

PowerLines

December 2022

Merry Christmas

2022 is almost over with just the month of December and the Christmas and related holiday period remaining. I am certainly glad the recent election cycle has come to an end. The rancor and vitriol of many of the print, television, and radio ads would be considered libel and slander if not associated with political campaigns. What has happened to civility in our society in general? We should be able to disagree with other's viewpoints, while respecting them as a person and rationally discussing our differences. Let's hope our candidates do better in future elections.

During this holiday season please take the time (our most precious gift) to share your talents with others that may be less fortunate or that are going through difficult times. Many times just a smile, taking time to listen, or a small act of kindness will let others know they are valued and someone cares about them.

During our annual meeting process in June 2023, three of our nine member districts will be up for election. Please see the service territory map to the right. Tom Schlatter, District 2, has decided not to seek reelection. Kevin Moore, District 5, and Lauri Quick, District 9, will seek reelection. More information will be provided on our social media sites and in future publications. If you are interested in learning more about the election process, please give us a call. Members can obtain petitions to begin the qualification process during late February.

Last month I mentioned slight increases in budgeted wholesale electric price increases from our supplier PPI. At the November board meeting, your directors considered utilizing net operating margins

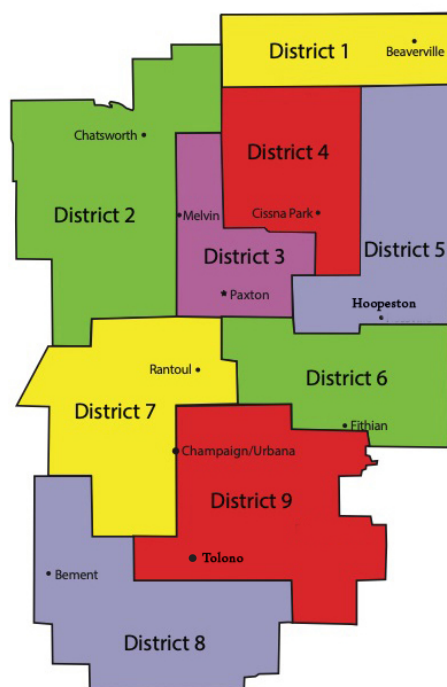
above budget for 2022 to apply to the 2023 power cost adjustment (PCA) to help rate stability. More information will be provided next month.

From our Board of Directors and all of us at EIEC, thank you for your support. Please know that all that we do is predicated on providing the best possible service to our members.

It is our sincere hope that you will all have a safe, blessed, and joyful holiday season, a Merry Christmas, and a great start to a Happy 2023!

Sincerely,

Bob Hunzinger



In this issue:

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- Stay safe while hunting
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- Apply today for college scholarships

How do you want to save today?

Co-op Connections® Card



Local Deals
Pharmacy Discounts
Cash Back Online
Hotel Savings

Visit www.connections.coop to register and start saving today.

2023 Annual Meeting dates:

Mark your calendars and plan to attend one of three 2023 Eastern Illini annual meetings:

- June 1st: Tuscola Community Building
- June 6th: Ford County Fairgrounds
- June 8th: Iroquois County Fairgrounds

Your Touchstone Energy®
Cooperative

HAVE AN EMERGENCY KIT ON HAND

Be prepared for winter storms

Power outages can be difficult to weather any time of year, but frigid temperatures without electricity can be challenging. When there's a winter storm in the forecast, there's no time to lose. Start preparing for inclement weather today, and you'll be in fine shape should winter snowfall take a turn for the worst.

Stock Up on Batteries

Make sure you have a good supply of batteries in a range of sizes and ensure that they're fully charged. Have spares ready for flashlights and radios as well as for smoke detectors, clocks, and other necessities that can run on battery backup.

Check Your Flashlights

How many times have you clicked on several flashlights in your junk drawer before finding one that actually works? In preparation for a power outage, carefully test each of your flashlights and determine which ones work and which ones don't, even with fresh batteries. Pitch the flashlights that don't work, and make sure the working ones have new batteries in them. Purchase additional flashlights if necessary—you'll want to ensure there's a "good" light for each member of the family, at the very least. Don't plan on using candles; flashlights are safer.

