

PowerLines

July 2023

36th Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting of Members



Travis Glazik, Eastern Illini lineman, gives Norma Matson, 98 year old Eastern Illini member, a ride in the bucket truck at the Ford County annual meeting event.

We want to thank Eastern Illini members who attended the Annual Meeting events in Tuscola, at the Ford County Fairgrounds, and at the Iroquois County Fairgrounds. It was great to be able to enjoy a sit-down fried chicken meal and talk with members, friends, and neighbors. We hope everyone enjoyed the meal and music. Hats off to our employees who went above and beyond to ensure everything ran smoothly. The final Annual Meeting event at the Iroquois County Fairgrounds culminated with the Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative business meeting which began at 6:00 p.m. in the 4-H Building.

Kevin Moore, Chairman of the EIEC Board of Directors, confirmed the notice and proof of mailing for the meeting. The meeting minutes and Treasurer's Report were approved. Members heard an update from President/CEO Bob Hunzinger. He provided insight regarding the most recent rate study and the proposed changes to the rate structure planned for March 2024. He also shared

an update on renewable energy and the new meter installation project set to begin in July. Guy Hall, attorney for Eastern Illini, determined that quorum had been achieved. He announced that two members of the Board of Directors ran uncontested and were reelected for three year terms. He also reported that the District 2 director was elected to replace Tom Schlatter, who retired.

DISTRICT 2: Mark Slagel, Strawn
DISTRICT 5: Kevin, Moore, Hoopston
DISTRICT 9: Lauri Quick, Tolono

Since there was no unfinished business or new business, Chairman Moore thanked members for attending and adjourned the meeting. The EIEC Board held a reorganization meeting following the annual meeting and elected officers.

CHAIRMAN: Kevin Moore
VICE CHAIRMAN: Bruce Ristow
SECRETARY/TREASURER: Steve Meenen
ASST. SECRETARY/TREASURER: Chad Larimore



Joey Gady, Eastern Illini apprentice lineman, and his dad, AT&T lineman, Dan Gady.

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- Reliable, affordable, and fast Internet
- Pay your bill your way: when, where, and how
- How to avoid home repair scams
- Celebrating 4th of July



- View your bill
- Make a payment
- Compare usage by month
- Review known issues
- Report an outage
- Update account information

SmartHub is available online or through an application on your cell phone. Sign up today!

Energy Efficiency Tip:

Summer is a prime opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors. To reduce home energy use, avoid using your oven and use the grill instead. You can also avoid using the oven with tasty no-bake recipes. Get creative in the kitchen (or backyard) and find new ways to save energy!

Your Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative 

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative * 330 W. Ottawa * Paxton, IL * 60957

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INTERNET: NO LONGER A LUXURY, NOW IT'S A NECESSITY

Internet from Nextlink

A BETTER CHOICE FOR INTERNET IS
NOW AVAILABLE FROM NEXTLINK!

50 Mbps
INTERNET
\$49⁹⁵
PER MONTH

Want something faster?
Double your speed for only
\$20 more per month!



FAST SPEEDS UP TO 500 Mbps!



NO DATA CAPS OR OVERTIME FEES



FULL COVERAGE WI-FI



30-DAY MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE

**Special Offer for Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative Members:
1ST MONTH FREE & FREE INSTALLATION**

As technology progresses in our world today, one of the most crucial tools people use for communication, entertainment, and information is the Internet. With a world population of over 6 billion people, more than half of the earth's population is connected, which is quite a feat. Today, numerous individuals and communities depend on the Internet and cannot imagine their lives without it.

The United States, which boasts one of the largest on-line markets globally, has over 307 million Internet users. The private sector is largely responsible for providing Internet connectivity across the country, using various technologies with alternating speeds and costs.

However, many communities, especially rural communities in the US, still lack sufficient infrastructure to enable their access to high-speed Internet, which

severely affects them as a high-speed Internet connection is crucial to being a part of the world today. Although broadband Internet access has increased in much of the U.S., nearly 1 in 4 rural Americans still say it is a major problem in their community.

Studies show that improved access to high-speed Internet connectivity in rural areas increases jobs, population growth, more business formations and innovations, lower unemployment rates, and improved cost of living.

The reasons for lack of rural Internet access are very familiar to many Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative members:

- 1) expensive communication infrastructure,
 - 2) low rural population density, and
 - 3) lack of alternative Internet providers.
- It goes without saying, there is discontent with rural Internet realities.

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative has formed a strategic alliance with Nextlink that will bring enhanced broadband and phone to residential and business members across our 10-county region in east central Illinois. Under this agreement, Nextlink and EIEC will work together to expand broadband services for the region.

NextLink is constructing a fiber-optic network over 400 miles in length through the EIEC service area as well as pervasive wireless Internet coverage providing Internet download speeds of at least 100 Mbps and up to 1 Gbps in certain areas.

