

# PowerLines

A monthly publication for member/owners of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative

February 2014

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## PLUS:

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Thanks for the high marks

## Beware of phone scams

We've heard about some scams that involve electric company customers being threatened with disconnection unless they make a credit card payment.

As far as we know, no Eastern Illini member/owners have been victim to this scam, but please be careful. If you are unsure if you are talking to us, please get a name, then call us back at 800-824-5102.



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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## The impact of regulations

We've written before about how the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed to limit carbon dioxide at new power plants. This is concerning because these regulations, along with the ones EPA has in store for existing plants, have the potential to not only increase your electric bills, but also make everything you buy more expensive.

Now is the time for electric cooperative member/owners like you to join their voices together to send a clear message: please remember consumers as you are writing these regulations.

You can help by visiting [www.action.coop](http://www.action.coop) today and sending a comment to the EPA. You can also help by sharing the link with your friends and family.

The soon to be released regulations for existing power plants are potentially troubling for us because the EPA has abandoned their all-of-the-above energy approach and could come up with rules that will make coal power plants VERY expensive to operate.

We currently purchase most of our electricity from the Prairie State Generating Campus in Lively Grove, Ill. It is among the cleanest coal plants in the world, and offers us (and you) long-term pricing stability at competitive prices. These new regulations could negatively impact that pricing stability.

While these regulations are technical, the potential increase in electric rates is something we take personally because we know it's difficult to make ends meet

month-to-month. We know the tough choices you face – we all face – in trying to live on a budget. That's what sets cooperatives apart from other utilities and that's why we must stick together.

What's at stake? Beyond providing safe, reliable, and affordable electricity, at Eastern Illini, we're worried about businesses and jobs in places like Watseka and Tuscola and Champaign and Paxton.

Thousands have answered the call already and sent comments through [www.action.coop](http://www.action.coop). But we need more. Here at Eastern Illini, we look out for you. And we don't take this request lightly. It only takes 30 seconds to help raise our voices together.

Visit [www.action.coop](http://www.action.coop). And talk to your neighbors about what we're doing and why. We're powering the future, driving economic growth and fostering innovation for you.

We don't want these new regulations to get in our way of progress. Please join the call and help us keep moving forward.

Respectfully,

*Bob Hunzinger*



MESSAGE FROM  
THE PRESIDENT

# A local retreat...

**Nestled on 32-acres of picturesque pastures and woods, the Heartland Spa offers a world class experience, right in our own backyard.**

Celebrating its 30th year as a leader in the spa and wellness industry, The Heartland Spa and Fitness Resort provides a welcoming, unpretentious, and nurturing environment for guests to relax, unplug and focus on their individual lifestyle goals.

## **A personal approach**

Accommodating no more than 41 visitors at a time, and boasting a 2:1 staff to guest ratio, you're guaranteed to receive the focused attention you deserve in order to achieve your personal goals.

Their healthy lifestyle programs, fitness classes, nutritional guidance, and guest speaker presentations are all geared toward smaller, more intimate groups to ensure you receive the most from your Heartland Spa vacation.

Heartland Spa offers all-inclusive two, three and five night getaway packages to provide everything you need to relax, renew and rejuvenate.

All meals, snacks, exercise classes, and guest speaker presentations are included as part of your stay. You'll also receive robes, t-shirts, and spa services during your stay. The longer your stay, the more spa services you'll receive.

Held in what used to be a working dairy barn (before a major remodeling) are many of Heartland Spa's fitness activities, spa treatments and water workouts. The "barn" is actually connected to the guest rooms by an



underground tunnel that makes it simple to get around, even during adverse weather.

The state-of-the-art health and fitness center offers the latest Keiser exercise equipment, group fitness classes for all levels, a 48 foot long heated indoor swimming pool, a sauna, and a whirlpool. Seasonal activities include bike riding, paddle boating, and walking paths around the lake with meditation gardens along the way.

