

# POWERLINE

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

May 2014

## Member Satisfaction Matters

As a cooperative, our ONLY priority is serving our member-owners. It's vitally important that we strive to meet the needs and demands of those who receive electricity from us. To measure member satisfaction, we work with our statewide cooperative association, which administers a survey on our behalf every two years. An American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) score is calculated as a weighted average of four survey questions that measure different facets of satisfaction.

As you can see in the line chart above, Corn Belt's ACSI score had been slipping over the years. Many factors (*including cost of power, outage response, community involvement, and knowledgeable employees*) contribute to overall satisfaction. After reviewing the 2011 survey results, cooperative leadership drafted a plan of action to improve member satisfaction. With unanimous approval from the Board, programs and processes were put into place in 2012 to communicate the cooperative difference to employees and members. Corn Belt's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013 provided additional opportunities to celebrate our cooperative legacy and to inform newer members on the importance of rural electrification.

In the 2013 survey, respondents (who were selected at random) ranked Corn Belt highly on these attributes: (% of respondents ranking it an 8, 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale)

- 91.2% - Knowledgeable, competent employees
- 88.8% - Responding promptly to outages
- 85.8% - Providing excellent customer service
- 84.9% - Reliable electricity with few outages
- 83.0% - Communicating with members
- 78.8% - Being involved in the community



Our efforts are making a difference - we're proud to announce an ACSI score of 86 in the 2013 satisfaction survey, which puts your co-op in the top tier of companies including Apple (87), Lexus (87) and Amazon (85).

Our mission now is to maintain the high level of service that our members deserve and expect. After announcing the exciting news in both regional offices, employees and board members were asked to sign a banner as a symbol of this continuing commitment to improving member satisfaction with every interaction. To learn more about the ACSI methodology, visit [www.theacsi.org](http://www.theacsi.org).





**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.

## Is Your Home Protected?

Spring showers can bring an increased threat of power surges, which are defined as sudden, short-lived increases in voltage.

Your cooperative can help protect your home from the threat of power surges which could damage your valuable electronics and appliances.

### INTERNAL SURGES

80% of temporary power surges come from *inside* the home; protect your equipment with surge protector devices like power strips. Make sure to look for the UL 1449 label, which guarantees it meets tested and approved standards. Surge protectors carry a "joule" and/or a "surge-current" rating; the higher the rating of these two categories, the higher the quality of internal surge-stopping components. Corn Belt carries several surge strips and outlet receptacles that may fit your needs.



### EXTERNAL SURGES



Whole-house protection is recommended for more severe surges, including lightning strikes. Corn Belt can install a surge protector on your exterior electric meter for \$6.95/month

(200 amp meter) and a \$25 installation fee. 400 amp meter protection is available for \$8.95/month with a \$25 installation fee.

**Sign up in May and we'll waive the installation fee AND give you a complimentary surge kit valued at \$35!**

Inside your home, a panel-mounted circuit panel or service entrance suppression device (TVSS) forms a second layer of defense by greatly reducing harmful surges entering your home. A qualified electrician can ensure proper installation.

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)

## Levelized Billing Option

Levelized Billing gives you a way to guard against large fluctuations in your monthly electric bill, without ever having to play "catch-up" at the end of the year. The program is designed to keep your electric bills consistent every month of the year, as long as you remain on the plan. It's the ideal way to accurately anticipate your monthly electric bill, which makes budgeting your expenses even easier.

With Levelized Billing, your monthly electric bill becomes a "rolling average" of your electric usage for the most recent 12 months. By

averaging your changes in usage over a 12-month period, your bill will remain fairly consistent every month, even in very cold or hot months when usage may be significantly higher. Our Levelized Billing program is completely free for members with accounts in good standing and with at least 6 months of service history.

Members can deactivate the Levelized Billing program at any time by contacting our Billing Department. If a member on Levelized Billing becomes delinquent or enters into a delayed payment agreement, they will be removed from the program.

