On Thursday, Nov. 30, 2006, around 3:30 p.m., outage calls began to trickle into the cooperative offices. When it was all said and done, the cooperative had 5,000 members without power and 500 poles either down or broken. It was apparent that Mother Nature wanted to welcome December with one of the worst ice storms this area has had since 1978. The cooperative moved quickly to restore power and requested additional crews by enacting the statewide emergency work plan. Twenty-six additional linemen with trucks and equipment came to our aid.

Within 36 hours, power had been restored to one half or 2,500 of the members who had been affected by the ice storm. By Saturday night, power had been restored to 3,500 of the 5,000 members who had lost power, leaving 1,500 members without electric service. By Tuesday evening, power had been restored to 4,400 of the original 5,000, leaving 600 still without electricity. By Wednesday evening, less than 75 members were still without power and by Thursday evening, power had been restored to everyone who could receive electric service. Some members needed additional repairs to their own meter base, etc.

"Considering the nature of the storm, how spread out the damage was and the weather conditions the guys had to work in, I feel the guys did an outstanding job in the restoration process," says Bill Shoaff, Operations Superintendent at the cooperative.

"I can’t say enough about the way our cooperative handled this situation,"
from the people who took care of the details back at the office, to the employees manning the phones and especially to the guys working out in the elements to restore everyone’s power,” noted cooperative board Chairman Darrell Shumard. “The cooperative appreciates the patience the members had with us as we restored their power.” The additional crews came from the following Indiana Electric Cooperatives: Fulton County REMC, Kankakee Valley REMC, Jasper REMC and Southern REC. Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative and EnerStar Power from Illinois sent crews as well. Also helping out in the last couple of days were crews from SouthEastern Illinois and Southern Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

While power has been restored to all members, it should be noted that it will take months to permanently repair all of the damage caused to the distribution system. Consequently, there will be a number of interruptions in service as repairs are made.
Did last month’s column ever generate a lot of interest. I have had a steady stream of calls since it was published. As promised, I will devote this column to describing how to properly seal the crawl space. It does work.

First of all, let me review with you the reasons why, in most cases, it is good to seal your crawl space. Moisture in the air always goes from warm to cool (like a glass of iced tea). Well, in the warmer months, the crawl space is cooler than the hot humid air, which means that the warm moist air is trying to find a cold surface, like ductwork, floor joists or ground for condensation to occur. So, if the warm, moist air can get in through open vents, it will find a place to condensate and BINGO, there’s your moisture problem. If you seal or close those vents, the warm, moist air can’t get in your crawl space in the first place. And if you place heavy plastic on the ground, it will stop ground moisture (not standing water) from migrating into your crawl space.

However, let me stress that there are times when it isn’t appropriate to seal a crawl space. In most cases it is the best option, but here are some situations when you should NOT seal a crawl space.

1. Do NOT seal your crawl space if your state or local codes do not approve of this type of construction.
2. In some cases, your pest exterminator might not approve and, if this is the case, do NOT seal the crawl space until you find another exterminator who will approve.
3. Do NOT seal the crawl space if you are in a flood plain or if you ever have standing water under your house. You must solve the water problem first.
4. Do NOT seal the crawl space if your dryer vent discharges into the crawl space. Change that and place the vent on an outside wall before you seal the crawl space.
5. Do NOT seal the crawl space if you have combustible appliances such as a gas furnace or a gas water heater located in your crawl space. Such appliances require considerable amounts of air for combustion.

Now, if none of the above conditions exist, and you have decided to continue, here’s the step-by-step method.

**No. 1:** From under the house, install two-inch rigid foam cutouts (eight inches by 16 inches) into the foundation vents.

**No. 2:** Install a minimum of eight-mil plastic across all of the ground of the crawl space and tape and/or overlap the plastic’s seams.

Install the plastic about six inches up the foundation wall. This will allow you to spray cellulose or foam insulation on the foundation wall. Once again, make sure you let your exterminator know about your plans before you seal the crawl space.

Folks, that’s really about all there is to it. Many will tell you that sealing up a crawl space will cause moisture problems. The fact is when we are called to solve moisture-related problems in a crawl space, we solve these problems as I described here in this column. When the crawl space is sealed, there should be no moisture in space unless you have a plumbing leak. While this rarely happens, you may want to install a small sump pump at the lowest elevation in case a leak develops.

In my honest opinion, this is how you should treat your crawl space. By sealing your crawl space, you will have a drier area with a more constant temperature, which will also help you save on your utility bills. And as always, feel free to call me at the office at 501-653-7931 if you have other questions.
If you have recipes to share mail them to: Recipes P.O. Box 560, Shelbyville, Illinois 62565 or P.O. Box 709, Mattoon, Illinois 61938.

