

PowerLines

February 2021

Interesting start to 2021

It has been an eventful start to 2021 at EIEC. The first day of the new year included freezing rain across our service area, with the heaviest ice accumulations on the lines mainly confined to the northern and western portions. Virtually all member outages were restored by the end of the second day. However, scattered outages continued for another few days as the ice eventually dropped from the lines, which caused recurring line and other outage issues. We were very fortunate to not have high wind conditions during the lengthy time the ice remained on the lines.

COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

We requested help from nearby cooperatives to assist in the restoration efforts on January 2nd. Sincere thanks to employees of Shelby Electric (Shelbyville), Rural Electric Convenience (Auburn), Enerstar Electric (Paris), and Coles-Moultrie (Mattoon) for their timely assistance. This is a great example of one of the seven cooperative principles, Cooperatives helping cooperatives. Overall, this was a relatively minor event compared to some of the severe past historic widespread ice storms that caused hundreds of miles of downed poles and lines. Perhaps you remember the February 1991 Valentine's Day ice storm that resulted in some member outages lasting about two weeks.

THANK YOU

A special thank you to all EIEC personnel who spent long hours restoring service and cleaning up the system damage, along with those employees who staffed the

office and phones and otherwise helped to restore power in various other ways.

2021 FOCUS

In late summer, the Board of Directors and senior staff participated in a strategic planning process facilitated by Cooperative Finance Corporation (our cooperative bank). The areas identified that will be a work focus in 2021 include:

- A continuous safety improvement plan to focus on employee & public safety
- Long term rate plan development that includes upgrading automated metering infrastructure
- Develop a long-term capital work plan focused on system improvements and infrastructure
- Succession plan at all levels of the organization
- Analyze feasible broadband opportunities



MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT

Each year three of the cooperative's nine board seats are up for election. If you are interested in learning more about this process, see the article included in this newsletter, visit our website, or call the office. For those considering participating, petitions and related information will be available beginning February 25th.

Please stay safe.

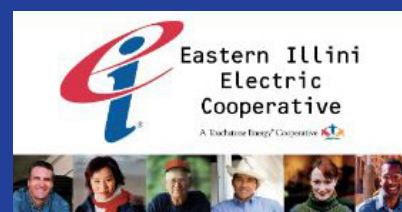
Sincerely,

Bob Hunzinger

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- New rates coming in April
- Switching to LED bulbs
- When the lights go out, so do we
- Safe and efficient power restoration
- Happy Valentine's Day

How do you want to save today?



Local Deals
Pharmacy Discounts
Cash Back Online
Hotel Savings

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

Need help with your bill?

You may be eligible for assistance in paying your winter electric bill. Contact your local community action agency for more information, or give us a call at 800-824-5102 for a community action contact list.

Your Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE SELECTED

Nominating petitions available February 25

Nominating petitions will be available on Thursday, February 25, 2021 for the June 10, 2021 director election.



The following Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative members were nominated by the board and have agreed to serve on the 2021 Credentials Committee:

- Herb Aden, Newman, District 8
- Michael Anderson, Paxton, District 7
- Tyler Babb, Penfield, District 6
- Ryan Knight, Armstrong, District 6
- Jason Niemann, Chatsworth, District 2

The Credentials Committee will review the qualifications of all candidates who file nominating petitions on April 15, 2021, to determine their eligibility to serve as directors of the cooperative.

Nominating petitions can be obtained by calling us at 217-379-0423. Each member who desires to be elected to the board of directors must have a petition signed by not less than 25 members of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative. Petitions must be filed by Monday, April 12, 2021, no later than 4:00 p.m.

Directors in Directorate Districts, 3, 4, and 6 will be elected at the June 10, 2021 annual meeting. The EIEC district map can be viewed at: www.eiec.coop. The nominating process is conducted in accordance with the following provisions of the EIEC Bylaws, Article III,

Any member of the Cooperative in good standing who desires to be elected to its Board of Directors may be nominated by petition signed by not less than twenty-five (25) members and filed with the Secretary/Treasurer of the Cooperative not less than sixty (60) days prior to the annual meeting of members. Nominations from the floor shall not be permitted. The Secretary/Treasurer of the Cooperative shall cause to be prepared and posted at the principal office of the Cooperative at least forty-five (45) days before the annual meeting, a list of the nominations for Directors thus filed with him or her.

A specimen ballot marked "Ballot for Directors" containing the names and addresses of all candidates listed in the order of priority determined by the date and time when the Cooperative received the respective completed candidate information shall be printed in or mailed with the notice of the meeting. In the event that multiple candidates' completed information is received on the same date and at the same time for the same directorate district, the ballot order shall be determined by lot conducted by the Board of Directors. The Secretary/Treasurer shall also have printed in or mailed with the said notice of the meeting or separately not less than seven (7) days prior to said annual meeting, a statement of the number of directors to be elected and the district from which they are to be elected.

If a particular directorate district does not have a contested election, that director can be elected by a voice vote as provided in Section 2.6 of Article II of the Bylaws. In such case, the name of the candidate for that specific directorate district shall not be required to be placed on the specimen and actual ballots.

