

PowerLines

November 2019

Autumn, Harvest, and Happy Thanksgiving

During the mid to latter portion of October, the diminishing daylight hours, the chill in the air, the start of a this year's late harvest season, and yes even major league baseball playoffs all indicate we are well into the fall season – and the calendar has now already turned to November! If you are in the process of completing harvest and involved with field preparation for next year, please remember to take the proper and necessary safety precautions.

This month brings us two very important holidays, Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving. Let's all remember to take time to thank a veteran for their service to our country. As many of us travel for the Thanksgiving holidays, please be safe and enjoy your family time and fellowship together. Take time to reflect upon, and share with others, what you are thankful for.

At Eastern Illini we are thankful for you, our members (who are also the owners of the cooperative), the nine directors that constitute our governing board, and our loyal and extremely dedicated employees.

To follow up with information that I shared in my August column, EIEC staff and board members have been reviewing our current and projected financial forecast along with the results of the 2018 mid-year Cost of Service Study.

In September, the board voted to approve a small increase in the base charge for all member rate classes, effective with the

January 2020 electric use that is billed to members in early February. Most of our members are on Rate 1 and will see a \$2.50 monthly increase in the base charge, which equates to about a 1.4% overall bill increase for a typical 1,000 kWh per month consumption level.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

EIEC has not adjusted its portion of the rates since 2013. During this time the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has increased by at least a cumulative 10%.

Your cooperative has worked diligently to keep expenditures at appropriate and reasonable levels while improving the system condition and reliability. We have been successful in that effort, but now need to adjust the revenue stream to account

for inflation and other increased costs. We expect to complete a comprehensive rate review during the first half of 2020.

For our members that were receiving electric service during the years 1992 and 1993, capital credit checks (a unique feature of cooperatives that is a return of member contributed equity) will be sent out in early December.

On behalf of our employees and our Board of Directors, we wish you a safe and very Happy Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,

Bob Hunzinger

In this issue:

- Ways to save on your energy bill
- Thankful for other cooperatives
- What's on that pole?
- Electronic Gift Guide
- THM IEC Scholarship Program

Congratulations on your Retirement!

Eastern Illini would like to thank two long-time employees who retired during 2019.

Debbie Laird retired in January with over 23 years of service. Debbie worked in various roles during her career, most recently as a valuable member of senior staff with responsibilities that included working with the directors, related board activities, various administrative functions, and providing organizational assistance to the President/CEO.

Tim Frick retired in September with nearly 34 years of service. Tim also worked in many different jobs during his tenure and ended his career as a well-respected subject matter expert for members regarding electricity use and energy efficiency.

Both Debbie and Tim provided loyal and dedicated service to our members and provided mentoring and leadership for other employees.

We wish all the best to Debbie and Jay Laird, and Tim and Susan Frick in their future endeavors.

Your Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative 

Ways to save on your next energy bill

Want to lower your home energy bills? Here are some simple ways to reduce your energy consumption.

1. Make the Switch to LED

LEDs are a great example of how innovation and technology can make your life easier. They last at least 25 times longer and consume up to 90 percent less electricity than incandescent bulbs.

Tip: By switching five of your home's most frequently used bulbs with ENERGY STAR® certified LEDs, it's possible to save \$75 on energy costs annually.

2. Seal Those Leaks

On average, heating and cooling account for almost half of a home's energy consumption. In fact, all the little leaks can be equivalent to leaving open a 3-foot-by-3-foot window.

Tip: Take simple steps like caulking windows, sealing leaks around chimneys and recessed lighting, and sliding draft guards under your doors to save up to 20% on heating costs.

3. Heat and Cool Efficiently

Don't waste money heating or cooling an empty home. Install a programmable thermostat and in colder weather schedule your home's heat to lower when you are away or asleep and increase when you are returning home or waking-up. In warm weather, schedule the thermostat to raise the temperature when you are away or asleep, and lower it at other times.

4. Maintain Your HVAC System

Make sure to clean or change your furnace filters regularly. A dirty furnace filter will slow down air flow, making the system work harder to keep you warm (or cool) and costing you more money.

Tip: Get a winter tune-up. Just as a tune-up for your car improves your gas mileage, a tune-up of your heating and cooling system can improve efficiency.

5. Look for the ENERGY STAR® Label

ENERGY STAR® labeled windows can cut heating costs by as much as 30% compared to single-pane windows, while increasing indoor comfort.

Tip: If you are undertaking a major home remodel or new build, consider installing ENERGY STAR® qualified HVAC equipment and appliances.

6. Turn the Electronics Off

That sounds easy, but too often we forget and leave electronics plugged in that are not in use.

Tip: Turn off unnecessary/ idle lights, appliances and electronics. A power strip can help turn off multiple items at once. (Sometimes the simplest things are really effective!)

