

Keep Electric Safety in Mind this Holiday Season

Cuivre River Electric Cooperative reminds everyone to play it safe with electricity during the holidays. Cuivre River Safety Coordinator Doug Bagby says, "A little thoughtful planning and common sense will help everyone enjoy the holidays safely." This festive season offers some unique potential electrical hazards. "Remember to thoroughly check electrically operated decorations before plugging them into an outlet," Bagby adds. "Many accidents may be prevented by just following a few simple safety steps."

Cuivre River Electric Cooperative offers these tips to help area residents have a safe and happy holiday season:

- Use waterproof outdoor cords for outdoor lights and decorations. Keep connections above ground and out of water or snow.
- Remember to keep indoor lights and decorations inside.

- Don't overload electric outlets.
- Check decorative lights for frayed wiring and loose connections.
- Resist connecting multiple extension cords together. If needed, purchase a longer extension cord to prevent a possible fire hazard. Avoid placing extension cords under rugs or in high traffic areas.
- Unplug decorative lighting when leaving home and before going to bed.
- Keep Christmas trees away from heating sources and electrical appliances.
- If decorating outside, remember to always look up for power lines.

Contact Cuivre River Electric Cooperative at 636-528-8261, 636-695-4700, 800-392-3709 or visit www.cuivre.com if you have questions or concerns about electric safety during the holidays.

Youth In Need Receives \$2.4 Million to Assist Families in Need

Youth In Need will be receiving \$2.4 million in federal stimulus dollars to expand child development and family support services in St. Louis City and St. Charles, Lincoln, Warren and Montgomery Counties. The agency will be adding 46 Head Start slots that serve families with children, ages 3 to 5; and 165 Early Head Start slots for families with children, ages birth to 3. The program expansion comes as a result of federal funding Youth In Need received as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. The agency received approximately 20 percent of the available funding in Missouri and is the only organization to receive Head Start and Early Head Start expansion dollars in the greater St. Louis region.

The expansion slots are allocated to: St. Charles County, 30 slots; Lincoln County, 16 slots; Warren County, 38 slots; Montgomery County, 23 slots; and St. Louis City, 104 slots.

"This expansion adds quality and capacity to our services, enables parents to stay in school or the workforce, and allows Youth In Need as an employer to add jobs," said Daryl Rothman, Youth In Need's Vice President of Head Start for the four county area outside St. Louis City. "There are vast numbers of underserved families who will benefit from these services, and we are thrilled to meet these community needs."

Since 1974, Youth In Need has provided services for children and families in crisis, particularly runaway and homeless youth. In order to prevent crisis

and strengthen families while children are young, Youth In Need expanded its services to include early childhood programs when it became a Head Start provider in 1998.

"We will be adding more than 50 new jobs to the economy and increasing by 17 percent the number of children and families we can help who are most affected by the difficult economic conditions," said Jim Braun, Youth In Need's President and CEO.

The national funding also funds facility and quality improvements at current sites to accommodate the increase in children who will be attending Youth In Need centers. Youth In Need will be opening additional center classrooms in Troy, Warrenton and Montgomery City, MO. "This funding pro-

vides Youth In Need with great opportunities to partner with school districts and other service agencies, so that we're all working together and maximizing resources to support children and families, rather than competing for them. Everybody wins—the children, their families, the communities and the local economy," Rothman said.

Youth In Need will continue to build on its community support by launching this expansion and will be looking to the community to continue to support the agency's other programs for youth Head Start and Early Head Start services are offered in center-based or home-based programs.

Center based services assist working families or those attending school or a trade program by providing educational services in both full and part day settings. Children attend a classroom environment to prepare for kindergarten, and parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child's learning environment. Home based services facilitate the involvement of family in meeting a child's needs at home—their primary learning environment. Home visitors meet weekly with each family in their home for 90 minutes. Families also enjoy two group meetings a month so children can experience a classroom setting. Home visitors help parents enhance their parenting skills and learn how to be their child's best teacher. Both center based and home based services assess family needs and assist parents in finding health and dental care, employment, education and other services. Head Start

services are offered at no cost to families who meet income eligibility.

According to research compiled by James Heckman, Nobel Prize winning economist at the University of Chicago, the economic return on the investment in comprehensive early child and parent education to American society is high. Benefits include higher educational achievement, increased earnings, greater family stability and decreased welfare dependency.

"We have long known from our own outcomes that early child interventions build stronger families when children are young and lower the prevalence of crisis when children are in adolescence," Braun said. "We are proud to have been selected to expand these services that will benefit the region for years to come."

Approximately \$2.1 billion was available nationwide for expansion of Head Start and Early Head Start services. A major portion of the expansion funds were allocated for the Early Head Start program across the country to increase enrollment by 55,000 children, ages birth to 3. Currently, 600 programs serve 45,000 Early Head Start children nationwide; ARRA funding doubles the scope of services to families with children in this age range.

Youth In Need is an eastern Missouri regional agency serving more than 10,000 children, teens and families each year with residential group homes, homeless street outreach, education, counseling and support groups, foster care case management and infant, child and

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COMMON SENSE IS IN DANGER

By Shelly Schneider



OK...nearly every economist on the planet is stating that while unemployment is still high, America is rising from the depths of despair and taking a few steps down that yellow brick road known as normal (not recession, not booming, just normal). That's good news, I suppose. But I'm still a little worried. I pray that you, my reader, held onto your job. Did you change anything about your life over the past 18 to 24 months? Did you eat out less, buy fewer pairs of shoes or decide to wait on the 52" LCD television until you could actually afford it? Are you prepared for what's next? You know what's next, right? Black Friday.

