

# PowerLines

October 2019

## Preparing for future members

Our board chairman, Tom Schlatter, and I recently attended our regional electric cooperative meeting in Milwaukee. This meeting combines cooperatives from Region 5 (Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin) and Region 6 (North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota).

In addition to the perfunctory business portions of the meetings relating to resolutions and elections, there is a lot of time devoted to education, training, and learning and sharing with other cooperatives.

Highlights included current and future challenges and opportunities related to how cooperatives are changing to meet the needs of future members. Here are a few of the areas important to members:

- Battery storage
- Broadband Internet
- Carbon constraints
- Member communication on various platforms
- Member information needs and expectations
- Rapid pace of changing technology
- Renewable energy
- Young adult member engagement

EIEC, like many of our fellow electric distribution cooperatives, is constantly evaluating items like those listed above and others to continue to provide safe, reliable, and valued services to our members and their communities in a cost-efficient manner.

### Harvest Time

Harvest in our area is starting later than normal this year but will soon be in full swing. Please take time to work safely in all aspects of your operation.

Be aware of the locations of poles and power lines. Always treat all lines as energized. Never drive over downed power lines. Call us for assistance if there is an incident or if something seems abnormal – and then wait for trained personnel and help to arrive.



**MESSAGE FROM  
THE PRESIDENT**

Please view the video on our website for more information about vehicle accidents involving downed power lines and staying safe:

[www.eiec.org/staying-safe-in-an-accident-involving-downed-power-lines/](http://www.eiec.org/staying-safe-in-an-accident-involving-downed-power-lines/)

Enjoy the weather pattern change to the fall season (and try not to think of the winter weather to follow).

Please take time to complete our annual survey on page 3 or you may complete it online at [www.eiec.coop](http://www.eiec.coop). We utilize survey results to ensure that we maintain our excellent level of service to our members.

Sincerely,

*Bob Hunzinger*

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## START SHOPPING START SAVING

### Co-op Connections® Card



- Local Deals
- Pharmacy Discounts
- Cash Back Online
- Hotel Savings

Visit [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop) to register and start saving today.

## Complete the member survey for a chance to win 10 \$25 bill credits

Please take a moment to complete and return the member survey on page 3. Your input is appreciated.

All submitted surveys will be eligible to win one of 10 \$25 bill credits being awarded to members.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# Sharing Success Grant to Lake Iroquois



Eastern Illini's donations were matched by CoBank through its Sharing Success program. Sharing Success was established in 2012 to celebrate the International Year of the Cooperative. Since the program's inception, CoBank and its customers have together provided more than \$36 million in support to charitable organizations. CoBank has increased the annual matching fund to \$4 million in 2019, which is beneficial to communities served by electric cooperatives across the nation.

"Sharing Success has had a broader and deeper impact than we ever imagined," said Aaron Johnson, CoBank's vice president of the electric distribution division. "We are delighted with the growing participation in the program by our customers, and deeply grateful to them for their assistance in identifying worthy charitable causes deserving of our support."

If you are aware of a 501 (c) (3) or a non-profit organization that is located in the Eastern Illini service territory that could benefit from a Sharing Success Grant, call Mike Wilson at 800-824-5102 to obtain an application.

Lake Iroquois Association near Loda, Illinois is the most recent recipient of the Sharing Success program from Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative and CoBank, a cooperative bank serving vital industries throughout rural America.

Lake Iroquois Association will receive \$5,000 to help in the on-going maintenance of the lake and fish restocking after a devastating fish kill on July 8, 2018 when the 80 acre lake experienced a phenomena called inversion, also known as lake turnover, which reduced the oxygen levels in the water when the surface water cooled down quickly in turn causing the water and sediment on the lake's bottom to rise causing the fish to die.

"We are member driven and community focused," said Mike Wilson, Vice President of Member and Community Relations for Eastern Illini. "When I heard about the fish kill at Lake Iroquois and the devastation to the ecosystem, it just made sense to find a way to help the association and the 240 EIEC members who live at the lake."

"We are grateful to Eastern Illini and CoBank for their commitment to supporting Lake Iroquois," said Jim Shearl, Lake Iroquois Association board member. We restocked the lake with 1,000 channel catfish and 1,000 large-mouth bass this spring and plan to add walleye and red sun fish this fall. This generous contribution will be beneficial to our on-going restoration process."