7. Winter Tip: Invite the Sun In

It feels like the sun abandons us during the winter, but that doesn't mean we should ignore it during the shorter days.

Tip: Open curtains/shades on your west-and south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat your home, and save 2%-12%.

8. Clean Your Clothing Efficiently

A washing machine spends 90% of its energy to heat water.

Tip: Wash in cold water. In addition, try to run full loads because the machine uses roughly the same amount of energy regardless of the load size. Consider air-drying when possible.

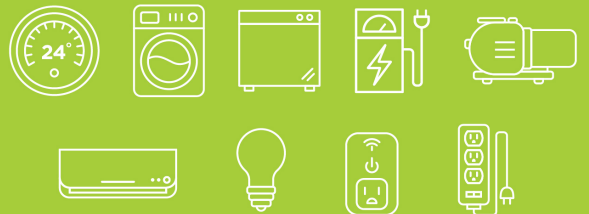
GET SMART ABOUT ENERGY SAVINGS

"Smart" devices and appliances save time and offer convenience – but not all save energy. The guide below shows how several trendy smart home technologies stack up when it comes to energy savings.

Smart Energy Savers



- Thermostats
- Washing machines and dryers
- Dishwashers
- EV charging stations
- Pool pumps
- Air conditioners
- Light bulbs and fixtures
- Power strips



Just Smart

- Virtual assistants (like Amazon's Alexa or Apple HomeKit)
- Smart locks
- Smart alarms
- Smart video security cameras

9. Clean Up Your Dishes Efficiently

If there's one thing that has the power to unite people, it's food. And with food comes dishes to clean. Fear not – there really is a more efficient way to use your dishwasher.

Tip: Avoid the "rinse hold" cycle and skip heated drying – simply open the door at the end of the washing cycle and let the dishes air dry!

COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE #6: COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

We are thankful for other cooperatives

When you think about Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, you probably associate us with the local community. And you would be right. Our leadership team, board of directors and employees all live and work right here in the communities we serve. But you may not realize that Eastern Illini is actually part of a much larger cooperative network that brings additional value, tools and knowledge that benefit you, the members of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative.

The 6th Cooperative Principle is Cooperation among Cooperatives. That means when a severe weather event is predicted for our region, we call on other co-ops in areas unaffected by the approaching storm. Through this system of mutual aid, we coordinate with other co-ops to bring additional trucks, equipment and manpower to our area. We work together and share resources in order to restore power to our communities. And Eastern Illini reciprocates by assisting other electric co-ops when they request help.

When Hurricane Dorian came ashore on the east coast in early September, Eastern Illini, along with twelve other Illinois cooperatives, sent crews to assist in storm restoration.

Eastern Illini sent Matt Huddleston, Sean Miller, Ken Mutchmore, and Luke Perzee to South River EMC in Fayetteville, North Carolina, a co-op with 43,000 members and 4,500 miles of energized line. The Eastern Illini crew helped them get power back on as quickly as possible.

A defining characteristic of a cooperative is “cooperation among cooperatives.” This is a way that co-ops work together to meet bigger challenges such as power restoration after a severe weather event.

Another area in which Eastern Illini benefits from cooperation among cooperatives is cybersecurity. Through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s (NRECA) *Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities Program* (RC3), we are able to access training, resources and tools to strengthen our efforts to combat cyber threats at Eastern Illini.

EIEC’s ability to tap into the larger electric cooperative network and access tools, products, resources and leading practices from across the nation ultimately makes our co-op and our community stronger.

Communities across the globe have benefited from the lessons learned and experience of co-ops in electrification of rural areas in the U.S. NRECA International has provided access to reliable and affordable electricity to 120 million people in 43 countries.

This effort is made possible through the support of electric cooperatives in Illinois and across the country. Hundreds of line workers, engineers and other co-op employees have served as volunteers to provide knowledge and technical expertise to bring first-time access to electricity and train local partners to help utilities in international countries to have sustainable electricity in their own communities.