January Recipes

Sausage Broccoli Chowder

Ingredients
- 1 pound bulk Italian sausage
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 8 ounces fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 cups broccoli florets
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 (14.5 ounce) cans chicken broth
- 1 (10.75 ounce) can condensed cream of mushroom soup, undiluted
- 9 ounces cheese tortellini, cooked and drained
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 8 cups light cream
- 1/2 cup grated Romano cheese

Directions:
In a skillet, crumble and cook sausage until no longer pink. Remove to paper towels to drain; set aside. In the same skillet, sauté onion, garlic and mushrooms in butter until tender; set aside.

In a Dutch oven, cook the broccoli florets and carrots in chicken broth until tender. Stir in sausage and the mushroom mixture from skillet. Add mushroom soup, tortellini, black pepper, basil and thyme; heat through. Stir in cream and Romano cheese; heat through again. Makes 12 servings.

Chocolate Soup

Ingredients
- 1 cup milk and 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream, mixed together
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons white sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 (14.5 ounce) cans chicken broth

Directions:
Heat all but 2 tablespoons of the milk and cream mixture in a saucepan. Do not allow it to boil. In a soup bowl mix the cocoa, sugar, vanilla, cinnamon and the reserved milk and cream. Pour the cocoa mixture into the hot milk and cream, blending well. Return mixture to bowl and garnish with mini marshmallows or graham cracker bears. Serves one.

Tortilla Soup

Ingredients
- 4 boneless chicken breast halves, cooked and shredded
- 2 (14.5 ounce) cans chicken broth
- 1 (4 ounce) can diced green chili peppers
- 1 (10 ounce) can diced tomatoes with green chili peppers
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 4 (10 inch) flour tortillas
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

Directions:
Combine the chicken broth, green chili peppers, tomatoes with green chili peppers, onion and garlic in a soup pot. Add the shredded chicken. Bring to a boil, stirring frequently. Reduce heat and simmer for 30-35 minutes. Add the lime juice, cilantro, cayenne and cumin. Simmer for 10-15 minutes longer.

Cut the tortillas into 1/2 x 2-inch strips. Fry in hot olive oil in skillet until golden brown; drain on paper towels. Ladle the soup into bowls. Garnish with shredded Monterey Jack cheese and tortilla strips. Makes 7 servings.

Continued on page 5
Now Is A Good Time To Check/Change Your Smoke Alarm Batteries

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Honoring Our Area Military Personnel

PVT Andrew P. Sheehan graduated from Army Basic Combat Training and Advanced Infantry Training at Ft. Benning, GA., on Oct. 13, 2006. He then reported and graduated from Airborne School, also at Ft. Benning. Andrew is currently in Ranger Indoc-trination Program (RIP) hold. He will report for RIP on Jan. 23, 2007.

Andrew is the son of Dan and Joann Sheehan of Neoga and Janice Krietemeyer of Shelbyville. He has two sisters, Ashley Monroe of Seaside, CA., and Amanda Krietemeyer of Shelbyville. Andrew has two broth-ers, Tyler and Trentin of Neoga.

Andrew attended Neoga High School and graduated in May 2006.

If you have a family member or friend who is currently serving in the military, please send us their name, rank and where they are stationed and we will try to feature them in an up-coming issue. Pictures can be used but must be of good quality. Send information to Military, P.O. Box 709, Mattoon, Illinois 61938 or P.O. Box 560, Shelbyville, Illinois 62565.

Chicken Corn Soup

Ingredients

1 (4 pound) chicken
1 onion, chopped
4 quarts water
1 (10 ounce) package frozen whole kernel corn
1/2 cup chopped celery

Salt and pepper to taste
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 pinch salt
1 egg
1/4 cup milk
2 hardboiled eggs, chopped

Directions:

In a large stockpot cover chicken and onion with water. Cook slowly until tender, approximately 1 hour. Remove chicken, let cool and remove meat from bones. Cut meat into 1 inch pieces, discard skin and bones. Add corn, cut up chicken and celery to stockpot and season with salt and pepper. Simmer soup for 10 minutes.