# Youth to Washington Winners

Eight local high school students from Corn Belt's service territory traveled to Springfield on April 2 for Illinois Electric Cooperative Youth Day. Students met with elected officials on the Senate Floor, including Representative Keith Sommer and Senator Chapin Rose. More than 200 students representing 24 cooperatives gathered in the state's capitol to view government in action, meeting with Lt. Governor Sheila Simon and Secretary of State Jesse White.

Government officials encouraged the students to take an interest in the political process and to learn more about issues that interest them. Students also enjoyed visiting the Old State Capitol and touring the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum.

At the end of the day, the students were interviewed and four were selected to attend the Youth to Washington Tour this summer in June. On the all-expenses-paid trip, they will join other students from across the nation and learn more about government and the electric cooperative system in addition to touring national sites and monuments.

The following students attended the Springfield trip:

Nicole Aldridge\* (Bloomington)  
 Amanda Breeden\* (Normal)  
 Rachael Fulop\* (Normal)  
 Kevin McKnight (Bloomington)  
 Cameron Parks (Bloomington)  
 Brittney Peden (Bloomington)  
 Kaelan Smith\* (Clinton)  
 Hannah Widener^ (Normal)

\* students selected to attend the Youth to Washington Tour

^ alternate student selected



On the Senate floor: Kevin McKnight, Nicole Aldridge, Kaelan Smith, Rachael Fulop, Rep. Keith Sommer, Amanda Breeden, Cameron Parks, Brittney Peden and Hannah Widener >>

## Is Geothermal Right for You?

With volatile propane and natural gas prices, 2014 might be the time to replace your LP or gas furnace with a geothermal heating and cooling system. Geothermal systems can save you 30 - 70% on your monthly utility bills and installation is more affordable than ever with federal tax credits and local rebates. And as a Corn Belt cooperative member, your geothermal usage qualifies for our lower electric heat rate.



### What is geothermal?

Your own backyard can be a renewable energy source for comfortably and affordably heating and cooling your home. A geothermal heating and cooling system takes advantage of the stable year-round temperature found a few feet underground. The system circulates a water-based solution through a buried loop system, providing high efficiency. A single piece of HVAC equipment has the ability to keep your home comfortable all year long in addition to providing some or all of your hot water needs. Learn more: [gaoi.org](http://gaoi.org)

### Tax Credit

A taxpayer may claim 30% of the cost of installing a geothermal heat pump, which must meet federal Energy Star criteria as part of the Residential Renewable Energy Tax Credit. Learn more: [energy.gov/savings](http://energy.gov/savings)

### \$1,500 Rebate

You may be eligible for a POWER MOVES rebate of \$1,500 if you install a geothermal system in 2014. AHRI certification and heat loss/heat gain calculations required. Certain efficiency standards must be met to qualify; contact Justin Stuva, Energy Advisor, at 309-664-9250 or email [justin.stuva@cornbeltenergy.com](mailto:justin.stuva@cornbeltenergy.com) for complete details.



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

Save the date for Corn Belt Energy's upcoming annual meeting at Central Catholic High School in Bloomington on Friday, June 20! Anyone who receives electricity from Corn Belt is a member-owner of the cooperative and is invited to attend. Bring the whole family and enjoy an afternoon of great entertainment and prizes; one lucky member will walk away with a new iPad Air!



## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**FRIDAY, JUNE 20**

**Central Catholic High School,  
Bloomington**

**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 more!

**1:45 - 2:45**

Emerald Underground (auditorium)

**3:00 - 4:30**

Business Meeting and iPad Air grand prize giveaway



## 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](mailto:cbec@cornbeltenergy.com)  
[www.cornbeltenergy.com](http://www.cornbeltenergy.com)



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



## 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](https://www.facebook.com/CornBeltEnergy)



Follow us on Twitter  
[@CornBeltEnergy](https://twitter.com/CornBeltEnergy)

