

PowerLines

April 2016

Reliability must be our driving force

At Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, we take pride in our ability to deliver reliable electric service to you - our member/owners. In fact, reliability is one of our corporate goals that is closely monitored by our board of directors.

This month I would like to briefly discuss several reliability related items. But a little background might help the discussion.

Electricity, as you probably know, is generated at a power plant the moment you need to use it. It then travels over large transmission lines to substations. From the substations, the electricity then travels over smaller distribution lines to the end-users. The chart on page 2 of this publication shows this process.

Eastern Illini is a distribution cooperative. That means our primary focus is on delivering the power we receive from the transmission grid to your homes, farms and businesses. We don't generate electricity on your behalf, we deliver it to you.

Our role basically begins when electricity is delivered to our substations. We currently have 25 substations throughout our service territory. We are also in the process of constructing three additional ones to help improve reliability.

We maintain about 4,500 miles of distribution lines within our 10-county service territory. That's enough electric line to stretch all the way to San Francisco, California, and back!



All of our distribution substations are supplied through the Ameren transmission system. Ameren is paid a delivery fee for this service. You might have noticed the transmission line-item on your monthly electric bill.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT In 2015, our average reliability "on-time" was 99.95%. This equates to an average of about 4-hours of outage time per member/owner, for the whole year.

In the past year and one half, our member/owners in the northwest portion of our service territory, specifically around Sibley, Roberts, Piper City, Chatsworth, and Forrest have experienced outages and conditions that haven't met our lofty expectations.

I apologize for the frequency and duration of these outages. Many of them were a result of transmission system issues. Unlike the distribution system, where our design, maintenance and upgrade practices impact reliability, we do not have much control over transmission supplier outages. - Continued on Page 2

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Nominating Petitions

If you are interested in running for Eastern Illini's Board of Directors, the deadline for turning in your nominating petition is April 25. Please contact our office at 800-824-5102 for more information.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Message from the President, cont.

Some of the incidents were weather related, and some were a result of equipment and maintenance issues.

So, what are we doing to improve reliability?

In general, we have a good working relationship with Ameren, and I want to compliment them on their willingness to work with us to improve reliability. We have been working with them to address specific issues, and they are in the process of upgrading various portions of their delivery system throughout east central Illinois.

We are encouraging them to concentrate capital and maintenance expenditures in areas that would also benefit our members.

Outages on February 24

Some of you may have experienced outages on February 24th, especially in the eastern portion of our territory (east of I-57) from Iroquois County all the way down to Douglas County. The outages were a result of a wintry mix of snow, sleet and ice accompanied by strong windy conditions with gusts over 50 mph. It was certainly the worst storm of this winter season.

The adverse weather caused both transmission and distribution issues. At one point, almost a third of our system was down. Our crews did a wonderful job working in terrible conditions to get power restored as quickly as possible.

In fact, one of our biggest obstacles that day was our line trucks were getting stuck or going off the roads due to the snow drifts and high winds. We are grateful for the co-op members who braved the elements and used their tractors to help get our vehicles back on the roads.

We are constantly working to eliminate or reduce outage times, and we use each event to learn to improve for future events.

We were also pleased to see the overwhelmingly positive interaction with you on social media during the storm. Our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/easternillini, generated a reach of over 27,500.