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Heating requires more energy than any other system in your home, typically making up about 42% of your energy bill. With proper equipment maintenance and upgrades like additional insulation and air sealing, you can save about 30% on your energy bill.



## COMPLETE AND RETURN MEMBER SURVEY

# For a chance to win 10 \$25 bill credits

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. Answer the questions and mail it to us along with your electric bill payment. You can also complete the survey at [www.eiec.coop](http://www.eiec.coop). All submitted surveys will be eligible to win one of 10 \$25 bill credits!

Please rate your satisfaction with Eastern Illini on each of the following:

	not at all satisfied					very satisfied				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Providing excellent customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to resolve issues or problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conducting business professionally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friendly and courteous employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledgeable and competent employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charging reasonable rates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivering good value for the money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community involvement and support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing energy efficiency information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having a minimum of outages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restoring power quickly after an outage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For the following questions, please rate your answer based on a scale of 1 to 10

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Considering all your experiences, how satisfied overall are you with Eastern Illini?											
not at all satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	very satisfied
To what extent has Eastern Illini fallen short of or exceeded your expectations?											
falls short	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	exceeds
Imagine an ideal utility company. How well do you think Eastern Illini compares?											
not very close	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	very close
If you could choose your electric company, how likely is it that you would choose Eastern Illini again?											
very unlikely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	very likely

How do you view your relationship with Eastern Illini? ☐ I'm a member ☐ I'm a customer

Did you attend the Annual Meeting on June 6, 2019? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you plan to attend the 2020 Annual Meeting on June 18, 2020? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please share reasons for attending the Annual Meeting: (check all that apply)

- |  |                                      |                                      |   |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Voting for Board of Directors | <input type="checkbox"/> Meal        | <input type="checkbox"/> Seminars    | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Meeting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Receive Co-op Updates         | <input type="checkbox"/> Bill Credit | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |   |

List your account # so we can contact you if you are one of the 10 winners of the \$25 bill credit drawing.

Your account number can be found on your electric bill. Account #: \_\_\_\_\_



# WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU CALL US AND WHEN WE CALL YOU

## It's the Co-op Calling

**As a member of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative you have access to 24/7 service from us and you can always reach someone by phone any time day or night.**

If you call us at 1-800-824-5102 between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. you will hear the following recorded message:

Welcome to Eastern Illini your local, member driven and community focused electric cooperative. We're glad you called, and we are ready to help. This call may be recorded as part of our commitment to quality service.

Did you know you can view and pay your bill with your smart phone or computer? It's a great way to track your electric use and even report an outage. Ask one of our Member Care Representatives about how to get started with SmartHub.

If you know your party's extension, enter it now or choose from the following:

To make a payment with our automated system, **PRESS 1,**

To report a power outage, **PRESS 2,**

To speak with our operations group about outdoor lighting, new service construction, or to report downed power lines, **PRESS 3.**

For all other issues, stay on the line and a Member Care Representative will assist you.

To reach the automated system directly call 1-888-836-2352.

Anytime Monday - Friday, before 7:30 a.m. and after 4:00 p.m. and on weekends, you can speak with our after hours service who will assist you with any request.

You will receive an automated phone call from us whenever a planned outage may be needed for system maintenance.

Besides receiving a phone call, we will also send you an email message.

That's why it is so important to be sure we have a good phone number on file for you, so you don't miss out on these important messages! We realize many members have disconnected their

landlines and now use only cell phones. Email addresses also often change, so be sure to update your email address as well. Call us at 1-800-824-5102 and confirm that the contact information we have for you is current and correct.

We encourage all Eastern Illini members to consider signing up for SmartHub. SmartHub is a convenient and easy to use on line system that provides information from your computer and smart phone.

You can view or pay your monthly electric bill and so much more! SmartHub lets you report an outage, get updated outage information, update your account or contact information, view your hourly, daily, and monthly electric use, and receive bill reminders. And, SmartHub is free!

Please be aware that Eastern Illini will never call a member and demand immediate payment of your electric bill or ask for a credit card for payment over the phone.