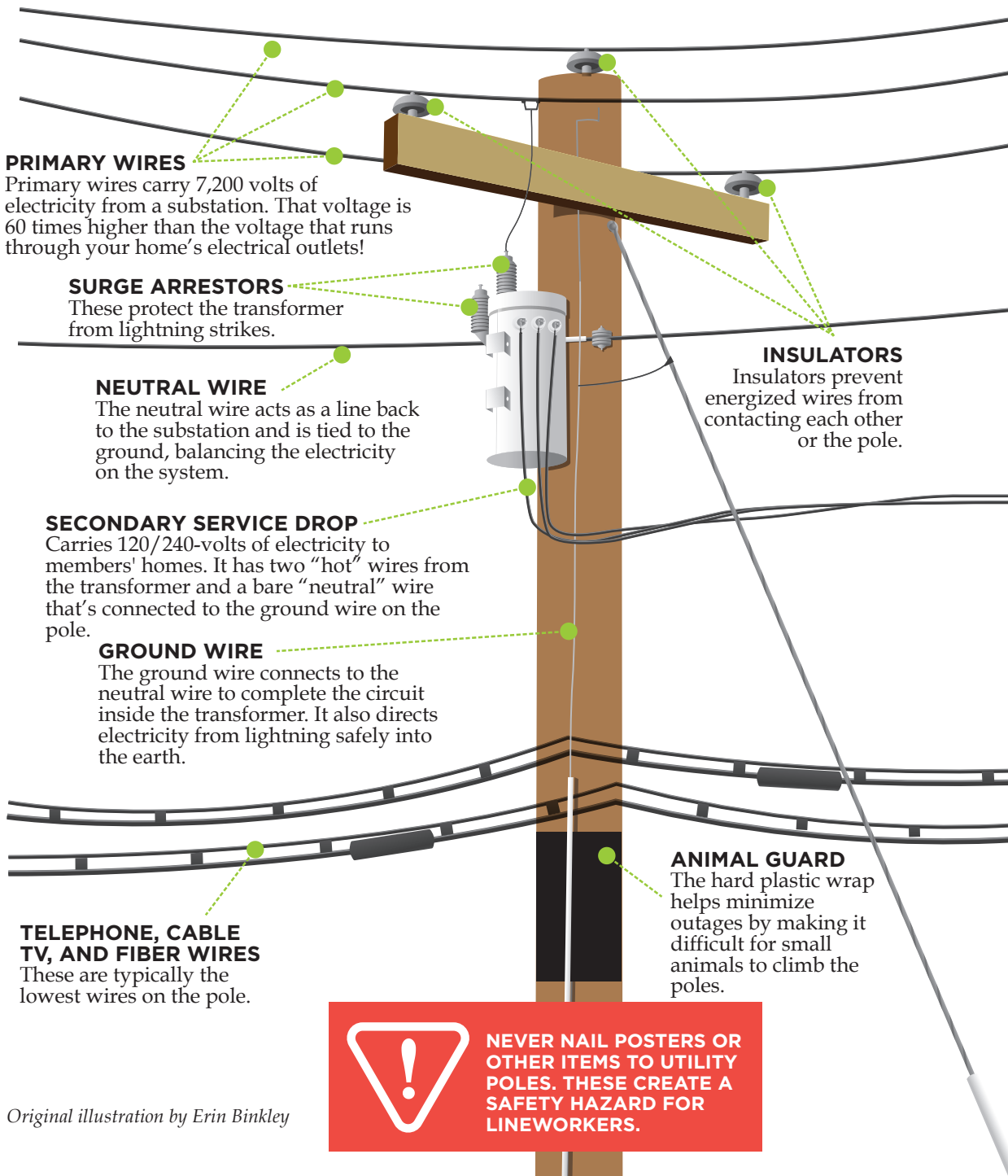
November is a time of year for reflection and giving thanks. Eastern Illini is grateful for other co-ops that enable us to better serve you and our broader community. When electric co-ops collaborate, we strengthen each other and the communities we serve – and that is something in which to be truly thankful. Happy Thanksgiving, everyone.



What's on that pole?

WHAT'S ON THAT POLE?

This illustration shows the basic equipment found on electric utility poles. The equipment varies according to the location and the service they provide.



Electronic Gift Guide

This holiday season, give the gift of tech! If you're searching for the latest gadgets and electronics to gift but don't know where to start, we've got you covered. Here's a list of ideas for your tech-savvy friends and family members, and with a range of prices and interests, there's sure to be something for everyone.

Gifts for those on the go:

We all have that one friend who never stays in one place, so they'll appreciate gifts that keep them charged and entertained while on the go.

A portable charger (or power bank) can keep their smart phones and tablets juiced, and the good news is this gift won't drain your wallet. You can purchase portable chargers online or at local retailers for as low as \$20. Typically, these compact devices can fully charge an iPhone three times before running out of steam.

A Bluetooth speaker is another great gift to keep those on the go entertained. Whether they're listening to their favorite tunes or watching the latest flick, Bluetooth speakers can clarify and amplify volume to satisfy any media enthusiast. Prices range depending on features, but you can purchase a quality Bluetooth speaker online or at local retailers for as low as \$30.

Gifts for the chef:

Every foodie knows that temperature matters when mastering the perfect cut of meat. A Bluetooth-connected thermometer can help your chef ensure a delicious (and safe-to-eat) meal. Just download the associated app and keep an eye on the grill right from your smart phone or tablet. Prices vary from \$30 to \$200, but you can purchase these handy gadgets online or at any big box store, like Wal-Mart or Target.

