

POWERLINE

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

March 2014

All-of-the-above Strategy Needed

You may have heard how the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed to limit carbon dioxide at new power plants. This is concerning because these regulations, along with the ones the EPA has in store for existing plants, have the potential to drive up electric bills for our co-op members. Electric cooperatives are disappointed—but not surprised—that in September the Administration officially abandoned an all-of-the-above energy strategy for a new, all-but-one approach that effectively removes coal from the nation's fuel mix in the future.

Electric co-ops have invested billions to reduce emissions, improve energy efficiency and generate renewable electricity. For several years, cooperatives have tested carbon capture and storage as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Unfortunately, the technology doesn't make financial sense. It has never been used at a commercial scale at a power plant over a prolonged period to demonstrate its viability or cost. In a 2012 Congressional Budget Office report, engineers estimate it would increase the cost of producing electricity from coal-based plants by 75%.

The Administration's switch to an all-but-one energy approach would limit Americans' access to coal, which is plentiful and affordable, with historical price stability. The U.S. Energy Information Agency reports the United States has 236 years remaining of recoverable coal reserves. Coal generates 58% of the electricity for America's electric cooperatives—our biggest energy source by far. We shouldn't gamble with the economic well-being of future generations and our nation's economy.

COOPERATIVE

ACTION NETWORK

Now is the time for co-op members to send a clear message to the EPA: *please remember consumers as you are writing these regulations*. Stand with us as we fight to keep electric bills affordable. Raise your voice through the Cooperative Action Network at www.action.coop. Tell the EPA we need an all-of-the-above energy strategy.



RENEWABLE ENERGY



NUCLEAR POWER



NATURAL GAS



CLEAN COAL

America needs an **ALL OF THE ABOVE STRATEGY** to keep electric bills affordable

**URGE EPA TO RECONSIDER
ITS "ALL-BUT-ONE" APPROACH**

TAKE ACTION

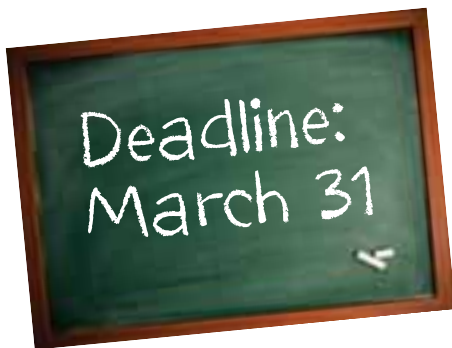
2014 education GRANTS program

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.



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 knows what to do in an emergency.
- Use qualified electricians for work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.



When Temperatures Plummet, Energy Costs Rise

You don't need to be a meteorologist to know that this winter has been particularly blustery and fierce; sub-zero temperatures have become the norm. Since most of a home's energy use is related to heating during the winter, many of us will feel an extra chill when we receive our winter energy bills.

To see your own electric usage compared to previous months, log in to your SmartHub account at cornbeltenergy.com. You can also overlay temperature data with your usage to see how the weather plays a significant role in your energy use.

SmartHub screenshot



The extremely cold weather means our heating systems have been running a lot harder to keep us warm. And with all the snow days, chances are you've been stuck at home more often than usual, too. Staying home using lights, TV's, and appliances will also add to your electric bill.

How Your Home Uses Electricity



Source: 2009 Buildings Energy Data Book, U.S. Department of Energy, Table 21.5. Represents an all-electric home. Updated February 2011.

<< To access SmartHub from your desktop, simply click "Account Log-in" at www.cornbeltenergy.com and log in with your email address and password.

Payment Assistance

If your home utilizes electric heat or if you've been supplementing with electric space heaters, your recent electric bills may have been higher than anticipated because of the unusually fierce winter weather.

If you need to make payment arrangements, please don't hesitate to contact a Member Service Representative at 1-800-879-0339. We're here to help our co-op members and we're willing to work with you to keep payments within your budget.

Some co-op members may qualify for the state's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. LIHEAP is designed to help eligible low-income households pay for energy services. Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the state of Illinois, energy assistance is

provided by local community action agencies or not-for-profit agencies throughout the state. You must contact the agency provider in your area to apply for assistance; visit www.liheapillinois.com for a complete list of agencies.

LIHEAP will provide a one-time benefit to eligible households to be used for energy bills. The amount of the benefit is determined by income, household size, fuel type and geographic location. An overdue bill or cut-off notice is not required. You do not have to own your home or pay energy bills directly to be eligible. Assistance for reconnection will only be provided to households that have made a good faith effort to maintain their energy services, or that can pay a portion of the amount owed for reconnection.

LIHEAP Income Eligibility:

You may be eligible to receive assistance under LIHEAP if your household's combined income for the 30 days prior to application is at or below the levels shown on below. If you rent, and your heat and/or electric is included in the rent, then your rent must be greater than 30% of your income in order to be eligible.

Household Size	Max. Annual Income
1	\$16,755
2	\$22,695
3	\$28,635
4	\$34,575
5	\$40,515
6	\$46,455
7	\$52,395
8*	\$58,335

*For households with more than 8, add \$5,940 per additional person.

look up as you head outdoors



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

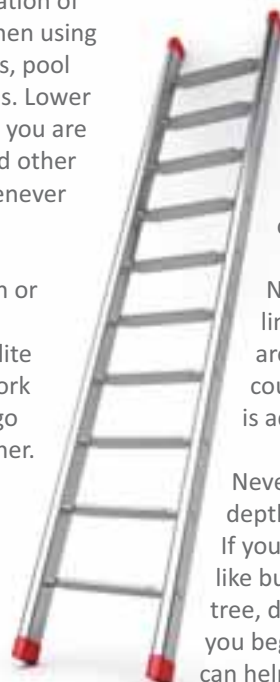


Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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 8-1-1 to call JULIE before you begin. This service is free and can help you avoid serious injury.

Home Show

Come out and see us at the 2014 Bloomington-Normal Home Show from March 7 - 9 at the U.S. Cellular Coliseum. We'll provide free literature on money-saving programs and energy efficiency tips for your home. Corn Belt employees will be on hand to answer your questions.

Outage Map

Visit www.cornbeltenergy.com from your computer or mobile device to view a live outage map of Corn Belt's service territory. To protect the privacy of our co-op members, outages are displayed by county or zip code only.

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.



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