Heartland Spa's Mike Jones noted, "We believe that a healthy lifestyle is an active lifestyle. Our programs are designed to get you moving! Whether you've been exercising for years, or are just starting out, there's something for everyone at the Heartland Spa!" Whether your goal is to lose weight,

lower your blood pressure, increase lean tissue, reduce stress, or simply to feel better, your exercise program should be enjoyable. With a variety of fitness options from which to choose, our programs are designed to encourage you to try something new. In an environment filled with support and motivation, it is our hope that you will discover activities that you find challenging and fun, so you can continue your spa experience at home.

Their most common classes are described and rated according to fitness level, choreography, and impact to better direct you to the classes that are appropriate for your goals and interests. Jones continued, "At The Heartland Spa and Fitness Resort, we make certain that you are surrounded with warmth and acceptance. We believe



# ...in the 'Heartland'

that a healthy, active lifestyle requires commitment and dedication. To help ensure successful results and keep you motivated, our programs are fun, challenging and rewarding!”

While working toward optimal health and wellness, they believe it's essential that you feel nurtured, encouraged, embraced and secure. With an emphasis on feeling good about yourself, they want you to succeed. Every member of their staff is focused on you, your interests and your needs. Their mission is to help you achieve your personal goals.

Jones cautioned potential visitors, “One of the biggest problems we've noticed is when people try to do too much too soon. When you try to change every aspect of your life all at once, often times nothing gets accomplished. We will work with you to determine your goals and set priorities, guiding you in a positive direction at a pace that works for you.”

## Local Fitness Package

For local guests, Heartland Spa offers a special one-day fitness package. Enjoy an incredible day of pampering, indulgence, fitness and fun. You will experience all that The Heartland Spa has to offer including a massage, a sea salt body scrub, a

delicious healthy lunch, snacks and full use of their state-of-the-art fitness and spa facility.

During your 8-hour stay (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.), you are also welcome to participate in all exercise classes, which run throughout the day, enjoy health, fitness and skin care presentations, cooking demonstrations, and unlimited “back to nature” activities such as bike riding or paddle boating and walking around our beautiful grounds.

The Heartland Spa fitness team has designed programs of activities to



## Ready to visit?

### Heartland Spa

**Address:** 1237 E 1600 N Rd, Gilman

**Phone:** (800) 545-4853

**Website:** [www.heartlandspa.com](http://www.heartlandspa.com)

**Rates:** Vary by service and length of stay. Eastern Illini member/owners are eligible for a 10% discount if booked by March 31.\*

\*Call for discount details, can't be combined with other offers.

include something for everyone, no matter how old you are or how physically fit. With so many options to choose from, you're sure to find something that's perfect for you!

### Cooperative Link

Heartland Spa receives electricity from Eastern Illini, just like you. Jones said, “We enjoy being part of a cooperative. We know they are always looking out for us.” Because of that relationship, Heartland Spa is happy to provide other Eastern Illini member/owners with a ten percent discount on packages booked by March 31, 2014.



# Powering up after a major outage



**Be Ready Before a Storm Strikes**

Lights out? Store these items at home in case of an outage.

- ☐ **Water**  
Three-day supply, one gallon per person per day.
- ☐ **Tools**  
Flashlight and extra batteries, can opener, wind-up radio.
- ☐ **Food**  
Three-day supply of non-perishable, high-energy food.
- ☐ **First Aid, Medicine**  
First aid supplies, hand sanitizer, and at least a week's supply of medications for the family.
- ☐ **Documents**  
Include copies of passports, birth certificates, and insurance policies.

**Learn more at [www.Ready.gov](http://www.Ready.gov).**

Source: American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency

## Thirty-one percent of power outages are triggered by weather.

Lineworkers must battle the elements to find problem areas and restore service as quickly and safely as possible.

“We know our member/owners want to know why their lights are out and when they’re coming back on,” shares Alan Schweighart, Vice President of Operations and Engineering at Eastern Illini. “First we must find the problems. Then we follow a series of steps to restore power.”

### Restoring power

Efforts are made to restore power to the largest number of members as quickly as possible. Then crews fix problems impacting smaller groups of members.

