

# PowerLines

August 2022

## Making sense of the volatile energy market

The hot and muggy weather during the first few weeks of June and early July have reminded us it is the summer season. Very soon this weather will be just a memory as we enter the fall season.

Thank you to all the Eastern Illini members that attended one of our three annual meeting member events in early June. There were some particularly good questions asked by members during the business portion of the meetings. I've summarized them below along with my responses.

Q? There has been talk of possible rolling blackouts. What is the possibility that EIEC and its members will be impacted?

A. The national and regional reliability entities (NERC and MISO) identified the possibility of rolling blackouts to maintain system integrity and reliability on the larger transmission grid this summer. In recent years, the retirement of fossil fired generation capacity (mainly coal fired power plants) partially offset by the addition of renewable resources such as wind and solar have changed the generation resource mix, resulting in a reduced amount of excess or reserve capacity, and a reduced number of available rotating generation machines. Based on what I have read and researched, the chance for rolling blackouts for 2022 is not zero, but just slightly above. It would take a combination of extended hot weather, generation resource outages, and transmission system issues.

Q? It has been reported that investor-owned utilities have significantly increased their rates. How will EIEC members be impacted?

A. In the way of background information – for various reasons, the price of natural gas, which had been at historically low levels since 2009, began to increase in late 2020, and has increased dramatically. Since the marginal

market price of electricity in the Midwest follows the price of natural gas, market energy prices have been increasing. Also, the recent MISO capacity auction (payment for generating resources that supply the electric energy to be available) increased dramatically from near zero to the equivalent cost of new generation. This cost must also be recovered in the market price of electricity.

Utilities like Ameren no longer own generation and their customer's supply is impacted by market price changes. However, EIEC and other cooperatives, through our wholesale generation providers like Prairie Power, Inc.



MESSAGE FROM  
THE PRESIDENT

(PPI) still own generation that includes a mix of coal, natural gas, wind, solar, and longer-term and short-term market purchases. This diverse and stable generation base spreads out fuel and market price risk, and effectively eliminates most of the capacity price risk. We anticipate minimal, if any, change in our wholesale power supply costs from PPI in 2022.

EIEC has only had two distribution rate adjustments since 2013, that totaled less than a 3% increase over a 10-year period. We are experiencing increased costs in all aspects of the business. The next rate adjustment is planned for 2024. We pass along wholesale market price adjustments from PPI through our Power Cost adjustment billing component. Since 2013, PPI costs have increased slightly more than 3% on total EIEC member billing.

If you want additional details and related information on these topics, I recently did an interview with Dave Brown, WITY Radio, and it is available at [www.eiec.org/Am22](http://www.eiec.org/Am22). Enjoy the remainder of the summer and stay safe!

Sincerely,

*Bob Hunzinger*

## In this issue:

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- 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!

## Your Capital Credit Allocation is on your electric bill

Eastern Illini allocates margins to each member as capital credits based upon the amount each member paid for electricity. The allocation is added to your capital credit account and it is always yours, even when you move off Eastern Illini lines.

Your Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup> Cooperative

# Avoid distractions while driving



While driving, we typically hear that “ding” on our phone, alerting us to a text or call coming through, and we sometimes feel the urgent need to check it. We know we shouldn’t, but we reason that we’re going to make an exception—just this once.

So, why do we indulge in behavior we know to be wrong, dangerous and in many states, illegal? Call it hubris. According to AAA research, most people feel they are better-than-average drivers. After all, we have busy lives and are accustomed to multitasking. But mounds of research and thousands of deaths every year prove otherwise.

August is Back to School Safety Month. As a new school year begins with young drivers and school buses back on the road, it’s a good time to be reminded of the dangers of distracted driving.

The reality is that using a phone while driving creates enormous potential for injuries and fatalities. Both talking on the phone and texting while driving take a motorist’s attention off driving, which can make a driver miss critical events, and objects, potentially leading to a crash.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, one of every 10 fatal crashes in the U.S. involves distracted driving, resulting in more than 3,000 deaths annually. Many of these accidents could easily be avoided if we’d simply put down our phones while driving.

Distracted driving is considered any activity that diverts our attention, including texting or talking on the phone, and adjusting the navigation or entertainment system. Texting is by far one of the most dangerous distractions. Sending or reading one text takes your eyes off the road for an average of five seconds. At 55 mph, that’s like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed.