Fill Up at the Gas Station

Before a big storm hits, always fill up your vehicles' fuel tanks. Gas station pumps run on electricity and if the power goes out, gasoline will not be available. If you have a gas-powered generator, you'll want to have plenty of fuel on hand to keep that generator humming, as well.

Stock up on water

If you are on well water, the well pump won't work without electricity. Stock up on drinking water, and fill up the bathtub and washing machine so you'll have water for flushing toilets and washing.

Americans use 50 -100 gallons of water per person per day, but that may be tough to accomplish in an emergency. You will want to have on hand about a gallon of potable water per person per day.

Buy a Car Charger for your Cell Phone

You probably already have stocked your car with things you'll need for a winter storm. It is especially important to have a car phone charger, so you can make calls and stay connected with news and information. With a car charger, you'll be able to keep your phone working even if the power is out for an extended period of time.

Avoid Frozen Pipes

Your pipes may freeze if the power outage is for an extended period. You may want to leave a small amount of cold water running from each faucet as a precautionary measure.

Winterize Your Home

If you've been meaning to caulk your windows, do it before cold weather strikes. Chances are the existing weatherstripping has seen better days.

Invest in a Generator

You might consider buying a generator, which can be switched on manually or can automatically kick in when the power goes out. You'll probably want one that's powered by gas, natural gas, propane, or diesel. Be prepared when the next winter storm hits.

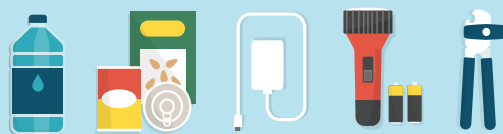
A Storm is Always Ready

ARE YOU?



When Mother Nature threatens a severe storm, be ready by having an emergency kit on hand.

YOUR KIT SHOULD INCLUDE:



Bottles of water

Nonperishable food

Portable phone charger

Flashlights

Batteries

Can opener



First-aid supplies

Hand sanitizer

Prescriptions

Pain reliever

Warm clothing

Blankets



Battery-operated radio

Toys, books and games

Important documents

Money

Baby supplies

Pet supplies

Once your kit is assembled, check it a few times a year to make sure batteries are fresh and that no one has borrowed a necessary item.

FOLLOW THE PILLARS OF HUNTER SAFETY

Stay safe while hunting



According to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in their publication titled, Today's Hunter in Illinois, there are four main pillars of Hunter Safety.

- **Responsibility** - A responsible hunter must know the laws and regulations about their firearm, and must also have respect for the type of game that is being hunted.
- **Safety Skills** - Safety Skills is about safety in the field. It is also safety for yourself, and others that you might be hunting with.
- **Knowledge** - It all starts with practicing with the firearm. It's important to know how to properly handle and shoot your firearm.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that 101.6 million Americans participate in wildlife-related activities each year, such as hunting, fishing and wildlife-watching. It is estimated that there are 11.5 million hunters in the United States.

Hunting is ranked as one of the safer activities when compared with other sports, including baseball, football, basketball, and jogging. Over the past 20 years, the number of unintentional firearm fatalities has declined. From 1997 to 2017, the number dropped by 50%, according to the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF.org).

Hunters should put safety first, as incidents and accidents do happen. Cardiac disease, lacerations and tree stand accidents are the most common reasons for hunters to visit the E.R. The homemade deer stands are the most dangerous. It is recommended to buy a manufactured tree stand rather than building one. A hunter from Jo Daviess county fell from his tree stand in October of this year and died. All hunters regardless of age or years of experience, need to focus on safe hunting practices.

• **Involvement** - Involvement is being able to promote hunting in a respectable manner by getting involved in organizations that support wildlife conservation. Be safe out there and follow these guidelines at all times when hunting:

1. Watch for the warning signs of a heart attack or other life-threatening conditions. Hunters can walk far distances when shooting and dragging an animal. Completing these activities can increase the heart rate and induce heart attacks.
2. Wear a full-body harness when in a tree stand to prevent falls that can cause serious injury.
3. Check tree stands regularly; they can deteriorate over time.
4. Do not lean tree stands against utility poles of any kind. Keep them far from overhead power lines.
5. Watch for power lines in wooded areas. Make sure they will not be in your line of sight when shooting.
6. Write and share a hunting plan. Where will the hunt take place and for how long?

