

PowerLines

February 2018

Winter arrives with a vengeance

Winter arrived over the holidays with a vengeance this year! On a recent trip, I was conversing with a couple from eastern Montana. While talking about the recent cold spell, they indicated that in their area, the low had reached -46 degrees (air temperature not including wind chill). I guess the -15 to -20 degree temperatures experienced in our area could be considered a mini heat wave in comparison.

I mention the cold weather because it positively impacted year-end results. In last month's message, we mentioned the board of directors authorized using surplus net operating margins for 2017 to decrease future wholesale energy purchase costs from Prairie Power Inc., our power provider. Mainly due to the year-end cold weather, EIEC net operating margins were approximately \$200,000 better than expected, which will allow additional flexibility with the future cost of PPI power purchases.

Member/owners can expect to see the benefit of the 2017 surplus margins in a lower Power Cost Adjustment (PCA), compared to the original 2018 budget. This will be in lieu of a year-end margin rebate.

The PCA reduction may amount to nearly \$3 per 1000 kWh of usage, or nearly 3.6% total reduction in the wholesale power cost paid to PPI.

This is a tangible current benefit to member/owners. We strive to balance the return of member equity both in the short and long term.

During 2018, we will initiate a cost of service study (COSS). This study will:

- 1) Verify that the cooperative's total revenue needs for the near future will cover financial obligations and debt service requirements;
- 2) Ensure that the collection of member/owner revenues among the various rate classes is allocated fairly;
- 3) Evaluate data and determine if the fixed charge to provide electric service needs to be increased.



**MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT**

Stay safe and warm as we endure the rest of winter and be on the lookout for robins and cardinals – a sure sign of approaching springtime.

Another fail proof sign of spring is when the pitchers and catchers report to baseball training camps in early to mid-February.

Sincerely,

Bob Hunzinger

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SmartHub is your online and app portal to:

**View and pay your bill
Report an outage
Track your electric use
Update your account info**

Visit www.eiec.coop to get started!

Did you know?

You may be eligible for assistance in paying your winter electric bill.

Contact your local community action agency for more information, or give us a call at 800-824-5102 for a complete list.

Your Touchstone Energy[®]
Cooperative

Freeze More. Waste Less.

Your freezer could be the secret to keeping ingredients fresh, saving money, and reducing food waste.

About 40 percent of all food produced in the United States does not get eaten. That's like buying five bags of groceries and dropping two in the parking lot without bothering to pick them up.

Collectively, consumers are responsible for more wasted food than farmers, grocery stores, or any other part of the food supply chain. The lettuce that went bad, the leftovers you never got around to eating, that science experiment in the back of the refrigerator you're hoping will disappear—it all adds up. In fact, the average American household of four is throwing away \$120 each month in the form of uneaten food.

Fortunately, you can fix the problem—and improve your experience with food in the process. Wasting less food is about keeping ingredients fresh, being creative with what you have, and getting to know your food, especially how it ages and how it is best stored. And despite its bad rap, frozen food—and freezing food—is one of the keys to turning around the food-waste trend.

Food storage is really an ancient art. Cave dwellers buried their hunted game in snow. Storing food was a survival skill and the inspiration behind all sorts of delicious traditional foods that we still

enjoy today. In this day and age, we have it pretty easy. What those cavemen would have given for a freezer!

Buying frozen foods can help you, your supermarket, and the whole supply chain waste less. It can also make it easier to land healthy foods on your plate when you're looking for a quick and easy meal.

But are frozen foods as good for you as fresh? The consensus is, pretty much. Research shows that the nutrient profiles of frozen fruits and vegetables are nearly equivalent to those of fresh produce. In fact, because they are often picked at their peak ripeness and frozen within hours of harvesting, they may in some cases have more nutrients than raw produce that travels for days and degrades in refrigerators.

So now you understand why the freezer can be the food waste warrior's best friend. In the freezer, you can safely store food for long periods of time without feeling as though you have to eat it.

Sure, you had the best intentions when you bought ingredients for that chicken parmesan meal, but somehow the week has gone awry and now the chicken has been in the refrigerator for a few days, uncooked. What do you do? Pop it in the freezer. That extra cooked pasta you're not in the mood to eat tomorrow? Throw that in, too. Though some foods might alter in texture, pretty much anything can be frozen.

If you're going to throw something into the freezer for just a couple of days, you don't really need to worry about how you do it (the exception: fresh fruits and vegetables require a quick blanch or purée before freezing).