NEW RATES COMING IN APRIL

Electric rates will be changing for all EIEC members, beginning with bills that will be sent out at the end of March. A recently completed cost of service study, and projected wholesale power cost increases, determined the need to adjust all rate classes. The impact of these rate changes will result in a modest 1% overall rate increase. The EIEC Board of Directors established the new rates with the goal of providing ongoing financial stability while keeping the increase as small as possible, and without sacrificing safety, reliability, and outstanding service levels.



RATE CHANGE IMPACT SUMMARY

- The overall rate increase is 1%.
- **Rate 1**, residential members, will see a 0.55% increase.
- Current members who are on **Rate 18** and who use a small amount of electricity will be moving to **Rate 1**.
- Members on **Rate 20B** will be moving to **Rate 1**.

All rates are published on the EIEC website: www.eiec.coop. Call us at 1-800-824-5102 with any questions.

BEFORE YOU CHANGE OUT EVERY BULB IN YOUR HOME READ THIS

Switching to LED bulbs

If you haven't switched to LED bulbs, now is the time. The reasons why are compelling. For starters, LED bulbs last much longer than incandescent bulbs, and they put out the same amount of light using significantly less energy. That's great for the environment, and it can save you lots of money in the long-term on your electric bill.

If you're smart home-inclined, LEDs open the door to all sorts of interesting and worthwhile features, including bulbs that change colors and bulbs that sync with your security system or voice assistant of choice.

Besides, many incandescent bulbs, including the 100 watt incandescent, are being phased out, so you'll need to make the switch eventually, anyway.

Lumens, not watts

Forget what you know about incandescents -- your watts are no good here. You're probably accustomed to looking for watts as an indication of how bright the bulb will be. The brightness of LEDs is determined a little differently. Wattage isn't an indication of brightness, but a measurement of how much energy the bulb draws. For incandescents, there is a correlation between the watts drawn and the brightness produced, but for LEDs, watts aren't a great predictor of brightness.

For example, an LED bulb with comparable brightness to a 60W incandescent is only 8 to 12 watts. There isn't a uniform way to convert incandescent watts to LED watts. Instead, measure with lumens (lm), which is the real measurement of brightness and is the number you want to look for when shopping for LEDs.

Choosing the right color LED

Incandescent bulbs typically put out a warm, yellowish hue, but LEDs come in a range of colors. LED bulbs are capable of displaying an impressive color range, from purple to red, to a spectrum of whites and yellows. For the home, however, you're likely looking for something similar to the light that incandescents produce. The two most popular colors available for LEDs are soft white (also called warm white) and bright white (also called daylight).



You'll pay more for an LED bulb

LED bulbs are like hybrid cars: More expensive upfront, but cheaper to operate. The price of LED bulbs has dropped and today you'll find plenty of LED options in the light bulb aisle available for \$5 or less.

But the dollars and cents don't stop there. You need to factor in the cost of using the bulb. The great thing about LEDs is that using them doesn't cost very much. A traditional 60-watt incandescent bulb will add about \$7 to your energy bill each year if you use it for 3 hours a day. A 60W-replacement LED that puts out the same amount of light will draw as little as 8 watts, and only add a buck to your energy bill over that same time frame.

Beware of non-dimmable LEDs

Because of their circuitry, LEDs are not always compatible with traditional dimming switches. In some cases, the switch must be replaced or you may have to pay more for a compatible LED. Most of the existing dimmers in homes today were likely designed to work with incandescents. Dimmers like those work by cutting off the amount of electricity sent to the bulb in rapid-fire succession, faster than the eye can detect. LEDs draw a lot less energy, so they don't always work well with dimmers like that. The first thing to do if you're buying LEDs that you want to use with a dimmer switch is to make sure that you buy bulbs that are, in fact, dimmable.

If dimming is truly important in your home, then you should really consider smart bulbs. Most use their own, built-in mechanisms to handle dimming, so you don't need a dimmer switch at all. Dimming mechanisms like those are great because they won't flicker or buzz, and you'll usually be able to sync things up with a

voice assistant like Siri or Alexa, which opens the door to commands like, "set the lights to 20%."

Not all light fixtures should use LEDs

LED bulbs do get hot, but the heat is pulled away by a heat sink in the base of the bulb. From there, the heat dissipates into the air and the LED bulb stays cool. The bulb needs a way to dissipate the heat. If an LED bulb is placed in an enclosed housing, the heat won't have anywhere to go, sending it right back to the bulb and sentencing it to a slow and painful death. That's why it's fine to stick with incandescent, fluorescent and halogen bulbs for enclosed fixtures.

When the lights go out, so do we



circuits, they can also be caused by extreme weather.

Ice/freezing rain

Ice accumulation on power lines makes them heavy. Half an inch of ice can add as much as 500 pounds to a power line. This added weight can impact power distribution and even bring down a power line. Ice that forms on power lines also increases its surface area, which means gusts of wind have more to catch. The weight of ice on tree limbs can cause them to fall on power lines as well.