"Nextlink Internet is committed to serving rural markets with the highest Internet speeds possible along with great customer service," said Bill Baker, Chief Executive Officer of Nextlink Internet. "With its long-standing history of providing electric service to its members, we felt that EIEC's mission and focus on customer service aligned perfectly with NextLink approach to providing high speed Internet and phone service."

"We are very optimistic that working with NextLink Internet through this mutually beneficial agreement will bring a much needed service to our members" said Bob Hunzinger, President/CEO at EIEC. "The expansion and upgrades related to Internet options in our service territory are long overdue and will be highly valued by our members."

According to data from the Federal Communications Commission, 39% of people living in rural areas lack access to high-speed broadband, compared to just 4% of urban Americans.

Rural Americans need Internet service for telework, telehealth, and remote learning. Remote work/work from home is estimated to encompass 25% of the workforce by 2025. Reliable and affordable Internet access will be key to achieving remote work in rural areas.

SPECIAL OFFER FOR EASTERN ILLINI MEMBERS

Reliable, affordable, and fast Internet

The special offer for Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative members from Nextlink is free installation and one month free. Getting Internet access for Eastern Illini members is happening fast. The Gibson City area as well as the Pesotum area are currently signing up members for Internet service.

The Nextlink Tower Deployment team will be hard at work this summer establishing another 30+ towers in the Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative service area. Those towers are on schedule to all go live by the end of September. They will offer members speeds up to 100Mb, and hopefully by end of year, speeds as high as 1 Gig for some members.

If you live near these towns in the EIEC service area, you are on track to be able to sign up for NextLink Internet service later this summer:

- Arthur
- Bement
- Clifton
- Donovan
- Gilman
- Mahomet
- Monticello
- Paxton
- Tipton
- Tuscola

Members will receive promotional information from Nextlink when service is available. Members can also check Internet availability at:

nextlinkinternet.com

The Davis family of Gibson City had been patiently waiting for NextLink service as far back as February of 2022 when the Eastern Illini and Nextlink strategic alliance was announced. In early May, they thought their wish for reliable, affordable, and fast Internet service had come true. At first a heavily wooded forest area prohibited the line of sight to their home and all hope was lost for fast Internet. After talking with Eastern Illini and Nextlink customer service, the Davis family was able to connect to

Nextlink from another tower and they are up and running with reliable, affordable, and fast Internet.

As the world grows more digitally dependent, so do Eastern Illini members. More and more of life's necessary activities have moved on-line. Internet service from Nextlink is a pathway to education and a highway to information that is reliable, affordable, and fast while empowering members.



PRODUCTS & SERVICES

INTERNET PACKAGES

	NEXT 50 Up to 50/10 Mbps	\$49.95/mo.
	NEXT 100 Up to 100/20 Mbps	\$69.95/mo.
	NEXT 300 Up to 300/30 Mbps	\$89.95/mo.
	NEXT 500 Up to 500/50 Mbps	\$119.95/mo.

INSTALLATION FREE!

PHONE PACKAGES

	STANDARD VOICE	\$14.95/mo.
	Local & LD Calling with Features	
	SELECT VOICE	\$19.95/mo.
	Standard Voice with additional Features	

ADD-ONS

	WI-FI ROUTER	\$ 8.99/mo.
	WI-FI EXTENDER	\$ 4.99/mo.
	PROTECTION PLAN	\$ 4.99/mo.

Special Offer for Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative Members:
1ST MONTH FREE
& FREE INSTALLATION

YOU COULD SAVE AN EXTRA \$30 EVERY MONTH

Enroll in ACP through NextLink to see if you qualify for additional savings. nextlinkinternet.com/acp

Business, Commercial and Enterprise plans are also Available!

217-606-8792
nextlinkinternet.com

EASTERN ILLINI HAS MANY EASY AND CONVENIENT WAYS TO PAY

Pay your bill your way: when, where, and how



To pay now, go to www.eiec.coop and under My Account, select Payment Options. Press the red rectangle that says Pay Now and enter your information.

Pay in person: Stop by our office at 330 West Ottawa in Paxton during office hours which are 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. On holidays and weekends, feel free to use our night deposit drop box in the front of the building.

Prepaid Advantage: This pay-as-you-go plan offers the opportunity to self manage payments in the amounts and time frame you want. Electric use is calculated and billed daily. Members using Prepaid Advantage must keep a minimum credit balance. Contact us at 800-824-5102 to sign up.

Off site payment locations: You can pay your Eastern Illini electric bill with cash at these local retailers: Dollar General, Family Dollar, CVS, Walgreen's or Walmart. An electronic or paper copy of your bar code is needed which can be found in SmartHub. Sign up for SmartHub at www.eiec.coop The retailer will scan the bar code and take your payment. A service charge is assessed by the retailer for using this payment method.