The more space in your freezer, the more air you're paying to cool. A well-stocked freezer holds the cold better than one that's empty.

If you tend to forget what's in the freezer, however, or are planning to leave the food in there for longer, it's worth taking the time to follow some basic guidelines to help preserve the quality of the food.

Generally speaking, if frozen food has been thawed in the refrigerator, it's fine to refreeze it, even if not cooked, though the quality might suffer a bit. If it was frozen raw and then cooked, you can refreeze the cooked portion. Leftovers should be frozen within three to four days. If food has been out of the refrigerator for less than two hours, it's still okay to refreeze it.

Fruits and vegetables can be frozen if no mold, yeastiness, or slime has developed and they haven't been left out of the refrigerator for more than six hours. Refreezing meats or seafood after thawing in water or in the microwave is not recommended.

The freezer can allow a once-a-week cook to provide meals all week or even longer. Quality does deteriorate over time, though, so it's best to eat frozen food within a few months.

Bottom line: Freezing is easy. The real challenge is remembering to use what you freeze! So many people "lose" things in the back of their freezer. One way to deal with this is to be super-organized. Another is to plan a "freezer night", so that you actually eat that beef stew before it is covered in ice crystals.

Food is simply too good to waste. We can make a major dent in what's currently getting tossed—and put a little cash back in our wallets at the same time.

Adapted from: The Waste-Free Kitchen Handbook



Energy efficiency in 2018

It is that time of year again — time to take down the holiday decorations, reflect on the past year, and set goals for the new year. Start this new year on the right foot by resolving to make energy efficient choices.

Set a clear and achievable goal for yourself. Whether you aim to reduce your energy use by five percent, save \$150 over last year, or compete with your neighbor for more efficient energy use — choose a goal that works for you.

If you are ready to take the next step in improving your home's energy efficiency, contact us for a home energy audit. Our experts will pinpoint exactly where your home is losing energy and what you can do to stop it, which can save you money on your future energy bills.

If you are more of a do-it-yourself type, you can conduct an energy audit yourself by making use of an on-line energy audit tool. Although this method is not as thorough as if done by a professional, it can still help you identify some of the easiest fixes and upgrades that can be done.

Here are a couple on-line energy audit tools that provide valuable information regarding saving energy.

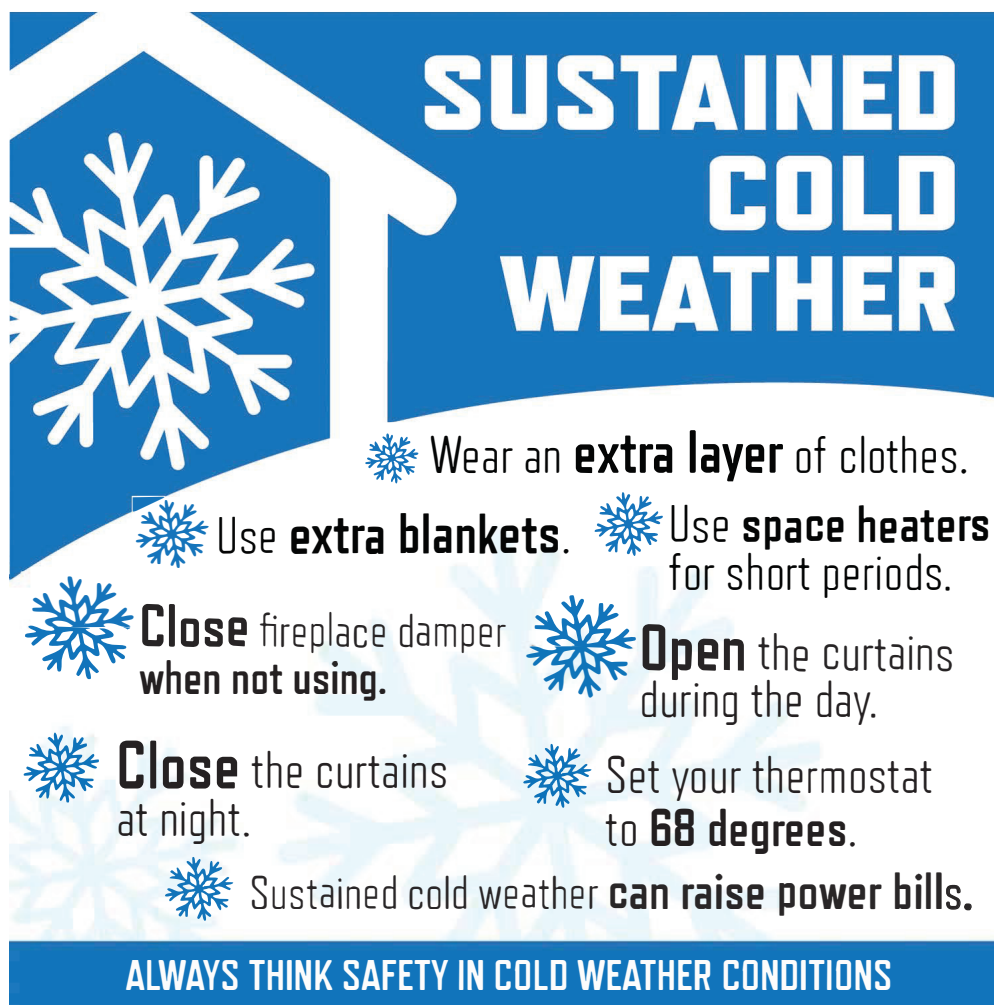
Home Energy Saver:

<http://homeenergysaver.lbl.gov/consumer/>

Home Energy Yardstick:

https://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=HOME_ENERGY_YARDSTICK.showGetStarted

Once equipped with an understanding of how your home compares to similar homes and where your energy is going to waste, it is time to move past planning and get to the fun part: making energy efficient choices!



SUSTAINED COLD WEATHER

- ❄️ Wear an **extra layer** of clothes.
- ❄️ Use **extra blankets**.
- ❄️ Use **space heaters** for short periods.
- ❄️ **Close** fireplace damper when not using.
- ❄️ **Open** the curtains during the day.
- ❄️ **Close** the curtains at night.
- ❄️ Set your thermostat to **68 degrees**.
- ❄️ Sustained cold weather **can raise power bills**.

ALWAYS THINK SAFETY IN COLD WEATHER CONDITIONS

Whether you choose a quick fix or a long-term investment, here are a few good starting points.

One of the most inexpensive energy efficient purchases is a power strip or smart strip. Televisions, computers, and even cell phone chargers continue to use electricity even when they're off, but this can be prevented with the flip of a switch if the devices are plugged into a power strip.

From a light bulb to a refrigerator, upgrading outdated and inefficient appliances can help you save as well. Make the switch to energy efficient LED light bulbs, or better yet, EnergyStar rated appliances to put a serious dent in your energy use. Replacing conventional bulbs with LED alternatives can add up to significant savings.

Residential LEDs — especially Energy Star-rated products — use at least 75 percent less energy and last 25 times longer than incandescent lighting, according to the Energy Department.

Weather-proofing your home can also reduce your annual energy use. This can include installing weather stripping on doors, caulking around windows and adding extra insulation in your attic. Replacing old windows is also an excellent way to save energy.

Finally, check your furnace filter regularly and replace it if it is dirty. A clogged filter can slow the flow of air and reduce the efficiency and the life of your furnace.

Cooperative Benefits: Nominating Petitions Available

Nominating petitions will be available on February 22, 2018 for the June 7, 2018 director election.

The following member/owners were nominated by the Board and have agreed to serve on the 2018 Credentials Committee: Herb Aden, Newman; Dale Gillette, Chatsworth; Terry Kaeb, Hoopeston; Roy Johnson, Penfield; and Mark Waldbeser, Loda.

The Credentials Committee will meet at Eastern Illini's headquarters in Paxton on Thursday, April 12, 2018, to review the qualifications of all candidates who file nominating petitions to determine their eligibility to serve as an Eastern Illini director.

Directors in Directorate Districts 3, 4, and 6 will be elected at Eastern Illini's Annual Meeting on June 7, 2018. Incumbent directors Steve Meenen of Melvin, District 3; Bruce Ristow of Cissna Park, District 4; and Brad Ludwig

of Fithian, District 6, have indicated they will seek reelection.

Nominating petitions can be picked up beginning at 8 a.m. on Thursday, February 22, 2018, at Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, 330 W. Ottawa, Paxton. Each co-op member who desires to be elected to the Board of Directors must have a petition signed by not less than 25 members of the cooperative. Petitions must be filed at Eastern Illini's headquarters in Paxton by 5 p.m. on Friday, April 6, 2018.

