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Arkansans advised to discuss substation safety with children

Little Rock, Ark. — May 22, 2006 — As the summer season approaches, the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas urge Arkansans to be aware of potential dangers of substations and power lines.

The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas are dedicated to delivering electricity safely and reliably to members. The infrastructure required to meet this goal involves thousands of miles of power lines and hundreds of substations. If the integrity of a substation is violated, then thousands of households could experience a loss of energy.

“The Danger — Keep Out or Warning — High Voltage signs on substation fences are there for the protection of consumers,” said Doug White, vice president of systems services for the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas. “Substations convert high-voltage energy from transmission lines into lower voltage electricity to supply homes and businesses. Substation equipment is exposed to high-voltage energy with some components energized at more than 100,000 volts.”

According to White, consumers are asked to contact their local electric cooperative if they notice anything unusual at a substation.

White said, “Substations are fenced and locked for a reason. Safety. Only trained, well-equipped professionals should enter a substation. Anyone else entering a substation facility subjects himself to many potential dangers and could also inconvenience an entire town by disrupting the service at the substation.”

White urges parents to remind their children to stay away from electric substations and also discuss electric power line safety with their children.

"We work very hard throughout the year to teach children to stay away from substations and power lines, and to be aware of the potential for danger.

Included in the Electric Cooperative of Arkansas' efforts are special presentations to school children and the public and a safety curriculum in schools.

"All of our efforts are useless if children think they can not be hurt with electricity, especially the amount of power handled at a substation," White said. "We encourage parents to be aware of what their children are doing and to take the opportunity to reinforce safe habits through family discussions."

The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas recommends the following tips for staying safe near power equipment:

- Never touch anything touching a power line.
- Keep ladders, antenna, kites and other objects away from power lines.
- Check for power line clearance when using farm equipment.
- Keep at least 10 feet away from power lines since power can jump to conductors.

- Power lines are not insulated for protecting people.
- Assume all lines are energized and carrying electricity.
- Never climb a power pole or other electrical equipment.
- Look up and stay aware of the location of overhead power lines to avoid making contact with them.
- Check trees for overhead wires running near or through limbs and branches before climbing. If lines are present, do not climb the tree for any reason.
- If you see others climbing or playing around power equipment, urge them to move away.

The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas comprise 17 electric distribution cooperatives; Arkansas Electric Cooperatives Inc. (AECI), a Little Rock-based cooperative that provides various services to the distribution cooperatives; and Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corp. (AECC), a generation and transmission cooperative. The distribution cooperatives provide electricity to approximately 460,000 members, or customers, in Arkansas and surrounding states.

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