Although most distractions are avoidable, some distractions are impossible to completely prevent – instead they must be managed. Driving requires your full attention. You can take charge of eliminating distractions to focus on the road ahead. Here are ten tips to avoid distractions while driving:

10. Fully focus on driving. Do not let anything divert your attention, actively scan the road, use your mirrors and watch out for pedestrians and cyclists.

9. Store loose gear, possessions and other distractions that could roll around in the car, so you do not feel tempted to reach for them on the floor or the seat.

8. Make adjustments before your get underway. Address vehicle systems like your GPS, seats, mirrors, climate controls, and sound systems before hitting the road.

7. Finish dressing and personal grooming at home – before you get on the road.

6. Snack smart. If possible, eat meals or snacks before or after your trip, not while driving.

5. Secure children and pets before getting underway. If they need your attention, pull off the road. Reaching into the backseat can cause you to lose control of the vehicle.

4. Put aside your electronic distractions. Don’t use cell phones while driving, except in absolute emergencies. Never use text messaging, email functions, or apps or games with a wireless device.

2. If another activity demands your attention, instead of trying to attempt it while driving, pull off the road and stop your vehicle in a safe place.

1. Take care of potential distractions before or after your trip, not while behind the wheel.

At Eastern Illini, safety is foremost in everything we do—for our employees and the members of the communities we serve. We remind our crews of the dangers of distracted driving, and we hope you’ll have similar conversations with your family members. Let’s work together to keep everyone safe on the roads. Remember: that text can wait and waiting just might save a life.

DELEGATES GAIN VALUABLE KNOWLEDGE AND LASTING MEMORIES

# Youth to Washington D.C. delegates



**YOUTH TO WASHINGTON  
WINNERS!**

**CONGRATULATIONS**

- Sophia Stierwalt
- Riley Klump
- Lilly Lahr

What do you get when 34 students from 16 Illinois electric and telephone cooperatives join 1,000 of their peers across the United States? You get the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth to Washington Tour!

Three students from Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative (EIEC) service territory were selected from a diverse group of applicants to represent Eastern Illini and enjoy an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. from June 17-24 as part of the annual Youth Tour.

The 2022 Youth Tour delegates from Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative included Riley Klump of Crescent City. She is the daughter of Eastern Illini members Scot and Jennifer Klump. Also, Lilly Lahr of Foosland. She is the daughter of Eastern Illini members Danielle and Jeff Lahr. In addition, Sophia Stierwalt of Sadorus was a delegate. Her parents are Eastern Illini members Tori and Scott Stierwalt.

While on the trip, the delegates toured Gettysburg and Mt. Vernon, the home of George Washington. They also visited The Holocaust Museum, Arlington National Cemetery, several Smithsonian Museums, and a variety of memorials and the U.S. Capitol. Senator Dick Durbin spoke with the delegates on the steps of the Capitol and the delegates had the opportunity to talk with Representative Adam Kinzinger in his office in the Rayburn HOB.

Among fun activities the students enjoyed were an assembly of more than 1,000 Youth Tour participants from across the nation. They also enjoyed a paddle boat cruise and dinner on the Potomac River.

“Youth Tour is a great opportunity that changes these students’ lives,” says Bob Hunzinger, EIEC President/CEO. “This experience helps prepare them for their futures. After touring our nation’s capital, meeting congressional representatives, and learning firsthand how our government works, they return home with valuable knowledge and lasting memories.

Since 1964, the nation’s cooperative electric utilities have sponsored more than 60,000 high school students to visit Washington, D.C., talk one-on-one with their U.S. congressional delegations and learn from energy and grassroots government education sessions. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, is the national service organization representing the nation’s more than 900 consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric co-ops, which provide service to 42 million members in 47 states.

The Youth to Washington D.C. trip takes place annually in June. Eastern Illini begins accepting applications for delegates in November. High school students who are going to be juniors or seniors and who live on Eastern Illini electric lines are eligible to apply. Selection is made in February and winners are notified in early March, so they can attend the state Youth Day in late March and the D.C. trip in June.

# LOVE OF THE LAND AND FAMILY IS AT THE HEART OF THE BREWERY

## Artesia Brewery where homemade is always better



Photo by Ford County Chronicle

Nestled among the corn and soybean fields near Thawville is a quaint brewery called Artesia with a stylishly decorated tasting room that serves Razzle Dazzle, Quakenbush, and Oldsmobile Red, just to name a few.

