rather than its rates, and Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the:

Iowa Utilities Board
1375 E Court Avenue, Room 69
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0069
515.725.7321 or 877.565.4450
iubcustomer@iub.state.ia.us

Spot Your Number

Read Watts Current and watch for your location number. If you spot it, call RVEC by the 20th of the month and you will receive an electrical bill credit for \$10.00.