

POWERLINE

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

August 2012

Beware of Utility Scam

Don't fall prey to "Obama utility bill scam"

Electric cooperatives and utilities across the nation are reporting fraudulent activity related to the "Obama utility bill scam."

SCAM DETAILS

Scammers committing a particularly painful form of identity theft appear to have hit on just the right formula to trick thousands of victims: A punishing heat wave, large utility bills, a bad economy and a good story. The criminals have been marching across the country, making their way from state to state, persuading victims that a special federal government assistance program - sometimes described as a bailout authorized by President Barack Obama's administration - is available to pay their utility bills. Victims are given bank account and routing numbers to use when paying their bills online, but only after they "register" by surrendering their social security numbers and other personal information. The scammers may identify themselves as government employees or as representing a local utility and have been calling and visiting homes.

There is no such utility payment assistance program. But electricity users seem to be falling for the ruse everywhere, making it in one of the more successful scams in recent times. The old adage still holds true - if something appears too good to be true, it probably is. Never give out your social security number or bank account information to someone who calls you without verifying the call.

WHAT TO DO

If you receive a phone call from a person representing themselves as a Corn Belt Energy employee and you suspect it is a scam, hang up. Do not give the caller any personal information. Be especially protective of your social security number, bank and credit card numbers, and driver's license number.

Legitimate companies will not call or email you asking for your account number or password, so keep your account information to yourself. You should also not assume that you can trust caller ID to let you know where a caller is located. Because scammers may use Internet calling technology, the area code you see may not reflect where they really are. Jot down the person's name, then hang up and call Corn Belt's main line at 1-800-879-0339 to verify the call.

If someone appears at your door claiming to represent Corn Belt Energy, you can call us at 1-800-879-0339 to verify the visit. Never let anyone into your home unless you have scheduled an appointment or unless the person has proper identification. The Corn Belt logo should appear on hardhats, shirts, and vehicles. If you suspect someone is impersonating a Corn Belt employee, do not let them into your home and call the police immediately.

Co-op members should be aware and know that these phone calls or door-to-door visits are not valid. Members can safely make payments through Corn Belt's website or by calling us at 1-800-879-0339. Our office is open from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. on weekdays.

Finally, please warn neighbors, friends and relatives who may be susceptible to these types of scams.





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 to learn more about the process.

Capital Credit Allocations

As an electric cooperative, Corn Belt Energy operates as a not-for-profit business, owned by the electric members we serve. When you pay your energy bill each month, you are accumulating equity in your cooperative, referred to as *capital credits*.

Each member is assigned an individual capital credits account, separate from their billing account. Whenever funds are allocated to your capital credits account, your equity in the co-op increases.

Your August billing statement contains important information regarding your capital credits account. If you had electric service with Corn Belt in 2011, look for the special message which indicates the amount being allocated to your capital credits account. This

amount is not cash sitting in an account; it is simply a statement of your equity in Corn Belt Energy Corporation during the previous year, based on your usage.

Capital credits are periodically disbursed/retired when the Board determines that it will not jeopardize the financial condition of the cooperative. With disbursements in 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 2005 and 2010, over \$11 million in capital credits have been returned to current and former co-op members.

If a former or current cooperative member has passed away, a relative or other legal representative should contact us at 1-800-879-0339 so that the remaining funds in their capital credits account can be properly disbursed.

Recognizing Killian's Leadership

Earlier this year, long time Director Mike Killian moved outside of the district he represents and thus announced his resignation from the Board.

Chairman of the Board Rae F. Payne presented a plaque to Mike during the Annual Meeting in June, thanking him for 23 years of cooperative leadership and dedicated service.

Mike and his wife Sandy now live in Hudson and have four grown children and eight grandchildren.



We wish Mike well and the very best in the future; he will be missed.

Have You Moved?

If you should move from one residence to another within Corn Belt's service territory, your account number will change. Make sure to update this information for online payments so your payment gets posted to the correct account in a timely matter.

If you move and continue to receive electricity from Corn Belt, make sure to update your account number with your payment processor. You can find your current account number on your monthly statement. Questions? Please contact a Member Services Representative at 1-800-879-0339.

Co-op Members Enjoy 74th Annual Meeting

Over 1,000 people attended Corn Belt Energy's Annual Meeting on Friday, June 22, representing more than 450 cooperative member-owner households.

Held again at Central Catholic High School in east Bloomington, those who registered were treated to a free gift, complimentary lunch, bluegrass music provided by the River Ramblers, and the chance to win valuable prizes during the business meeting. One lucky member walked away with an Apple iPad!

More than 230 children attended the Annual Meeting, and there was plenty to see and do including inflatable rides, face painting, balloon animals, safety demonstrations, bucket truck rides, and plenty of kettle corn.

During the business meeting, Board Chairman Rae F. Payne remarked on the how the electric cooperative is looking out for members long-term. He stressed how cooperatives like Corn Belt Energy are more important now than ever because they work hard to keep energy affordable and reliable for co-op member-owners.

President and CEO Jeff Reeves also addressed members and noted that wholesale electricity costs will continue to increase in the foreseeable future, due to Environmental Protection Agency regulations on coal-based electricity generation, among other factors. Reeves also shared with members how the cooperative has strived to control costs over the past twenty-five years.

Pictured below, the following Directors were re-elected to serve three-year terms: Gary Archey of Clinton (District 4), James E. Adams of Bloomington (District 1), Jan Reimer of Carlock (District 1), and Charles Meisenheimer of Walnut (District 7).

A proposed bylaw amendment was also approved by members in attendance, which reduces the number of Directors in District 1 from six to five.

After the meeting, the Directors organized and re-elected Rae F. Payne as Chairman, Charles Meisenheimer as Vice Chairman, Albert Hagenbuch as Secretary Treasurer, and Jan Reimer as Assistant Secretary Treasurer.





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 

Remembering the Early Days

Your locally owned and managed not-for-profit electric co-op will celebrate 75 years of service in 2013, and we need your help!

We're working on a short documentary to communicate why cooperatives were formed in the 1930's and we'd like to interview long-time members who remember those early days.

Do you or a family member remember when the lights came on for the first time? Do you recall farm life before electricity? If so, please contact Erin Campbell, Director of Communications, at 1-800-879-0339 x250. We would be honored to visit with you and record your stories and recollections with your permission.

We're also looking for any early photos or documents relating to Corn Belt from the 30's, 40's or 50's. We'll simply scan or photograph your items and promptly return them.

We appreciate your assistance with this celebration and look forward to the exciting year ahead!



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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