

Eastern Illini *PowerLines*

May 2012



in this issue

annual meeting preview **P.1**

electric safety tips **P.2**

do it yourself energy audits **P.3**

outage restoration **P.4**

Attention Businesses

Any person representing a business or other organization (non-residential) must present a letter from the proper officials of that entity (preferably on company letterhead) designating that person as the official representative to act for the entity.

Please call Eastern Illini at 800-824-5102 if you have questions about this new identification procedure.

Eastern Illini Electric Co-op

330 W. Ottawa
Paxton, IL 60957
800-824-5102
www.eiec.coop

Annual Meeting scheduled for June 14

2012 meeting features a generous bill credit, a great meal, and plenty of activities for everyone.

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative will hold the 2012 Annual Meeting of Members on Thursday, June 14, from 3 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the PBL Junior/Senior High Commons. The business meeting will begin at 7 p.m.

Members registering at the meeting will receive a \$25 bill credit. A free meal will be served from 4-7 p.m., featuring roast beef and BBQ pork from Niemerg's Catering.

A concession stand with hot dogs and other snacks will also be available for people who would prefer a lighter meal.

For the kids, there will be an inflatable bounce house and an inflatable obstacle course, miniature golf, bucket truck demonstrations, and other games and activities. Oscar, the talking robot, will also be around to engage and entertain everyone.

Adults can relax in the air-conditioning while

attending one of several seminars. There is a wide range of seminar topics this year, including:

- Watts up? Lighting made simple
- Gaining comfort and savings with insulation
- The Co-op Connections Card: Your ticket to big savings
- Maximizing comfort while minimizing cost
- Renewable from the ground up - Geothermal
- Celebrating Flag Day
- Smart Hub: Utilizing Eastern Illini's new online bill payment system.

A video commemorating our 75th anniversary will also be shown during the event.

Next month's issue of the *PowerLines* bill insert will include more detailed information, schedules, directions, and a summary of the full annual report.

The official annual report/annual meeting program will be available online at www.eiec.coop prior to the annual meeting and at the meeting itself.

Reasons to attend the annual meeting:

\$25 bill credit
A free meal
Games for the kids
Engaging seminars
A talking robot

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Electrical Safety Calendar

Use this handy calendar to help keep your home safe. For more tips, visit esfi.org.

JANUARY

- ☐ Check and replace furnace filters

FEBRUARY

- ☐ Vacuum refrigerator coils

MARCH

- ☐ Replace smoke and carbon monoxide alarm batteries if not done in last 12 months

APRIL

- ☐ Check and replace furnace filters

MAY

- ☐ Clean air conditioners or schedule annual inspection
- ☐ Vacuum refrigerator coils

JUNE

- ☐ Dust light fixtures/lamps
- ☐ Schedule annual inspection of gas-powered dryer

JULY

- ☐ Check and replace air conditioning filters

AUGUST

- ☐ Vacuum refrigerator coils

SEPTEMBER

- ☐ Schedule annual furnace cleaning and inspection

OCTOBER

- ☐ Check and replace furnace filters

NOVEMBER

- ☐ Vacuum refrigerator coils

DECEMBER

- ☐ Dust light fixtures/lamps

ESFI recommends hiring a licensed, qualified home electrical inspector if:

Your home is more than 40 years old; your home had a major addition or renovation or major new appliance added in the last 10 years; and/or you are the new owner of a previously owned home.

Every month you should:

1. Inspect all electrical and appliance cords for damage

2. Test GFCIs & AFCIs

Whether you have a receptacle-type or circuit breaker-type ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI), pushing the TEST button should turn off power to the circuit. To restore power, press the RESET button. To test arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) push the TEST button. The breaker handle should go to the middle or off position. To reset, move the breaker handle to the OFF position and then to the ON position.



3. Test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms

Push the TEST button or use other procedures recommended by the manufacturer. Smoke alarm batteries should be changed at least once a year. If an alarm "chirps" or "beeps" to indicate low batteries, change them right away. Replace all smoke alarms at least every 10 years.



May is Electrical Safety Month

Honor electrical safety month by preparing your family to stay safe.

Every May, we celebrate Electrical Safety Month. It's a time when we place a spotlight on ways we keep you, our member/owners, safe.

This year, we're focusing on how to keep safe after a storm rolls through. No matter the type of weather or damage to electrical equipment and infrastructure, resulting safety hazards are generally the same.

To stay safe after a major storm or natural disaster strikes, we urge you to develop a family action plan. Designate a place for everyone to meet after an event. Map out ways to evacuate your home. Create a laminated card with emergency contact numbers for each family member.

Consider listing a relative or friend who lives far from your community as the point of contact—if your family gets separated,

that person can let others know who is safe.

And don't forget pets in your family action plan—many rescue shelters will not accept pets after a catastrophe, so it's important to decide beforehand where Fido or Tabby can take up residence for a while.

It's not hard to understand why safety remains a top priority for Eastern Illini - working around electricity is a life-or-death situation every day for many of our employees. As a result, we work hard to instill a culture of safety that our employees also take home with them.

We also strive to raise safety awareness among Eastern Illini member/owners. Look for safety tips in this publication, in the *Illinois Country Living* magazine, and check www.eiec.coop for more information.

Pledge to honor Electrical Safety Month by fashioning an emergency action plan for your family today.

Unclaimed Capital Credits

One major benefit of being a member/owner of Eastern Illini is the return of capital credits to you.

Sometimes, though, we can't find past members to whom we owe money.

Please visit our website at www.eiec.coop to check the list of unclaimed capital credits.

