



NOT A GOOD SIGN

We've all seen them... signs, flyers, posters and bulletins tacked, stapled, or nailed to utility poles. Yes, utility poles seem like the perfect place to tack up notices about garage sales, baby luaus, lost pets and upcoming events. But they're not.



For one, using utility poles as bulletin boards is against the law. In 1998, the State Legislature passed additional laws, which not only clarified that it's illegal, but also added additional penalties for those putting up the signs, handbills or posters or those sponsoring the advertised event or operating the advertised business.

The fine for posting the illegal signs can go as high as \$500 and/or 30 days in jail. To strengthen the law against this type of "littering," once you receive written notice of your violation, you may be subject to additional fines of up to \$200 per posted item, plus community service time if you don't remove the signs within 72 hours after the date of the advertised event, or upon written notice of the violation, whichever comes first.

The signs do more than just litter the environment. The safety of our employees is at stake. Staples, nails, and tacks used to affix the signs to utility poles can puncture insulated safety gloves, and expose linemen to electrocution when working on energized lines. They can also make it harder to use their climbing spikes.

The next time you need to 'get the word out,' resist the temptation to use utility poles; instead, take advantage of the nearest community or shopping center bulletin boards.

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Don't do 'Like Mike'

The recent movie "Like Mike" featured a scene that raised concerns at electric utilities across the nation. In the movie, a boy named Calvin climbs up on a roof to get a pair of sneaker-type shoes marked with the initials "M.J." The shoes are hanging from a power line and as the boy's hand reaches for the sneakers, lightning strikes a nearby pole, sending a current down the line and "supercharging" the boy, turning him into a basketball star like Michael Jordan.



The reality is that this scenario is extremely dangerous and should not be duplicated.

Through our MECO in Your Community outreach programs, safety demonstrations and other efforts, MECO works hard to reinforce the message that electric lines, substations and other utility equipment should only be handled by professionals who have the appropriate training and safety equipment.

Don't take chances. Call us at **871-7777** to report shoes, or any other items, caught in power lines.



There's still time... to be COOL and save

You still have time to check out MECO's offer to save up to \$60 on the purchase of an air conditioner with an energy efficiency ratio of 9.4 or better. A combination of MECO rebate coupons valued at \$40 and a \$20 coupon from participating vendors, **Hamai Appliance, Sears and A/C Warehouse** can help you purchase an **Energy Star** qualified window, portable or through the wall air conditioner.

Copies of MECO's coupons can be found on the website www.heco.com, (click on **Special Offers for MECO**) or call **871-8461**. The coupons are also available at many retail stores and are good for each air conditioner you buy through **September 30, 2002**.



Old vs. new

Thinking of remodeling your kitchen or replacing an old appliance? Consider the energy savings you can enjoy by updating your home appliances to more energy-efficient models:

Refrigerator: A new refrigerator with an **Energy Star** label can save between \$35 and \$70 over a year compared to models designed 10 years ago. This can add up to between \$525 and \$1,050 over the average 15-to-20-year life of the unit.

Dishwasher: Older dishwashers use 8 to 14 gallons of water compared to 7 to 10 gallons of water consumed by new models.

Oven: Conventional ovens must heat up about 35 pounds of steel and a large amount of air before they heat the food. Tests indicate that only 6 percent of the energy output of a typical oven is absorbed by the food. New ovens have additional insulation and tighter-fitting oven door gaskets and hinges to save energy.



POWER TIPS

Energy saving vacation tips

Planning an end-of-the-summer vacation? Here are some energy saving tips to help save money and gain peace of mind while you're away:

- If you're going to be away from home longer than a weekend, turn off the circuit breaker to your water heater. No need to heat water for an empty home. Remember: In most homes, the water heater is the biggest energy user in the house.
- If you plan to be away less than a month, it isn't necessary to change the temperature control setting on your refrigerator. Do use up perishable foods that won't last until you return.
- If your travels will keep you away for an extended period (longer than a month), consider turning your refrigerator off before you go. Remove all food, turn off the circuit breaker, clean the interior of the refrigerator and prop the doors open to prevent odors from forming.
- Play it safe: Unplug your TV, VCR/DVD machines, microwave oven, personal computer and other sensitive electrical equipment just in case there's a storm or power outage while you're away.
- Concerned about paying your electric bill on time? Consider MECO's automated bill payment service. Your payment will automatically be deducted from your checking, savings or credit union account. Or you can make an advance payment based on what you normally pay each month.

For more information on these bill payment options, call MECO's Customer Service Center at **871-9777**.



TEQUILA-LIME GRILLED CHICKEN



RECIPE OF THE MONTH

- 2 cups salad oil
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme leaves
- 2 tablespoons dried oregano leaves
- 2 tablespoons dried basil leaves
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 2 teaspoons seasoned salt
- 1 tablespoon tequila
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 2 whole broiler chickens, split into halves

Put oil into a blender; cover and blend on high speed. Slowly add lime juice and continue blending. Add remaining ingredients and blend well. Pour mixture over chicken halves and marinate in refrigerator for several hours or overnight. Grill or broil chicken halves. Makes 4 servings.

