PowerLines
March 2020

March: Let the sun shine

March is a mercurial weather month – it can be a continuation of winter, an early start to spring, or as is most typical, a combination of both. The three-month National Weather Service Outlook forecast through May shows near normal temperatures, but the possibility of above average precipitation. Going into June, the projection is for warmer and wetter than normal weather. Let's hope we don't have a repeat of the late and rainy spring like 2019.

March is a month in which the sun's rays begin to feel much warmer as its daily trek across the sky becomes higher and begins its journey to become more directly overhead. Due to generous federal and state renewable incentives, EIEC now has over 100 member owned solar installations on its system, with many more at some stage in the application process. During 2019, we doubled the number of connected installations that previously existed.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As a cooperative, EIEC has the obligation to treat all members in an equitable manner. We also must comply with various federal, state, and local (EIEC bylaws) requirements. When the cooperative adopted its net metering program (up to 10 kW dc rating) almost 15 years ago, it included a limit on the total number of such installations. This would allow members that wanted to install solar the ability to do so, but also provide a means to not overly burden all members. Your board of directors modified this limit a few years ago (which allowed a slight increase in the total number of net metering installations). Presently, we are nearly halfway to this limit. Staff and the board will be reviewing options as we approach the limit.

Reaching the limit does not mean that additional solar net metering installations would be prohibited; however, the compensation method for excess solar generation back into the EIEC system would be changed, most likely reduced. The method of compensation to existing systems may also be affected. We expect members to continue to express interest in solar installations into the near future, and we will work with them to help achieve their goals. If you are considering solar, please involve EIEC in the process at the beginning stages to optimize your installation. Systems larger than 10 kW have additional study and interconnection parameters and lead-times, and necessitates involvement of our power supplier, Prairie Power, Inc.

In his state of the state address in January, Governor Pritzker said this about renewables, "Our spring agenda must also address the pressing issue of adopting new clean energy legislation that reduces carbon pollution, promotes renewable energy, and accelerates electrification of our transportation sector…. Urgent action is needed — but let me be clear, the old ways of negotiating energy legislation are over. It's time to put consumers and climate first. I'm not going to sign an energy bill written by the utility companies."

It will be interesting to follow what legislative initiatives result from the 2020 Illinois legislation session.

Celebrate the vernal equinox on March 19th, and cheer on your favorite major league baseball team as the season gets off to an early start in late March this year.

Sincerely,

Bob Hunzinger

In this issue:

7 Cooperative Principles

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Member Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training, & Information
6. Cooperation among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative * 330 W. Ottawa * Paxton, IL * 60957
800-824-5102 * info@eiec.coop * www.eiec.coop * facebook.com/easternillini

Nominating petitions available March 5

Nominating petitions will be available on Thursday, March 5, 2020 for the June 18, 2020 director election.

The following members have been appointed by the Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative board of directors to serve a 1-year term on the 2020 Credentials Committee: Skip Betka of Rankin, Megan Deck of Hoopeston, Jeremy Hoel of Tolono, Harold Loy of Beaverville, and Tim Totheroh of Wellington.

The Credentials Committee will meet at the cooperatives' headquarters on Tuesday, April 21, 2020, to review the qualifications of all candidates who file nominating petitions to determine their eligibility to serve as directors of the cooperative.

Directors in Directorate Districts, 2, 5, and 9 will be elected at the June 18, 2020 Annual Meeting being held in Paxton, IL. Incumbent directors Tom Schlatter of Chatsworth, District 2; Kevin Moore of Hoopeston, District 5; and Lauri Quick of Tolono, District 9, have indicated they will seek reelection.

Nominating petitions can be picked up beginning at 7 a.m. on Thursday, March 5, 2020, at Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, 330 W. Ottawa, Paxton. Each 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 no later than 4 p.m. on Friday, April 17, 2020. The nominating process is conducted in accordance with the following provisions 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 twenty-five (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 candidates listed in the order of priority determined by the date and time when the Cooperative received the respective completed candidate information shall be printed in or mailed with the notice of the meeting. In the event that multiple candidates' completed information is received on the same date and at the same time for the same directorate district, the ballot order shall be determined by lot conducted by the Board of Directors. 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. If a particular directorate district does not have a contested election, that director can be elected by a voice vote as provided in Section 2.6 of Article II of the Bylaws. In such case, the name of the candidate for that specific directorate district shall not be required to be placed on the specimen and actual ballots.

The Board of Directors for Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative is made up of cooperative members just like you. Pictured, from left to right, back row: Bruce Ristow, Cissna Park; Chad Larimore, Bement; Tyler Finegan, Ashkum; Steve Meenen, Melvin; Kevin Moore, Hoopeston; front row: Brad Ludwig, Fithian; Tom Schlatter, Chatsworth; Steve Gordon, Rantoul; and Lauri Quick, Tolono.

