

PowerLines

July 2016

We must work together

Thank you for attending last month's annual meeting. We were blessed to have such great weather! As employees and board members of your cooperative, we were pleased with the large turnout of all ages, especially the number of younger families and children – who will be the future of the cooperative. We hope you enjoyed the meal and festivities.

The annual meeting is primarily intended to be a member appreciation event, but members also conducted important business by electing three directors for the board and approving updates to the bylaws. One of the highlights of the business meeting was the recognition of retiring directors Herb Aden and Kay Horsch for their many years of service to our members and the cooperative system.

For a full recap of this year's annual meeting, please see page 4 of this publication.

July 4th

I have many fond memories of the July 4th holiday. In the town where I grew up, there was a late morning parade, followed by games, food, drink, and other festivities at the local city park. The highlight of the day was the evening fireworks. This event drew people from many miles around.

July 4th is a celebration of our independence as a nation. Independence from religious persecution, independence from

colonial rule, the chance to shape a nation and a representative democracy unlike any the world had previously encountered. Our forefathers and ancestors were people of hard work and great foresight, who were extremely successful. We have inherited their legacy of success, which includes a legacy of a diverse population.



**MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT**

Let us never forget the sacrifices that our ancestors, immigrants from all parts of the world, made to allow us the opportunity for a better life.

I am deeply saddened while writing this column on the day after the horrific massacre that occurred in an Orlando nightclub. The people murdered in Orlando had the same dreams as our ancestors - to seek a better life and future for themselves and their families.

The United States continually attracts new generations of immigrants also seeking a better life. We live in a world that is increasingly more divided by zealotry of various types. The terrible massacre in Orlando reminds us that we, as a nation, are not perfect, and that we are part of a larger world that is not perfect. It reminds us that we all must work together to accept and cherish our diversity as our ancestors did to continue to make the United States the beacon of light and hope for those seeking a better life.

Happy Fourth of July!

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Independence Day

Our cooperative will be closed on Monday, July 4, in honor of Independence Day.

We hope you enjoy a safe and enjoyable 4th of July holiday!

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Stay safe around water this summer

Whether at home or on vacation, boating, fishing, and swimming can be fun ways to enjoy the great outdoors.

With Memorial Day weekend the unofficial start of summer, Safe Electricity is sharing the message, “If you feel a shock, swim away from the dock,” to help keep people safe from a hidden hazard called electric shock drowning (ESD).

As Molly Hall, executive director of the Energy Education Council and its Safe Electricity program explains, “If electric current is present in fresh water and someone swims into that energized water, the result can be electric shock drowning. If the electrical current is strong enough, the electric shock can cause muscle

paralysis, which leaves the affected individual unable to swim to safety. It’s a particularly dangerous hazard because it’s impossible to tell by sight if the water is energized.”

“That’s why it’s so important to know what to do if a swimmer feels anything akin to electric current, such as tingling on the skin or a pulsing sensation in the water. They must swim away from anything that could be energized, like a dock with electrical service, or a boat that’s plugged into shore power. If possible, swim to the shore instead.”

Outdated wiring and a lack of proper safety equipment and routine maintenance on docks and boats can cause such situations where electricity “leaks” into the water. According

to the Electric Shock Drowning Prevention Association, between 10 and 15 milliamps, which is just 1/50 the wattage of a 60 watt light bulb, can cause drowning. They also report that many ESD deaths have occurred around private docks and boats plugged into shore power while docked.

Safe Electricity recommends that individuals do not swim around docks with electrical equipment or boats plugged into shore

power. If a person is in the water and feels electric current, that individual should shout to let others know, try to stay upright, tuck their legs up to make their body smaller, and swim away from anything that could be energized. Do not swim to boat or dock ladders to get out – if possible, swim to the shore.

If people see someone who they suspect is getting shocked, they should not immediately jump in to save them. Throw them a float, turn off the shore power connection at the meter base, and/or unplug shore power cords. Try to eliminate the source of electricity as quickly as possible; then call for help.

