

PowerLines

September 2018

What is Important?

It's a question that people might answer with things like family, health, community, faith, world peace, financial security or productive jobs.

How would you answer this question?

I am often asked what keeps me up at night as CEO. It's safety – for our employees, our members, and the public in general. We should all strive to have productive and rewarding days that end with our health and safety the same, or better, than when the day began.

The core tenets of what is important to Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative include:

- Safety
- Reliable service
- Financial responsibility
- Member satisfaction

We have developed various measures to track our progress in these key areas. In October, you will have the opportunity to provide your feedback via a survey as to how well we are performing our core duties as a cooperative utility.

Half-Year Results

This has been a bit of an unusual weather year, resulting in our electricity sales for each of the first seven months higher than our budget.

Through July, kWh sales are a cumulative 7.3% better than budgeted. It appears that August sales may trend below budget, thus breaking the streak. Financially, through June, our net operating margins were \$257,000, or 40% above budget (*our budget reflects our banker's benchmark requirements*).



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT Request for Help

Expenses have been tracking below budget as well. If our electricity sales stay close to budget for the remainder of the year, your Board of Directors will consider options to use any excess margins for the benefit of the membership.

One area in which we need assistance is in attracting journeyman linemen to work in a cooperative setting.

Presently, the electric industry in general is struggling to fill these positions. If you are a journeyman lineman, or may know someone who is, and would be interested in considering a cooperative career, please contact me.

As employees, we strive to do the extra things to exceed your expectations. We hope you enjoy the cooler September weather.

Stay safe,

Bob Hunzinger

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Labor Day

Our office will be closed on Monday, September 3 for Labor Day. As always, please contact us anytime via SmartHub or at 800-824-5102 to report an outage.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Paws & Claws Animal Sanctuary

Jenn Garrett has a big heart for animals and an immense passion for rescuing them from neglect, abuse and disaster. She also has a scenic rural setting, just west of Hoopeston, to showcase her animal menagerie.

Paws & Claws Animal Sanctuary is a member of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative and in fact, Jenn and her husband, LT, provided the animal petting area at the 2018 EIEC annual meeting. Both Jenn and LT are animal lovers who want to make a difference by saving the lives of stray, no longer wanted and endangered animals. They own and operate Paws & Claws, located at 8891 Route 9 in Hoopeston.

Jenn, a native of Ontario, Canada, got her start rescuing animals with a pocket monkey. It has grown from there and now she has Petunia, a potbelly pig, a goat named Vincent Van Goat, Katie and Perry Peacock, and Swiper, a fox. She has both wild and domesticated animals and the number and variety of

residents varies from day to day. Her sanctuary animals come from as far as Tupelo, Mississippi and Buffalo, New York and as nearby as someone in the next town who purchased a bunny as an Easter present and no longer wants the responsibility now that the rabbit is full grown.

It's a family affair at Paws & Claws. Jenn's grandson Mark, age 6, can be found riding his miniature pony, Princess, around the property. Michael, age 4, is very comfortable around all the animals and his liveliness and enthusiasm doesn't phase the horses grazing in the pasture. Those who work at the sanctuary describe Paws & Claws as a peaceful, healing space for people as well as animals.

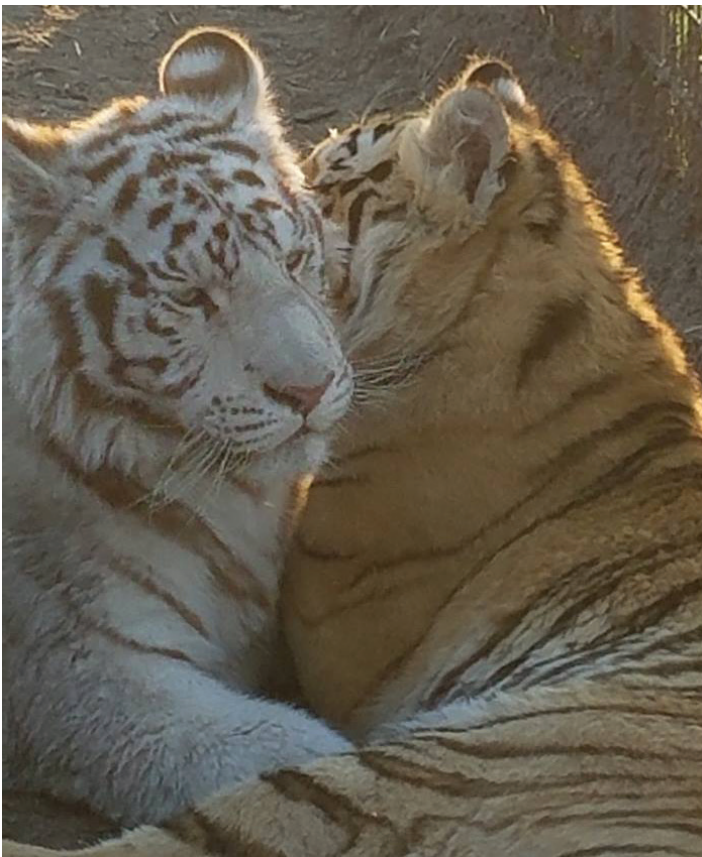
Jenn is excited that she recently received USDA approval for the animal sanctuary to be open to the public. That approval took many hours of preparation and planning. Paws & Claws enhanced their enclosures and added some additional safety measures to ensure that the animals as well as the public remain safe at all times.