7. Have a way to get in touch with the outside world. Keep your cell phone in a pocket rather than in a pack.

If you get in trouble, dial 911. Even if you are way out in the woods, even if you can't talk, rescuers will be able to find you. They can pinpoint where you are with your cellphone. It's also a good idea to have a battery charger.

8. Always carry a first-aid kit.

9. Respect firearms: Have the safety on, handle the gun like it is always loaded, always point it away from others and know what and where the target is.

10. Do not fire at power lines, insulators or conductor cans. They can drop to the ground and become energized and cause a fire.

Among other safety considerations, hunters are reminded to ensure heating sources are ventilated properly when in hunting cabins and boats; wearing appropriate, high visibility clothing while hunting; and, being familiar with the area being hunted. Illinois' busiest hunting season begins in mid-November and continues through the first week in December.

In 2021, fourteen hunters died during hunting season in Illinois. Between 2015 and 2019, 90% of the hunting accidents were from falls. 147,004 deer were harvested by hunters during the 2021-22 season. 69,990 deer during the firearm season and 67,637 deer during the archery season. Muzzle loader season brought in 3,043. An additional 6,334 deer were harvested through other seasons.

More details about the 2021 - 22 deer season can be found at: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/hunting/deer/Documents/2021-2022IllinoisDeerHarvestReport.pdf>

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas!



visitors and numerous parties and the reaction to the decorations is always the same: wonder and awe. Most people are enthralled by all the decorations and the wide variety of trees in all shapes and sizes, which each have a different theme.

Ronna has worked for Eastern Illini for 25 years. He is an Electric Systems Specialist and very involved in all things safety at the co-op. His affiliation with electric cooperatives got him started on Willie Wirehand ornaments. Willie Wirehand is a cartoon mascot for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Created in 1950, Willie's head is a lightbulb socket, his body is a wire, and his hips and legs are a two-pronged plug. Willie Wirehand ornaments became available for purchase in 2000. Brian has purchased two ornaments every year since then and has a tree that is totally decorated with Willie Wirehand ornaments. He currently has over 40 Willie Wirehand ornaments.

"Holiday decorating is in my blood," says Ronna. "Both my parents, Delmar and Mary Jean Ronna, enjoyed decorating for Christmas and as a child, the holiday season was my first chance to express my creativity in design. Getting to recreate all those wonderful memories is a favorite part of the season and one of the reasons I have taken tree decorating to a whole new level."

Ronna is an avid University of Illinois sports fan, so he of course has an orange and blue Illini tree that features one of his favorite ornaments, Chief Illiniwek.

Though Ronna enjoys all of his trees, his favorite tree is in his living room and it is his Old World tree that is adorned with over 100 Christopher Radko ornaments. Christopher Radko went into the business of designing European mouth-blown glass ornaments when his precious family glass ornaments were shattered when the family tree fell. Today, Radko ornaments are crafted in Poland, Italy, and Germany using Renaissance era carving, molding, blowing, hand painting, and finishing processes.

Ronna's tree display stays up through Epiphany, January 6th, the twelfth day after Christmas. He does keep one tree up to decorate for other holidays including Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and Easter.

The tradition of bringing evergreens indoors and decorating them during the winter months dates back centuries to when they were used to celebrate winter festivals and the winter solstice. Christmas trees were meant to represent life during dark, cold winter nights, while the Romans used fir trees to decorate temples for their evergreen qualities. In short, Christmas trees have been used to represent the resilience of life when the months are at their darkest and the weather at its grimmest. Over the years this has morphed into an elaborate tradition of ornaments, candy canes, candles, lights, and garland that create a spectacular focal point that warms our hearts and brings back fond memories of people and good times.

Some may wonder if seven trees are enough for Brian or if he is thinking about adding to his winter wonderland? Well, there's talk that

a Cubs tree may be added in the future. Its exact location in the house is still under discussion. You can be assured it will be beautifully decorated and enjoyed by those who celebrate the holiday season with Brian Ronna.