Be your home's private investigator

Do-it-yourself home energy audits reveal savings in energy and money

No matter the age of your home, it could benefit from a private energy investigation—also known as an energy audit. Eastern Illini offers several levels of home energy audits conducted by our certified energy advisors. But you can get started on your own search to find low-cost solutions that could save you money every month on your electric bill.

To be an energy “private-eye,” ask yourself a simple question: Does my home feel drafty and cold in the winter, or stuffy and hot in the summer? If your answer is “yes,” then your home probably has air leakage.

To track down where those spots are, round up the usual suspects—culprits like damaged seals around doors and windows. If you see daylight or feel air, then apply caulk and weather stripping to keep outdoor air where it's supposed to be.

But don't forget spots you might not immediately think of, like recessed canister lights and electrical outlets. Outlet insulation kits can be purchased for as little as \$2, and you can fix up your canister lights with some caulk around the edges. Also, look where walls meet the ceiling. Cobwebs can mean you've got drafts - if spiders can get through, the air can, too.

Next, poke your head into the attic and inspect the crawl space or basement for

sufficient insulation. In our area, we recommend at least 14 inches of cellulose insulation in your attic. Basements should also be insulated - the proper amount is based on your type of basement. It's important to remember insulation won't do its job well if there's not a proper air barrier working in tandem. That means all joints and cracks must be sealed between your living space and insulation.

Finally, look to your light fixtures. Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) are up to

75 percent more efficient than traditional incandescent bulbs, and they are now available in many designs and levels of light quality. They cost a bit more up front, but you'll make your money back in less than nine months and after that, they start saving you money.

Make sure to purchase a CFL that has an ENERGY STAR label on the packaging.

ENERGY STAR-rated CFLs will typically last five to seven times longer than a traditional incandescent bulb producing the same amount of light.

To learn more about ways to reduce your electric bill, visit our website at www.eiec.coop or call us at 800-824-5102. Our energy advisors will be happy to help!



Did you know?

According to the EPA, geothermal heating and cooling systems are the most energy-efficient, environmentally clean, and cost-effective space conditioning systems available today.

Find out more by visiting www.eiec.coop or calling us at 800-824-5102.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

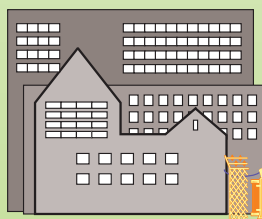
Smart home landscaping can lower your electric bills. Trees on the east and west sides of your home provide shade—and reduce your cooling costs—during hot summer months. Shade for your air conditioner can save 10 percent of your cooling costs. And by adding vegetation to the north side of your home, you can reduce winter winds that trigger higher heating costs. Find more ways to save at TogetherWeSave.com.

Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

How power is restored after an outage

High-Voltage Transmission Lines

1. Transmission towers and lines that supply power to one or more transmission substations rarely fail. However, when damage does occur – usually due to high winds or ice buildup – these towers and lines must be repaired before other parts of the distribution system are inspected, because they serve thousands (or ten of thousands) of people.



Large Industrial User

Restoring the power after a severe storm involves much more than just flipping a switch at a substation or pulling a fallen tree off a downed power line. Highly trained workers from local electric cooperatives, crews from neighboring states and specialists from the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives work together around the clock to restore service.

Shown here are the steps co-ops follow in restoring power. At each stage, the primary goal is getting the greatest number of co-op members back online in the shortest time possible.



Make sure you report any outage to your electric co-op, even if you think a neighbor already has called. This will help line crews isolate and repair the problem as soon as possible.

Transmission Substation

Local Distribution Substation 1

2. A co-op usually has several local distribution substations, each serving hundreds or thousands of co-op members. When a major outage takes place, these substations usually are checked first to see if the problem is in the transmission system to the substations or the substations themselves.

If you or a family member depends on life-support equipment, call your electric co-op immediately. Then your co-op can try to prioritize power restoration to you or can advise you to seek shelter elsewhere.

Local Distribution Substation 2

3. If the problem cannot be isolated at a local distribution substation, the next step is to check the distribution lines that carry power to groups of customers such as towns or housing developments. In Iowa, the largest cause of outages is fallen trees, which is why your co-op has an ongoing right-of-way maintenance program.

Do not connect a generator directly to household wiring. The power from a generator can back-feed to power lines and injure or electrocute line workers making repairs.

4. Then, the line crews work on outages that are more localized by inspecting the final supply lines – called tap lines – that carry power to utility poles or underground transformers outside small businesses, schools and homes.

5. Finally, isolated outages – caused, for example, by a damaged service line between a transformer and an individual home – are repaired.

Farms

Small Businesses

Schools

Homes

Office closing

Eastern Illini's offices will be closed on Monday, May 28 in honor of Memorial Day.

As always, call us at 800-824-5102 to report an outage, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Don't mess with downed power lines

Downed power lines can look relatively harmless, but don't be fooled.

Downed power lines likely carry an electric current strong enough to cause serious injury or possibly death. You can't see, hear, or smell electricity. These tips can help you stay safe around downed lines:

- If you see a downed power line, move away from the line and anything touching it.
- If you are in a vehicle that is in contact with a downed line, stay in the vehicle. Use your cell phone for help and tell others to stay away from your vehicle.
- The proper way to move away from the line is to hop or shuffle with small steps, keeping your feet together and on the ground at all

times. Electricity wants to move from a high voltage zone to a low voltage one—and it could do that through your body.

- If you see someone who is in direct or indirect contact with the downed line, do not touch the person. You could become the next victim. Call 911 instead.
- Do not attempt to move a downed power line or anything in contact with the line by using another object such as a broom or stick.
- Do not drive over downed lines.
- If you must leave your vehicle because it's on fire, jump out of the vehicle with both feet together and avoid making contact with the vehicle and the ground at the same time. This way you avoid being the path of electricity.