Jenn has a vision for the future that involves movie nights, school groups and educational activities all related to learning more about the care and feeding of animals. She hopes to expand Paws & Claws to be able to handle more animals who need to be rescued, whatever the reason - neglect, abuse or living situations that are dangerous.

Because of her years of experience in rescuing animals, she has some expert advice to share – please leave wild animals in the wild and in their natural habitat. What seems cute and cuddly now eventually grows up.

Jenn is willing to relocate animals in need to her facility. She has a friend that's a pilot who can assist in animal transportation. Jenn feels blessed to do the work she does and believes that these animals deserve to live in a loving and safe environment where they can receive the best quality of care. Paws & Claws is just that place. She's currently receiving offers to take in animals from other rescues due to over crowding or lack of cages. The sanctuary has room, but needs to build enclosures large enough to house them comfortably.



As a result of the USDA certification, Paws & Claws will now be open for visitors to come and see the sanctuary animals and learn more about them.

The general public can stop by on weekends, and for \$10 per person, have an up close and personal encounter with an alpaca while meandering through Hoovertville Junction, home to wolf dogs, roosters, raccoons, donkeys and many unique and unusual inhabitants.

Guided tours are available for \$20 and provide more in depth information about the animals.



Operating an animal sanctuary takes time, patience, money, love and commitment. It is physically and mentally demanding. It also takes a great deal of planning, a significant amount of funding, land, sturdy and secure buildings and fencing, substantial food sourcing, unwavering devotion and steadfast perseverance.

Paws & Claws is a tax-exempt non-profit, and tax deductible donations are always accepted and appreciated.

Check out the Facebook page for Paws & Claws. It highlights Jenn's work and features many of the animals that are cared for at the sanctuary.

Volunteers are always needed and appreciated. If you are willing to help out with animal care and feeding, grounds maintenance or even enclosure construction and have time and talent to donate, contact Jenn at 217-772-3050 or simply stop by Paws & Claws sometime.



Interesting Facts:

- *The tigers consume 15 lbs. of meat every day.*
- *The nearest exotic animal veterinarian travels from Skokie, IL to Hoopeston.*
- *Jenn uses the word "salad" with all the animals and that means "do you want some grass?"*



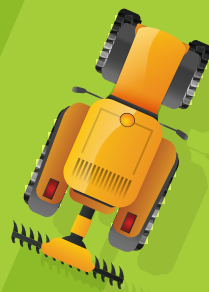
Cultivating the Seeds of Safety

The 2018 National Farm Safety & Health Week will take place September 16 - 22, 2018. With harvest just around the corner, it is more important than ever to take preventative measures to stay safe.

Agriculture and specifically farming continue to rank as one of the most hazardous industries in the U.S. Over 400 farmers and farm workers die from work related injuries and many of those are related to tractor over turns. Effective farm safety management is key to having a safe and bountiful harvest. Follow these safety tips:

- Develop a “safety first” attitude. Follow safe work practices at all times.
- Be physically and mentally fit before operating equipment. Fatigue, stress and worry can distract you from safely operating equipment. Take frequent breaks.
- Pay attention to all safety information. Read the operator’s manual and heed warning decals. Inspect the equipment and correct any hazards prior to operating the equipment.
- Identify hazardous areas on equipment and make sure you stay away from moving parts. Beware of pinch points, shear points, wrap points, pull-in areas, thrown objects, crush points, stored energy hazards and freewheeling parts.
- Make sure everyone who operates the equipment has the appropriate training.
- Shut down the equipment, turn off the engine, remove key and wait for moving parts to stop before dismounting.
- Keep bystanders and others away from equipment operation area. Do not allow “extra riders”, especially children.
- Make sure PTO shields and safety locks are operational.
- Prominently display “Slow Moving Vehicle” signage and check that lights are functioning properly.
- Always have a fire extinguisher readily available and easily accessible.

