

PowerLines

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

September 2014

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Part science, part style

PLUS:

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Co-op Connections Card

Summer/winter rate update

For member/owners that are on one of our special marketing rates (Rates 8, 18B, 20, and 24), the switch from "summer" rates to "winter" rates will take place on September 25. Check your bill to verify which rate you are on.



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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Member Appreciation Events Scheduled

We're coming to you this month.

We are excited to host a series of member appreciation events throughout our service territory this month.

Most of the events will be held in the morning (7 a.m. start), but to make sure we give everyone a chance to attend, we are also hosting one evening event. The morning events will feature a full breakfast.

Some of the topics we expect to cover during the informal events include an introduction of our new President/CEO Bob Hunzinger, and an update on new EPA regulations and how they could impact your electric bill.

We will also offer a recap of the information covered during our annual meeting that was held June 12. That will include some basic financial information, and how our capital credit program is set to retire (pay back) over \$1 million this year.

We also want to hear from you. All of your questions will be answered, and we'd love some feedback about both what we are doing right, and what we need to work on.

Please check the complete schedule below to see when we will be in your area.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Member Appreciation Schedule

Tuesday, September 16 in Forrest at 7 a.m. - breakfast will be served

*Forrest Public Library
301 West James Street*

Wednesday, September 17 in Paxton at 6 p.m. - snacks will be served **

*Eastern Illini's Office
330 West Ottawa Street*

***Please note that this is an evening event. All others will begin at 7 a.m.*

Thursday, September 18 in Watseka at 7 a.m. - breakfast will be served

*Super 8 Motel
710 West Walnut Street*

Friday, September 19 in Pesotum at 7 a.m. - breakfast will be served

*Eastern Illini's Warehouse
987 CR 200 North*

Monday, September 22 in Paxton at 7 a.m. - breakfast will be served

*Eastern Illini's Office
330 West Ottawa Street*

We need you to take action

New EPA rules could have a major impact on electric bills.

We need your participation to help keep your bills - and all of our member's bills - at reasonable levels. Please read this information and visit www.action.coop to register your view on this issue.

A few months ago, we wrote about proposed EPA regulations for new fossil fueled power plants. I received a few calls and comments from members relative to that article that expressed opinions on both sides of the issue.

Recently, the EPA issued proposed rules for existing power plants, which would regulate carbon dioxide emissions for the first time ever. The over 600-page proposed rule sets targets for individual states to reduce carbon emissions. Illinois would be required by 2030 to reduce emissions by 33 percent from 2005 levels.

Why is it important to provide input now? The 120 day comment period ends in mid-October. Also, each state has a limited time to submit plans to reach these targets after the final rule is issued in June 2015. Interim targets are expected to be achieved beginning around 2020.

EIEC, along with our power supplier Prairie Power, Inc., have already completed many of the suggested EPA "building blocks" to achieve these reductions. This includes utilization of natural gas fuel, improving existing plant efficiencies, utilizing renewable energy such as solar and wind, and encouraging end use energy efficiency. Of course, we can and will do more.

As you may know, approximately 60 percent of our power supply

comes from coal fired generation. Eastern Illini and other distribution cooperatives in Illinois have made a long term investment in a state-of-the-art coal fired power plant.

Since coal generation is a large emitter of CO₂, there is a possibility of significant future additional costs for this generation source that could be passed along to our members. We are in favor of a clean environment for all of our member communities. We also want to be treated fairly for the highly efficient, large capital investments that have already been made on your behalf. The new power plant is among the cleanest in the world, and it meets and exceeds all current environmental rules and regulations.

"Whatever our individual beliefs regarding climate change may be, it is certainly now an economic issue for all of us."

Some may view this as a political, or an ideological issue relative to global warming or climate change. This column is not addressing that issue. Whatever our individual beliefs regarding climate change may be, it is certainly now an economic issue for all of us.

We support an energy strategy that is all inclusive – nuclear, natural gas, renewable energy, and coal. All of these are important for diversity of fuel, and for energy



**MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT**

independence, domestic supply, and national security.