Melting ice

Melting ice can be heavy, putting extra strain on power lines and causing the lines to touch or rest on one another. Because of this, melting ice can cause outages even though the temperature is rising. Depending

on conditions, melting ice can cause as many or more problems than the ice itself.

Tree branches

In any weather, tree-related issues cause the most power outages in many service areas. Branches, limbs or even tree trunks can fall into power lines and cause problems. Add wind, freezing rain or ice to the mix for an increased potential for problems.

Icy roads and blizzards

Vehicles sliding on ice or colliding with one another vehicle can strike a power pole or pad-mounted transformer, causing an outage or other problems. Heavy snowfall, icy roads or reduced visibility can make it difficult for our crews to get out and fix problems. We do all we can to get out there to quickly address service issues.

When you experience a power outage, let us know. Call 1-800-824-5102 or use SmartHub to report an outage. Our goal at Eastern Illini is to always have the power on for you, but sometimes Mother Nature has other ideas.

Although we work hard to maintain our equipment, monitor power delivery 24/7, and do all we can to keep the lights on, there are circumstances beyond our control that can interfere with power delivery. Winter weather is one example. Winter storms can impact the distribution of electricity due to ice, heavy winds, sleet, and other extreme conditions.

Regardless of the reason, know that when the lights go out, even during extreme weather, everyone at Eastern Illini is working in the field and behind the scenes to do all we can to restore power safely and efficiently.

Along with causing outages, winter conditions can cause hiccups with power delivery that include blinking lights, or ebbs and flows in the amount of power that comes into your home. Although blinking lights can be a symptom of other problems such as loose wiring connections or overloaded

on conditions, melting ice can cause as many or more problems than the ice itself.

We started 2021 with ice and freezing rain that impacted the northern half of our service territory. Not only were all our linemen in the field to restore power, but we asked for assistance from some of our neighboring co-ops to the south. Many tree branches broke off from the weight of the ice and fell on power lines.

Wind

Wind can cause tree branches to brush power lines, which can result in blinking or flickering lights. Therefore, it's important for us to keep trees cleared around power lines and poles. In addition, heavy winds can cause lines to move and sway. If they gain enough momentum, they can gallop or jump. This can



PROTECT YOURSELF DURING A POWER OUTAGE

Safe and efficient power restoration

Thankfully, lengthy outages do not happen on a regular basis. That does not mean you should not prepare for them, however.

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative suggests you:

- Have a storm kit ready that includes flashlights, bottled water, batteries, battery-operated radio, non-perishable food, portable cell phone chargers that are fully charged, hand sanitizer and first-aid supplies.
- Have alternate plans for refrigerating or accessing medicines and using power-dependent medical devices.
- If you still maintain a landline, determine whether your home phone will work in a power outage and how long battery backup will last.
- Practice opening and closing your garage door manually. If you do need to leave your home, you will want to be able to get your vehicle out of the garage.

During a power outage:

- Call Eastern Illini to report the power outage at 1-800-824-5102 or use SmartHub from your cell phone to let us know.
- Keep freezers and refrigerators closed to preserve food.
- Only use generators outdoors and away from windows and doors; do not use them in a garage.
- Do not use a gas stove to heat your home.
- Disconnect appliances and electronics to avoid damage from electrical surges.
- If you are able and it is safe to travel, go to an alternate location for heat or cooling.
- If possible, check on neighbors. This is especially important since cell phone and Internet communications may be disrupted and they may be unable to call for help.

Above all else, stay safe.

ONCE THE POWER IS OUT

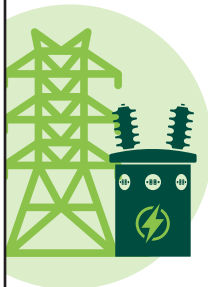
HOW IS IT SAFELY RESTORED?

When conditions are favorable for a storm, severe weather can take down power lines or disrupt your electric service in several ways.

It can happen when wind causes trees or branches to fall into power lines or when ice buildup on wires causes the lines to sway and "gallop." When lightning strikes, transformers and other electric equipment can be affected.

Slick road conditions can also play a role when vehicles strike a power pole or pad-mounted transformer and cause a disruption in service.

Please know that when the power does go out, we are doing all we can to safely and efficiently restore power. Here are the steps we take in the assessment and restoration process:



STEP 1: ASSESS THE DAMAGE

We assess the damage to utility equipment and power lines across the service area

STEP 2: ADDRESS SAFETY RISKS

We address immediate safety risks, including downed power lines



STEP 3: RESTORE ESSENTIAL SERVICES

We ensure that public health and safety facilities are operational

STEP 4: PRIORITIZE REPAIRS

We repair (usually in this order): transmission towers and lines, substations, distribution lines, and then service lines to properties





HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

The average person shells out \$169 on Valentine's Day gifts. This year, consider donating to your local food bank, a favorite charity, or to a family or small business who has seen hard times during the COVID crisis.

EASTERN ILLINI ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
member driven and community focused