There is a certain joy that comes along with putting up Christmas decorations. It signifies happy times, togetherness, family, friends, and celebration. 70% of all American households display a Christmas tree during the holidays.

Indoor Christmas decorating for most people likely involves one tree, one room and one weekend. Some people drop decorations into additional rooms. Others, well — they just do more. That group includes Brian Ronna, Eastern Illini employee and holiday decorator extraordinaire. This year his holiday decorations involve seven Christmas trees, five rooms plus the breezeway and four weeks of working nonstop.

In his eyes, "you can never have too much," said Ronna, about Christmas decorations. "The more, the merrier." Ronna begins decorating right after Halloween. That means first removing everything from shelves, cabinets, and tabletops. While that may seem like a chore to some, Ronna said "it's not work if you enjoy it." After many trips to and from the Morton building where he stores his Christmas totes, Ronna can stop to appreciate the decorations. Over the holidays, Ronna has many

SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS APPLY FOR A TRIP OF A LIFETIME

2023 Youth to Washington Trip: June 16 - 23

Now is the time for sophomores and juniors in high school to apply for the Youth to Washington Trip June 16 - 23.

Eastern Illini proudly sponsors the Youth Tour and sends representatives for an all-expense paid trip to tour Capitol Hill, meet with members of Congress and gather with over 1,000 of their peers from other cooperatives across the United States.

During their time in D.C., students will see the major monuments and memorials, ride a river boat down the Potomac, visit Arlington National Cemetery, and tour many museums including the Holocaust Museum.

Six applicants will be selected as finalists and will be invited to attend Youth Day in Springfield which will be held March 29th. Following Youth Day, four of the finalist will be chosen to represent Eastern Illini on the Youth to Washington trip. We also ask that the finalist join us for one of our annual meetings as our guest. They are being held June 1, 6, and 8, 2023.

“Youth Tour is a great opportunity that changes these students’ lives,” says Bob Hunzinger, EIEC President/CEO. “This experience helps prepare them for their futures. After touring our nation’s capitol, meeting congressional representatives, and learning firsthand how our government works, they return home with valuable knowledge and memories to last a lifetime.”

Since 1964, the nation’s cooperative electric utilities have sponsored more than 60,000 high school students to visit Washington D.C., talk one-on-one with their congressional delegations and learn from energy and grassroots government education sessions. Participants form a co-op on the trip and elect a board of directors to represent their newly formed co-op. The participants find out more about the cooperative business model and learn about The Cooperative Principals.

Even the chartered bus ride to and from D.C. gives the participants a chance to make new friends. The participants start their trek to D. C. in Springfield, and



2022 Youth to Washington representatives from Eastern Illini

Sophia Stierwalt, Riley Klump, Lilly Lahr

their first stop is Gettysburg National Military Park where participants experience all the incredible history of the battlefield. Participants also have the opportunity to visit Mount Vernon, the estate of George and Martha Washington, on the banks of the Potomac River in Fairfax County, VA.

While in D.C., the participants assemble with youth from across the country who are also participating in Youth Tour. While exploring museums, memorials, and monuments, participants make new friendships that will last a lifetime.

Applications are due by February 13, 2023. Contact Melinda Garrelts at Eastern Illini for more information: melinda.garrelts@eiec.coop.

Youth to Washington Program Official Rules:

- Applicants must be sons or daughters of an Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative member currently receiving electric service from the cooperative.
 - Applicants must be a high school sophomore or junior.
 - Up to six applicants will be selected as finalists and will attend Youth Day to Springfield.
 - Following Youth Day, four of the finalists will be chosen to represent Eastern Illini on the Youth to Washington trip.
 - The application deadline is February 13.
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APPLY TODAY!

<https://www.eiec.org/youth-washington-program>

APPLY TODAY FOR COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

for deserving high school seniors in the electric cooperative family



\$2,000 scholarships

Apply Today!

Applications are due by **December 30, 2022**

9

scholarships are awarded to high school students who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member.

4

scholarships are reserved for high school students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors.

1

scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, is awarded to a high school student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative employee or director.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
<https://aiec.coop/iec-scholarship/>