Of course we support energy efficiency and conservation as well, which reduce the demand for energy over time.

Cooperatives are democratic organizations, owned by their members. This is your chance to make your voice heard on this issue to the EPA. Your collective voice is more powerful than one letter to the EPA from me, or from our board of directors.

Some of our members filled out cards at our June annual meeting expressing their views on this important issue.

You can join them. If you are concerned about our future energy supply, please visit action.coop to learn more about the proposed EPA rules. While on the website, register your comments, and support a diverse, all inclusive, and economically sound future energy supply. This important step will only take a minute or two of your time.

Sincerely,

Bob Hunzinger

Part science, part style

Using window treatments can improve the look - and efficiency of your home.

While installing new windows may not be a realistic option for many of us, there are some less expensive things that can really make a difference for the look and efficiency of your windows.

“Windows account for 10 to 25 percent of annual heating and cooling costs, especially in older homes,” says Mike Carroll, Eastern Illini’s Energy Specialist. “Blinds, shades, films and drapes are all good options to consider if old or inefficient windows can’t be replaced.”

“It’s important to remember that location, placement and materials are key,” Carroll continued. “Windows facing west let in the hottest light and need the most coverage, while windows facing south are the most important natural light source and only need light coverage.”

Draperies

During the winter months and in cold climates, draperies work best. Their ability to reduce heat loss depends on fabric type (closed or open weave), color, the season and other factors.



Keeping drapes drawn during the winter, especially at night, could save up to 10 percent of heat loss from a warm room. When hanging draperies, make sure they are placed as close to windows as possible to reduce heat exchange and that they are long enough to fall onto a windowsill or floor.

Shades

Shades - pleated or cellular, quilted roller and dual - are one of the simplest product choices for insulating rooms. But depending on the material, some are more energy

efficient than others. Cellular or pleated shades are one example of an energy efficient choice. They can help keep air from either entering or escaping your home.

Interior blinds

Because of their spacing and openings, blinds tend to be more effective at reducing summer heat gain than winter heat loss. But the level of cooling and heating can also be influenced by the position of the slats. When completely closed and lowered at a sun-filled window, for example, heat gain can be reduced by around 45 percent, according to industry estimates. Slats can also be adjusted to block and reflect sunlight onto a light-colored ceiling.

Window film

Residential window films can be high-end and permanent or inexpensive and temporary solutions to improve the energy efficiency of windows. Clear solar-control window films can block up to 84 percent of the solar energy that would normally enter through windows, according to the International Window Film Association.

To find out more ways to save, contact Eastern Illini’s energy experts at 800-824-5102 or visit our website, www.eiec.coop.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

When it’s hot outside, appliances and lighting can actually heat up our homes more than we think. To save energy, minimize the activities that generate additional heat, such as burning open flames, continuously running a computer, or using hot-hair devices like curling irons. This will ultimately keep your house cooler.

Source: Department of Energy

Beyond the flip of a switch

There are many steps required to deliver you safe and reliable electric service.

With the mere flip of a switch, electricity illuminates our lives. But have you ever thought about where your power comes from?

Most of us don't give it a second thought until our service is interrupted and we're left in the dark – even if only for a short amount of time.

In today's world, electricity is a necessity, and this necessity travels a great distance to reach you – our member/owners.

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative provides electricity to approximately 12,000 members, and it takes a network of folks to do so. We build and maintain overhead and underground power lines and manage the equipment needed to provide you with safe and reliable power – but did you know that we don't actually generate the power that is supplied to your home? That's where our local generation and transmission cooperative (G&T) comes in.

We receive electricity from Prairie Power, Inc. (PPI), a G&T located in Springfield, Ill. G&Ts are wholesale power suppliers that are owned and governed by electric distribution cooperatives, just like Eastern Illini. PPI both produces electricity and purchases some, then sends the power over high-voltage transmission lines to us. Since G&Ts are owned by multiple distribution cooperatives, operating costs are split among the owners. This process allows us to purchase power at a lower cost than if we tried to do it all by ourselves.