Safe Electricity, along with the American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC) and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers/National Electrical Contractors Association, recommends adhering to these steps in order to enhance water recreation safety and accident prevention:

- All electrical installations should be performed by a professional electrical contractor familiar with marine codes and standards and inspected at least once a year.
- Docks should have ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) breakers on the circuits feeding electricity to the dock.
- The metal frame of docks should be bonded to connect all metal parts to the alternating current (AC) safety ground at the power source. That will ensure any part of the metal dock that becomes energized because of electrical malfunction will trip the circuit breaker.
- Neighboring docks can also present a shock hazard. Make

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*Don't let a safety hazard dampen your summer fun.
Water and electricity are a dangerous mix.*

*Never touch any electrical appliances or outlets
when you are wet or standing in water.*

Learn more at

 **Safe
Electricity.org**

your neighbors aware of the need for safety inspections and maintenance. Marinas should comply with NFPA and NEC codes.

Here are a few additional tips to keep in mind for a boat's electrical system, particularly those with AC systems:

- Regardless of the size of boat, maintenance of the electrical system should be done by
- an ABYC Certified® Marine Technician, a professional familiar with marine electrical codes.
- Have a boat's electrical system checked at least once a year. Boats should also be checked when something is added to or removed from their systems.
- Boats with AC systems should have isolation transformers or equipment leakage circuit interrupter (ELCI) protection,

comply with ABYC standards, and should be serviced by an ABYC Certified Technician.

"The cost of boat and dock maintenance is definitely worth it when it comes to saving lives," adds Hall. "Take time to inspect all of the electrical systems on or near the water."

For more electrical safety information, visit SafeElectricity.org.

St. Joseph substation dedicated

The first of three new substations is now energized.

On May 18, our newest substation, located just south of St. Joseph, was officially dedicated. Eastern Illini's President/CEO Bob Hunzinger noted, "This new substation will help increase reliability and reduce

outage times. It will also provide for future load capacity in the St. Joseph and Sidney areas."

The St. Joseph facility is the first of three new substations currently under construction. It will be followed by similar facilities in Loda and in the Tolono area.

Eastern Illini's 28 substations connect our distribution system to the electric transmission grid. From there, we distribute electricity to your homes and businesses through about 4,500 miles of line. That's more than enough electric line to stretch all the way from Paxton to Los Angeles, California - and back!



Annual meeting recap

The Annual Meeting is one of the benefits of being part of an electric cooperative.

On Thursday, June 9, over 1,000 member/owners and their families (totaling over 2,000 people) attended Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative's 29th Annual Meeting.

The event was geared for family fun and featured several children's activities, including two bounce houses, an inflatable obstacle course, miniature golf, face painting, a model train display and bucket truck demonstrations.

Other entertainment included the Gene Trimble Band and a pair of costumed energy efficient light bulb characters - CFL Charlie and LED Lucy.

A full meal of fried chicken, roast beef, noodles, potatoes, corn and green beans was provided by Niemerg's Catering, and the Rocking K Chuckwagon provided lighter fare and snacks for those relaxing outside.

All registered member/owners also received a \$25 attendance credit for joining the festivities.

Eastern Illini lineman Terry Riggins discussed his upcoming trip to Bolivia to help impoverished parts of that country receive electricity for the first time. The trip is sponsored by NRECA International.

Multiple seminars were also held during the day. The wide-ranging topics included a session by Mary Dickinson, a University of Illinois Master Gardener, offering tips on growing plants that thrive in the shade. Other topics involved drone applications in agriculture, organic farming, electrical safety, and renewable energy options.

Several legislators attended the meeting to show their support for Eastern Illini and to mingle with the crowd. Among the attendees were Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs, State Representative Tom Bennett and Patrick Doggett, a staff member for U.S. Congressman Adam Kinzinger.

Harold Loy, of Beaverville, was re-elected to Eastern Illini's Board of Directors. Steve Gordon, of Rantoul, and Chad Larimore, of Bement were both elected to their first terms on the board. They replace Herb Aden, of Bement and Kay Horsch, of Dewey, whom each decided to not seek re-election.



Board Chairman Tom Schlatter, and Eastern Illini's President/CEO Bob Hunzinger discussed the current state of the cooperative during the business portion of the meeting. They noted that 2015 was a very good year for Eastern Illini.

Eastern Illini's annual meeting is a tangible benefit of being much more than simply a customer. You are a member - and an owner - of your locally owned and governed electric cooperative.







With parades, watermelon, hot dogs, and swimming under the hot sun, followed by the “oohs” and “aahs” from stunning fireworks, Independence Day is a time for celebration – but also a time to thank those who have fought for, and continue to fight for our freedom as Americans.

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative will be closed on Monday, July Fourth, to celebrate 240 years of independence!

Have a safe and wonderful 4th of July!

