

PowerLines

December 2023

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays

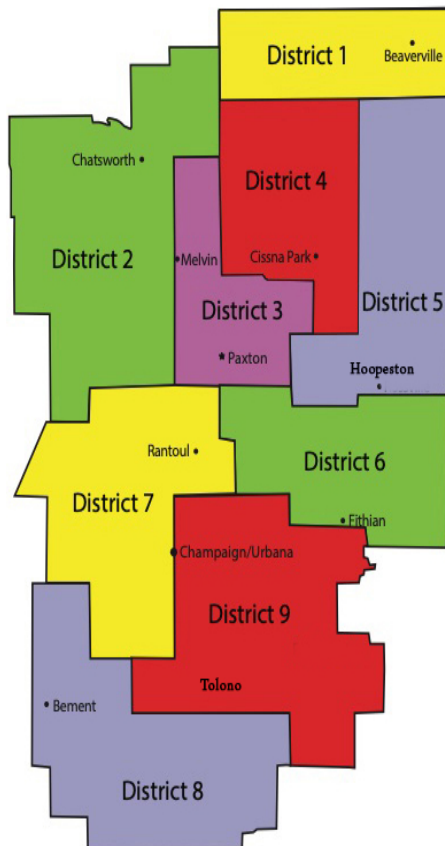
The year 2023 is nearly over, with just the month of December and the related holiday periods remaining. During the holiday season, please take time (our most precious gift) to share your talents with others that may be less fortunate or that are going through challenging times. A simple smile or small act of kindness will let others know they are valued and that someone cares.

News Briefs:
We have nearly completed our member meetings to discuss our upcoming rate adjustments. The meetings were well attended and members asked excellent questions and provided good discussion. Thank you to all that have attended. We have included additional information on our website.

The return of \$1.2 million in capital credits to members is in process. The mailing of checks started around Thanksgiving for memberships active during 2002.

We have results from the October member survey with nearly 1100 responses. Overall, members rated their cooperative very highly, with a

score of 89 (out of 100) on the member satisfaction benchmark. Additionally, member ratings for employee interactions ranked extremely high at 95 or above in most every category. Thank you! Members also identified areas for improvement. We use this annual member feedback to continually strive to improve service and to create a positive experience for members.



During our June 2024 annual meeting process, three of our nine member districts will be up for election. Please reference the service territory map shown here. Brad Ludwig, District 6, has decided to not seek reelection. Steve Meenen, District 3, and Bruce Ristow, District 4, will seek reelection. More information will be provided on our social media sites and in future publications. If you are interested in learning more about the election process, please give us a call. Members can obtain petitions to begin the qualification process beginning February 22, 2024.

From our Board of Directors and all employees, thank you for being members and for your support. It is our sincere hope that you will have a safe, blessed, and joyful holiday season, a Merry Christmas, and a great start to 2024!

Sincerely,

Bob Hunzinger

In this issue:

- Serving up savings this holiday season
- Rate restructuring coming in March 2024
- SmartHub lets you manage your account
- Have a safe and happy holiday season
- 2024 Youth to Washington trip



- 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!

RATE RESTRUCTURING MEMBER MEETING BEING HELD DEC. 7

Join us at the Eastern Illini Pesotum location (987 CR 200 North) for the December 7th member meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m. to discuss the details of rate restructuring happening in March 2024. We will provide background information, explain the new rates and answer your questions.

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

ENERGY EFFICIENCY IDEAS TO CONSIDER THIS WINTER

Serving up savings this holiday season

The holiday season is just around the corner and soon, festive music will flood the airwaves, sparkling lights and decorations will adorn homes and businesses, and good tidings will abound. The holidays also bring a frenzy of decorating, cooking and family gatherings, and amid the hectic hustle and bustle, you may receive higher-than-usual energy bills.

Here are a few ideas for energy efficiency this winter designed to help you save.

Winter months typically bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. Making minor, low-cost improvements, like weatherstripping exterior doors and caulking around old, drafty windows can have a positive impact on energy bills.

It seems like these days Christmas decorations go up as soon as the Thanksgiving turkey is finished. With holiday lights adorning home sweet home for well over a month, consider switching to LEDs to save energy. LED holiday lights use 88% less energy than incandescent holiday lights.

