

PowerLines

April 2018

The importance of safety

NRECA Annual Meeting

There were many highlights from the 2018 annual electric cooperative meeting held in Nashville this year. I would like to briefly discuss one very important topic covered there that impacts all of us.

Safety

EIEC has an annual safety goal that includes ZERO lost time incidents for our employees.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and Federated Insurance (a cooperative insurance provider) have coordinated efforts nationally to eliminate electrical contact injuries by raising awareness and setting a goal of ZERO injuries resulting from contact with energized electric lines. This type of contact incident typically results in a lifetime debilitating injury or death. During one of the general sessions, a video was shown that recounted the events that resulted in the death of a cooperative line worker from Alabama, and the resulting impact on his family and coworkers. The room of thousands of people remained silent and contemplative during the video.

EIEC safety efforts not only include employees, but also keeping the public aware and safe around our facilities. Our territory is predominantly rural farm ground. Each year our facilities are involved in numerous incidents involving vehicles or farm equipment, with many of the events having the possibility of contact with energized lines. Unless your vehicle or equipment has caught fire, or is in imminent threat of doing so, the best course of action is to stay in the vehicle,

call for help, and patiently wait for trained personnel to arrive. Please reference the video on our website at: <https://www.eiec.org/electrical-safety/storm-safety/> It covers the proper course of action if you are involved in an accident involving electric utility lines.

With the start of the spring farming season, please be careful – not only around energized lines – but also in the safe and proper operation and maintenance of farm equipment of all types.

We will be recognizing our dedicated employees who work to provide reliable service to you in two separate events this April. April 9th is National Lineman Appreciation Day, and April 25th is Administrative Professionals Day.

EIEC employs over 50 people to serve you via more than 13,000 meters that encompass over 4,500 miles of energized line in a service territory of approximately 100 miles in length by 60 miles in width. If you have a chance, pass on a word of thanks when you see our employees in their daily work.

By the time you read this column, that great harbinger of spring – baseball – will have started another season. Based on our observations of the Cardinals in spring training in early March, it does not appear that the Cubs have anything to be concerned about this year.

Thank you for allowing us to serve you.

Stay safe,

Bob Hunzinger



**MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT**

In this issue:

- The latest spin on washer and dryer energy efficiency
- Geothermal heat pump federal tax credit reinstated
- People to know: Sean Miller
- Spring into safety on the farm
- EIEC Annual Meeting: June 7



SmartHub is your online and app portal to:

**View and pay your bill
Report an outage
Track your electric use
Update your account info**

Visit www.eiec.coop to get started!

SAVE THE DATE!

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative will hold its Annual Meeting of members on Thursday, June 7 in Paxton. More details will be available in the May issue of the PowerLines newsletter.

Your Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative

The latest spin on washer and dryer energy efficiency

The average American family washes about 400 loads of laundry each year - that's 7.7 loads of laundry per week. Depending on power and water charges, the average load costs about \$1.50 per load to both wash and dry.

As of January 1, 2018, newly-manufactured clothes washers will be more energy and water efficient. The newer models also tend to be bigger, cheaper and provide better cleaning performance.

The 2018 standards for residential clothes washers will reduce energy use by 18 percent and water use by 23 percent. The standards for front-loading washers haven't changed and remain at 43 percent energy use reduction and 52 percent water reduction.

In the 1990s, typical washers used 40 gallons of water. Today's washers use between 10 and 15 gallons per load. If you are in the market for a new washing machine, Energy Star certified machines use about 70 percent less energy and 75 percent less water than models from 20 years ago.

Most expenses in the laundry room come from heating water or air for washing and drying. With 90 percent of the cost going towards heating water, only 10 percent goes towards the electricity needed to run the motor. Here are several ways you can save money and reduce energy, while still ensuring your clothes come out smelling fresh and clean.

USE COLD WATER

You can save a bundle by using cold water to wash your clothes. This can also help reduce the risk of your clothes shrinking, or the colors fading. Washing in cold water costs about 5 cents per load, as compared to 70 cents per load in hot or warm water.

RUN FULL LOADS

It costs just as much money and uses just as much electricity to wash a small amount as it does a full load. Find a way to include other articles of clothing when you need to wash the sports shirt that needs cleaned prior to game time.

CHOOSE A FAST SPIN CYCLE

The spin cycle is used to wring out the clothes to get rid of excess water and prepare them for the dryer. The faster the spin, the more dry they will become. Choose the fastest spin cycle for your loads, as this can reduce the drying time needed. The less time needed to heat air, the more money you can save with each load.

Clothes dryers have a reputation for being energy hogs. Average dryers use between 2.79 and 9.25 kWh per cycle. There are several ways to improve efficiencies when using your dryer.