Tips for a Safe Harvest



Harvest season brings hard work and can be an exhausting, but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous (even deadly!) when working near overhead power lines. We urge farm operators and workers to keep the following safety tips in mind:

Source: SafeElectricity.org



Use care when operating large machinery near power lines.



Inspect the height of equipment to determine clearance.



Always keep equipment at least 10 feet away (in all directions) from power lines.



Remember to lower extensions when moving loads.



If a power line is sagging or looks to be dangerously low, please call us immediately.

People to Know: Bill Hoffschneider

- **Quick Wit**
- **Neat Handwriting**
- **Engaging Smile**

Bill began his cooperative career as an apprentice lineman in 1985. While still in high school, his drafting teacher at Rantoul High School, saw a talent in Bill and encouraged him to use his drafting skills. Bill's first job was working for the Village of Rantoul at the power plant. A close family friend worked for Illini Electric and encouraged Bill to join the cooperative. For 33 years he's been serving members and providing his expertise to assist in the delivery and management of safe, reliable electricity. Bill is one of two remaining Illini Electric employees who were part of the 1987 merger that joined together Eastern Illinois Power and Illini Electric.

Bill's coworkers really like working with him. They describe him as knowledgeable and dedicated. They enjoy his great sense of humor and they are a bit envious of his creativity. If you need a document completed with neat handwriting, take it to Bill. Handwriting is more than just a form of communication. For Bill, it is part of his identity along with his quick wit and engaging smile.

In his current role, Bill is an engineering technician/serviceman. On most days, he's busy meeting with electrical or building contractors to make sure new builds, upgrades and renovations are completed to specifications. Bill has a great deal of interaction with members daily. They have come to rely on Bill for accurate, complete and insightful answers to their questions. His job often involves talking to township road commissioners and community leaders throughout the Eastern Illini territory. Implementing the annual EIEC work plan for pole rebuilds involves Bill staking out all the lines, so crews can do installation and upgrades.

Bill's favorite part of his job is talking to members. He likes meeting new

people and building business relationships. He's found out over the years that asking the right questions and engaging in dialogue works best and builds long lasting rapport. The most challenging part of his position is having to have hard conversations explaining and justifying policies and procedures. Safety is a top priority with Bill and his decision making begins with making sure members and employees are always safe. Bill wants members to be aware of the power lines around their homes and property. He's seen farming equipment become more expansive over the years and it is so important to stay safe around electrical poles and lines.

Bill feels blessed to work at Eastern Illini. He is truly appreciative that the board of directors and senior leadership are committed to safety and to providing the tools, equipment and training needed to work effectively and efficiently.

Bill was fortunate enough to be able to help with the cleanup after Hurricane Katrina. He was dispatched with a crew that provided assistance in Picayune, MS. Bill worked long hours cleaning up downed trees and restoring power. The people



of Picayune were extremely appreciative. Even though devastation was widespread, their spirit and attitude remained positive. Bill had the opportunity to assist Sonny and Elaine Smith while in Picayune and Elaine prepared some delicious home cooked meals that were enjoyed by the linemen. To this day, Eastern Illini still receives a Christmas card from Sonny and Elaine.

Each year around Thanksgiving, Bill and his wife Renee, make their annual trek to Gatlinburg, TN where they enjoy the scenic views, majestic mountains and tranquil log cabin accommodations. They relax, listen to blue grass music and enjoy all that the Great Smokey Mountains have to offer.

In his spare time, Bill keeps busy farming his in-laws farmground and helping out neighbors during harvest time. He is a member of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Gifford where he currently serves as a trustee and is the 2018 Chairman of the Church Council.

Bill and his wife Renee, have three daughters: Jennifer, Holly and Hope and five grandchildren. He also has a big old Bloodhound named Red who weighs over 100 lbs. and keeps him company.



Sonny and Elaine Smith, Picayune, MS

Partners in Power



For 20 years, Touchstone Energy cooperatives like Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative have stood together as the powerful brand of electric co-ops. Now as a network of more than 730 electric co-ops, we have the resources to be your best source for power and information, as well as provide you with gold standard service.

We realize that being best in class takes more than just keeping the lights on. It's also about demonstrating our core values as we work with you, our members, to strengthen our communities. Simply put, it's the Cooperative Difference. And that's why we are proud to serve you.



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