

PowerLines

September 2019

Sharing of Ideas

The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) recently held their annual meeting in early August in Springfield. Cooperative directors and staff from across the state attend this event. Among the many excellent topics, there was a presentation that was especially pertinent to the rural areas served by electric cooperatives.

We have all heard and seen many examples in our local region of the decline of rural small cities, towns, villages, and the surrounding communities.

It was heartwarming to hear the views and work of Zachary Mannheimer and others with McClure Engineering Company (based in Iowa). Their place maker group works with rural communities and towns to revitalize and establish viable businesses that will hopefully attract and retain millennials and the younger generations who will establish roots in these areas.

Various surveys show that the younger generations want to move out of the cities and into more rural areas. Some of the key drivers mentioned included:

- Access to hi-speed internet service
- Flexible work hours
- Recreational activities
- Connecting across generations
- Cultural amenities and other related activities important to them

Interestingly, many of the successful examples cited included microbreweries serving as a catalyst for or spin-off from development. It is good to know there is activity to improve rural areas.

Passing the torch

At a recent EIEC employee safety meeting, a panel of retirees (with retirement dates ranging from 1997 to 2017) regaled current employees with humor, stories, lessons learned, and advice. Many of the retirees commented on the number of new (and young) faces in the audience.



**MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT**

Included among the various themes discussed were:

- The importance of safety in all aspects of the co-op
- Appreciation for the opportunity to work for EIEC and the pride they had in serving and representing members (who are the cooperative's owners)
- Sharing of work practices and cooperation among cooperatives both statewide and nationally
- Changing technology over the years and the increasing pace of change
- Awareness of generational change and differences among employees
- The culture, spirit, and family nature of EIEC and of co-ops in general

As current employees, we are doing our best to continue the cooperative principles and legacy of over 80 years of dedicated service by employees throughout the years to our members.

We hope you will take time to enjoy the cooler weather as we transition into early fall on the calendar.

Cooperatively,

Bob Hunzinger

In this issue:

- Empowering Education Grants
- Ways to Have a Safe Harvest
- Advanced Technology
- Stay Safe Around Downed Lines
- Enjoy a Movie on Us!

START SHOPPING START SAVING

Co-op Connections® Card



- Local Deals
- Pharmacy Discounts
- Cash Back Online
- Hotel Savings

Visit www.connections.coop to register and start saving today.

Keep Your Contact Information Current

Did you do away with your land line? Has your email address changed? Let us know. We want to make sure we have your most current contact information on file. Give us a call at 800-824-5102 and change or confirm your contact information, so we can reach you easily should the need arise.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

EMPOWERING EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM 2020



Eastern Illini
Electric
Cooperative

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative is member driven and community focused. We value our schools and students, because they will be our future, so we are offering \$500 grants to school districts in the EIEC service territory. The Empowering Education Grant Program is designed for teachers to help fund projects that will inspire students and provide memorable learning experiences.

Each school district in the Eastern Illini service territory has a chance to earn a \$500 grant. Teachers may complete the application on-line at **www.eiec.coop**. One grant recipient from each school district will be selected. Previous winners aren't eligible to win again.



**ATTENTION
TEACHERS
\$500 GRANTS
AVAILABLE**

**APPLY AT
WWW.EIEC.COOP
BY DEC. 13, 2019**

Apply online with a defined plan of implementation that highlights innovative learning experiences for your students. Detail how it directly benefits students and how many students will be involved.

Grant award winners will be determined based on:

- Number of students impacted
- Creativity and innovation
- Ability to foster creative learning

MAKE SAFETY YOUR #1 PRIORITY

Ways to Have a Safe Harvest

Farm work continues to be one of the most dangerous occupations in the U.S.

According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, farming is the 6th most dangerous occupation in America. Unfortunately, almost 58,000 adults are injured each year doing farm work and 29 are killed. Over the next few months, farmers will be working longer hours - starting their days before sunrise without resting until long after the sun sets. There will be slow moving tractors, oversized combines, and grain loaded trucks in the fields and on the country roads and also on heavily traveled roadways.

To ensure you and your favorite farmer are safe during the upcoming harvest, follow these farm safety tips:

MAINTAIN YOUR EQUIPMENT

Most farm accidents and deaths involve outdated machinery that lack safety features. Make sure your equipment is maintained according to the manufacturers' recommendations to prevent rollovers and accidents. Have farm trucks serviced regularly. Conduct a safety check before taking the combine to the field.

BE ALERT ON THE ROAD

Most accidents happen at dawn or dusk, as they are commuting times for drivers. They happen most often when a driver attempts to pass a slow-moving vehicle, or does not realize a farmer is turning or stopping. Drivers need to allow adequate time and distance for farm equipment to make wide turns. Farm machinery typically travels at 25 mph or less, so drivers



need to be prepared to slow down to avoid a rear-end collision. Drivers of farm equipment should turn on their flashing lights and use slow moving vehicle (SMV) signs to draw attention to equipment traveling at slow speeds. Be careful of soft edges on the roadway when moving over to allow vehicles to pass.

HAVE A PLAN FOR GRAIN BIN SAFETY

Train and educate farm workers on grain storage hazards and risks involved when entering a grain storage bin. Follow safe bin entry practices like Lock Out Tag Out and utilize a lifeline system. Have an emergency action plan in case an accident happens and make sure everyone on your farm is trained to follow it. There should always be a person outside the bin anytime someone is entering the bin.

