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Blinks Can Signal a Properly Working Electrical System

We often hear the question from members “What causes my lights to blink?” The utility network is subject to certain short-term losses of power, and Northwestern REC takes all possible measures to prevent these occurrences and minimize the affects to our members. Blinking lights are a result of momentary outages that occur when some type of disturbance exists on the line. This could be a lightning strike, an automobile striking a pole, or when a squirrel or tree branch comes into contact with an energized power line.



Photo by: Harald Edens

When lights blink, it is an indication that the cooperative’s equipment is operating properly. If a fault or short circuit happens on a power line, a device called an “oil circuit recloser” (OCR) opens to stop it, then quickly closes back in. Although the process is quick – and usually temporary – it may cause your lights to blink, making it

necessary to reset digital clocks and appliances with digital displays.

The OCR is essentially a breaker, functioning much like a breaker in the electrical panel in your home or business. It permits power to continue flowing through the line with only a brief interruption of service – rather than causing an extended power outage. If the short circuit continues, the OCR will operate or ‘trip’ three times before eventually stopping the flow of electricity and causing a power outage. This process protects the lines from damage, cutting off power to the affected section of the line and isolating the problem until it can be repaired.

Although the weather and nature’s creatures are

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News from the REC is published quarterly by the Northwestern Rural Electric Co-operative Assoc., Inc.

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Owned by Northwestern Rural Electric Co-operative Assoc., Inc., the Center is located one mile south of Cambridge Springs in Crawford County, Pennsylvania.

Co-op News

\$50 goes a long way

Northwestern REC offers local businesses a great advertising opportunity. Each quarter, the Member \$en\$e coupon flyer program is delivered to all 20,000 members of Northwestern REC. The flyer contains ads from local businesses, as well as FREE residential-member classified ads.

The next flyer will be distributed in the December member bills. Ads should be submitted by mid-November to be included in this flyer. For more information, call Amy Fuller, Marketing Coordinator, at 1.800.472.7910. ♦

Do's & Don'ts - Tips from Field Services

- Although other utilities may allow customers and/or contractors to break meter seals and disconnect power, **Northwestern REC does not**. Members or contractors working for members must always call the Co-op at 1.800.473.3567 to schedule a time for the Co-op to disconnect and reconnect power. Your safety is our priority.
- Northwestern REC strongly discourages members from using conduit when installing underground electric cable. It is not necessary - the cable is protected with thick insulation and will not be damaged when installed properly. Conduit may be used, however, when the cable passes underneath a drive. Underground cable instructions, including trench guidelines, may be obtained from Northwestern REC. Call 1.800.473.3567 or visit us online: www.NorthwesternREC.coop.
- Call PA One Call before you dig! PA Act 287 requires all contractors to inform PA One Call of their intentions to excavate. Fines can range from \$100 - \$25,000. PA One Call - 1.800.424.1776. ♦

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beyond our control, cooperative members can lessen the effects and inconvenience of “blinks” when they occur. When purchasing small appliances and other equipment, consider purchasing battery backups. You may also want to install surge protection in your home or business and surge protection with built-in uninterrupted power supply (UPS) for computers or other electronic devices whose “memory” would be lost with a power interruption. ♦

Source: www.cooperative.com.

Northwestern Delivers Shocking Savings to Local Businesses

During these challenging economic times, local companies are looking for every opportunity to improve their bottom line by reducing expenses. Small reductions in monthly fixed costs such as eliminating monthly long distance fees and reducing variable costs such as per minute rates on long distance and toll-free numbers can add up over the course of 12 months.

For example, if a business is currently paying a monthly fee of \$7.95 for long distance service, a savings of \$95.40 in annual fixed costs could be realized by finding a program that didn't require a monthly fee. In addition, if that business has a toll-free number and currently pays \$8.00 per month for that service, it could save an additional \$96.00 per year. Therefore, a total of \$191.40 could be saved in fixed costs per year by signing up for a program that did not have a monthly fee for long distance and toll-free service.

Variable costs can have an even larger impact on potential savings. For example, what are you currently paying on a per minute basis for your Interlata and Intralata long distance calls? What about toll-free per minute costs? Some local businesses have reported paying as much as 25¢ per minute. There are also some plans that require a minimum usage in minutes and if not utilized, the monthly amount is charged regardless. For example, if you currently pay 25¢ per minute and use 500 minutes of long distance per month, your monthly per minute

Mark Your Calendars

Counter Terrorism and Emergency Preparedness Videoconference

October 22, 2004

8:30 a.m. ~ 12:30 p.m.

Presented by

PA Rural Development Council

Videoconference sites include (local):
Northwestern REC - Cambridge Springs,
Titusville, & Greenville
Contact PRDC for other locations.

Respond to ruralpa@state.pa.us

costs are \$125.00. If you could sign up for a program that offered 6.9¢ per minute, your monthly per minute costs would be \$34.50, or an annual savings of \$1,086!

All of these benefits and more can be found in Northwestern REC's Long Distance Program.

The Bottom Line – look at all of your expenses to find savings, even those that appear to be minor. Other often overlooked expenses include mailing costs, interest expense (refinancing opportunities), natural gas and electric rates (are you on the best rate for your business operations?), and efficiency improvements such as using online reverse auction tools to purchase supplies. These are often the most overlooked and can impact your net income.

Contact Linda King, Business Development Manager for NREC, at 1.800.472.7910 to see if the Co-op Long Distance program can improve your bottom line or visit www.northwesternrec.coop to sign up and save! ♦

A Well Insulated Home Offers Peace & Quiet

While longing for peace and quiet in their homes, Americans have surrounded themselves with decibel-raising high-tech gadgetry including big screen TVs, computer games, CD players and stereo systems.

In most homes, walls between rooms are only marginally effective at blocking noise. Made of drywall and lumber, these interior or partition walls have poor Sound Transmission Class (STC) ratings. An STC rating is a number used to characterize the sound insulating value of a wall, floor or ceiling—the higher the STC rating, the less sound will be transmitted between rooms.

Home builders typically take steps to increase the STC rating for rooms that tend to be the noisiest, such as kitchens and bathrooms, but it may not be enough. There are a number of simple measures that can be taken to raise the STC number in any home.

By far the easiest and most economical method for controlling noise is to install insulation in the wall cavity. Adding insulation beneath drywall in a typical wall configuration can increase sound control.

Many homeowners struggle with the kind of insulation to use. When selecting insulation, remember three things:

- Keep it dry—don't add mold causing moisture to your house with wet-spray insulation. A combination of fiber glass batts and blown-in products will insulate core areas of your home.
- Choose an Energy Star product—fiber glass insulation is Energy Star compliant, which means they help reduce energy consumption.
- Choose an environmentally friendly product such as fiberglass insulation.

Source: www.simplyinsulate.com ♦