

POWERLINE

A monthly newsletter for member-owners of Corn Belt Energy

March 2011

Restoring Your Power

Central Illinois was hit with an unusually treacherous blizzard on Tuesday, February 1. While

we avoided ice accumulations that plagued electric cooperatives south of us, we had to contend with zero visibility and impassable roads covered in tall snow drifts.

As the storm blasted through the area, ferocious winds created problems for Ameren Illinois transmission lines that feed into several of our substations. The winds also knocked down power lines which created several line outages throughout our service territory.

While we were aware of the outages, the extreme road conditions of Tuesday afternoon and evening made it impossible for our bucket trucks to get to most locations.

In fact, five of our linemen had to bunker down and spend the night in their trucks as they were stuck and unable to go anywhere. The situation improved on Wednesday morning as road commissioners were back

out clearing roadways. Three crews from the City of Springfield and four additional crews from our North region in Princeton assisted with restoration efforts on Wednesday, February 2. Almost all of the 4,000+ members without power as a result of the storm were restored by Wednesday evening.

Tim Muellenberg, VP of Electric Distribution at Corn Belt, notes that recent investments in our system's infrastructure prevented further damage. "We have no reports of broken poles or cross arms, which is remarkable for a storm of that magnitude. We've put a lot of work into keeping our distribution system strong, and this is where those efforts pay off."

Many members used their smart phones to track our progress via our website, Twitter and Facebook. See the article on page 16c for details on how to connect with us online.

For faster outage reporting, make sure we have your current phone numbers on file.



CALL: 1-800-879-0339

EMAIL: cbec@cornbeltenergy.com



Maintenance Foreman Jerry Daugherty's bucket truck treads through the snow on February 1.



Ron Hopkins, Manager of Engineering, monitors substation activity during the storm.

education GRANTS program

Corn Belt Energy is now accepting applications for our 2011 Education Grants Program. Four schools that serve children of Corn Belt electric members will each be awarded \$1,000 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 children of our members. Multiple projects within the same school can be combined to a total of \$1,000. 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 spring.



Why would we want you to use *less* energy?

You rarely walk into a business and hear the employees encouraging you to buy less of their product, so it may seem strange when your electric utility encourages you to use energy efficiently. By using less energy, you not only save on your electric bill, you help reduce overall energy demand. On a larger scale, those individual reductions in usage can delay the need to build costly, new power plants.

Electric cooperatives like Corn Belt Energy have long been in the business of energy efficiency - it's a natural extension of our business model. Unlike investor-owned utilities, electric co-ops aren't structurally

motivated to sell more kilowatt-hours to create more profits for investors. Co-ops exist to benefit the member-owners who receive the electricity.

Visit our website to learn more about these rebates and incentives that encourage energy efficiency:

- Clothes Washer Rebates
- Heat Pump Rebates
- home Efficiency Rebate Program
- Water Heater Rebates

We also invite members to take an interactive home tour at www.togetherwesave.com to see how little changes can add up to big savings on your energy bills.

Water Heater REBATES

If you're purchasing a new electric water heater, Corn Belt can help defray the cost.

Buy an electric 40-gallon water heater and you'll receive a \$100 rebate; purchase a 50-gallon or larger unit and we'll give you a \$125 rebate. You can purchase your water heater from any retailer, and we encourage you to buy an energy efficient model with good insulation.

To claim your rebate check, send a copy of your receipt to:

Corn Belt Energy
Attn: Justin Stuva
1 Energy Way
Bloomington, IL 61705-6356

Make sure the receipt indicates the size of the water heater and include your Corn Belt account number.



Clothes Washer REBATES

Corn Belt members with electric water heaters may qualify for a \$50 rebate if they have purchased an ENERGY STAR clothes washer after April 15, 2010.

Call Justin Stuva, Energy Advisor, at 800-879-0339 or find the rebate form at www.cornbeltenergy.com > Programs & Services > Energy Efficiency Programs.

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!



Have you ever wished you had information readily available as you were making a purchasing decision in the middle of a store?

With the free LIGHT BULB FINDER mobile phone app, it's easy to switch from conventional light bulbs to energy-saving equivalents with the right fit, style and light quality. View bulb images, cost, savings, and environmental impact. Create shopping lists and buy bulbs directly through the app or at local stores.

Download the app for your iPhone or Android at www.lightbulbfinder.net.



IN THE KNOW

It's never been easier to keep in touch with Corn Belt! Follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/cornbeltenergy and find us on Facebook at facebook.com/cornbeltenergy for outage updates, energy efficiency tips, safety alerts, legislative news and more.