In a separate bowl make rivels (crumb sized egg noodles) by mixing together flour, salt, egg, and enough milk to form small crumbs. Drop rivels into soup and add hardboiled eggs. Simmer for 15 minutes and serve hot. Servings per recipe: 12

Cabbage Goulash

Ingredients

1 pound bulk pork sausage
1 pound ground beef
1 large onion, chopped
1 (28 ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes, chopped, juice reserved

1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste
2 tablespoons vinegar
1 tablespoon chili powder
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
10 cups shredded cabbage

Directions:

In a large kettle, brown sausage, beef and onion; drain off fat. Add remaining in-gredients except cabbage; mix well. Stir in cabbage and simmer 15-20 minutes or until cabbage is tender. Serves 6.
For Sale

- 1982 Chevy 4 x 4 jacked up truck, needs engine work; 1991 Pontiac Grand Prix; 1979 Eagle bus, conversion started; 52” RCA big screen, needs minor repair; entertainment storage unit, 2 x 4’ high; Heil AC/heat package, outdoor unit; TMX 10th anniversary Elmo, new in box; Dell Axim 5 pda keyboard attachment. Call 217-348-0224.

- 25 “Thomas and Friends” train engines and cars, interlocking wooden train track with bridges, tunnels and other extras, 3’ x 4’ wooden train table, many accessories and landscaping. Call 217-774-2800 leave message if no answer.


- Coin collection, pennies to silver dollars. Call 217-764-5296.

- 2001 GMC Sonoma pick-up, ext. cab, a/c, good on gas, nice stereo, bed liner, 3rd door, well maintained. Asking $6,900 obo. Call 217-728-4291.

- Rear-tine tiller, 6 hp chain drive, new in 2006, reasonable rates, excellent references. Call 217-325-3690.

- Electronic meat grinder, very nice condition, $30; large wooden desk with one small drawer on either side, $25 obo. Call 217-865-2403 leave message for the grandmaswisdom@yahoo.com.

- “Quality Care” CNA, 20 years experience, would like to assist you in your home, reasonable rates, excellent references. Call 217-234-8740.

- Six month old bunnies, 5$: 2 1/2 year old gas stove, used only 1 year, $250 obo; Weider weight bench and weights, $200; go cart, $500 obo; RCA 61” big screen TV, $900 obo; 2’ x 4’ x 33” Foosball table, $45. Call 217-246-2640.

Wanted

- Old toy farm tractors & implements, pedal tractors, any brand, any condition, no dealers please. Call 217-824-9460 or e-mail list to Baileyauction@hotmail.com.

- Old cars or parts wanted, ‘75 or older, any condition. Call 217-856-2233 or 217-254-0856.

- Reefer container needed for storage, must be at least 7 ft wide by 10 ft long. Call 217-768-3864.

Services

- Fireplace kits wanted - pull down and drop down, ceiling fan, etc., any condition. Call 217-254-0856.

If you have items to list, please send them to: Member Exchange P.O. Box 560, Shelbyville, IL 62565 or P.O. Box 709, Mattoon, IL 61938 e-mail- info@cemee.coop or - memberexchange@shebylelectric.com.

Call Your Cooperative To Purchase ECO Renewable Energy Certificates
Shelby Electric Cooperative Welcomes A New Employee

Marla Pruemer started working for Shelby Electric Cooperative as a Member Services Representative on Nov. 13, 2006. On Nov. 30, 2006, she was welcomed to the cooperative by Mother Nature as a major ice storm hit. Marla, along with the other employees, worked hard manning the phones and supporting the efforts to get the power back on. Marla is a graduate of Tower Hill High School and received a bachelor’s degree in Speech Communications from Eastern Illinois University. Prior to employment with the cooperative, Marla worked for Tiny Tech Preschool in Shelbyville and also at the U of I Extension office in Shelby County. Marla has two sons, Dakota, 11, and Levi, 15.

Marla loves being a parent and going to her children’s activities. She also loves the people here and she says that it feels like home when she walks in the door. Lucky for us the extra work involved with the ice storm didn’t scare her away ☺. Welcome to the cooperative family Marla.
Outage Report – November 2006

Line Outages:

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Shelby Electric Cooperative would like to personally thank each member that was without power due to the ice storm, including the employees and directors who were also part of that mix, for their patience. Being without power for several days can begin to wear on people so we appreciate your patience with us as we worked long hours to bring the power back on. Many of you took the time to call or send words of encouragement so we thought we’d share a few. They meant a lot to the linemen and all involved at the cooperative.

The cooperative would also like to say a big thank you to everyone involved with this from the employees, spouses and businesses who helped prepare the breakfast and dinners, to the people getting food and supplies out to the linemen, to the people answering the phones, our linemen and of course our members, this was a great team effort by all involved.

Special Cooperative Thank You to Tina and Ashlee Coleman who volunteered their time to help the cooperative employees with the meal preparations.

Due to the December Ice Storm, there will not be an outage report in the February Shelby News. If anyone is interested in seeing the outage report from Nov. 31, 2006, to Dec. 31, 2006, please contact the cooperative.