

# POWERLINE

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

September 2013

## Energy Policy is Misguided

### *Recent policy changes threaten energy affordability*

In late June, President Obama announced a series of actions to combat climate change. For electric co-ops, the outline hammered one point that has us ready to do battle: reducing the volume of greenhouse gases—primarily carbon dioxide—emitted from fossil fuel-burning power plants, both new and existing.

To that end, the President has instructed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate carbon emissions under the federal Clean Air Act, a law last updated in 1990 that contains not a single line mentioning carbon dioxide. Under the sweeping mandate set forth, the White House risks shuttering the nation's entire coal fleet—roughly 37% of generation capacity—and driving up electric bills for all consumers.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and its 900+ member cooperatives oppose using the Clean Air Act to regulate greenhouse gases and will engage the administration at every turn to inject common sense back into policy discussions. Whether you agree with the President's underlying concerns about global warming or not, the basic fact is that short of closing all coal-fired power plants there are no economically viable tools currently available to accomplish his goals.

For several years, electric co-ops have warned the Obama administration that employing the Clean Air Act to curb power plant carbon dioxide emissions is badly misguided. Without significant modifications, co-ops feel the President's proposal will jack up electric bills for those who can least afford it—our consumer-members.

One of our first missions as not-for-profit electric co-ops remains keeping rates affordable. Forcing electric co-ops to shut down coal plants and switch to other fuels amounts to levying a punitive, regressive tax on rural America. Today,

coal accounts for about 74% of the power produced by generation and transmission utilities (G&T's) and 55% of all electric cooperative electricity requirements.

While G&T's are diversifying into alternative energy sources, keeping the lights on 24/7 requires traditional baseload generation—namely coal, nuclear, and hydro—as well as a full mix of fuels. Many communities depend on coal-based generation for affordable electric power, especially in the Midwest. Using the Clean Air Act to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants could disproportionately burden these residents and business owners with higher costs of power.

*“Rural communities have a great story to tell about how they are innovating, using new technologies and leading in energy efficiency. It's our responsibility to communicate the importance of affordable energy to the communities cooperatives serve and tell their story on how we are pursuing our energy future,”* said Jo Ann Emerson, CEO of NRECA. *“The next few months are a critical time to unite behind that message and let policymakers know where we stand on the issues, as well as how important affordable energy is to us and the American economy.”*

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, on behalf of America's electric cooperatives which serve over 42 million consumers, will continue to urge the President and his administration to work with co-ops on a real “all-of-the-above” energy strategy to keep electric bills affordable for rural Americans.

#### **Ready to take action?**

Sign up for information alerts at [www.action.coop](http://www.action.coop)

# Nicor Gas Customers: You have a choice!

With cooler weather just around the corner, it's time to think about your natural gas heating costs. If you're a Nicor Gas customer, you can choose who supplies your gas through their Customer Select program.

Nicor will continue to deliver your gas, but you can select Corn Belt Energy to supply your natural gas. We offer two competitive variable therm rates and convenient billing options. There are no monthly fees or termination fees and no equipment to install. The Corn Belt Energy supplier cost will be conveniently included on your Nicor Gas statement, so you only receive and pay one bill.

Enroll by October 31 and we'll send you a \$20 check after your first bill! Use promo code FALL during the online enrollment process.



**GREAT RATES • NO FEES • LOCAL SERVICE**

*Current Rates per Therm:*

**46¢**  
Market Advantage Plan

**46¢**  
Winter Protection Plan

### Market Advantage Plan

By selecting this plan, your natural gas therm cost will fluctuate according to current market conditions. You will benefit from this plan if it's a mild winter and market prices remain stable or decline.

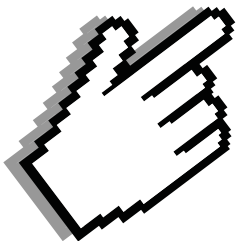
### Winter Protection Plan

With this plan, the goal is to protect you from the volatility of the winter market. You'll benefit from this plan if it's an extremely cold winter causing higher market prices.