Morris and Linda Tammen, along with their family, have established a one-of-a-kind weekend destination brewery that uses locally sourced ingredients including honey, hops, and fruits to create beer, cider, and meads. The drink offerings use spring water from the farm's Artesian wells, hence the name. Many of the beers are named after relatives of the Tammens and there is often a story and family history to go along with the drink.

Everyone in the family is involved. When Morris and Linda retired from farming in 2018, they no longer needed their Morton building to store farm machinery, and their children convinced them to convert the building into a brewery.

Morris managed the construction project and son-in-law, Ryan Reber, an architect, designed the brewery. Linda

is the bookkeeper and beekeeper. Son, Evan Tammen, and Ryan Reber are brew masters. Katrina Tammen Reber is the business manager for Artesia and Evan's wife, Angela Tammen, serves as the event planner and social media coordinator. Even Alison Tammen Lirette and her husband, Scott, who live in

Michigan, help in the orchard during visits to the farm. Morris and Linda have six grandchildren and they want to pass on a lasting legacy that encourages home grown, local, organic, biodiverse, natural, and quality.

It is evident when you visit Artesia that the love of the land and the love of family is forefront in their daily lives.

If you venture out to visit Artesia Brewery, their hours are Fridays, 5- 10 p.m. and Saturdays 12 – 10 p.m. The address is 384 E. 1200 North Road, Thawville. You'll want to come early to get a seat on the patio so you can enjoy the live music provided by a wide variety of musical groups.

Artesia Brewery is family friendly and hosts several holiday events for children throughout the year. The annual Easter Egg hunt is a favorite of many. Don't be surprised to find your neighbors and friends imbibing as business is hopping, especially in the summer when visitors can enjoy a cold one sitting on a church pew that came from the Lutheran Church in Roberts or in the pig shed that has been converted into a welcoming area for conversation and camaraderie.

The Tammens have plans to expand to be able to host larger events in the future. Artesia Brewery is a great place to meet up with family and friends and sip a delicious drink. You'll be surprised that the middle of nowhere tastes so good.

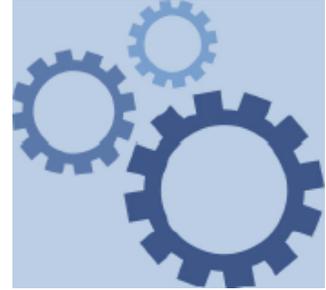


# CAPITAL CREDITS ARE A BENEFIT OF COOPERATIVE MEMBERSHIP

## Your Capital Credit allocation is on your bill



### CAPITAL CREDIT ALLOCATION IS ON YOUR BILL



Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative keeps track of how much you pay for the electricity you use all year.



Eastern Illini calculates if the overall revenue collected for the year is more than the costs of operation. If there is more revenue than expenses, it's called margin.



EIEC allocates margins to each member as capital credits based upon the amount each member paid for electricity that year. The allocation is added to your capital credit account and it is always yours, even if you move.



Capital credits stay in your account to "go to work" funding the operations of the co-op. We use those dollars to offset other types of financing like taking out loans.\*

*\*Capital credits are not available to be used any other way until retirement. A deceased members estate may opt for early retirement at a discounted rate.*



Over time, and based on the financial condition of the cooperative, the board of directors may authorize the retirement of capital credits. Those payments are sent via check, so it is important to keep us up-to-date on your address if you move.





# Our Crews Are Working to Serve You

Help us keep them safe

To provide excellent service and keep our crews as safe as possible, please help us with the following:

- At a job site, do not stop to ask crews what they are working on or when power might be restored. Crew members need to give the repairs their full attention to ensure safety. Asking them questions can divert their attention and increase the amount of time it takes for the issue to be resolved.
- When driving by a utility truck (or any roadside vehicle with flashing lights), please move over and give them space. In a work zone, follow all signage, including speed limits. Drivers who travel through a work zone too fast can endanger workers on the ground and up in the bucket.

- If one of our employees is in your yard or on an easement to address service issues, be sure to secure your dogs. Please keep meters and padmount transformers (green boxes) free from obstructions.

Please be patient as we work on an outage or other issues. Safety is our top priority, for you and for our employees.

At Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, we provide members with safe, reliable energy solutions and exceptional service.

