



Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company

NEWS RELEASE

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MMWEC electrical safety program impresses Boys and Girls Club campers

Ludlow, Mass. – August 2, 2007 – The toaster is charred and deformed, the result of using a knife to remove a piece of toast.

The tip of the shovel melted away when it struck an underground power line.

And the black holes in the aluminum baseball bat are from a lightning strike.

These are some of the convincing props used by Ray Gouley, an electricity and natural gas safety expert hired by the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC) to conduct safety programs at the Ludlow Boys and Girls Club this summer.

The people who last used the toaster, shovel and bat are no longer with us, Gouley said, making a stark impression on the middle schoolers attending the last of six safety sessions last week.

The program also included fun, games, educational booklets, videos and ice cream/brownie sundaes for the approximate 200 children who spend their summer days at the club, but the message about being safe around electricity and natural gas came through loud and clear.

“This program is just fabulous,” said Judy Fleury, the club’s assistant director and lead teacher. “The kids have learned a lot and I think it’s helped them overcome some of their fears about lightning and electricity,” she said.

MMWEC has been presenting its electrical safety program in Ludlow public schools and at the Ludlow Senior Center for seven years. This year, the pre-school to middle school-aged children at the Boys and Girls Club received age-appropriate safety presentations over the course of three days.

The third day involved a trip outside to use scratch-and-sniff cards that release a rotten egg odor, like the smell of natural gas, and include a list of dos and don’ts to ensure safety in the case of a natural gas leak.

Fleury said the safety lessons learned are reinforced in booklets for each age group that can be taken home and shared with parents, presenting an opportunity to extend the learning experience.

“I’m very impressed with how the program is put together,” she said. “The kids really enjoyed it and they take away good information that helps to keep them safe.”

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Gouley discusses the potential dangers that lurk in the use of household electrical equipment, like toasters, radios, outlets and cords. He also discusses how to stay safe around potential outdoor hazards, such as power lines, lightning and natural gas leaks.

The presentations are updated regularly to reflect new electric and natural gas technologies and to provide a better understanding of how energy is produced and delivered to homes. One of the latest updates is a greater emphasis in program booklets on renewable energy resources and energy conservation practices.

“From computers and cell phones to household appliances and motorized toys, kids are using energy more and more every day,” Gouley said. “It’s important for them to understand where it comes from and how to use energy wisely and safely,” he said.

As part of the program, Gouley conducted an energy quiz game based on a video about electrical safety. The team with the quickest answers to questions about what to do in dangerous situations earned first dibs on the ice cream sundaes.

MMWEC’s Director of Member and Public Relations Sandy Magyar said the program is a logical part of MMWEC’s community relations activities.

“This is one of the best ways for MMWEC to stay involved with the community and contribute to the well-being of the town at the same time,” Magyar said.