

# POWERLINE

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

May 2012

## Looking Out for You Long-term

As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, our *only* priority is serving our member-owners. We're not owned or controlled by far-away investors; we answer to the people we serve. Cooperatives like Corn Belt have a long-term goal of providing reliable service at an affordable price. We've served Central Illinois for almost 75 years, supporting the communities where we work and live.

Over the past few months, you may have received direct mail offers, phone calls, or even front porch visits from alternative retail electric suppliers. You've probably read in the news about townships voting on ballot referendums in order to aggregate and negotiate a lower rate with an alternative electric supplier.

These alternative marketers are targeting customers of investor-owned electric utilities like Ameren Illinois and Commonwealth Edison in order to offer them choice in the marketplace. Municipalities and electric cooperatives like Corn Belt are not-for-profit, consumer-owned utilities that are always looking out for the best interests of their consumers, not far-away investors.

Marketing activity from these alternative electric suppliers has sprouted recently in Illinois due to a unique period of very low wholesale electric prices, which are a result of lower demand (*due to weak economic conditions*), low natural gas prices,

and an overabundance of electric generating capacity. Experts expect this low-price environment to be relatively short-lived. In fact, the Citizens Utility Board (CUB), an Illinois consumer watchdog group, urges caution and notes, "It remains to be seen whether community aggregation will lead to real savings for consumers in the long term."

Cooperatives like Corn Belt are democratically controlled, not-for-profit entities that epitomize consumer choice and aggregation. Each member-owner has the right to vote for local directors and bylaws which govern our operation. Corn Belt Energy is a member-owner of a generation and transmission cooperative (*Wabash Valley Power Association*) that aggregates the purchasing power of several distribution co-ops in the Midwest to buy and build generation.

Electric co-ops were formed 75 years ago by farmers and rural citizens who banded together to bring the benefits of electricity to rural areas where market forces and profit potential just hadn't worked. Today, electric cooperatives are still working hard to provide affordable, reliable energy.

***That's the cooperative difference.***

***As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, we're always working to provide reliable, affordable power to our member-owners.***



# Partners for Energy Efficiency

On March 20<sup>th</sup>, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture officials selected Corn Belt Energy's headquarters as the Illinois location for their announcement of a report which highlights the ways in which their Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) has contributed to rural energy efficiency. Colleen Calahan, Illinois Director of Rural Development for USDA, made the official announcement at Corn Belt because of the co-op's commitment to energy conservation and to the ag community.

Corn Belt Energy is one of 287 Illinois recipients who have received a total of \$14.4 million in REAP grants and loans to install renewable energy systems or make energy efficiency improvements since 2009.

Last year, Corn Belt was able to install a geothermal system into our central region office and we're already benefiting from the efficiency advice we give to our members. (Our

*Princeton office has been running on geothermal for several years.)* Since installation of the system last summer, we're seeing energy savings of over 30% per month on average. A REAP grant from the USDA helped offset the installation cost.

One of the most energy efficient ways to heat and cool, a geothermal system circulates a water-based solution through a buried loop system to take advantage of the constant temperature of the earth about 6 feet underground. A single piece of equipment has the ability to heat and cool a home or business, while also providing some or all of their hot water needs.

Homeowners and business owners who install geothermal systems typically save 30% or more on their energy bills and may qualify for federal tax credits. Additionally, co-op members with geo are eligible to receive Corn Belt's electric heat rate

and may be able to take advantage of installation rebates offered through our power supplier, Wabash Valley Power Association. With all of these incentives, going geo is more affordable than ever. Learn more from the Geothermal Alliance of Illinois website at [www.gaai.org](http://www.gaai.org)



President & CEO Jeff Reeves pictured with Colleen Calahan, State Director of USDA Rural Development



## Prescription Discounts

Use your free Co-op Connections card to save 10% to 60% on prescriptions not covered by insurance at participating pharmacies including CVS, Walgreens, Wal-Mart, Target and many more! Simply present your card with your prescription at any participating pharmacy and pay the discounted price; no additional forms or paperwork are needed. Visit [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop) to search for participating pharmacies. Need a card? Call us at 1-800-879-0339.

## Geothermal Open House

Looking to replace or install a new HVAC system? Learn how a geothermal heating and cooling system can save 30% or more on your energy bills while providing optimal comfort.