SPRING IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Three ways to electrify your lawn care

Spring is just around the corner, and you can practically smell the freshly cut grass. If you're in the market to upgrade your lawn care equipment, you may want to consider electric or battery powered options.

Gas-powered lawn mowers and trimmers may be your go-to, but times they are a changin'. Electric lawn care equipment options are becoming more popular than ever, offering consumers faster charging times, longer battery life, and quieter, greener products compared to their gas-powered counterparts. Here are three ways you can electrify your lawn care this spring.

Electric Lawn Mowers

Electric lawn mowers have come a long way over the last few years. Early models required corded connections, which were tricky to manage—but the cord has been cut. Newer cordless electric mowers are certainly more expensive than gas-powered mowers, but much of the upfront cost can be recovered since electricity is a less expensive fuel than gas, and electric engines generally require less maintenance than gas engines. Cordless electric mowers typically range from $200 to $500.

Electric mowers are suitable for most lawn care needs, with batteries that typically require about one to two hours to fully charge, and most batteries can run for a full hour. That said, if you have a large yard (half an acre or larger), a gas-powered option may be best to suit your needs.

Electric Trimmers

Cordless electric string trimmers are a great option for most lawns. Traditionally, like lawn mowers, string trimmers have typically been powered by gas. But new versions of electric trimmers are improving and are now considered worthy competitors of gas-powered models.

Cordless electric trimmers are much quieter and easier to use, and most batteries last about 30 to 45 minutes. So, if you have a lot of space to trim, you may want to consider a back-up battery or plan to work in short bursts. If you're interested in purchasing an electric trimmer, the main factors to consider are the battery's life, charge time, and power. Costs can vary depending on your needs, but you can find a quality version for about $100.

Electric Leaf Blowers

After cutting and trimming your lawn, you'll need to clear off those walkways and patios for the finishing touch. If you don't want to deal with the maintenance of a gas-powered blower or the restraints of a corded blower, a cordless electric version is a great option.

Cordless electric leaf blowers are easy to maneuver and lightweight, but they don't offer quite as much power as gas-powered and corded blowers. If your leaf blowing and clearing needs are minimal, a cordless electric leaf blower can get the job done. Costs for a cordless electric blower vary depending on power and battery quality, but you can purchase a dependable model for about $150.

If you're looking to electrify your lawn care equipment, be sure to do your homework. Search online for the latest reviews, and check trusted websites like ConsumerReports.org.

With a little research, you'll be well on your way to Lawn of the Month – with minimal maintenance, less hassle and decreased noise for which your neighbors will thank you!

UNRULY TREES AND POWER LINES: WE'RE ON IT

Tree trimming prevents outages

We love trees
They beautify our landscape, provide shade and are an essential part of nature. When you see us out trimming trees, know that we are doing so to keep you safe and prevent any service issues now or in the future.

Just like the human body, EIEC's electrical system needs constant maintenance to keep it healthy. When something goes wrong, your lights go dark. Trees and branches pose a tremendous threat to any electrical system. That's why Eastern Illini has a comprehensive tree trimming program called vegetation management. Our vegetation management program aims to minimize power outages.

Too close for comfort
Although most trees do not present a problem, some of them grow into or crowd power lines or other utility equipment. When greenery becomes too close for comfort, we have to address it because overgrowth can interfere with power distribution and create a fire hazard. Power lines can give off a spark or arc that may land on a nearby branch and ignite. Additionally, the lights in your house may flicker when tree branches brush lines during high winds. Stormy weather can also cause limbs to break off and land on power lines. It is our job to ensure trees, branches and limbs are a safe distance from power lines.

Clear power lines make it easier and safer for lineworkers to access lines and fix problems that may occur. When clearing around lines, we make sure proper pruning techniques are used to preserve tree health as much as possible. Pruning is the first line of defense against unruly trees, although sometimes a tree must be removed. This is a last resort for certain scenarios: when a fast-growing tree is located directly under a power line or for trees that are leaning, in decline, or cracked or split.

Why are my trees getting trimmed?
As an electric co-op, we want to maintain the appropriate clearance between trees and power lines. Power lines sometimes sag as they expand in the summer due to air temperature and heavy use. Clearances around the lines must account for this, as well as wind, which causes the lines to sway. We also prune to a distance greater than the minimum clearances to account for future growth, movement of trees or power lines due to wind, conductor sag due to heat and line loading.

Here's how you can help
Be conscientious about where you plant trees on your property. Trees should never be planted directly under overhead power lines.

Small trees eventually become large trees so it's best to plant all trees at least 25 feet away from lines. Trees that grow taller should be planted at least 45 feet away.

Give us a call if you have questions or concerns about tree trimming. We'll keep doing our part to improve reliability and we hope you will too.

