

PowerLines

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

April 2015

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Co-op Connections Card

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This spring, let Eastern Illini's Co-op Connections Card help you cover everything, from gardening and farming tools to home improvement and energy efficiency projects.

View the story on page 4 for more information, and find all the ways to save at www.connections.coop.



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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Co-op Principle #2

Democratic Member Control

As you prepare for the local elections coming up on April 7, please remember that voting for politicians is not the only way we as co-op members can practice democracy.

Every co-op – whether it's Eastern Illini, your credit union, or a farm co-op – follows the basic principle of one member, one vote. Most often you are asked to vote and elect individuals that will represent you on the board of directors. These folks are your friends, neighbors and fellow residents of our community. Occasionally, you may be asked to vote on a policy, such as a bylaw change (this is like the constitution for your co-op).

Every member in good standing of the co-op may run for the board. This is one of the key differences between a co-op member and a customer of an investor-owned utility (IOU).

Co-ops invite participation. In fact, it is critically important to the survival of the co-op. Most co-ops serve far fewer people than IOUs. Co-ops measure the number of members in the thousands, IOUs in the millions. If you are not actively involved with the co-op, we all suffer. As the electric utility industry evolves, having interested members who are willing to take an active role is critically important.

At Eastern Illini, we believe in the Own, Use, Serve and Belong model.

Own - Refers to each member truly believing and feeling that they do indeed share in the ownership of the

co-op. This can come from attending the Annual Meeting, voting, receiving a capital credits check or participating in other co-op events.

Use - For

electric co-ops this means that you use the co-op's resources wisely (after all, you are an owner of those resources). You utilize the free energy audits that we offer. You use energy-efficient appliances, use LED or CFL lights – and you turn them off when you leave the room.

Serve - If we are successful with “own” and “use,” perhaps you will feel called to serve your co-op – maybe as a board member, volunteer, committee member or community contributor through the co-op.

Belong - We all seek to belong to something. In the early days when the co-op was just getting started, neighbors helped neighbors. While our lives seem busier and more electronically driven than ever, the need to connect and belong is necessary for us and our communities to thrive.

There is great power in the human connection, and at Eastern Illini, we strive to do that every day.

Sincerely,

Bob Hunzinger



**MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT**

Safe planting

Have a successful planting season rooted in safety

As farmers make plans to return to their fields for spring planting, Eastern Illini and the Safe Electricity program urge them to be particularly alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines. Operating large equipment near these lines is one of the often overlooked, yet potentially deadly, hazards of working on a farm.

Start by making sure everyone knows to maintain a 10-foot clearance minimum from power lines. “Sometimes a power line is closer than it looks,” says Molly Hall, executive director of the Energy Education Council’s Safe Electricity program. “Helpful safety steps include using a spotter and designating preplanned routes that avoid hazard areas.”

Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors now have tall antennas extending from the cab that could make contact with power lines. Avoid raising the arms of planters or cultivators near power lines, and never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.

Simply working too close to a power line is dangerous as electricity can arc or “jump” to conducting objects, such as a ladder, pole or truck. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tires, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination.

“If your equipment does come into contact with power lines, stay in the cab and call Eastern Illini for help,” explains Hall. “If the power line is

energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path to the ground.

Even if a line has landed on the ground, there is still potential for the area to be energized. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until help arrives.”

If exiting the cab is absolutely necessary because of fire, the proper action is to jump—not step—with both feet together, hitting the ground at the same time. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Hop to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area.

For more tips and information on how to stay safe this planting season, visit SafeElectricity.org or eiec.org.



If it's not in use...turn off the juice!

How saving energy saves you more than money

Reducing household energy use doesn't mean doing without. It doesn't require walking around your house wearing extra sweaters and earmuffs in the dead of winter, or stripping down to the bare essentials in the summer.

It means being smarter about how you manage the energy you do use. Consider Eastern Illini your trusted resource for exploring energy-saving strategies. Since we are a not-for-profit, member-owned electric co-op, we want to help you – our member/owners.

Energy efficiency means performing the same job and getting a similar outcome using less energy. This efficiency is often achieved through a mechanical change, such as replacing an older, less efficient appliance or mechanical unit with a new model, but sometimes a minor change of habit is all that's needed.

Examples could include dimming lights, turning down the thermostat or washing clothes in cold water instead of hot water.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Summer is right around the corner! Have you changed your home's furnace filter? Filters get loaded with more and more particles as they do their job. This actually has the effect of making them more efficient, but it also increases resistance and reduces airflow. Remember to check filters once a month.

Source: EnergySavers.gov



FIVE TIPS FOR SAVING ENERGY AT HOME



- 1 When using a conventional heating system, set your programmable thermostat to turn down the heat when the house is empty or everyone is asleep.
- 2 Insulate your electric water heater.
- 3 Plug leaks around windows, doors, and power outlets with caulk and weather stripping.
- 4 Purchase ENERGY STAR® products.
- 5 Monitor your energy use to spot trends and sudden changes.



Eastern Illini
Electric
Cooperative

The benefits of energy efficiency and conservation

So why are energy conservation and energy efficiency more important than ever to our member/owners?

The short answer is that energy reduction in your home:

- 1) saves you money
- 2) improves our economy by enabling you to spend and invest in other areas

3) reduces the amount of power generation that is required. This saves the co-op money, and helps the environment.

One great way to track your electric use is by using SmartHub. With SmartHub, you can easily track your electric use by the month, the day, and even down to the hour. You can also view and pay your bill, and even report a power outage.