When an outage occurs, line crews work to pinpoint problems. They start with high-voltage transmission lines. Transmission towers and cables that supply power to thousands of consumers rarely fail. But when damage occurs, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

### It’s not all our equipment

Eastern Illini is a small electric company. We don’t have the luxury of owning every single line that connects to our system. In fact, many of the transmission lines that feed into our substations are owned by the local investor-owned utility.

In many outage situations, our system is okay, but the transmission lines feeding in to our system are down. We are at the mercy of a different company on when the transmission line will come back on.

A good example of this occurred recently in our northeastern area (around Clifton and Papineau). We are working with the owners of the transmission lines to make sure they understand the importance of getting those lines updated and more reliable.

### Our distribution system

Next, our crews check distribution substations. Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of members. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to discover if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of members in communities or housing developments.

If local outages persist, supply lines (also called tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools, and homes.

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your home may need to be repaired.

Always call us at 800-824-5102 to report an outage. This helps crews isolate local issues.

### Stay in the know

The best way to stay updated on the restoration process during an outage is to follow our facebook page. Simply visit us at [www.facebook.com/easternillini](http://www.facebook.com/easternillini) and “Like” our page.

We also have an outage map at <https://ebill.eiec.coop/oms/outageMap> that shows - in a broad sense - where we are experiencing outages. You can use that to check if other member/owners in your area are experiencing outages.

We are also working on providing you with more features to keep you informed, including text message options.

As a reminder, please notify us at 800-824-5102 to report an outage.

# New bulb on the block

**There's a new lighting mascot in town. Meet LED Lucy.**

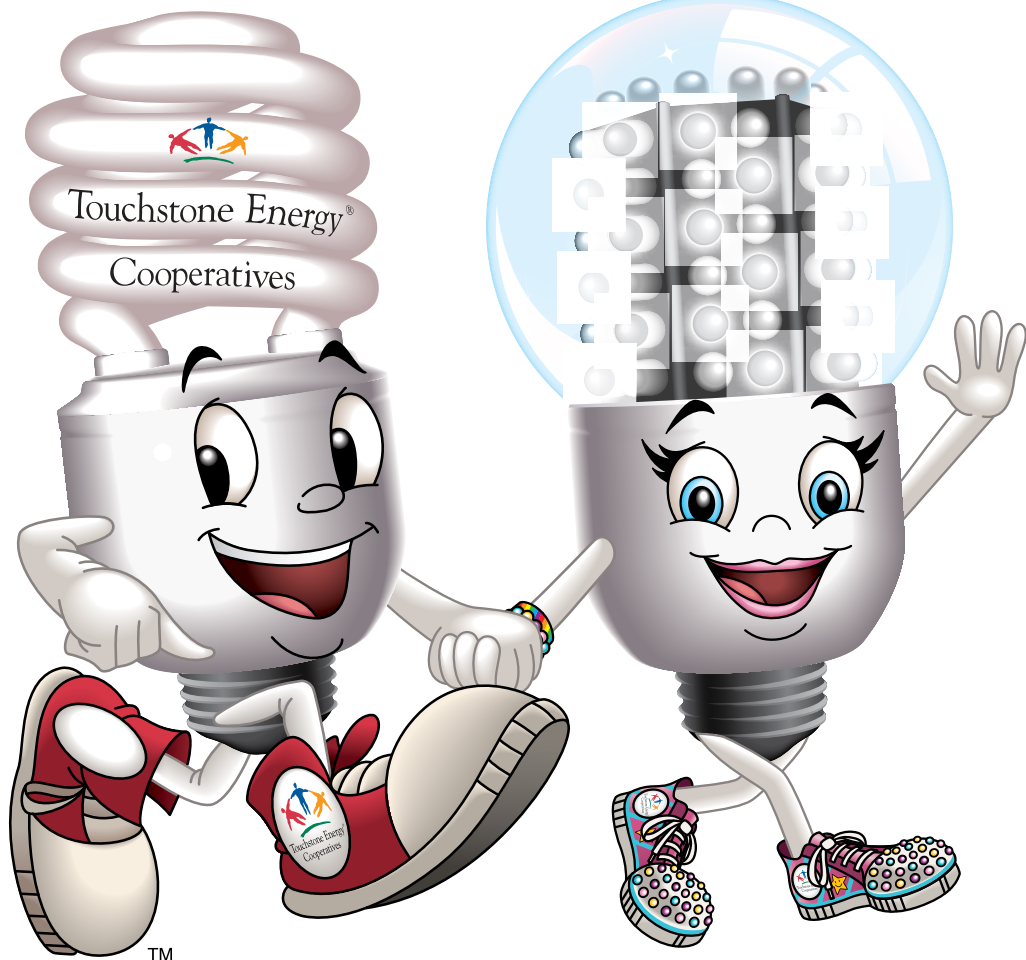
CFL Charlie, a cartoon mascot for Touchstone Energy Cooperatives®, the brand “ID” of the nation’s electric cooperatives, helps families become “Super Savers” by switching to energy efficient lightbulbs. In late 2013 he was joined by LED Lucy, a dazzling, spunky mascot lighting the way for even brighter bulb savings.

