

# FactsOnEnergy

September 2009

Helpful information from the Ameren Illinois Utilities

## TREE TRIMMING GETS TO ROOT OF OUTAGES

During severe weather, trees are one of the most frequent causes of power outages. High winds, thunderstorms or ice storms can cause limbs—and even entire trees—to fall on power lines, tearing down energized lines and equipment. Broken limbs can sometimes cause outages just by making contact with electric lines and equipment.

To help keep tree-related outages to a minimum, we maintain a four-year cycle of tree trimming to manage tree and brush growth around power lines. Proper tree trimming can help us avoid removing the tree altogether—and our certified arborists always use pruning methods designed to protect your trees. While trimming can sometimes result in an unnatural appearance for the tree, it is imperative to delivering safe and reliable energy.

By reducing the number of tree limbs that can fall into energized equipment, tree trimming helps us get to the “root” cause of many outages.

**You can help us keep the power flowing by planting the right tree in the right place—away from power lines or electrical equipment. For more information on proper planting, go to [www.mysafetrees.com](http://www.mysafetrees.com).**



## KEEP TRANSFORMERS CLEAR

Many neighborhoods are home to pad-mounted transformers. These **gray- or green-colored metal boxes contain electrical equipment** that helps us deliver the proper voltage of electricity to your home or business.

Customers often attempt to camouflage these transformers by planting shrubs or flowers around them, or blocking them from view with fences. Unfortunately, these attempts at beautification can present safety and reliability issues—and violate the law. *Story continued on reverse.*



To minimize service interruptions, utility employees often work on the transformer while it is energized, using an eight- to 10-foot “hot stick.” The location of the fence in this photo does not give our worker adequate room to properly and safely use the hot stick. The National Electrical Safety Code requires 10 feet of clearance in front of the transformer (padlocked side).

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[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

**Are You Ready? September is National Preparedness Month**

- AmerenCIPS:** 1.888.789.2477
- AmerenCILCO:** 1.888.672.5252
- AmerenIP:** 1.800.755.5000
- TTY Illinois Relay:** 711
- Underground Locating (JULIE):** 1.800.892.0123 (or 811)



The Ameren Illinois Utilities—AmerenCIPS, AmerenCILCO and AmerenIP—are subsidiaries of Ameren Corporation.

## KEEP TRANSFORMERS CLEAR (CONT'D)

The National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) requires that **fences or other obstructions, such as landscaping, be at least 10 feet away from the padlocked front of the transformer and at least three feet from the sides and back edge of the transformer pad.** The NESC has been adopted as law in most states, including Illinois.

Keeping the area around the transformer clear allows us to safely complete repairs, upgrades and general maintenance—and **helps us restore service more quickly following a power outage.** To ensure unrestricted access to our equipment, we may need to remove landscaping or other obstructions around an underground transformer. Whenever possible, we give prior notice before doing so. However, in emergency situations, we may need to take immediate action to maintain safety and restore electrical service to the area.

