

Say hello to September

Another summer season is effectively over when we celebrate the Labor Day holiday. It continues to be a very eventful year regardless of the season – allow me to provide some brief updates.

The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC), our statewide organization, recently held their annual meeting. It is always good to reconnect with friends and other cooperative personnel from around the state. Included among the many informative topics

was a presentation by Corey Parr from Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange (our cooperative insurance company). Corey discussed safety and loss prevention, especially as related to the increasing occurrences of electrical contact incidents.

Unfortunately, these contacts are usually life altering in nature, and many involve other people. Please, always be aware of the location of power

lines, but especially if using equipment or tools that increase your effective reach or height. Additionally, harvest season will soon be in full swing in our service territory. We encourage everyone to take extra care when working in the vicinity of power poles and the lines they support.

During July we initiated, via contractors, the installation of new electric meters. This process should be completed by the end of the year – depending on shipment dates. This will help to facilitate EIEC implementing a third billing component that comprises the highest 15 - minute usage (demand charge) in

each billing period. We are finalizing plans for member information meetings beginning in November to discuss this topic in conjunction with our planned rate adjustments. There will be much more information provided across our various platforms in the near future.

Legislation passed by Congress in the past few years has made a lot of possible funding (in the form of matching grants, loans, and tax credits) available to electric

cooperatives in various areas such as grid resiliency, reliability, cybersecurity, renewable energy, and many other related areas. Our staff is evaluating what areas we may be able to take advantage of for the benefit of our members.

> With the availability of new technologies and renewable generation and other sources, operation of the distribution system is becoming

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

increasingly complicated which also raises additional safety concerns. We will

soon be asking for your help to identify generation sources and Electric Vehicle (EV) ownership to aid in our planning and safe operation of the system.

Some photographs of our new West Ridge replacement substation construction are included to the right. Construction is expected to be completed later this fall or early winter.

Stay safe!

Bob Hunzinger

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Construction of new West Ridge Substation



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KNOW WHAT TO DO IF A POWER LINE COMES IN CONTACT WITH EQUIPMENT Ways to stay safe this harvest season

Harvest is a busy and often hectic time. There are many components that make it more accident prone than other parts of the year, including the amount of equipment on public roads, longer hours, and the urgent nature of getting the crop out of the field at the right time.

The annual mortality rate for farm accidents stands at roughly 60 – 70 per 100,000 of farm population and it is a rate that is not going down, according to the National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health. Farmers and those who help with harvest are encouraged to prepare both mentally and physically for what tends to be a

very demanding season.

Most farmworker injuries and deaths are caused by tractor overturns, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). On average, these incidents result in about 130 deaths each year nationwide.

As the fall harvest begins, Eastern Illini urges farmers to stay safe by knowing their surroundings and equipment sizes to maintain safe clearance from poles and overhead power lines. Contact with poles and power lines increase significantly during harvest season for three main reasons:

- More equipment is in the field;
- That equipment tends to be largerlike combines, wagons and tractors;
- Farmers work more hours in the dark when it's difficult to see poles and overhead lines.

Here are some safety tips to consider during harvest:

Know the height of your equipment.
Don't drive under power lines if your equipment is too tall to clear them.



- Be aware of your turning radius. Ensure your tractor and anything you pull does not swing into poles or overhead lines when you turn. Pay special attention at the end of the rows and field entrances.
- Stay safe during grain handling and storage. Be alert when setting up and moving equipment. Boom, auger and grain bin use can place you near overhead lines.
- Stay alert, especially when it gets dark. Know where poles and overhead lines are at all times.
- Know what to do if an overhead line comes in contact with farming equipment. Stay on the equipment and do not step to the ground while touching the equipment. Call 911 and wait until a qualified person can verify the line is not energized and tells you it is safe to exit the vehicle. If you must leave the equipment because of fire, try to jump clear of the equipment so you don't touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Land with both feet together. Shuffle away, keeping your feet together and on the ground. Don't let someone outside the equipment come near you.

If you come across an individual or equipment that has made contact with a power line, do not touch the victim or item. Call 911 and inform the dispatcher of the electrical accident. Always seek medical help for an electrical contact accident., as some injuries might not be visible, or appear several hours later.

The third week of September is National Farm Safety and Health Week. It brings awareness and attention to protecting farmers and

farm workers through best practices and always putting safety first. Visibility is a key to safety on the roads. All farm vehicles using the public roads must display the fluorescent orange Slow Moving Vehicle triangle. Additionally, tractors and other self-powered farm vehicles must have proper lighting. Drivers should remember farm vehicle operators have limited visibility to the rear. Anyone passing such a vehicle should use extreme caution.