TRIMMED TREES =
BETTER SERVICE

When you see us trimming trees near power lines, know that we are doing so because:

- **Tree and foliage overgrowth** can interfere with power distribution.
- **Power lines** can give off a spark or arc that may land on a nearby branch and ignite.
- The lights in your house may flicker when tree branches brush power lines during **high winds.**
- **Stormy weather** can cause nearby limbs to break off and land on power lines.
- Unobstructed power lines make it easier and **safer** for lineworkers to **maintain equipment** or **restore power**.

Troy Allen and Matt Bachman

Vehicle repair, done well, has always been a thinking person's vocation.

Working through problems requires logic and inference and, now more than ever, the ability to troubleshoot difficult-to-diagnose digital malfunctions is extremely important. It's estimated that 80 percent of service truck repairs today are electrical, having to do with sensors and emissions-control systems. But the job of vehicle technician still has a tough physical element that takes a combination of smarts, stamina and strength.

When you meet Troy Allen and Matt Bachman, vehicle service technicians at Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, your first impression might be that they are reserved, modest, and unpretentious, which is all true. But dig a little deeper and you will find dedicated, determined, discerning individuals who aren't afraid to roll up their sleeves and get the job done. Between the two of them, they maintain 22 EIEC service trucks, along with 10 light to medium duty trucks, 5 other vehicles, aerial man-lifts and derricks with gas and diesel engines, hydraulic systems, hydraulic tools, and lawn mowers, weed eaters, and chain saws. They are known for their abilities to problem solve and everyone at the co-op relies on them to not only do repairs correctly, but get things done as quickly as possible, so linemen can be in the field restoring power, maintaining lines, installing equipment, and serving members.

Both Troy and Matt say that every day brings new challenges that require strong technical skills and the ability to communicate well. A love of cars and hands-on work are reasons Troy and Matt do what they do, but knowing they are making a positive impact on keeping linemen in the field is what brings them back day after day. Service trucks need maintenance every 250 hours, so Troy and Matt's work is never done.

They perform inspections, handle servicing, and scheduled maintenance, troubleshoot, repair or replace, and adjust and test service vehicles, so they are always dependable, reliable, and ready for use.

Troy and Matt perform tire repair and replacement following strict safety guidelines. They handle tune-ups, transmission servicing, brake replacement, repairs and adjustments on gasoline and diesel vehicles, always making sure all vehicles and equipment are ready for daily operations. They also maintain the shop and all the equipment in the maintenance facility.

"We are fortunate to have such dedicated mechanics at Eastern Illini," says Chase Sanders, Manager of Procurement and Physical Resources. "Troy and Matt are hard working and good at their jobs."

Troy and Matt have been mechanics for many years. Matt has been employed by Eastern Illini for almost 20 years. Troy joined EIEC in October 2018. Both agree that they've seen significant change in the vehicle repair industry.

Today's vehicles contain dozens of interconnected computers, so it's nearly impossible to repair a vehicle without hooking it up to diagnostic equipment or at the very least a laptop computer.

Vehicle service technicians still need to know how to strip down and reassemble mechanical components without damaging bolt threads, warping flat surfaces, or cracking soft metal, but also how to operate and interpret these many-layered computer applications.

A proliferation of electronic controls for the engine, suspension, steering, brakes, and nearly everything else has made already complicated motor vehicles even more so.

Both Troy and Matt are Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative members. Matt resides in Loda and Troy resides in Ludlow. Matt just returned from a vacation in Florida. One of his favorite places to visit is Maui. In his heyday, Matt enjoyed stock car racing open wheeled modifieds. He's put that hobby on the back burner for less expensive around the house projects that keep him busy.

Troy enjoys drag racing his 1970s Monte Carlo and he sometimes drives his 1973 Impala station wagon to work. Troy has on his bucket list to some day sky dive. Matt won't be joining him for that adventure.

Whether they are turning a wrench or reading a diagnostic scanner, Troy and Matt have a deep commitment to maintaining machines of all kinds at Eastern Illini.

When it comes to severe weather...

hope for the best, but prepare for the worst.

You can begin your preparation by assembling an emergency preparedness kit, which includes items to help keep your family safe and comfortable during a power outage. Your kit should include items such as water, non-perishable food, flashlight, batteries, blankets and a first aid kit.

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

_____ Drinking water & food
_____ Blankets, pillows & clothing
_____ Basic first-aid supplies
_____ Medications
_____ Basic toiletries
_____ Flashlights
_____ Battery-operated radio
_____ Extra supply of batteries
_____ Cell phone with chargers
_____ Cash and credit cards
_____ Basic tools (duct tape, wrench, etc.)
_____ Important documents & numbers
_____ Toys, books & games
_____ Baby supplies
_____ Pet supplies