After the power is sent over PPI's high-voltage transmission lines, it then makes it's way to our substations, where the voltage is reduced in order to make it to your home safely. We own 25 substations, each located within our 10-county service territory.

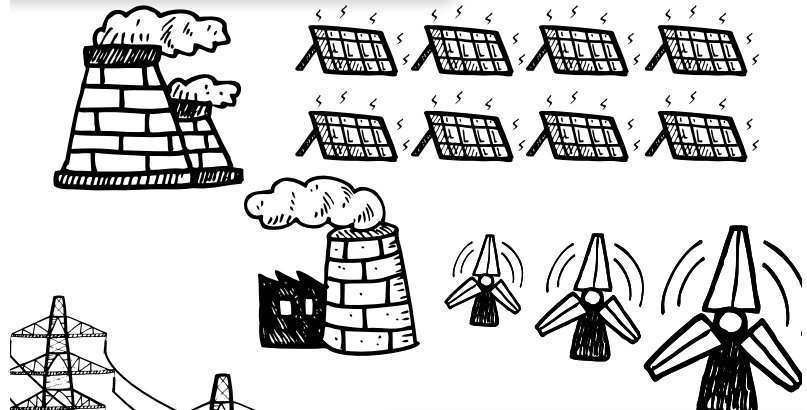
From the substations, power is sent to our transformers, those large tanks that sit at the top of power poles, then directed to your home.

Check out the graphic to the right for more information about how the electric grid works.

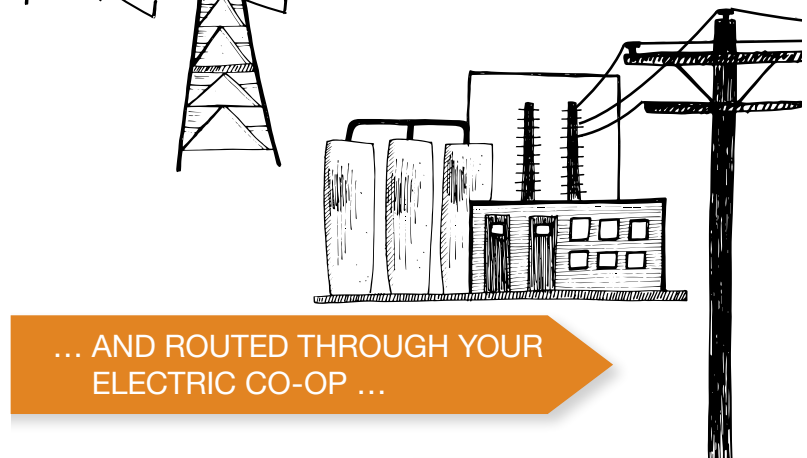
As you can see, there's a little more to it than flipping a switch, but we've got you covered. Eastern Illini has provided member/owners like you with safe and reliable

Where does my power come from?

POWER IS GENERATED ...



...THEN SENT OVER TRANSMISSION LINES ...



... AND ROUTED THROUGH YOUR ELECTRIC CO-OP ...



... WHERE IT IS SENT VIA DISTRIBUTION LINES TO YOUR HOME.

power for over 75 years, and that continues to be our number one priority today.

Are you grounded?

Simply switching out outlets can save you and your family.

Did you know there are different types of electrical outlets? Each are designed for different purposes; however, there is one specific type that stands high above the rest—the ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlet.

GFCIs have saved thousands of lives and cut the number of electrocutions in half since the 1970s. If your home lacks GFCI outlets, don't fret—you can learn how to "get grounded."

GFCIs are the most efficient outlet in protecting from electrical shock. If it senses a loss of current, the outlet switches off power to that circuit. These devices can either be installed in your electrical system or built into a power cord. The third hole at the bottom of the outlet is known as the "ground" slot, and it monitors electrical currents that flow through the left "neutral" slot and the right "hot" slot on each outlet.

A GFCI can react faster than a blink of an eye to any imbalance of power by immediately shutting off the electrical current. These outlets are now a requirement in all places where water could potentially come into contact with electrical products such as bathrooms, garages, outdoors and kitchens.