CLEAN THE LINT FILTER

Clean your lint filter before or after every load. The more lint builds up in the filter, the harder the dryer fan has to work to pump air through the filter. A clean filter improves air circulation and increases the efficiency of the dryer. It's also an important safety measure.

If you use dryer sheets, they leave a film on the filter that reduces air flow and, over time, can impact the performance of the motor. Use a toothbrush to scrub the lint filter at least one a month for maximum efficiency.

DON'T MIX FAST & SLOW DRYING ITEMS

Just like the wash cycle, it is important that you only run the dryer when it is full and don't mix fast and slow drying items. Thick towels and sheets take longer than T-shirts, so it's best to dry like things together.

MOISTURE SENSOR

If your dryer has a moisture sensor, use it instead of the timed dry feature. The dryer will shut off when it senses laundry is dry. Not only will this save energy, but it will also save wear and tear on your clothes caused by over-drying.

DRYER LOCATION

If at all possible, move your dryer to an outside wall, so exhaust air will have less distance to travel. Also, consider moving your dryer to a warm location. Cold air falls, so a dryer in your basement isn't as efficient as a dryer in a warmer space.

Installing a dryer vent seal to prevent cold air from leaking down into the dryer is another good idea. If your dryer feels really cold when you open it in the winter to put in a load, you definitely can benefit from a dryer vent seal.



Geothermal heat pump federal tax credits reinstated

Federal tax credits for geothermal heat pumps were recently reinstated by the federal government.

Residential consumers are eligible for a 30 percent federal tax credit for installing a geothermal heat pump system in their home. The reinstated tax credits are retroactive to January 1, 2017, meaning that anyone who installed a geothermal system in their home in the past 14 months now qualifies for the tax credit. The tax credits are extended through January 1, 2022, when a phase out plan reduces the credit to 22 percent before ending.

The geothermal tax credit was part of a measure to extend the tax incentives to renewable energy technologies like geothermal heat pumps, combined heat and power systems, small wind systems, and fuel cells, that were taken out of the legislation passed by Congress two years ago, extending the tax credits for the solar industry.

In addition to the residential tax credits, there is also a 10 percent investment tax credit for commercial geothermal systems that was also extended.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association joined with a coalition of many national and state organizations to support reinstatement of the tax credits. The cooperatives are appreciative of the efforts of Representative John Shimkus and several other Illinois Congressmen who sponsored legislation leading to the tax credit reinstatement.

The tax credit extension was part of the Continuing Resolution action by the Congress in early February to fund the federal government.



“We are appreciative of our leaders’ support for geothermal heat pump technology and providing parity with the other renewable energy technologies,” said John Freitag, executive director of the Geothermal Alliance of Illinois. “Geothermal heating and cooling is by far the most efficient and effective way known today to heat and cool our homes and businesses. The tax credit extension helps to make installation of a geothermal heat pump the obvious best choice for heating and cooling.”

Geothermal works like your refrigerator. Your fridge removes heat from its interior and transfers it to your kitchen. A geothermal heat pump uses the same principle, but it transfers heat from the ground to your house, or vice versa.

It does this through long loops of underground pipes filled with a liquid of water or an antifreeze solutions. The loops are hooked up to a geothermal heat pump in your home, which acts as both a furnace and air conditioner.

A geothermal heat pump will immediately

save you 30 to 60 percent in your heating and 20 to 50 percent on your cooling costs compared to conventional systems. With a geothermal heat pump, there’s no on-site combustion and no emissions of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide or other greenhouse gases. Geothermal heat pumps can be installed in new construction and retrofit situations. Retrofits do require ductwork modifications.

A geothermal system may cost as much 40 percent more than a traditional HVAC system. Some of these costs can be recouped through tax credits and energy savings.

Installation costs vary depending on site accessibility and the amount of digging and drilling required. Professional installation is needed for sizing and design. Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative works with many qualified geothermal system installers, so give us a call and we can provide you with additional information.

People to know: Sean Miller

Sean Miller: Geographical Genius.

People who know Sean Miller think he's a geographical genius. Maybe he does have supernatural powers when it comes to knowing the Eastern Illini map books. Some of his co-workers are convinced that he has spent a great deal of time memorizing them. His photographic mind and keen knowledge about the territory might have something to do with the fact that he grew up a half mile from the Pesotum warehouse and spent his teenage years burning rubber on the back roads of southern Champaign County.

Probably it has more to do with his 18 years of service to the co-op as a journeyman lineman and subforeman. During that time, he's traveled almost every road in his service area connecting service for new member/owners, upgrading existing service and implementing the on-going maintenance program of testing poles. Sean travels as far east as Sidell and Fairmount, as far south as Arcola and often heads west to the Bement area when member/owners need assistance.

"He knows how to get places and he and he knows everyone by name," says Graham Schmid, Pesotum line foreman. "Sean is the nicest guy around. He is the first to help someone out in call rotation. He makes sure no one is left out on their own and he always steps up and does more than his fair share."