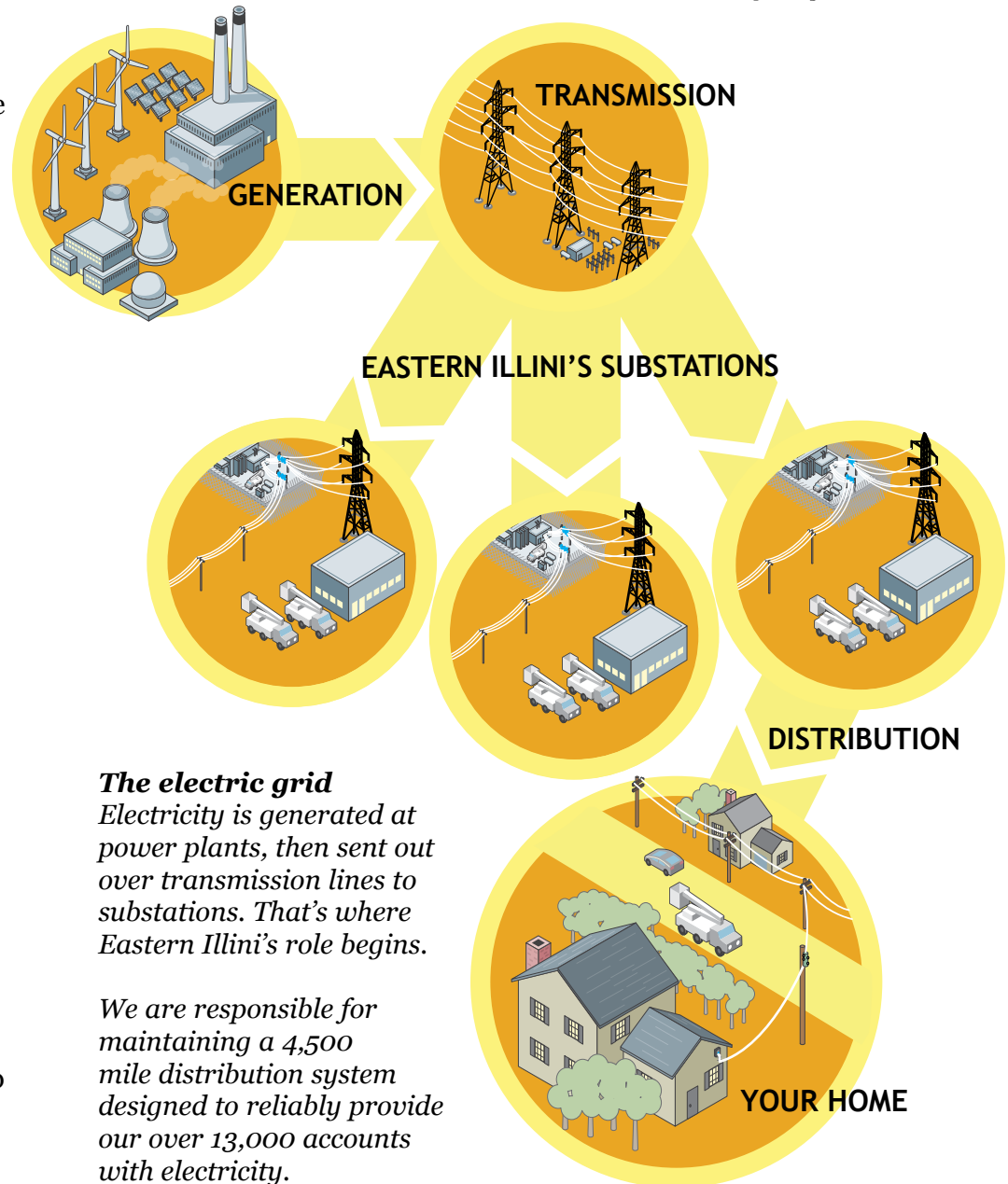
We do everything possible to maintain continuous and reliable service, and to restore service as

quickly as possible when outages do occur.

I would be remiss if I didn't close with a safety message. Please make sure you stay away from downed power lines. There is no way to tell if the lines are energized, so always assume they are. If you do notice any downed lines, please let us know immediately by calling 800-824-5102.

Sincerely,

Bob Hunzinger



The electric grid

Electricity is generated at power plants, then sent out over transmission lines to substations. That's where Eastern Illini's role begins.

We are responsible for maintaining a 4,500 mile distribution system designed to reliably provide our over 13,000 accounts with electricity.

Graphics by Funnel, Inc., and NRECA

FFA group headed to Europe

After success at the national FFA contest, a group from Prairie Central High School will travel to Europe this summer.

Prairie Central High School has developed a successful FFA program that includes several state titles. Their dairy cattle evaluation and management team didn't stop there, though.

After winning the state FFA contest last year, the team traveled to Louisville, KY to compete in the national FFA contest. The team finished as national runner-up, and sophomore Jake Leman won the individual national championship.

Prairie Central's FFA Advisor Darren Ropp noted, "These kids put in a tremendous amount of work in preparing for both the state and national competitions. It was exciting to see that hard work pay off with the success at both events."