During power outages, simply use your smart phone to follow the latest outage updates. The next time you find yourself waiting in line, make sure to check out our mobile-friendly website at www.cornbeltenergy.com.

2011 B-N Home Show

Come out and see us at the 2011 Bloomington-Normal Home Show from March 11 - 13 out at the U.S. Cellular Coliseum. We'll provide free literature on money-saving programs and energy efficiency tips for your home.

Outage Report

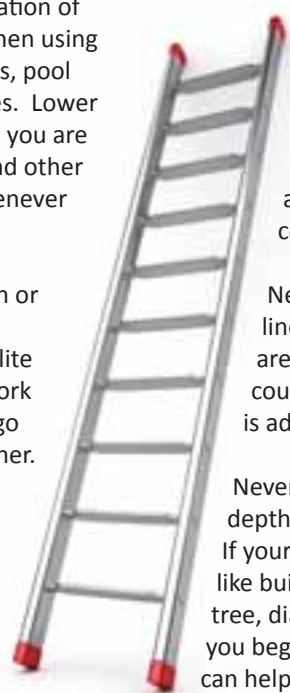
Monthly outage reports are available at www.cornbeltenergy.com under "Outages." To request a printed copy, simply call us and we'll mail or fax it to you.

look up as you head outdoors

Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long metal tools like ladders, pool skimmers and pruning poles. Lower your long equipment when you are moving it. Carry ladders and other long items horizontally whenever possible.

Be careful when working on or around your roof, installing rooftop antennas and satellite dishes, doing roof repair work or cleaning gutters. Never go up on the roof in bad weather.

Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house. Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from lines.



Never trim trees near power lines – leave that to the professionals. Never use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines. Contact a professional maintenance contractor.

Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines aren't touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch.

Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. If your projects include digging, like building a deck or planting a tree, dial 811 to call JULIE before you begin. This service is free and can help you avoid serious injury.

THE KING OF CAULK & TALK

Get valuable home efficiency advice from nationally renown architect and home energy expert, Doug Rye. Tune in for an hour of energy saving ideas every Saturday from 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. in the Bloomington-Normal area.



"Home Remedies" Saturdays 7-8am

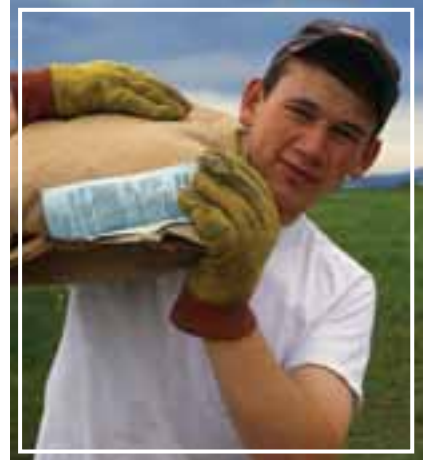
ELECTROCUTION HAZARDS ON THE FARM

Every year, dozens of farm workers in the United States are killed by electrocution.

Portable grain augers, oversized wagons, large combines and other tall or cumbersome equipment can easily contact overhead power lines. The result is electrocution of anyone on the equipment.

Follow these safety tips during the planting season:

- Always lower portable augers or elevators to their lowest possible level - under 14 feet - before moving or transporting; use care when raising them.
- Keep all objects at least 10 feet away from overhead lines. Know where all overhead power lines are located on your property and inform all workers about them.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting larger modern tractors with higher antennas.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- Plan your route between fields, to bins and elevators, and on public roads so that you avoid low-hanging power lines.
- When moving large equipment or high loads near a power line, always use a spotter, or someone to help make certain that contact is not made with a line.
- Don't use metal poles when breaking up bridged grain inside and around bins.
- As in any outdoor work, be careful not to raise any equipment such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes, and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness and dust and dirt contamination.
- If equipment gets hung up on a power line, the operator should NOT get off the machinery unless in immediate danger. If the operator touches the ground and the equipment at the same time, he or she will become a channel for electricity.
- If you must leave the equipment, jump as far away from the machinery as possible. Never get back on machinery that touches a power line until the utility company disconnects the line.
- Be sure you and everyone else in your operation know what to do in an emergency.
- Use qualified electricians for work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.



Contact Us

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 

This information has been provided by Safe Electricity. Safe Electricity is a program of the Energy Education Council, a registered 501(c) (3) not-for-profit organization, headquartered in Springfield, Illinois, and operated from within the University of Illinois Extension. The Council's mission is educational. For more information, visit their website at www.safeelectricity.org.