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NEWS RELEASE

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Schaeffer Electric Offers Holiday Lighting Safety Tips as it Brightens IBEW Local One Hall with 735 Twinkling Lights

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission: 10,000+ Annual Injuries From Putting Up Holiday Lights, Decorations and Christmas Trees

ST. LOUIS – The landmark “Hill” neighborhood in south St. Louis is now brightened with a festive glow– and a safety message – just in time for the holidays. As it installed more than 700 holiday lights at the **International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local One** headquarters, South St. Louis County-based **Schaeffer Electric Co.** offered holiday lighting safety tips. The installation required 24 man hours and included 675 feet of lighting and 735 colored bulbs.

“This is the tenth consecutive year that our company has done the lighting at the hall,” said **Charlie Schaeffer**, field superintendent for Schaeffer. “And while this is a fun assignment, we are serious about doing it safely.”

According to the **U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission**, hospital emergency rooms treat more than 10,000 people annually for falls, cuts and shocks related to installing holiday lights, decorations and Christmas trees. (<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml08/08104.html>.) Meanwhile, the **National Fire Protection Association** reports that holiday lighting and electrical decorations are involved in an average of 240 home fires per year – causing an average four deaths, 14 injuries and \$7.5 million in property damage. (http://www.nfpa.org/assets/files/pdf/christmastrees_sum.pdf.)

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As homeowners go out to hang their lights, Schaeffer offers these safety tips:

- Indoors or out, use only lights that have been safety-tested by a recognized testing laboratory, such as **Underwriters Laboratories (UL)**.
- Only use lights that have fused plugs.
- Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Throw out damaged sets. Replace burned-out bulbs promptly with the same wattage bulbs.
- Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord.
- Make sure the extension cord is rated for the intended use. Look for # 12 or #14 gauge wire (listed on the cord packaging). The higher the gauge, the smaller the diameter of the wire. Gauge #16 or #18 extension cords should not be used for holiday lighting.
- Only use lights that are approved for outdoor use. Fasten lights securely to trees, house walls, or other firm supports to prevent wind damage. Use only insulated staples to hold strings in place, not nails or tacks.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
- Turn off all holiday lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.

Founded in 1935, Schaeffer Electric provides electrical, lighting, data and communication services in the commercial, industrial and residential markets, in addition to landscape lighting and lighting maintenance programs. For more information, visit www.schaefferelectric.com.

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