To put that into perspective, the Department of Energy estimates that with standard holiday decorations, LED lights typically increase energy bills by about \$5 to \$7. But with incandescent lights, energy bills will typically increase by \$33 or more. For homes that go above and beyond with incandescent holiday lighting (think Clark Griswold), energy bills could increase by as much as \$350. Beyond energy savings, LEDs provide additional benefits, such as being shock-resistant, shatterproof and cool to the touch, making them safer for the home.

You can also lower energy use by managing holiday lighting. Smart light timers can help you save energy by connecting to a smart phone app or



or voice assistant to program lights to turn on and off at set times. If you don't use smart home technology, you can still save energy by using traditional timers.

Additional easy ways to save during the holiday season include turning off overhead lights and using your Christmas tree to illuminate your home. If you have a fireplace, remember to close the flue when you're not burning a fire to ensure heat doesn't escape through the chimney.

If you plan to have family and friends over this holiday season, you can cook up energy savings by using small countertop appliances like microwaves, air fryers and slow cookers, when possible, as they use much less energy than the stovetop or oven. When using the oven, bake multiple dishes at once for maximum efficiency. After all, it takes as much energy to cook one dish as it does to cook several. Turn the oven off a few minutes before the recipe's end time and allow the residual heat to finish baking the dish. Once the food is done, leave the stove door ajar to

allow the residual heat to warm the room. When using the stove top, match the pan size to the burner to maximize the stove top's efficiency.

Make sure to unplug devices that are not in use. Americans spend an excess \$100 a year on electronics and devices that are not in use. Use power strips to efficiently disconnect from the power source.

If large appliances and electronics are on your shopping list, look for ENERGY STAR labeling on those items. ENERGY STAR-certified products use up to 60 percent less electricity than those that are non-certified. While the initial cost of an ENERGY STAR-rated appliance may appear higher than that of a conventional model, you can quickly recoup that cost over the first years of usage with lower energy bills.

This may be the year to ask Santa to upgrade your thermostat. Investing in a newer thermostat (and programming it to lower the temperature at certain times of the day in the winter) can save you more than 15% on energy costs.

You can also save energy by letting the sun shine in. Keep drapes and shades open during the day and then close them at night to reduce chill and cut down on drafts from cold windows.

Colder days and fewer hours of daylight cause an influx in energy expended in the form of heat, as well as a small hike in electricity. As you go about this holiday season, be mindful of your energy consumption. Not only will implementing these tips reduce heat loss and electric bill spikes due to light displays in your home, but it makes for a more efficient but equally productive holiday season. With a little planning upfront, you can find efficient ways to save.

Rate restructuring coming in March 2024

Understanding Demand

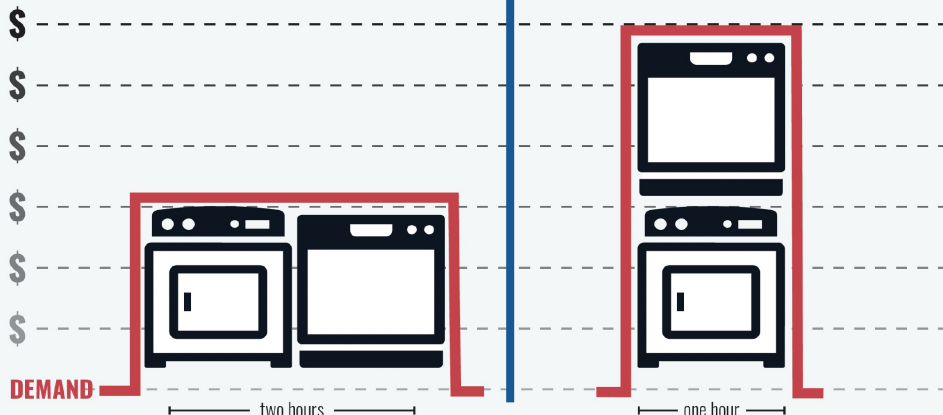
As more appliances in your home run simultaneously, your demand for power increases. The members in the following example use the same amount of energy (kWh) to run their appliances, but each member is putting a different demand (kW) on the electric grid.



Mary: Mary cooks her food for one hour. Then she runs the dishwasher the next hour.