The nominating process is conducted in accordance with the following provision of the EIEC 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 25 members and filed with the Secretary/Treasurer of the Cooperative not less than sixty (60) days prior to the annual*

meeting of members. Nominations from the floor shall not be permitted. The Secretary/Treasurer of the Cooperative shall cause to be prepared and posted at the principal office of the Cooperative at least forty-five (45) 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/Treasurer shall also have printed in or mailed with the said notice of the meeting or separately not less than seven (7) 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.



Eastern Illini's Board is made up of co-op member/owners just like you. Pictured, from left to right, are board members Steve Gordon (Rantoul), Brad Ludwig (Fithian), Chad Larimore (Bememt), Harold Loy (Beaverville), Jay Hageman (Fairmont), Kevin Moore (Hoopeston), Steve Meenen (Melvin), Tom Schlatter (Chairman from Chatsworth), and Bruce Ristow (Cissna Park).

People to know at Eastern Illini:

Denny Kingren

Dennis Kingren handles the warehouse at Eastern Illini, but that's just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to his job responsibilities. Very seldom do you see Denny without a hat adorning his head and that's how his work goes too. He wears many hats.

He can be found ordering and receiving materials, inventorying incoming shipments, verifying that resources and supplies are available when needed for jobs in the field, and providing equipment for Eastern Illini crews. At other times, Denny can be found finishing a concrete project, repairing a gate or helping out another employee.

For over 30 years, Denny has been a part of the electric cooperative family. He began his career with Eastern Illinois Power Cooperative in 1986. His home building expertise and knowing the right people, landed him his first job at the co-op.

He started out in Member Services, spent time as an apprentice journeyman lineman and found his niche when the warehouse position became available and he's been doing that ever since. He enjoys the diversity of his position. There's always something new or different to do on a daily basis.

His greatest challenges at work are the storms. Everyone at EIEC works together to get member/owner's electricity back on as quickly as possible and that takes a team effort.

Everyone knows Denny and Denny knows everyone. He's never met a stranger. He's the type of person when he enters an elevator full of people, he'll find out your name, the name of your children and all about you before you step off the elevator and he'll remember you, so the next time he sees you around he'll greet you as a friend.

His friends recount a snowmobiling trip Denny took to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. His fellow snowmobilers were always waiting on Denny to come out of the restaurants where they dined, because Denny struck up numerous conversations with the locals and made an abundance of new friends.

His people skills have served him well throughout his career. He has formed strong relationships with people both inside and outside Eastern Illini. He goes out of his way to serve the needs of member/owners and employees. Much of what he does happens behind the scenes and Denny is modest to take credit for his many accomplishments.

"You won't find a more dedicated, loyal employee than Denny," said Mike Zalaker, Vice President of Procurement and Physical Resources at EIEC. "I've worked with Denny for over 30 years and greatly appreciate his valuable contributions to Eastern Illini over the years. He goes above and beyond to do his job and he does it well."

Denny has the keen ability to interact with people at all levels of management, staff and member/owners. It might be his quirky sense of humor that endears people to him. He knows how to get a laugh, make light of serious issues and express humor through a witty pun, good joke or playful prank.

Another hat worn by Denny is that of Fire Chief of Paxton. He's been with the fire department since 1973 and has served as chief since 2002.

As a career firefighter he's seen it all and he never knows when the pager is



going to tone out and what he'll find. In a matter of minutes, he can go from being a civilian to dealing with a devastating house fire. It's all in a day's work.

Denny was born and raised in Paxton. He currently lives in Paxton, with his wife Jennie. He has two sons, one daughter-in-law and almost four grandchildren. His fourth grandchild will be arriving in June.

Denny enjoys snowmobiling in the winter months and in the summer, you'll find him on his boat with his grandchildren on Clinton Lake.

Denny likes working at EIEC. He counts his co-workers as his friends. Denny takes helping the member/owners seriously and he truly believes in the cooperative mission to provide reliable service at a reasonable cost. Member/owners are #1 in his book and he always aims to deliver on that mission.

As Denny begins his 31st year at EIEC and his 16th year as Paxton Fire Chief, he is hopeful that 2018 will be a good year.





We're not your typical utility company.
Eastern Illini is your local, not-for-profit electric cooperative.
We don't have customers, we have member/owners.
As such, you're not only our number one priority, you're the only reason we're here.
Call us anytime at 1-800-824-5102 or visit us at www.eiec.coop.

Eastern Illini is your local, member/owned connection to powerful solutions.
We're always on for you!