Several members have reported that they have received calls claiming their bills are past due and payment is due immediately. Any request to pay your bill in this way, or by wiring money is a scam and should be reported. Call us if you are suspicious of the call or have questions.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative

## CHANGING OUR HOURS

## TO BETTER SERVE

## YOUR CHANGING NEEDS

In order to better serve you during our busiest times of the day, Eastern Illini will be adjusting our lobby hours of operation beginning October 1, 2019.

This allows us to maximize our resources during the time of day when our members tend to need us most.

Our lobby hours will be Monday - Friday from 7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

You may reach us at 1-800-824-5102 or 217-379-2131 between the hours of 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Information is also always available 24/7 at [www.eiec.coop](http://www.eiec.coop)



Eastern Illini  
Electric  
Cooperative

# MEMBER DRIVEN AND COMMUNITY FOCUSED

## October is National Cooperative Month

When you think of October, pumpkins, Halloween and beautiful fall foliage naturally come to mind. But October is notable for another reason – it's National Co-op Month! This is the time of year when cooperatives across the country, including Eastern Illini, celebrate who we are and more importantly, the members we serve.

Cooperatives are different than other types of businesses. When the market declines to offer a product or service, or does so at a very high price, co-ops intervene to fill the need.

Similar to how Eastern Illini was built by members who came together to bring electricity to our community, cooperatives are conveners for the common good. Your electric co-op exists to provide safe and reliable energy to you, the members of the co-op. Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members we serve.

As a co-op, we are well-suited to meet the needs of the community because we are locally governed. Eastern Illini's

leadership team and employees live right here in the community. Our board of directors, who helps set long-term priorities for the co-op, live locally on co-op lines. These board members have been elected to the position by neighbors like you.

We know our members (that's you!) have a valuable perspective. That's why we are continually seeking your input. Whether through community events, our social media channels or the annual meeting, we want to hear from you.

Our close connection to the community ensures we get a first-hand perspective on local priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments, such as electric vehicles, and equipment and technology upgrades.

Another feature that sets our co-op apart from a traditional utility is one of our core principles, "Concern for Community." Eastern Illini gave \$5,000 to the Lake Iroquois Association to help cover the cost of replacing fish in the lake and a portion of the funds will be used for an ecosystem maintenance program.

We also participate in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, where we take our community's young people to Washington, D.C. for a week-long immersion to experience democracy in action. This year four high school students made the trip.

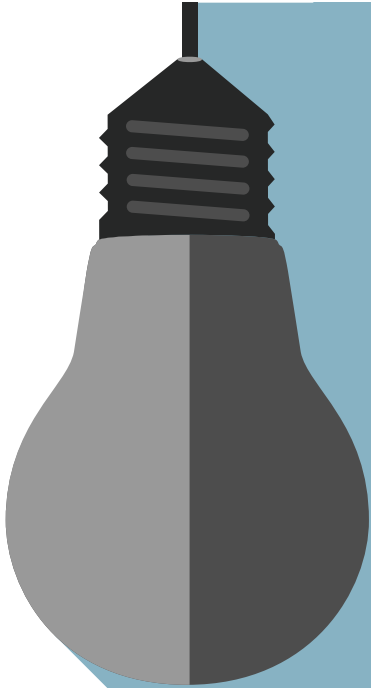
Ultimately, the larger community benefits from these programs because of you and your neighbors. You empower the co-op through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs.

We hope you will think of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative as more than your energy provider, but instead as a local business that supports this community and powers economic development and prosperity for the people. We will continue to learn from our members about their priorities so that we can better serve you – because your electric co-op was built by the community, for the community.



October is National Co-op Month.

Electric cooperatives are led by the community, for the community.



## SIX HELPFUL TIPS

# WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT...

**1**

Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Generators, camp stoves, or charcoal grills should be used outside and at least 20 feet away from windows.

**2**

Plan ahead before an outage occurs: Have alternate plans for refrigerating medicines, using power-dependent medical devices and charging cell phones.

**3**

Check on your neighbors if you can. Older adults and young children are especially vulnerable to extreme temperatures.

**4**

Go to another location with power if heat or cold is extreme and if conditions are safe to do so.

**5**

Keep refrigerators and freezers closed to maintain temperatures in the appliances for as long as possible. Once the power is back on, when in doubt, throw food out.

**6**

Turn off or disconnect appliances, electronics or other electrical equipment. Power may return with momentary surges or spikes that can cause damage.



**Eastern Illini  
Electric  
Cooperative**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 