I'm getting on a soap box here, a high horse, etc. Why? Because if you're heading to the stores at 4 a.m. on Friday and plan to purchase thousands of dollars worth of presents that you really cannot afford and charge it all, then I'm disappointed. Maybe this recession didn't teach us anything. Maybe we all need a lecture on common sense. Our economy may no longer be on the brink of destruction, but I fear that common sense still hangs in the balance. And there is more than enough blame to go around. Mortgage companies and overpaid executives from Wall Street to Main Street were greedy. Our elected officials saw the warning signs years ago when our economy was booming, and did nothing to stop it. You know what? It's a sad commentary, but I've come to expect all that. What really saddens and angers me is the fact that so many Americans turned over their minds and free will to these idiots. We put ourselves in front of the speeding locomotive, believing all the while that we could somehow dodge the carnage at the last possible second.

I understand wanting something so bad you can taste it. That's perfectly human. What I cannot un-

derstand is signing your life away because a slick and well-trained sales person tells you not to worry about that adjustable rate mortgage. Live for today, right? Never mind that when you're 65 you'll be living in a cardboard box. I understand they were trained to use catch phrases and tactics that make it seem easy to borrow hundreds of thousands of dollars without blinking an eye. But really. If your family earns \$50,000 a year, does it seem logical to borrow money to move into a \$300,000 home?

If only. If only there were a 3-day waiting period. Not only for the purchase of firearms, but for the purchase of a car or home. Granted, it would take three days to read and have someone interpret the fine print in these lovely loan contracts. But if this wonderful lady Common Sense had prevailed, our country would not be in the life-support condition that it currently lies.

What happened to the language of Common Sense? She says things like, "I'll have to review these documents first," or "This seems too good to be true," or "Something in my gut tells me that I won't be able to afford property taxes, insurance and furniture for this \$300,000 home, not to mention the mortgage payments." Why are we so willing to ignore the gut feelings and sell our future (and quite possibly our souls) and our children's future to keep up with the Joneses?

Our grandparents had the right idea. The time to buy is when the cold hard cash is in your quivering hand. Delayed gratification, not instant insanity. Is this really the life we want for our children?

Common Sense is suffocating my friends. We've buried her alive under a mountain of big-screen televisions, the newest and most gadget-stuffed cell phones, and the latest must-have fall fashions.

Ask yourself a few questions. If I lost my job tomor-

row, how long could I afford to live in my home? Do I have the cash to pay for the James Bondish cell phone (and the 2-year contract that accompanies it), or will I just charge it? If I die next week, will my children inherit a pile of debt along with Grandma's pearls?

Common Sense. For too long Americans have looked past her to Lady Luck. Lady Luck is long gone, riding into the sunset with the Wall Street executives in Bentleys and Lamborghinis. Common Sense still has a pulse, albeit weak and thready. There is time to revive her. It will take tough love on our part, for our sake and the sake of our children. It will take saying the word, "No," over and over when confronted with the latest and greatest. It will take a willingness to regain control over our own financial situations and lives.

Cash for Clunkers was nice, and there were some wonderful incentives for first-time home buyers. There are lots of people and more than a few plans out there designed to stimulate spending and get America moving in the right direction, and I applaud the ideas. I just pray that each of us takes a good hard look today at what we can realistically afford, and if it's things we really need to fulfill our dreams. We've allowed things to become more important than people, and we've devalued values.

It's time to let Common Sense, not nonsense, back into our hearts and minds. She's not new, nor is she hi-tech or come with 85,000 "apps." The good news? You don't have to wake up at 3 a.m. and stand in line for 90 minutes in hopes of getting one of only three in stock. Common Sense is ready and waiting, and she's free!

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family development programs.

Believing in the power of potential, Youth In Need's mission is to provide nurturing environments and educational opportunities so children, youth, and families will find safety and hope, achieve their goals, and build a positive future.

*Graph Based on 2008 data.

| YOUTH IN NEED BY THE NUMBERS | |
|--|--|
| PROGRAM | CURRENT # OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY MEMBERS SERVED* |
| Head Start and Early Headstart | 5,888 |
| Shelter and Transitional Living | 304 |
| Homeless Outreach | 2,408 |
| Foster Care and Adoption | 131 |
| Counseling | 541 |
| Teen Parent Program | 165 |
| Before-and-After School Programs | 1,131 |
| TOTAL # OF CLIENTS RECEIVING DIRECT CARE | 10,568 |

The Magic House Hosts Annual Pancake Breakfast with Santa

St. Louis – Forget the holly–The Magic House is decking the halls with hotcakes this holiday season! The Magic House is hosting its seventh annual Breakfast with Santa on Sunday, December 6, at 8:30 a.m., 10 a.m., 11:30 a.m., and 5 p.m. In addition to a special appearance by Santa, the event will feature pancakes prepared by the renowned flapjack-flipping company, Chris Cakes.

Reservations are required, and tickets are \$18 per person or \$15 for Magic House members. The ticket price includes a complete breakfast of

pancakes, sausage, milk, juice and coffee, as well as unlimited playtime in the museum, a framed photo with Santa Claus and a creative holiday activity to take home. Potential pancake consumers are advised to reserve their places soon, as tickets are going like hotcakes. Reservations can be made online at www.magichouse.org or by phone, 314-822-8900, and are non-refundable.



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