SmartHub is available online and/or as a FREE app for both iOS and Android smartphones and tablets. Start using SmartHub at www.eiec.coop/smarthub.

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

Co-op Connections Card Program

Eastern Illini member/owners have saved over \$173,000 on discounted prescription drugs.

New figures for 2014 show just how valuable the Co-op Connections discount card is for members of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative and other Touchstone Energy Cooperatives in Illinois.

Members of participating co-ops around the state have saved \$2,001,720 on prescription drug costs through 2014, according to a report from Touchstone Energy, the alliance of over 750 independent, consumer-owned co-ops nationwide.

Since 2007, Co-op Connections cardholders saved more than \$82 million on prescriptions nationwide. Through February, Eastern Illini member/owners saved over \$173,000 on prescriptions in that time span.

In 2014, discounts on prescription drugs reached an all-time high of 45 percent nationwide. Eastern Illini member/owners saved an average of 41.4 percent.



Both local pharmacies and national chains like Walgreens, Walmart and CVS participate in the program.

For a list of pharmacies in our area that offer the discount, please visit www.connections.coop and follow the links for "Healthy Savings."

Prescription drug savings are just one of the Co-op Connections card's Healthy Savings Discounts. Eastern Illini member/owners can also save money on labwork and imaging, dental care, chiropractic and eye care. Currently, there are over 100 providers within Eastern Illini's service territory offering Healthy Savings Discounts.

If you can't find your Co-op Connections Card, you can download a new one from www.connections.coop, or simply call us at 800-824-5102 and we'll send you a new one.

Best of all, this is a FREE program - all because you are a member of Eastern Illini!

To make it easier to use your card, there is a mobile app that provides a link to all of the deals and offers. Simply search the iOS or Android app store for Co-op Connections.

Co-op Connections Card Fast Facts



30,000

local retail offers where members can shop and save in their neighborhoods.



45% Off

is the average savings for prescription drugs when using the card.



1.37 million

page views on cooperative.com



\$173,765

in pharmacy discount savings by Eastern Illini member/owners.

Nominating petitions now available

Nominating petitions for the June 11 director election are now available.

Directors in directorate districts 3, 4, 5 and 6 will be elected at Eastern Illini's June 11, 2015 Annual Meeting.

Nominating petitions can be picked up at Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative's main office, located at 330 W. Ottawa in Paxton.

Each member/owner who desires to be elected to the board of directors must have a petition signed by not less than 25 Eastern Illini member/owners.

Incumbent directors Steve Meenen of Melvin (District 3), Bruce Ristow of Cissna Park (District 4), Kevin Moore of Hoopeston (District 5) and Brad Ludwig of Fithian (District 6) have indicated they will seek reelection.

Eastern Illini's Board of Directors is made up of member/owners just like you. They are tasked with setting the policies and guidelines that our management team then carries out.

Petitions must be filed at the cooperative's headquarters in Paxton no later than 5 p.m. on Monday, April 27, 2015.

Credentials committee selected

The committee reviews potential candidates for Eastern Illini's Board of Directors.

Todd Shively of Buckley, Ted Vinson of Fithian, Mark Waldbeser of Loda, Jim Weston of Rossville, and Scott Zumwalt of Sheldon have been appointed by the Board of Directors to serve a 1-year term on the Credentials Committee.

The Credentials Committee will meet at the cooperative's headquarters on Thursday, April 30, 2015, to review the qualifications of all candidates

who file nominating petitions to determine their eligibility to serve as directors of the cooperative.

The nominating process is conducted in accordance with the following provision of the Cooperative's bylaws:

Article III, Section 3.5, Nominations:

Any member of the cooperative in good standing who desires to be elected to its Board of Directors may be nominated by petition signed by not less than twenty-five (25) members and filed with the Secretary of the Cooperative not less than forty-five (45) days prior to the annual meeting of members. Nominations from the floor shall not be

permitted. The Secretary of the Cooperative shall cause to be prepared and posted at the principal office of the Cooperative at least thirty (30) days before the annual meeting, a list of the nominations for Directors thus filed with him or her.

A specimen ballot marked "Ballot for Directors" containing the names and addresses of all nominees listed in the order determined by lot conducted by the Board of Directors of the Cooperative shall be printed in or mailed with the notice of the meeting. The Secretary shall also have printed in or mailed with the said notice of the meeting or separately not less than ten (10) days prior to said annual meeting, a statement of the number of directors to be elected and the district from which they are to be elected.



Did you know that we save you thousands of dollars per year by maintaining an in-house vehicle maintenance program? Plus, we are able to get repairs done faster, which makes us even more efficient!

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

National lineman appreciation day



America's electric cooperatives have designated the second Monday of April as National Lineman Appreciation Day.

On April 13, 2015, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative will honor the hard working linemen who often work in challenging conditions to keep the lights on.

The full text of the resolution, which the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Board adopted unanimously, is:

"Whereas linemen leave their families and put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on; Whereas linemen work 365 days a year under dangerous conditions to build, maintain and repair the electric infrastructure; Whereas linemen are the first responders of the electric cooperative family, getting power back on and making things safe for all after storms and accidents; and Whereas there would be no electric cooperatives without the brave men and women who comprise our corps of linemen;

Therefore be it resolved that NRECA recognize the Second Monday of April of each year as National Lineman Appreciation Day and make available to electric cooperatives, materials and support to recognize the contributions of these valuable men and women to America's Electric Cooperatives."

We proudly recognize all electric linemen for the services they perform around the clock in dangerous conditions to keep power flowing and protect the public's safety.