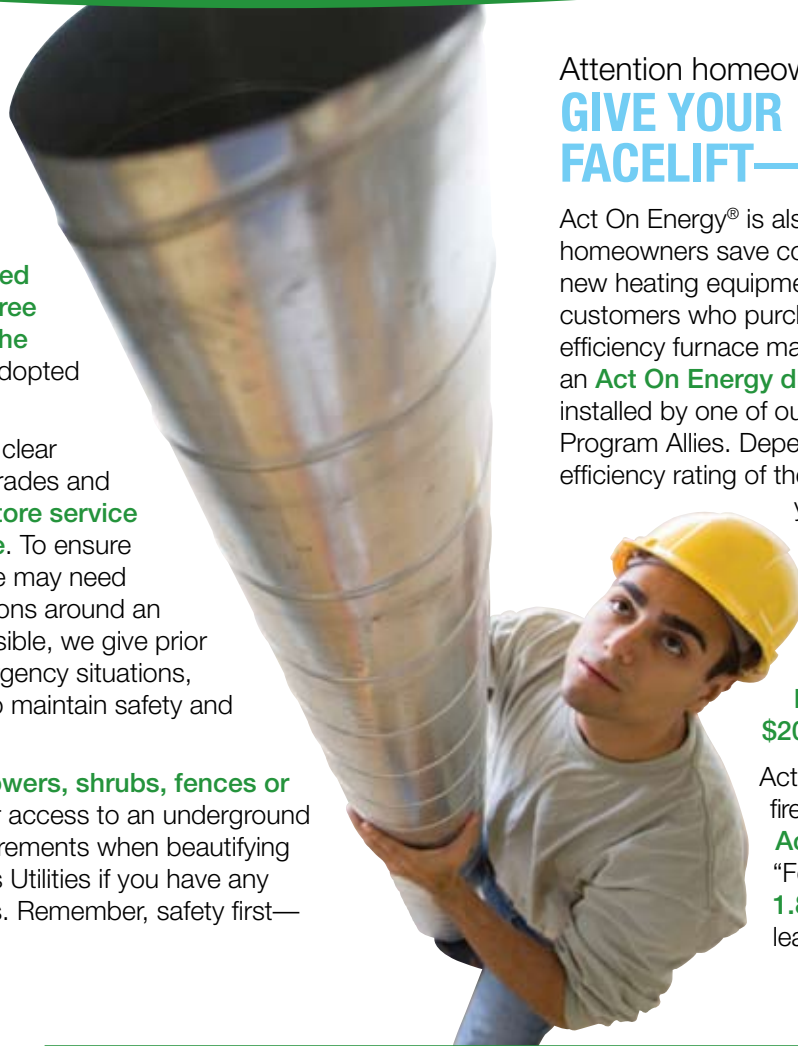
We appreciate your help in **relocating flowers, shrubs, fences or other obstructions** that could hinder our access to an underground transformer. Please consider NESC requirements when beautifying your yard, and contact the Ameren Illinois Utilities if you have any questions regarding adequate clearances. Remember, safety first—call JULIE 811 before you dig.



## Attention homeowners: GIVE YOUR FURNACE A FACELIFT—FOR LESS

Act On Energy® is also helping homeowners save cold cash on new heating equipment. Residential customers who purchase a new, high-efficiency furnace may be eligible for an **Act On Energy discount** when it's installed by one of our qualified HVAC Program Allies. Depending on the efficiency rating of the new equipment, your discount could be as high as \$200. Plus, your efficient new unit could **reduce your energy bills by as much as \$200 a year.**

Act now—before you fire up that furnace! Visit **ActOnEnergy.com**, “For My Home,” or call **1.866.838.6918** to learn more.



## HVAC DISCOUNT NOW AVAILABLE Smart Businesses Save with Act On Energy®

Hot savings on heating equipment are now available to small business gas customers of the Ameren Illinois Utilities. Our Act On Energy Small Business HVAC Program offers financial incentives to replace or tune up a furnace or boiler for AmerenCILCO, AmerenCIPS or AmerenIP gas customers on Rate GDS-2.

When the pilot program debuted earlier this year in the Peoria area, 78 small business and non-profit customers received financial incentives to improve the energy efficiency of their heating equipment. As a result, these organizations will collectively **save an estimated \$15,500<sup>1</sup> in energy bills every year** and reduce their natural gas consumption by more than 12,400

therms. That's enough to heat nearly 12 homes for a year!

A furnace tuneup will prolong the lifespan of existing equipment and ensure it operates at maximum efficiency. On average, the incentive **covers about 40 percent of the cost of a furnace tuneup.** Incentives vary for purchasing a new furnace, depending on the efficiency rating of the new equipment.

Work with a registered Program Ally of the Act On Energy efficiency programs to take advantage of these special offers before the winter chill arrives. For details, call **1.866.800.0747** or click on “For My Business” at:

**ActOnEnergy.com**