

# POWERLINE

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

July 2016

## Plan for a safe and happy FOURTH OF JULY HOLIDAY

The month of July has always been a favorite of mine. It's the middle of summer, the kids are out of school and of course, we celebrate Independence Day! Typically on the Fourth, we celebrate our nation's independence with grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, homemade ice cream and other sweet treats, and last but not least, fireworks. This is a time for fellowship with family and friends, but at Corn Belt Energy, we also want to make sure our members focus on safety.

To ensure you have the best Fourth of July possible, we would like to remind you about a few important safety tips from The American Red Cross.

Nothing says "Fourth of July" like a spectacular fireworks display! The safest way to enjoy this part of the celebration is to head to a local fireworks show. But, if you want to put on your own show at home, be sure to follow these safety tips:

- Always follow the instructions on fireworks' packaging and never give fireworks to small children.
- Keep a supply of water close by as a precaution.
- Make sure to wear protective eyewear when lighting fireworks.
- Light only one firework at a time and never attempt to relight "a dud."
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place away from children and pets.
- Never throw or point a firework toward people, animals, vehicles, structures or flammable materials.

Cookouts are a great way to bring folks together on the Fourth. Whether you are grilling in your back yard or at a

community park, make sure your feast includes a generous portion of fun and a side helping of safety! We recommend the following safety tips:

- Supervise your grill at all times.
- Use the proper tools for cooking on a grill.
- Never add charcoal starter fluid when the coals have already been ignited.
- Always follow the manufacturers instructions when using grills.

Fireworks and cookouts wouldn't be complete without a sunny day. Here's hoping we have good weather, and if we do, make sure you are practicing sun safety:

- Use a broad spectrum SPF sunscreen and reapply often.
- Protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Be on the lookout for signs of heat stroke (hot red skin; changes in consciousness; rapid, weak pulse; rapid, shallow breathing).

However you choose to celebrate, Corn Belt Energy wishes you a safe and Happy Fourth of July!





# Surge protection for your entire home

Storms often bring an increased threat of power surges which could damage your valuable electronics and appliances.

Many people think a blink in power is a surge, but these are generally caused by something such as a tree contacting a line. When a blink occurs, Corn Belt Energy's protective devices work, causing an interruption to protect the wires and other components.

What is a power surge? A power surge is defined as sudden, short-lived increase in voltage. Power surges can enter the home in a variety of ways including power lines, telephone lines, cable/satellite connections and any other metallic system that connects to your home.

Corn Belt Energy 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.

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.



information, please visit our website at [www.cornbeltenergy.com](http://www.cornbeltenergy.com) or call us at 800-879-0339.

# A cyber security plan from the experts

*Lessons you can learn from how electric co-ops guard against Internet bad guys*

By Paul Wesslund

Could a computer hacker shut down the nation's electric grid?

It's a question asked in popular books, congressional hearings – and it's even the plot point in the 2007 Bruce Willis movie "Live Free or Die Hard."

Most experts answer that question with, "probably not." Part of the reason for that answer is there are a lot of people in government and the utility industry like Barry Lawson.

As Associate Director of Power Delivery and Reliability for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), Lawson spends his time working with electric co-op utilities to try to protect utilities from digital hackers.

Lawson and several others at NRECA run cyber security training sessions, publish security safety materials and develop techniques and software not only to keep the nation's electric supply reliable and secure, but to protect sensitive member, employee and co-op data and information from identity theft.

Lawson says co-ops make a high priority out of protecting themselves from the constant variety of cyber computer attacks by everyone from organized crime to hobbyist hackers, who are constantly launching attacks on every computer in the world.

"We're all being hacked," says Lawson. "As soon as you plug a new computer into the Internet, it's being hacked

## FOUR TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR COMPUTER



**1. Install antivirus software and keep it updated.**



**2. Never send emails that include your personal information (like date of birth or SSN).**



**3. Never open attachments or links unless you know the sender or were expecting the message.**



**4. Monitor children's activity on the Internet and make sure they know how to practice good cyber security.**



by software that looks for Internet connections by the millions."

Lawson says we can all use advice that's the basis for how utilities protect themselves from cyber attacks: "try to make it as difficult as possible, and put in as many layers of protection as possible."

Here are Lawson's top four tips for protecting your computer:

1. Make sure you have antivirus software installed on your computer, and remember to keep it updated.
2. Don't send e-mails containing personal information, like your date of birth or Social Security Number, because that increases opportunities for mal-actors to steal your identify. Be careful of typing a credit card number into a website—if you do, make sure that it's a secure website. You can tell whether it's secure by looking for the "s" at the beginning of the

website address. Most begin with "http://." A secure site will begin with "https://."

3. Attachments or links in an email can contain malware that can infect your computer. Don't open an e-mail attachment or click a link unless you know the person sending it, and you were expecting them to send it to you (hackers can take over an account and make it look like it's from a friend.)
4. Monitor children's online activity, and make sure they know how to practice good cyber security. Visit the U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team's (UC-CERT) website for security tips on how to keep children safe online (<https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/ST05-002>).



## FUN FACT:

Corn Belt Energy has **5,635** miles of line in our service territory.



## 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 

## Energy efficiency rebates

Find energy efficient rebates and incentives that may apply to your home, business, farm or school. Rebates include lighting, HVAC, geothermal, heat pump water heaters, commercial and industrial.



These savings are available through Corn Belt Energy's power supplier, Wabash Valley Power Association.

Learn more about the rebates at [www.powermoves.com](http://www.powermoves.com) or by calling us at 800-879-0339.

## \$100 bill credit winner

Congratulations to Martha Schoen, who won a \$100 bill credit for completing the 2015-2016 member satisfaction survey. Martha was randomly selected from all of the Corn Belt Energy members who completed the survey.

Thank you to all members who took the time to complete the 2015-2016 member satisfaction survey. Your feedback is extremely important to us.

## Connect with your co-op

Keep in touch with your electric cooperative 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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