This summer, the team will travel on an international tour of Europe. The students will compete at a world-renowned farm show in Scotland. They will also get to travel to several other European countries to see different farming styles and techniques.



The group is holding several fundraisers and taking donations to help offset the cost of the trip.

Eastern Illini's President/CEO Bob Hunzinger noted, "These kids are representing east central Illinois wonderfully. We are

excited to work with the group and help them get to Europe. Our commitment to our communities is a core value for us, so this was an easy partnership to develop."

For more information, or to make a donation, please contact Mr. Ropp at 815-692-2355.



Above: Prairie Central High School students (from left) Milan Teubel, Milan Leman and Jake Leman practice judging a Jersey cow as they prepare for their trip to Europe this summer.

Left: The state champion dairy cattle evaluation team from Prairie Central High School includes (from left) teacher Darren Ropp, Milan Leman, Jake Leman, Grayson Cottrell, and Milan Teubel.

Lineman Appreciation Day

Linemen are truly the face of our cooperative, but it takes a full team to deliver reliable electric service.

April 11, 2016, is National Lineman Appreciation Day so it is appropriate that we take a moment to recognize the people that often work in brutal weather conditions to ensure we all have safe and reliable power.

In fact, linemen are often first responders during storms and other catastrophic events, working to make the scene safe for other public safety officers. However, while linemen work in highly visible settings, there are many behind the scenes that also labor tirelessly to help keep the lights on. They usually do so with little or no public recognition or acknowledgment.

Promoting a culture of safety

The Operations and Engineering department ensures that the overall system is well maintained. This team is responsible for planning ahead for future needs and continually monitoring existing equipment and resources.

An equally important area of focus is safety. Working with electricity is an inherently dangerous task, and helping to foster a culture of safety for all workers is a major priority. You can count on the Operations and Engineering department for everything from lighting, heating, cooling and so much more.

Member Service

The Member Care Representatives (MCRs) answer calls and questions about billing and payments. They are responsible for ensuring that

you are treated appropriately, and it all starts at the time you sign up for membership. The member care group is usually your first contact with Eastern Illini.

Your energy efficiency resource

The Marketing department will work with you to identify high use periods and discuss ways to save on your monthly bill. They are also responsible for Eastern Illini's annual meeting and special outreach to community organizations, including schools and civic groups.

Communications, like this newsletter, come from this department. They also act as your voice in both Springfield and Washington, D.C. to make sure our legislators are mindful of rural issues.

Delivering timely savings

The Accounting group is responsible for the financial well-being of Eastern Illini. As you know, the co-op generates an electric bill that we send to you either electronically (via SmartHub and email) or through regular mail. We do so to ensure we can apply the latest technology, help lower your energy costs and send timely, accurate bills to you.

While we are a member-owned cooperative and operate differently than investor-owned utilities, we are still a business. As such, the accounting department ensures



that revenue collected from the membership exceeds our expenses. Typical expenses include the money we pay for electric power, equipment, new technology, upgrades to the infrastructure, employees and other expenditures.

The Human Resources department is responsible for all personnel associated with our co-op. They handle the recruiting, hiring, retiring, benefits and initial orientation for all employees. Continual learning and training for co-op employees is crucial to having a skilled workforce that helps keep the co-op operating at an optimal level.

This learning element is also one of the Seven Cooperative Principles and extends to our members. For example, Eastern Illini sponsors youth scholarships and an educational trip to Washington, D.C. as part of our Youth Tour program each summer.

Staying in sync

Many different people and departments work closely together to serve you because you, the member, are at the heart of everything we do.

We work hard to stand as a driving force in our community. The electricity we provide literally powers our communities. And it takes every person in the co-op, to deliver on this promise. We are dedicated to east central Illinois because we all live in this area.

Across the country, Eastern Illini, together with 900 other electric cooperatives, provide safe and reliable service to 40 million Americans while maintaining a unique consumer-focused approach to business.



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As we celebrate Lineman Appreciation Day on April 11, we wanted you to know that our linemen, just like all of our employees, are dedicated to providing you with reliable electric service. After all, we're owned by you and the other members in our community, which means our focus is always right here in east central Illinois. Find out more at www.eiec.coop.



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