Corn Belt Energy will host a free open house event with Town & Country Services on Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 AM - Noon at 3470 E. 449<sup>th</sup> Road in LaSalle. Co-op members will have the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about the geothermal installation process and review available rebates, incentives and tax credits. Reservations are not required, but you can contact Luke Wilson of Town & Country Services at 815-442-3415 for more details.

## Energy Efficient Rebates Now Available

Wabash Valley Power Association, the cooperative that supplies power to Corn Belt Energy, is offering several rebates to our residential and commercial member-owners through a program called Power Moves. The incentives are designed to promote energy efficiency upgrades in homes, businesses, schools and farms.

Visit [www.powermoves.com](http://www.powermoves.com) to view available rebates and to print the appropriate forms. For more information, contact Justin Stuva, Energy Advisor, at 1-800-879-0339 x235 or email him at [justin.stuva@cornbeltenergy.com](mailto:justin.stuva@cornbeltenergy.com).

# 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 us, making sure the receipt indicates the size of the water heater. Include your Corn Belt account number and send to:

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

# Outage Reports

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

# Teaching Safety

Corn Belt covered the cost for Live Line Demo to teach electric safety to 4<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> graders at Hartsburg-Emden schools on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

**Always call JULIE at 8-1-1 to have underground utilities located before you dig.**

To avoid personal injury and damage to underground lines, state law requires you to contact Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators (JULIE) before any digging project, regardless of the project size or depth. The call is free, and so are the services.

According to state law, the person doing the digging is required to call JULIE with the locate request information at least 48 hours (*two working days, excluding weekends and holidays*) in advance of the start of excavation. You must begin your project within 14 days from the time you call and if you want to start your project over the weekend, remember to contact JULIE by Wednesday at 4:00 PM.

In order to help the utility locator properly identify your project area, JULIE recommends that you mark the area where you will be digging with white paint and/or flags.

Each JULIE utility member is responsible to mark their own underground facilities with paint or flags within the two working day period required by law (*excluding Saturdays, Sundays and holidays*).

Visit [www.illinois1call.com](http://www.illinois1call.com) to learn more about the process.

# Illinois Cooperative Youth Day

Three local high school students from Corn Belt's service territory traveled to Springfield on March 28<sup>th</sup> for Illinois Electric Cooperative Youth Day.



*Megan Weisert, Meredith Martin and Casey Lebre stand in front of the Capitol Building in Springfield during Cooperative Youth Day in March*

Casey Lebre of Normal, Meredith Martin of Bloomington, and Megan Weisert of Mackinaw met with elected officials, including Senator Shane Cultra, Lt. Governor Sheila Simon, and Secretary of State Jesse White. The students also toured the Supreme Court, the Old State Capitol and the Lincoln Presidential Museum.

Sponsored by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, the day is designed to introduce student leaders to state government.

Lebre and Martin will attend the national Youth to Washington Tour, a week-long trip to Washington D.C. in June. They will join other student leaders from across the nation and learn more about government and the electric cooperative structure and tour national sites and monuments.



## 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 

# 74<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Members

## Central Catholic High School, Bloomington

### Friday, June 22

Save the date for Corn Belt Energy's 74<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of co-op members! Join us at Central Catholic High School in east Bloomington on the afternoon of Friday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Bring the whole family and enjoy an afternoon of great entertainment and prizes! If you receive electricity from Corn Belt, you're a member-owner of the cooperative and invited to attend.

Complimentary lunch and activities for all ages will be provided, including great bluegrass music from the River Ramblers. More details will appear in next month's issue and an Annual Report book will be mailed to every co-op member by early June with a complete agenda and RSVP details for lunch.



New this year, consultants representing these businesses will be on site with samples, prizes, and items for cash & carry sales:



Free reusable tumbler for each co-op household in attendance!

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**Noon - 2:00:** Complimentary lunch

**Noon - 3:00:** Registration; Co-op Connections and direct sales booths; Free activities for kids including face painting, bucket truck rides, bouncy houses, balloon animals, glitter tattoos and much more!

**1:30 - 2:45:** River Ramblers Bluegrass

**3:00 - 4:30:** Business Meeting and new iPad grand prize giveaway

Grand Prize Giveaway **iPad**



*Grand prize winner must be present to win.*

lia sophia

MICHE

Norwex

thirty-one

SOUIL PURPOSE

Tupperware

JamBerry

Scentsy

TASTEFULLY SIMPLE

Origami Owl

The Pampered Chef

close to heart

MARY KAY