**\$20** Switch now and get \$20!  
[www.countoncornbelt.com](http://www.countoncornbelt.com)

## 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.



Find us on Facebook  
[/CornBeltEnergy](https://www.facebook.com/CornBeltEnergy)



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



Watch us on YouTube  
[/CornBeltEnergy](https://www.youtube.com/CornBeltEnergy)

## Outage Map

Visit [www.cornbeltenergy.com](http://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.

## Pay by Text

Corn Belt co-op members can now opt to pay their bills via text! To register your cell phone and payment information, go to <http://bit.ly/153RS5H> to get started. Questions? Call us during business hours at 1-800-879-0339 and we'll walk you through the process!

## Documentary

We're celebrating 75 years as your electric cooperative and we invite you to learn more about our early days by viewing our 22-minute documentary at [www.youtube.com/cornbeltenergy](http://www.youtube.com/cornbeltenergy). Find out how farmers banded together to bring electricity to their families and communities.

# New and Improved Online Accounts

## *New SmartHub technology displays hourly usage data*

You'll notice a more powerful, efficient, and streamlined experience when you log in to your online Corn Belt account. Utilizing SmartHub technology, co-op members can now track their electric usage down to the hour and view average temperature data to see how the weather impacts cooling and heating usage.

As always, members can view their account history along with current and past statements, and you still have the ability to pay your bill electronically. Free SmartHub mobile apps are also available for Apple and Android devices, making it even easier to keep track of your electric usage, 24/7. You can even report outages through your updated online account!



Check out our short, easy-to-follow SmartHub video tutorial at [www.youtube.com/cornbeltenergy](http://www.youtube.com/cornbeltenergy) to get started and learn more about these great features:

- View hourly, daily and monthly usage data
- Compare usage between hours, days, months or years
- Set usage thresholds and alerts
- Receive bill reminders
- Report outages
- Pay your bill quickly
- View Corn Belt's social media feeds

To download the free mobile apps for Apple or Android devices, search for "smarthub" in your app store.



To access SmartHub from your desktop, simply click "Account Log-in" at [www.cornbeltenergy.com](http://www.cornbeltenergy.com) and log in with your same email address and password.





## 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 

## ELECTRIC HEAT RATE

If your home utilizes an electric heat source - including geothermal - you can take advantage of Corn Belt's Electric Heat Rate of 4.45 cents/ kWh (plus any additional current cost of power as indicated by the Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment on your monthly statement).

All electric heat is sub-metered through equipment supplied by Corn Belt Energy and the Electric Heat Rate is applied to your sub-metered usage from Oct. 1 through April 30.

This rate is applicable when at least 50% of the square footage of a home is heated electrically from a hardwired 240 volt electric heat source. To see if you're already receiving this rate, check for a Rate 10 or Rate 19 line item charge on your monthly statement. For more information contact Justin Stuva, Energy Advisor, at 1-800-879-0339 x235.

## Send the Light Coming Soon!

Corn Belt is proud to sponsor Illinois State University's fall performances of *Send the Light*, a docudrama about rural electrification in the 1930s, created by Bloomington-Normal resident and ISU alum Don Shandrow and featuring songs by local ISU alum Phil Shaw. Performances will be held at ISU's Westhoff Theatre, directed by ISU faculty Connie de Veer and Michael Vetere. More details to come in next month's issue!

October 17-19, 22-26: 7:30 p.m.

Matinee: October 19: 2:00 p.m.

Student Performances:

October 18 & 23: 10:00 a.m.

## 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

**NOTE:** To receive a water heater rebate, co-op members must also agree to allow Corn Belt to place a load management switch on the water heater (at no cost), which is eligible for bill credits of \$4.50/month for June - September bills. The load management switch will turn your water heater off periodically during peak load times during the summer, typically in the late afternoon on very hot days. This load management switch minimally affects your hot water while allowing the cooperative to reduce electric load during peak usage times which saves money by avoiding peak power charges from our power supplier.