

POWERLINE

A monthly newsletter for co-op members of Corn Belt Energy

February 2014

The Latest in Lighting

A new year calls for updated lightbulb efficiency guidelines. Congress called for improved energy efficiency standards for traditional incandescent bulbs several years ago under the federal *Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007*. By 2014, lightbulbs using between 40 watts to 100 watts must consume at least 28% less energy than classic bulbs. The change will save Americans an estimated \$6 billion to \$10 billion in lighting costs *annually*.

Now that 2014 is here, traditional 40 watt and 60 watt incandescents will be phased out in the marketplace. And more consumers are filling the gap with a solid solution: LEDs.

Incandescent bulbs create light using a thin wire (filament) inside a glass bulb—a delicate connection that can easily be broken, as frustrated homeowners can attest. In contrast, LEDs are at the forefront of solid-state lighting—small, packed electronic chip devices. Two conductive materials are placed together on a chip (a diode). Electricity passes through the diode, releasing energy in the form of light. LEDs offer several benefits:

- LEDs could last longer, perhaps for decades
- The energy to use LEDs could be substantially less than that of CFLs or other fluorescents
- With no mercury content, LEDs are more environmentally friendly
- The products are rugged and more resistant to breakage
- LEDs perform well in cold climates, especially outside
- LEDs are dimmable and cast a more pleasing light

However, some consumers avoid LEDs because of the high price tag. Remember that the true value lies in the lifetime of the bulb. It takes about 50 traditional incandescent

bulbs, or eight to ten CFLs, to last as long as one LED lamp.



Look for the U.S. Department of Energy's blue ENERGY STAR logo for guaranteed color quality over time, steady light output over the lifetime, high efficiency, and a warranty.

You can also look for an LED Lighting Facts label. The label helps consumers compare products to manufacturer claims and similar products with a quick summary of performance.

More lighting efficiency changes are coming. Congress' act mandates lightbulbs to be 70% more efficient by 2020.

Curious to know if LEDs are right for you? Learn more at:

>> www.lightingfacts.com/content/consumers

>> www.energysavers.gov/lighting



education **GRANTS** program

Corn Belt Energy is now accepting applications for our 2014 Education Grants Program. Five schools that serve children of Corn Belt electric members will each be awarded \$1,500 to fund innovative programs that enrich students' education.

Teachers and administrators of public or private K-12 schools may apply; the facility does not need to receive electricity from Corn Belt Energy, but must serve families within our footprint in Central Illinois. Multiple projects within the same school can be combined to a total of \$1,500. Applications and further details can be found online at www.cornbeltenergy.com under "Community."

An impartial panel of judges will review the grant applications and preference will be given to projects and programs that enhance learning and are not currently being funded through the school's budget.

The application deadline is March 31 and the grants will be awarded in late April/early May.



YOUTH TO WASHINGTON TOUR

Your child or grandchild could go on the trip of a lifetime!

High school sophomores and juniors with a passion for leadership and government are encouraged to apply for an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington D.C. in June!

Those who currently receive electricity from Corn Belt are welcome to nominate a child or grandchild to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Up to 10 applicants will be selected by an impartial panel of judges to attend Illinois Cooperative Youth Day in Springfield on April 2.

From that group, two students will be chosen to represent Corn Belt Energy by attending the Youth to Washington Tour, an all-expense-paid trip to

Washington D.C. from June 13-20 with other statewide and national winners.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has been bringing high school students to Washington D.C. for over 50 years. On the tour, students will learn about electric cooperatives, American history and U.S. government. They participate in National Youth Day, visit with their representatives and senators, and explore the sights around the nation's capital.

Applications can be found on our website at www.cornbeltenergy.com under "Community." Applications must be received by February 28.

What to do During an Outage

Power outages can be caused by many things; ice accumulation weighs down power lines, tree limbs break off into the lines, an animal gets too close to a warm transformer, or maybe a car hits a utility pole. Here are some steps to take if you experience an outage:

Step 1: Make sure the outage is on our end; check your fuses and breakers and see if your neighbors have lights.

Step 2: Report your outage by calling our automated outage reporting system at 1-800-879-0339. You can also report your outage from your mobile device through our free SmartHub app. These two reporting mechanisms tie directly into our outage management system (OMS) for efficient and cost-effective reporting. Some members are concerned when they call in and don't speak to a live person; if the automated phone system tells you that we've recorded your outage, our dispatch center has been immediately notified through the OMS.

To make the outage process even more efficient, **make sure we have your current phone number(s) associated with your account.** Check your latest bill stub or log in to your online SmartHub account to see which number(s) are currently linked to your account. Don't worry - we won't sell or share your contact information with anyone else.

Please do not report your outage to us via Facebook or Twitter as these outlets are not manned 24/7 and are not directly linked to our OMS.

Step 3: Be patient. As our outage management system is predicting the extent of the outage, our dispatch center assigns crews to investigate the issue and make necessary repairs. If your outage occurs after business hours, keep in mind that often times

linemen need to stop what they're doing and grab necessary gear and supplies before heading out to the outage location to restore power, usually in adverse weather conditions. A little bit of patience goes a long way as our linemen work as quickly and as safely as possible.