Sean maintains the electrical system right up to the meters on member/owner's homes. When mother nature destroys what Sean has built, he works tirelessly to get the power system back in working order.

Power restoration takes precedence on a lineman's to-do list, and that's the case with Sean. He really enjoys his job and has come to realize that people

don't have a complete understanding of the importance of a lineman until their power goes out. Sean likes the fact that his job involves being out doors. He also enjoys that every-day brings new challenges and opportunities to make a difference. Getting to know member/owners and helping them are some of the most rewarding aspects of the position.

Though Sean is Midwest born and bred, he's seen the country as a lineman as he takes the sixth Cooperative Principle: Cooperation Among Cooperatives to heart. He has been on the front lines during hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Ivan, working alongside other cooperatives to get the power back on in the midst of extreme devastation. Sean spent long days in warm, muggy climates and rugged terrain getting the power back on as quickly as possible. He found the work challenging and very rewarding. He said the people they helped were extremely appreciative of their efforts.

The summer of 1993 was the start of it all. Sean was summer help for Eastern Illini for three summers, from '93 to '95. He then went on to farm with his father-in-law before starting full-time work for the co-op in January of 2000.

During his career, Sean has seen many enhancements to the electric system that have made it stronger. He remembers the days that even the threat of an impending thunderstorm made the lights blink. Nowadays, the deployment of automated technology and proactive maintenance, has minimized outages and maximized sustainable service.

When he's not climbing poles or restoring power, Sean still helps his father-in-law on the farm, especially during planting and harvest.



He's an avid sports fan and is loyal to several teams – Illini, Cubs, Bears, and the Blackhawks. He can often be found in the stands at Tuscola Community High School watching a Warrior volleyball game and cheering his youngest daughter's volleyball team on to victory.

Supporting the University of Alabama at Birmingham's Blazers, has become another past time for Sean as his oldest daughter is attending college there. Sean and his wife make their home in Tuscola and like to spend family vacation time in Aruba, a small Dutch Caribbean island off the coast of Venezuela.

Sean takes pride in his job, his community and in helping member/owners. As a lineman, he stands ready to respond no matter the situation or weather conditions. He'll be there as quickly as possible to restore power, but his days of burning rubber on the back roads near Pesotum have been passed on to the younger generation.

Spring into safety on the farm

As farmers make plans to return to their fields for spring planting, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative encourages everyone to be particularly alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines. Operating large equipment near these lines is one of the most often overlooked, yet potentially deadly, hazards of working on a farm.

There are steps farmers can take to help keep themselves and workers safe when working around electricity. Here are some safety tips to follow during the planting season:

- Keep all objects at least 10 feet away from overhead lines. Know where all overhead power lines are located on your property and inform all workers about them.

- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting larger modern tractors. Many tractors are now equipped with radios and communications systems that have very tall antennas extending from the cab that are more likely to make contact with power lines.

- Plan your route between fields and on public roads so that you avoid low-hanging power lines. Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.

- When moving large equipment or high loads near a power line, always use a spotter, or someone to help make certain that contact is not made with a power line.

- Be sure everyone else in your operation knows what to do in an emergency.

- Use qualified electricians when installing and repairing farm electrical systems. Consider installing waterproof and dust proof electrical boxes and outlets at the farm.

Overhead electric wires are not the only source of electrical contact that can result in a serious incident. Pole guy wires, used to stabilize utility poles, are grounded. However, when one of the guy wires is broken it can cause an electric current disruption. This can make those neutral wires anything but harmless.

If you hit a guy wire and break it, call EIEC to fix it. Do not do it yourself. When dealing with electrical poles and wires, always call us at 1-800-824-5102.

ALERT TODAY, ALIVE TOMORROW: HEADS UP FOR FARM SAFETY

Stay safe around downed power lines. Consider all lines, equipment and conductors to be live and dangerous.



If the vehicle is on fire, or you must exit for other safety reasons, follow these steps:

1. Jump clear of the vehicle. Do not let any part of your body or clothes touch the ground and the machinery at the same time.
2. Land with feet together and hop away in small steps to minimize the path of electric current and avoid electric shock.
3. Keep going until you are at least 40 ft. away.
4. Call for help. Make sure no one gets within 40 ft. of the downed line.
5. Do not re-enter the area or vehicle until emergency responders and your electric co-op crews determine it is safe.

EASTERN ILLINI ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

WE'RE ALWAYS ON FOR YOU

SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 7 2018 ANNUAL MEETING



- food, fun, entertainment
- \$25 bill credit
- business meeting
- activities for kids
- director voting
- seminars
- door prizes

3:00pm - 8:00pm
Thursday, June 7, 2018
Paxton-Buckley-Loda
Junior/Senior High School