A digital kitchen scale is a must for any culinary pro. No more guessing —

the easy-to-read digital screen ensures the exact weight or amount required for that perfect dish. Prices vary depending on the weight the scale can handle, but you can find a 13-pound max weight scale for about \$20 on Amazon.com.

Gifts for the pet owner:

Let's face it—pet owners would be lost without their fur babies. Luckily, pet tracking products continue to advance, so pet owners can always keep a watchful eye on their furry friends. Most trackers simply attach to your pet's collar.

Prices vary depending on the tracker's capabilities, but some features include water resistance, health monitoring and exceptional battery life. You can purchase pet trackers online or at a local pet store in your area.

Speaking of keeping an eye on pets, you can also purchase surveillance cameras for real-time monitoring—some cameras even allow you to toss treats to your furry friend while you're away from home.

Additional features include a microphone (so you can talk to your pets), a built-in laser toy (for our feline friends) and the ability to snap a photo or take video from your smart phone. Prices vary depending on the bells and whistles, but you can purchase a pet camera for as low as \$40 on Amazon.com.

Gifts for peace of mind:

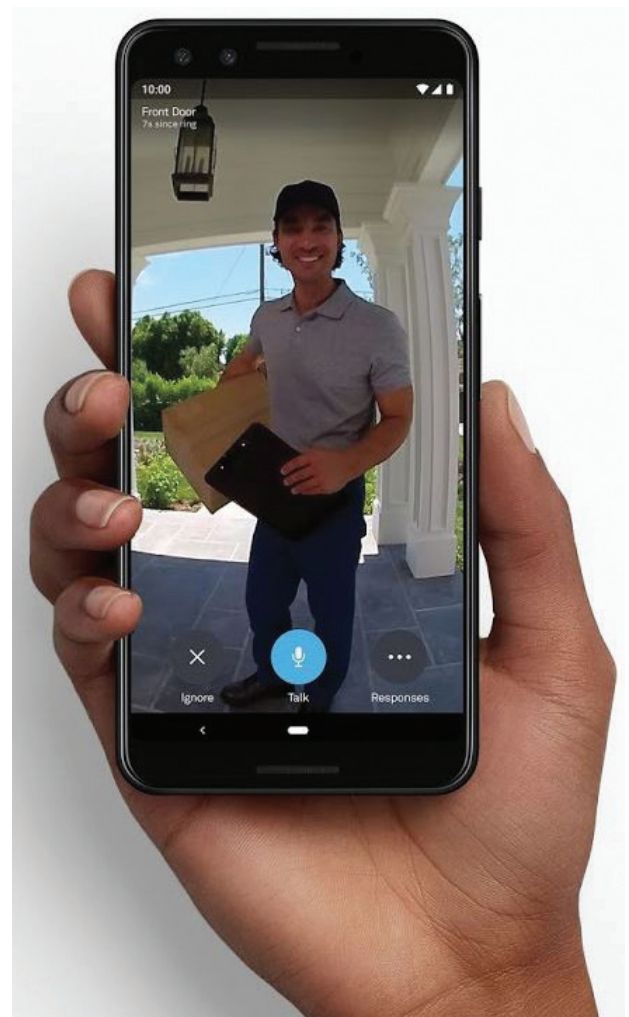
Knock knock. Who's there? If you have a smart doorbell, you already know!

Today's smart doorbells show you who's at the door and come with everything from live video streaming to Wi-Fi enabled apps, two-way talk, and home automation compatibility.

A doorbell camera is a lot like an outdoor security camera, but it's so much more. It's also a great way to greet guests, accept packages, and monitor who comes and goes from your home.

Nest Hello video doorbell provides a great picture and a slick app that rarely throws up any problems. It replaces your existing wired doorbell and provides 24/7 streaming that you can check anytime. The price starts at \$200 and is available online. Ring Video Doorbell connects with Alexa and enables announcements. It cost is \$100 and is available on Amazon.com.

The holiday season is fast approaching, so consider the gift of tech for family and friends on your list. They'll thank you for the latest electronic gadget.



THOMAS H. MOORE
Illinois Electric Cooperative Memorial Scholarship Program

APPLY TODAY!

<https://aiec.coop/iec-scholarship/?coop=EIE>

2019 WINNER

Audrey McNamara

A portrait of a young woman with long, wavy brown hair, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a dark top. The background is a light-colored, textured wall.

Audrey is the daughter of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative members Tom and Kristi McNamara from Mahomet, Illinois

Twelve \$2,000 scholarships are awarded annually to deserving students in the electric cooperative family entering college to help offset their educational costs. Contact Gayle Ford for more details: 217-379-0423 or gayle.ford@eiec.coop.