Eastern Illini bills are due on the 17th of every month. For the remainder of 2023, bills are generated on the following days:

- July 31, 2023
- August 30, 2023
- September 28, 2023
- October 31, 2023
- November 29, 2023
- December 28, 2023

Paperless billing is available. You will receive your bill electronically, so you can pay anytime and anywhere for on-the-go convenience.

Running errands, taking kids to practices, stopping by a family member's home, and filling up your vehicle with gas, is this what your evenings look like? We understand that time is precious, so we make it convenient for you to pay your bill by offering a wide variety of payment options—which allows you to choose where, when, and how!

Pay with SmartHub: View and pay your bill with your Smartphone or other device. You can find this FREE app in your app store. The app is easy to use and allows you to pay your bill from anywhere and at anytime using a checking account or credit/debit card. Sign up today at www.eiec.coop

SmartHub also gives you valuable information about your electric use. It provides account management at your fingertips. You are able to view your billing history and see your current bill. Using SmartHub you can report an outage. Reporting service issues is also a snap with SmartHub.

Pay by phone: Call 800-824-5102 and "PRESS #1" to make a payment. From there you have several options to keep your payment preferences up to date:

- **PRESS #1** to check your account status
- **PRESS #2** to make a payment
- **PRESS #3** to edit recurring payment information
- **PRESS #4** to edit stored payment information
- **PRESS #5** to update your pin number

Pay by mail: We send a return envelope with your bill, so you can return your payment to EIEC P.O. Box 96, Paxton, IL 60957

Automated payment: You can have funds automatically deducted monthly from your checking, savings, or credit card.

Pay now: A quick and simple way to pay your bill on-line. All you need is your account number and a payment method.

SAVVY HOMEOWNERS ASK MANY QUESTIONS

How to avoid home repair scams

Your home represents one of the largest financial investments you may make in your lifetime. Of course, you want to take care of that investment. But when repairs need to be made, it's also important to know you're getting a good service for your money.

Home repair scammers are most likely to propose fixes for driveway sealant, duct cleaning, landscaping, leaky foundations, or furnace and roofing repair. But there are just as many opportunities to be ripped off as there are things in your home to repair.

Here are five ways to avoid home repair and home improvement scams.

KNOW THE SIGNS

Home improvement or repair scams come in many forms, but their similarities make them easy to avoid if you know the signs. Most home improvement fraud involves:

- Intentionally providing false information about the home repair.
- Publishing false advertisements.
- Increasing the terms and costs of a project midstream.
- Or not providing the services for which they have been paid.

Here are a few things to look out for when hiring home repair or home improvement professionals:

- **Beware of anyone who knocks on your door** and offers immediate services. A true professional has a client schedule and is too busy to work door to door.
- **Beware of contractors with "extra materials."** Anyone who comes to your door with leftover materials from another job up the road is likely pedaling sub-par materials that will end up causing more damage than good.



- **Beware of cash-only workers.** Licensed contractors may offer discounts for cash payments, but they will also accept checks and credit cards. Don't engage with people who want to avoid a paper trail. Always hire professionals who are licensed, bonded, and insured in Illinois.
- **Beware of pushy salesmen.** If someone is offering a "today only" deal, then it's probably too good to be true. Don't feel pressured to decide or sign a contract immediately.
- **Beware of anyone who offers to drive you to the bank** to withdraw funds to pay for the work.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

It's easier than ever to research local home repair professionals to avoid scams. Read online reviews—many will have reviews on Google, Angi, or Porch.com. Ask for references and call them. You can also check the Better Business Bureau to see if anyone has filed complaints about the company.

Get written estimates for specific projects from several businesses you trust and compare them. We suggest calling at least three comparable businesses.

ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Even after you choose a contractor, it is your consumer right to ask questions.

Confirm their business identity, including their permanent address, how long they've been in business, and what year they were initially licensed. Ask whether they offer a guarantee or warranty for their services and how long such a warranty would last.

REVIEW THE CONTRACT

After getting a written estimate, make sure to get your contract in writing, as well. Review it carefully to make sure everything you discussed in the estimate is included and the terms haven't changed.

DON'T PAY THE FULL AMOUNT

Make sure the work you need is done to the proper standards and to completion before handing over the final payment. The Better Business Bureau recommends paying no more than 30% of the contracted cost up front as a down payment. Don't make your final payment until you have inspected the final quality of their work.

Most homeowners believe that they are too savvy to be ripped off by con artists, but an average of 6,124 home repair scams are reported to the Federal Trade Commission annually for a total loss of \$13.8 million. In Illinois in 2021, 48% of the home repair scams reported involve a loss of money. The average loss to a homeowner was \$1,550.

**“Ask not what your country can do for you
— ask what you can do for your country.”**

— President John F. Kennedy



As we celebrate our freedom this Fourth of July, let us not forget to honor the men and women who have answered the call to preserve it.