Each day of National Farm Safety and Health Week focuses on a topic relevant to farm and health safety:

- 09/18: Equipment & Rural Road Safety
- 09/19: Health and Wellness
- 09/20: Priority Populations
- 09/21: Confined Spaces
- 09/22: Brain Health

Contact with power lines can interrupt electric service, which can halt work and slow other farming activities that require electricity such as grain drying.

Call us at 800-824-5102 to report a downed power line. Let's all make this harvest season safe and successful for everyone involved.

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NEW METERS WILL IMPROVE SERVICE Meter installations continue



Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative has begun the process of replacing electric meters across the service territory. The replacement of old meters is going well and is on schedule. If you're not home when the meter is replaced, you may find a hangtag like the one pictured above on your doorknob.

If you have questions, give us a call at 800-824-5102. We'd be happy to provide answers to your questions and get you any additional information you may need related to your new meter. WHY ARE METERS BEING REPLACED? The technology in the new meters will ultimately enable you to access relevant information about your electric use. This gives you the ability to be aware of when you use electricity and how much, through SmartHub, our free member application. It also gives us near real-time data about outages. We will also be able to troubleshoot and resolve equipment issues quicker, reducing outage times. The new meters give us a more efficient way of starting and stopping service. The existing meters have served us well, but it's time for an upgrade.

WHEN WILL THE METERS BE REPLACED?

Eastern Illini staff or a contracted installer will be replacing all the meters in our service area between now and the end of the year. The replacement of meters takes place during the day.

HOW WILL THE METERS BE REPLACED?

You will receive communication in advance that the new meters are being replaced in your area. After you've been notified, a meter installation technician will knock on your door to let you know they are installing the new meter at your location. If you're not home, they will leave a hangtag on your door, so you know they have been there. You don't need to be home when the meter is replaced. You don't have to do anything in advance of getting the new meter.

Most meters are located outdoors, so the technician will remove the old meter and

install the new meter in a matter of minutes. It's just that quick.

WILL I NEED TO DO ANYTHING ONCE THE NEW METER IS INSTALLED?

In most cases, the power will be out less than 60 seconds, but in some instances, it can take up to 5 minutes. You may need to reset the clock on your microwave after the new meter has been installed, but that's about it. For the most part, there will be little if any impact as a result of the new meter installation.

DOES THE INSTALLATION TECHNICIAN NEED TO COME INTO MY HOME TO CHANGE MY METER?

The answer to that is no, because in most cases, the existing meter is on the exterior of the home or building and is easily accessible from the outside.

The new meters have become the norm for many utilities around the country because they allow for more accurate and faster collection of meter readings, improved safety conditions for staff and minimized wear and tear on Eastern Illini vehicles, and near real-time data about outages, so we can quickly troubleshoot.

More than 75% of homes in the U.S. are equipped with the type of meters we are installing. The data collected by these meters is secure and protected. These new meters are one way we can better serve our members and improve the overall efficiency of the co-op.

Jeff Blackford, Eastern Illini Serviceman, installs a new meter for an EIEC member.





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HERE'S TO A GREAT AND SAFE 2023 FOOTBALL SEASON Energy and football

When most people think of energy consumption, they think of cars, homes, and office buildings. Those things do take a lot of energy, but they aren't the whole story. Almost every human activity consumes energy, often in surprising ways, you might not have even thought of. One of those is likely at a football game. Football consumes a lot more energy than people think, especially some bigger college fields and professional games in gigantic stadiums. It may not be the biggest consumer of energy in the world, but football does consume quite a bit.

Most stadiums rely on powerful lights to illuminate the field during play and they consume an immense amount of energy, especially in the bigger stadiums that need more lighting – not just for the field, but also the concourses with concessions, parking lots and the tunnels that connect the locker rooms, storage and staging areas.

A single stadium can consume several hundred thousand kilowatts of power in a year, and the lights make up a large part of that. Fortunately, many stadiums are cutting down on power use. Most are switching over to LED lights, which reduces the amount of energy they consume. Others are installing solar panels and other clean energy features.

The most commonly used watts for stadium lights are 400W, 500W, 750W, 1000W and 1500W, providing 64,000lm to 240,000 lumens per light. These wattages are very common because they are bright enough to illuminate the entire stadium. A typical high school football stadium uses 750watts while a NFL stadium uses 1500watts.



We're Proud to Power FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS

To all the players, coaches and supporting staff, we wish you a great and safe 2023 football season. We're rooting for you.

Here is an example of what it might cost to light a high school football field using 16 units of 1000 watt LED football floodlights, assuming the average electricity consumption of football field floodlights is roughly 16,000 watts. The cost to operate the football field lights is \$19.2 per day or 16,000 watts x 8 hours x \$0.15 x 1000. Therefore, the cost of power if we operated the lights on a recreational football or soccer field for 8 hours each day would be roughly \$19.20, or \$576 per month.