Lighting standards started shifting away from traditional lightbulbs in 2012. CFL Charlie and LED Lucy want to make sure Eastern Illini member/owners know about all lighting options.

“I’m older than I look,” LED Lucy confides. The mascot’s light-emitting diodes beam. “The first LED was created in 1927. Since then we’ve added stylish colors, and costs dropped. I love bargains, and LED prices get lower every year!”

The mascots share a few pointers on their energy efficiency namesakes.

**Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs)**  
CFL Charlie - and other bulbs like him - are the most common and economical lightbulbs on the market. The swirly



style is linked to the concept of efficient lighting, but some consumers haven’t warmed to the design.

“Not everyone likes to see my swirls,” explains Charlie. “That’s fine by me—everyone has a different sense of style. Several of my friends are designed to look just like a traditional lightbulb.”

CFLs offer 75 percent energy savings over traditional incandescent bulbs and pay for themselves in 9 months, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

**Light emitting diodes (LEDs)**  
LEDs have

been used for years in cell phones and other electronics. Most diodes are small—about half the size of a pencil eraser. By banding several small diodes together, a bright and dependable light emerges.

As their popularity grows, some companies are making light with a single, bright LED chip. New ways to build LEDs will help drive down costs.

“It’s going to be fun to watch LED Lucy gain fans,” laughs Charlie. “She uses a little less energy than me, and lasts 25 times longer than traditional incandescent bulbs.”

Since lighting adds up to 10 percent of a home’s electric bill, every bulb counts. To help children learn more about lighting, visit [www.kidsenergyzone.com](http://www.kidsenergyzone.com).



## Energy Efficiency

### *Tip of the Month*

Fighting winter chills? A crackling fire in the hearth warms the house, but don’t let it heat up your electric bill. To cool energy costs, keep the fireplace damper closed when not in use. Caulk around the fireplace hearth. Double up on wood-earned warmth by lowering the thermostat setting to between 50 degrees and 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Learn more at [www.energysaver.gov](http://www.energysaver.gov).

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

—Thanks for the—  
**HIGH**  
—MARKS.—



The 2013 American Customer Satisfaction Index\* (ACSI) has rated Eastern Illini with a score of 86. Your feedback puts us a full 11 points higher than the utility industry average. That means you rated us in the top ten percent of all electric cooperatives across the country. **THANK YOU!**

Even though ACSI recognizes “customer” satisfaction, Eastern Illini members are in fact “owners,” too. That’s an important distinction. And it’s why we strive to provide you a level of service that’s second to none.

Naturally, we’re honored. But it won’t go to our head. We’ll remain the dependable source of electricity you never have to think twice about. Unless, of course, you’re being surveyed by the ACSI.



*Looking out for you.*



\*Touchstone Energy ACSI member ratings using the ACSI customer satisfaction survey questions are compared to the ACSI ratings of residential customers of the U.S. largest investor-owned energy utilities.