GET PLENTY OF REST, EAT HEALTHY, AND TAKE BREAKS

Drink plenty of fluids and have healthy snacks on hand to keep your energy levels up. Don't push yourself past healthy limits. Accidents are more likely to happen once fatigue sets in. Drive the combine only while you are alert and aware of your surroundings. Hours of steady operation can lull you into a hypnotic state. To avoid dangerous situations, schedule a break for all workers every two to three hours. Change jobs with someone else who can run the combine for awhile. Accidents are more likely to happen once fatigue or dehydration sets in.

TELL YOUR FAMILY & OTHERS WHERE YOU'LL BE WORKING AND WHEN

Keep the lines of communication open. Always have a cell phone on you in case of emergencies.

Do your part to make this a safe and healthy harvest season.

HARVEST SAFETY TIPS FOR FARMWORKERS

- **Maintain a 10-foot clearance** around all utility equipment in all directions.
- **Use a spotter and deploy flags** to maintain safe distances from power lines and other equipment when doing field work.
- **If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, contact us immediately** by phone and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab, without touching it at the same time, and hop away to safety.
- **Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle.** Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipe and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.

Advanced Technology Enhances Electric Service

It's a new school year and students and teachers are getting ready for a fresh year of learning!

From kindergarten through college, students attend school to gain knowledge about a broad variety of subjects and learn new skills that will prepare them for the future. Teachers provide that knowledge along with a welcoming environment for learning.

In a similar vein, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative is continually learning in order to advance technology that improves electric service, reliability, safety and in turn, enhances quality of life for the members we serve in our local communities throughout our 10 county service territory.

At Eastern Illini, we're working to help sift through the options for our members in ways that benefit the greater community. At the same time, we never lose sight of the top priority—which is to provide safe and reliable electricity.

Technology improves efficiency at EIEC

For example, automated meter reading (AMR) is the technology of automatically collecting energy consumption data and transferring it from the electric meter to the co-op. Because this information can be collected remotely, it enhances our system's efficiency, helps control costs and improves work processes.

Similar to AMR, advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) is an integrated system of smart meters, communications networks

technologies, especially for outages caused by extreme weather is pinpointing the outage location, which helps to reduce risk for crews.

In addition to providing essential information during major outages, Eastern Illini analyzes AMI data for anomalies including faults, damaged meters or energy theft. Detecting these problems early helps our cooperative save money and improve reliability for the whole community.

Member's interest in renewables is at an all-time high. Nationally, the increasing use of solar energy is paving the way for new methods of generating and using electricity. U.S. energy experts say we won't be able



We keep abreast of industry trends because the energy sector is rapidly changing. Innovations in technology and energy types are fueling demand for more options. On the member front, people are looking for more ways to manage their energy use with smart technologies. Members expect more convenient payment methods – whether through automatic bill pay, pre-pay, online or in person.

and data management systems that enables two-way communication between utilities and consumers. In the event of an outage, AMI helps to distinguish between events that impact a single home or multiple outages. This is critical because resolving either issue is a very different process. The two-way communication is integral to AMI because it provides a means to verify that power has been restored after an outage. However, one of the biggest benefits from improved

to meet national energy goals without solar. That's why we continue to research how best to adjust our energy mix and explore emerging technologies for members.

At Eastern Illini, our “school year” is never over. We continue to learn from our members about their priorities, and we will continue to research the issues so that we can better serve you, now and in the future.

IT'S A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Stay Safe Around Downed Lines



be electrocuted. Stay in the vehicle, and tell others to do the same. Call 911 to have emergency and utility services notified. Do not leave your vehicle until a utility professional has told you it is safe.

The only circumstance when you should exit the vehicle is if it is on fire - which is a rare occurrence. If you must exit, jump clear of it with your feet together and without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Continue to “bunny hop” with your feet together to safety. Doing this will ensure that you will not have different strengths of electric current running from one foot to another.

Students get to school in a variety of ways—riding a bus, being driven by a family member, carpooling, walking, or even driving themselves. Electricity is not usually the first thing on a student’s or driver’s mind on the way to school. Yet, it is vitally important to know what to do if there is a downed line or an accident with a power pole along that journey. Here are some tips that can help keep students and those who help transport them to and from school safe.

sparkling, this is not always the case. Treat all down lines as though they are energized, and stay far away from them. Call 911 to have first responders and the utility notified of the downed power lines.

If you are in a vehicle that wrecks with a power pole, the vehicle may be charged with electricity. If this is the case and you step out of the car, you will become the electricity’s path to the ground and could

If you come upon or witness an accident involving power lines, do not approach the accident scene. If you see someone approaching, warn them to stay away from the accident until utility professionals and emergency responders have confirmed that there are no electrical dangers.

In April 2016, CBS News reported that a Pennsylvania school bus driver asked an 11-year-old student to move a downed power line. Sadly, the boy’s hand was burned, but fortunately he was not more seriously hurt. In 2009, two Indiana teenagers, Ashley Taylor and Lee Whitaker, were in a car accident with a utility pole. Fortunately, just days earlier, these teens had seen a presentation about electrical safety at their school and had learned to stay in the car if in such a situation. Lee and Ashley’s lives were saved because they knew what to do. Severe storms, high winds, and vehicular accidents with power poles can all cause power lines to fall. Just because a power line is down does not mean that it is not carrying electricity.

While downed lines can sometimes show they are live by arcing and





A MEMBER APPRECIATION EVENT
ENJOY A MOVIE ON US!

EASTERN ILLINI ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INVITES YOU TO

SHREK

MONDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2019

WATSEKA THEATER

218 EAST WALNUT ST, WATSEKA, IL

5:00 p.m.

To reserve tickets, register online by October 9 at:

www.eiec.coop

Popcorn, hot dog, and small drink provided