GFCIs are not exclusive to three-prong outlets. They can be installed into standard outlets, and there are even portable devices available when installation is not practical.



GFCIs should be tested at least once a month to ensure they are working effectively. The first step you need to take is to test an item, such as a lamp, that visibly powers on when plugged in. Push the "reset" button to prepare the outlet then push the "test" button. Did your lamp turn off? If it did, the GFCI is working properly.

Now, hit the "reset" button once again to power it back on. If your lamp did not power off, then you should contact a certified electrician to correct the problem.

GFCI outlets are especially important in rooms that have water - like bathrooms, kitchens and garages.

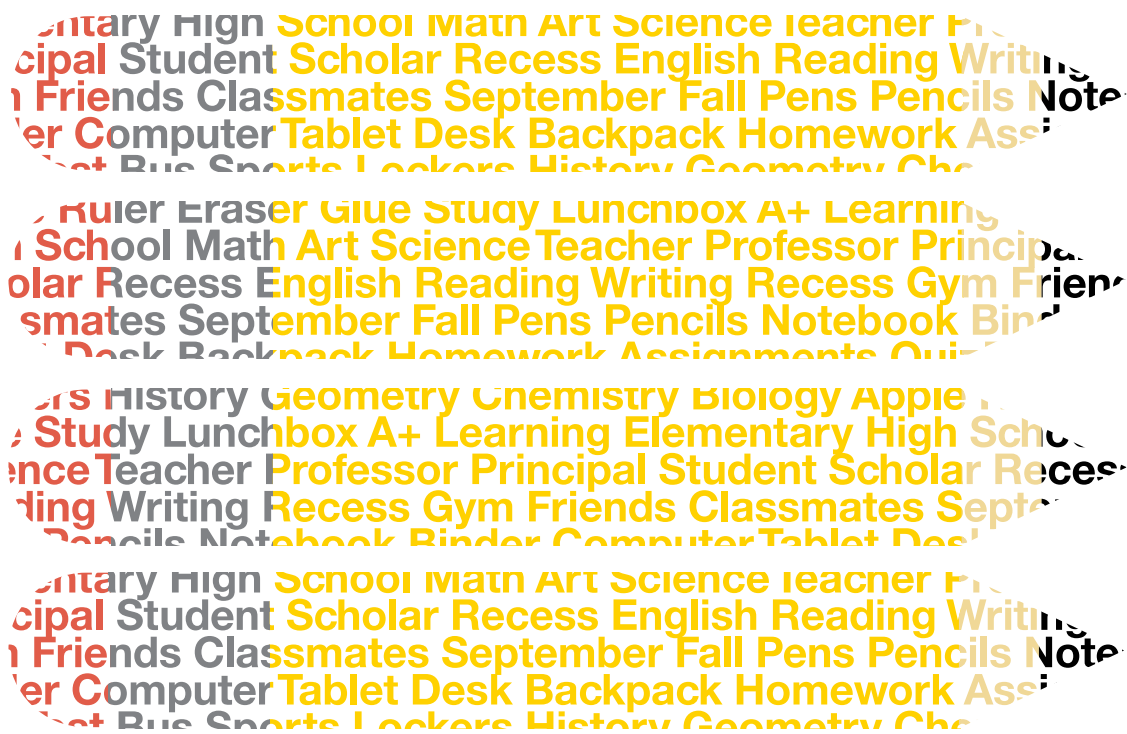
Next time you have a free moment, take the time to look around your house. If you're not "grounded," consider updating your electrical outlets to GFCIs.



Providing value
for your
electric dollar

Did you know that in December of 2013 we issued EVERY member/owner a bill credit because of our higher than anticipated sales? The average credit was \$20!

This is one more simple way that we are looking out for you - and your wallet!



Get an A+ in Back to School Savings

Earn extra credit with Eastern Illini's Co-op Connections Card.
We'll help you save on all the back to school basics from
backpacks and apparel to pencils and glue.



Find all the ways to save at
Connections.coop