Joe: Joe cooks his food and runs the dishwasher while he's cooking.



Average Appliance Use (60 min. runtime)
Range: 1500 Watts = 1.5 kWh / 1.5 kW
Dishwasher: 1800 Watts = 1.8 kWh / 1.8 kW

Mary
Energy: 3.3 kWh
Demand: 1.8 kW

Joe
Energy: 3.3 kWh
Demand: 3.3 kW

Beginning in March 2024, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative will implement a new rate structure that separates the costs for energy (kWh) and demand (kW). This change will impact all rate classes and will be reflected on the April bill.

WHAT IS DEMAND?

Simply put, energy is the amount of power you consume, while demand measures your impact on the grid to deliver that power. For example, think about your vehicle. Energy (kWh) would be what is recorded on the odometer - a measurement of total miles. Demand is like your speedometer - measuring the speed at which energy flows. The upcoming demand charge will be similar your highest recorded "miles-per-hour." Eastern Illini must build and maintain the electric system so we can make sure you can "drive" as fast as you'd like at any time.

WHY CHARGE A DEMAND RATE?

With a traditional blended rate, the impact of your demand is rolled

up into a charge based on the power you use. This change will allow us to bill you more fairly for the two largest drivers of your consumption: your impact on the electric system (your demand) and amount of power you consume (your energy use).

HOW IS MY DEMAND DETERMINED?

Although there hasn't been a charge associated with demand, we've been showing your demand reading on your bill for years. It represents the 15-minute interval with the highest energy consumption during the billing period, measured in kilowatts (kW). When we make the rate change, you will be billed a per kW rate multiplied by the total kW of that highest interval. The demand charge will vary by rate class.

Demand is a measure of the rate at which energy is consumed. The demand Eastern Illini must supply varies with the time of day, the day of the week, and the time of year. Peak demand seldom occurs for more than a few hours or fractions of hours each month or year, but EIEC maintains sufficient generating and transmission

capacity to supply the peak demand. Demand charges are based on the amount of energy consumed in a specified period of time known as a demand interval. Demand is calculated in 15 minute intervals.

There are several ways to identify opportunities for energy efficiency. You may want to conduct an energy audit, analyze your energy use patterns, and identify areas where energy waste can be reduced. Some of these changes may include upgrading to energy-efficient appliances, improving insulation, optimizing HVAC systems, and adopting smart energy management practices.

You will find in the graph to the left some examples showing members using the same amount of energy (kWh) to run their appliances, but each member is putting a different demand (kW) on the electric grid.

Mary and Joe have appliances with average use (60 minute run time) The range: 1500 Watts = 1.5 kWh/1.5kW and the dishwasher: 1800 Watts = 1.8kWh/1.8 kW. Mary cooks her food for one hour. Then she runs the dishwasher the next hour. Her energy use is 3.3 kWh and her demand is 1.8 kW. Joe cooks his food for one hour and runs his dishwasher at the same time he is cooking his food. His energy use is 3.3 kWh and his demand is 3.3 kW.

These changes are designed to collect more of our distribution system costs from the fixed-cost component rather than the variable component.

Most Eastern Illini residential members will see a minimal impact. Members with large electric use will likely see a reduction in their bills. Members with low electric use will likely see the largest percentage increase. We will be talking more about demand and answering your questions prior to March 2024.



SAVE TIME AND MONEY AND DO IT AT ANYTIME FROM ANYWHERE

SmartHub lets you manage your account

SmartHub will have a new look and feel, but will contain all the powerful features that allow you to take control of your account like never before! The browser version of SmartHub that you access from a computer or mobile browser will be updated to provide you with a more cohesive and modern experience. Users of the mobile app version of SmartHub will feel right at home with the new layout. Navigation has been moved from across the top to down the left side of the screen. The report-an-outage function is now even easier to access.

All functionality from the old version has been moved over to the new experience, though the navigation and layout may have changed. Note that you may have to clear your browser cache/cookies to access the new SmartHub the first time. The mobile app version of SmartHub you are already familiar with is unchanged.

On January 9, 2024, when you log into SmartHub you will see the new design that is simple and easy to navigate.