Step 4: Check our website, Facebook account or Twitter account for updates on major outages. We usually post status updates for larger outage events (*those affecting 500*

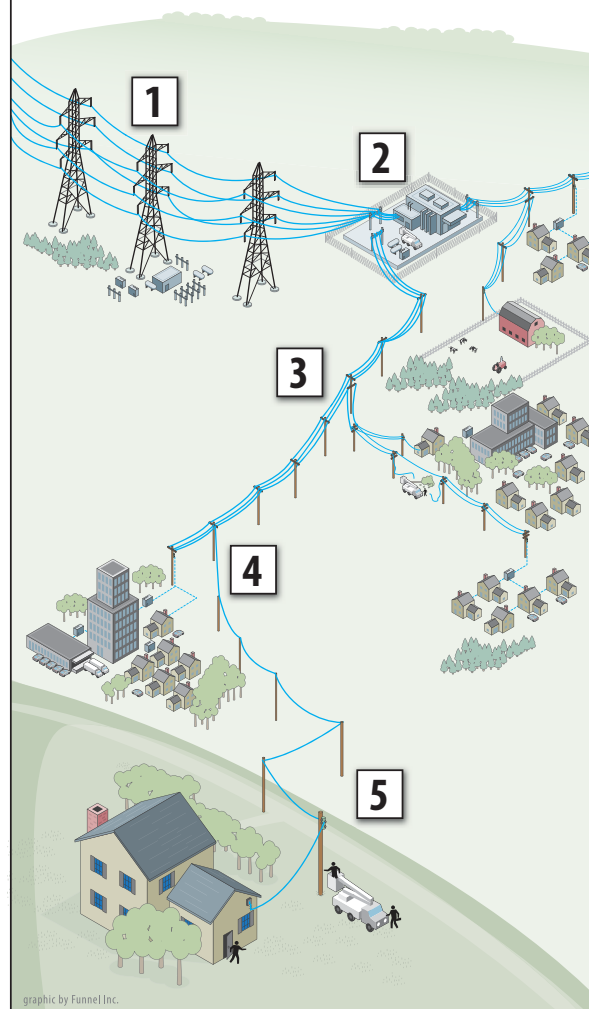
co-op members or more). View a live outage map at cornbeltenergy.com to check the extent of the outage. If you don't have internet access, we also post status updates on our main phone greeting at 1-800-879-0339 during major outages.

If you experience a power outage, rest assured that we're doing everything in *our* power to restore yours as quickly as possible. Our co-op member-owners are our **ONLY** priority; that's the cooperative difference.

Powering UP

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible.

Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark.



1 High-Voltage Transmission Lines

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

2 Distribution Substation

Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

3 Main Distribution Lines

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

4 Tap Lines

If local outages persist, supply lines, called tap lines, are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools, and homes.

5 Individual Homes

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issues.

graphic by Funnel Inc.



Contact Us

1-800-879-0339

Call this number to report an outage and call from a phone associated with your account if possible.

LOCATION

1 Energy Way
Bloomington, IL 61705

OFFICE HOURS

8:00 AM - 4:30 PM
Monday - Friday

cbec@cornbeltenergy.com
www.cornbeltenergy.com



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

What you need to know about SPACE HEATERS

Each winter, we receive a lot of calls asking about space heaters. If properly used, they *can* keep your heating costs down. Space heaters are intended for zone heating, which may be impractical for most households; they're not meant to replace your whole-house heating system. You can save significantly if you use space heaters this way: turn the thermostat down considerably, then place the space heater in a room occupied by your family and close off the rest of the home.

Only use a space heater when you are in the room with it; never leave



a space heater on with unsupervised children or pets or when you are sleeping.

Don't be fooled by the misleading claims of some brands; all 1,500 watt space heaters use the same amount of electricity.

ELECTRIC HEAT RATE

If your home utilizes an electric heat source - including geothermal - you can take advantage of Corn Belt's Electric Heat Rate of 4.45 cents/ kWh (*plus any additional current cost of power as indicated by the Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment on your monthly statement*).

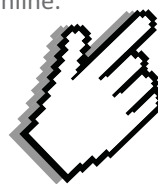
All electric heat is sub-metered through equipment supplied by Corn Belt Energy and the Electric Heat Rate

is applied to your sub-metered usage from Oct. 1 through April 30.

This rate is applicable when a home is heated electrically from a hardwired 240 volt electric heat source. To see if you're already receiving this rate, check for a Rate 10 or Rate 19 line item charge on your monthly statement. For more information contact Justin Stuva, Energy Advisor, at 1-800-879-0339 x235.

Connect with your Co-op

Keep in touch with Corn Belt throughout the year for safety information, energy efficiency tips, outage updates and more. If you have a Quick Response Code app on your smartphone, simply scan these QR codes to connect with us online.



Find us on Facebook
/CornBeltEnergy



Follow us on Twitter
@CornBeltEnergy