If the local high school football team has five home night games this fall, they will spend about \$100 to light the football field during the games. Similar to replacing your home light bulbs with more efficient LED bulbs, the same goes for stadium lights. LEDs are very energy-efficient light sources, so an entire stadium can be illuminated with less watts, which leads to a considerable reduction in energy use and related cost reductions. If a high school football field already has a sports lighting system installed and the proposal is to upgrade to a new generation LED system, the cost will be between \$150,000 – \$350,000 for retrofitting. The price range depends largely on how much of the existing infrastructure can be used and which conversion method is applied. Sometimes it is possible to retrofit only the new LED lamps into the existing lighting fixtures, which can reduce the overall cost greatly.

A modern LED football field lighting system offers numerous advantages for schools, clubs, players and spectators. An LED floodlight system enhances a sports field. Games under the lights are a special experience for players and spectators alike. LED floodlighting provides consistent illumination of sports fields and spectator areas. LEDs have many advantages including long service life, better efficiency, and

clear visibility. Players can recognize potentially dangerous situations earlier and avoid the risk of injury; and spectators also feel safer and have a more enjoyable experience.

Although initially LED floodlighting systems are somewhat more expensive, in the long run it saves on operating costs and all surfaces are evenly illuminated and glare is avoided. LED floodlight systems also reduce light pollution. The light goes where it is needed: onto the playing field. By not shining or diffusing in other directions, residents or motorists are not affected by stray lights. Similarly, LED is also ideal for lighting parking lots and pedestrian walkways.

As football shifts into high gear, we hope your hometown team does great under the lights this season!

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A HOME GENERATOR HELPS YOU TO BE PREPARED Powering up when the power is down

A home generator helps you to be prepared. Like insurance, it protects your home and your family in the aftermath of a storm or other power emergency. An effective home generator keeps the lights, appliances, heating systems, air conditioning, sump pumps, Wi-Fi, and other necessities running. That can save you money by, for instance, keeping your food fresh and preventing water and mold buildup in your basement. It can be a lifesaver for people with electrically powered medical devices.

While a generator can be a lifesaver during and after severe weather, it can be dangerous if you don't take precautions. In the past decade, carbon monoxide from generators has killed at least 770 people in the U.S.

Because you probably rarely rely on a generator, it's easy to overlook basic safety measures that should be routine. It's also easy to get preoccupied with the cleanup work that lies ahead, so you may even be tempted to run a generator in a living space if most of your house is severely water damaged and can't be saved. Don't ever do that. Running a generator inside or too close to a living space can lead to death or injury from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning as well as burn injuries resulting from contact with a hot generator. All these happen too often during power outages and storms. The greatest danger is CO poisoning. Portable generators can produce deadly levels of carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas. Carbon monoxide can kill you in as little as 5 minutes, if the levels are high enough.

To reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, some new portable generators feature a built-in sensor that triggers an automatic shutoff if CO builds up to dangerous levels in an enclosed space. Whether you buy a new generator that implements these new safety standards or you're running an older model without an auto shutoff, we strongly advise that you follow this safety advice:

Never run a generator in an enclosed space or indoors. Most generator-related injuries and deaths involve CO poisoning from generators used indoors or in partly enclosed spaces. That includes a basement or garage, two spaces that can capture deadly levels of carbon monoxide. Always place the generator at least 20 feet from the house with the engine exhaust directed away from windows and doors.

Don't run portable generators in the rain. You can buy tents for generators that keep them shielded but still well ventilated—online and at home centers and hardware stores. Before refueling, make sure to turn off a gas-powered generator and let it cool. Gasoline spilled on a hot engine can ignite. Allowing the engine to cool sufficiently reduces the risk of burns while refueling.

Install a transfer switch before the next storm. This critical connection will cost from \$500 to \$900 with labor for a 5,000-rated-watt or larger generator. A transfer switch connects the generator to your circuit panel and lets you power hardwired appliances and avoid the safety risk of using extension cords for those with plugs. Most transfer switches also help you avoid overload by displaying wattage use levels.

Don't attempt to backfeed your house.

Backfeeding means trying to power your home's wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet. Backfeeding is a reckless and dangerous practice. It presents an electrocution risk to you as well as our linemen and neighbors served by the same transformer. It also bypasses some built-in household circuit protection devices, so you could end up frying some of your electronics. Always use a generator outside, a minimum of 20 feet from your home, with the exhaust directed away from the house. And make sure your house has working carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home.



Never run it in an enclosed space



Always run it at least 20 feet from your home



Always direct exhaust away from your home

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HONORING THE HARD WORK OF THOSE AROUND US AS WE CELEBRATE LABOR DAY

We take a moment on Monday, September 4, 2023 to honor and celebrate all those who work hard. Regardless of how you choose to spend the day, make sure you take some time to give yourself a pat on the back for all your successes and the success of those around you.