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative members who haven't taken advantage of SmartHub yet are missing out. It's not just a portal for online bill pay. It features powerful tools to help you monitor your electric use and gain an understanding of the charges on your monthly bills.

In SmartHub, you can set bill reminders, view billing and payment history, compare usage, schedule and make payments. By monitoring and comparing energy usage you can see how home energy use changes from bill to bill and learn how personal habits and behaviors impact your monthly energy usage.

If you spend part of the year away from your home you can especially benefit from using SmartHub. It's a fantastic way to monitor the electricity

use in your home and monitor any changes that could indicate a problem. For instance, a spike in usage unrelated to weather may be caused by a malfunctioning pump or water heater.

SmartHub may be accessed one of two ways: The web version is available from any web-enabled device or the mobile app can be downloaded and installed on your mobile phone or tablet via your devices' app store. Either version will provide secure access to the member's account, takes less than three minutes to set up and it's free to download.

You may want to consider adding a secondary user to your account. The primary user controls the maintenance of credentials for secondary users including password reset and unsubscribing.

As a SmartHub user you can access your provider through smart home devices and

perform a number of functions including get your bill balance or pay your bill. Your life is busy and managing your account can feel complicated, with our SmartHub tool it won't be. Save time and money by managing your account at anytime from anywhere.

At the end of the registration process, we encourage you to check the notification option for text messages. You'll also want to remain on paperless billing because it will save you time and a tree! Paperless billing is an eco-friendly way to instantly access your bill. No more waiting for your bill to arrive in the mail and you will save time with easy payment options. By using SmartHub, you can gain a better understanding of how your home uses electricity, which will enable you to adhere to your budget and become more energy-efficient.

NEWLY REDESIGNED SMARTHUB

MANAGE YOUR ACCOUNT LIKE NEVER BEFORE

SMART MANAGEMENT. SMART LIFE. SMARTHUB.

Visit us Online at www.eiec.coop

INCREASE YOUR AWARENESS OF HOLIDAY HAZARDS

Have a safe and happy holiday season



Top 10 Holiday Safety Tips

1. Inspect electrical decorations for damage before use.

Cracked or damaged sockets, loose or bare wires, and loose connections may cause a serious shock or start a fire.



2. Do not overload electrical outlets.

Overloaded electrical outlets and faulty wires are a common cause of holiday fires. Avoid overloading outlets and plug only one high-wattage appliance into each outlet at a time.



3. Never connect more than three strings of incandescent lights.

More than three strands may not only blow a fuse, but can also cause a fire.



4. Keep tree fresh by watering daily.

Dry trees are a serious fire hazard.



5. Use battery-operated candles.

Candles start almost half of home decoration fires (NFPA).



6. Keep combustibles at least three feet from heat sources.

A heat source that was too close to the decoration was a factor in half of home fires that began with decorations. (NFPA).



7. Protect cords from damage.

To avoid shock or fire hazards, cords should never be pinched by furniture, forced into small spaces such as doors or windows, placed under rugs, located near heat sources, or attached by nails or staples.



8. Check decorations for certification label.

Decorations not bearing a label from an Independent testing laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or Intertek (ETL) have not been tested for safety and could be hazardous.



9. Stay in the kitchen when something is cooking.

Unattended cooking equipment is the leading cause of home cooking fires (NFPA).



10. Turn off, unplug, and extinguish all decorations when going to sleep or leaving the house.

Unattended candles are the cause of one in five home candle fires. Half of home fire deaths occur between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. (NFPA)





2024

EASTERN ILLINI
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

YOUTH TO WASHINGTON TRIP

APPLY TODAY! <https://www.eiec.org/youth-washington-program>

Sophomores and juniors in high school can win an all-expense paid trip to **Washington D.C. June 14 - 21, 2024** to learn about government, explore museums, memorials, and monuments and find out how cooperatives work. You will meet with members of Congress and enjoy a trip of a lifetime.

Official Rules:

- Applicants must be sons or daughters of an Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative member currently receiving electric service from the cooperative.
- Applicants must be a high school sophomore or junior.
- Up to six applicants will be selected as finalists and will attend Youth Day to Springfield.
- Following Youth Day, four of the finalists will be chosen to represent Eastern Illini on the Youth to Washington trip.
- The application deadline is Friday, February 2.