

# POWERLINE

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

September 2016



## LEARNING ABOUT RENEWABLE ENERGY

Member Advisory Committee members visit landfill gas-to-energy plant

Over 78 years ago, Corn Belt Energy efficiently and affordably ran power lines to parts of rural Illinois that investor-owned utilities did not see as profitable. Many experts consider rural electrification as the greatest engineering achievement of the twentieth century.

In addition, electric co-ops began promoting energy efficiency decades ago, long before it became mainstream. And today co-ops have found innovative ways to use renewable energy generation while keeping electricity affordable—no easy feat. Government mandated renewable portfolio standards require

that more of the electricity being produced come from renewable sources, which are typically more expensive than traditional sources like coal-fired and natural gas-fired power plants.

One of the many renewable energy generation sources utilizes landfill gas. The decomposition of garbage in the landfill creates methane gas. While most landfills burn off the methane produced, landfill gas-to-energy plants such as the one located in Clinton, Ill., transforms this gas into electricity.

Corn Belt Energy Member Advisory Committee members, Directors and

employees toured the Clinton landfill plant on Thursday, August 4, to learn more about renewable energy.

Participants learned that this 3.2-megawatt plant, one of 15 landfill gas-to-energy plants owned by Wabash Valley Power Association, runs on Caterpillar engines and produces enough energy to power approximately 3,500 homes.

The purpose of this trip was to further demonstrate one of the many sources of renewable energy that make up the electricity that Corn Belt Energy members use daily.

# Stay focused on safety during harvest

During harvest season, many farmers reap the benefits of advancement in agricultural technology. With the help of GPS auto-steer devices, farmers are able to decrease driver error and maximize productivity. Yet despite these advances, safety risks remain.

To help farmers stay out of harm's way, Safe Electricity shares tips for a safe harvest.

GPS with auto-guidance provides farmers with real-time location data about a field, which can be used for crop planning, map making, navigation assistance and machinery guidance. During harvest, this technology allows drivers to have their hands off the steering wheel as the combine maneuvers itself through the field. Thanks to this technology, farmers can more easily and efficiently maintain accuracy even during low-light conditions, which enhances productivity.

"One critical part of safety around electricity is awareness," explains Kyla Kruse, communications director of the Safe Electricity program. "It's important to remember that farm machinery is vulnerable to hitting power lines because of its large size, height and extensions. Being aware of the location of overhead power lines and planning a safe equipment route can help reduce accidents."

In equipment with auto-guidance systems, less focus is needed on steering, which may lead some drivers to think that they do not need to be as aware of navigation issues. However, even while using a GPS with auto-steering, farm workers need to keep safety in mind and stay focused on their surroundings.

Putting safety first requires alertness, focus and knowledge of potential

hazards and safety steps. Varying pass-to-pass accuracy levels and potential issues, such as power poles not being correctly plotted in the system, reinforce the need for drivers to stay focused on the location of the farm equipment while in the field and to be ready to take action if necessary.

Regardless the technology used on the farm, keep the following electrical safety guidelines in mind:

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from power lines—at all times, in all directions.
- Look up and use care when moving any equipment such as extending augers or raising the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always set extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads to prevent contact with overhead power lines. Grain augers should

always be positioned horizontally before being moved.

- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, contact Corn Belt Energy by calling 800-879-0339.

If your equipment does make contact with a power line, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away and wait for the utility crew to cut the power. The only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire, which is rare. However, if this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and machinery at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

For more information on electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



Source: The Energy Education Council ([www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org)), a non-profit membership organization providing consumer safety and energy efficiency materials to more than 400 co-ops.

# Save with the LED Lighting Rebate

Looking for ways to save energy and money at home? Corn Belt Energy offers rebates to members for the purchase of energy efficient LED light bulbs. This rebate program rewards our members when they invest in new, energy efficient lighting. Some of the highlights of this program include:



ONLY **ENERGY STAR®** RATED LED BULBS QUALIFY FOR THE REBATE.

THE SHAPE AND SIZE OF BULB DOES NOT MATTER. LED bulbs come in a variety of shapes and sizes.

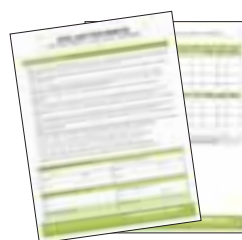


BULBS CAN BE PURCHASED ANYWHERE THAT QUALIFYING ENERGY STAR LED BULBS ARE AVAILABLE.

THE REBATE ONLY COVERS THE COST OF THE BULB UP TO \$7.50 FOR LED BULBS. If the purchase price of the LED bulb is less than \$7.50, the member will be reimbursed for the total purchase amount paid for the LED bulb. If the purchase price is greater than \$7.50, only \$7.50 will be reimbursed per LED bulb.



YOU MUST BE A COOPERATIVE MEMBER TO QUALIFY. To qualify for the rebate, applicants must receive electric service from Corn Belt Energy.



DOWNLOAD OR PICK UP YOUR REBATE FORM TODAY! Rebate applications are available for download at [www.cornbeltenergy.com](http://www.cornbeltenergy.com) or can be picked up at one of Corn Belt Energy's office locations.

Other information: Limit 25 bulbs per member account per calendar year. Include a copy of the original receipt with the application. Rebates cannot be issued for products that are not Energy Star qualified. Please retain bulb packaging until the rebate is received.

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

## DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS REBATE OPPORTUNITY!

This is the last year that we will be able to provide up to a \$7.50 rebate on LED light bulbs.

## Survey to begin - data gathered will help plan for the future

From September 2016 through January 2017 Corn Belt Energy will be conducting a survey of residential co-op members. This telephone survey is conducted every two years, and helps our power supplier, Wabash Valley Power, determine how much power we'll need in the near future.

The survey will be conducted by Oppenheim Research, a Tallahassee, Fla., firm with experience in a wide variety of research methods as well as a strong history of satisfied customers. Co-op members will be randomly selected, and 300 completed surveys will be done for our co-op. The survey is designed to last approximately 10-12 minutes and will primarily focus on the appliances and items in and around your home that consume electricity. The calls will take place Monday through Friday, beginning mid-afternoon and running until about 9:00 pm. Please remember, we will not ask you for any personal information such as your bank account, credit card or social security number over the phone.

If you are called and don't wish to participate, you will not be pressured to do so. We greatly appreciate those who do take the time to help us plan better for the future. If you have any questions about the process, please call the office at 800-879-0339.

# Choose Corn Belt Energy as your natural gas supplier!

Seasons are changing, which means it's time to think about your natural gas heating costs during the upcoming winter months.

Did you know that you can purchase your natural gas from a supplier other than Nicor Gas through a voluntary program called Customer Select®? Corn Belt Energy supplies natural gas with competitive rates, local service and cooperative values as a part of the Customer Select program. Corn Belt Energy offers two competitive therm rate plans and convenient billing options to help you minimize fluctuation in your natural gas costs.

## Market Advantage Plan

By selecting this plan, your natural gas therm cost will fluctuate according to current market conditions.

## Winter Protection Plan

With this plan, the goal is to protect you from the volatility of the winter market and provide you with more stable per therm prices.

Corn Belt Energy has been rooted in this community for over 78 years, and you'll always have access to local professionals who can answer your questions promptly. For more information or to sign up today, contact us at 800-879-0339 or visit [www.countoncornbelt.com](http://www.countoncornbelt.com).

## 2017 Education Grant applications now available

Corn Belt Energy is now accepting applications for our 2017 Education Grants Program. Five schools that serve children of Corn Belt Energy electric members will each be awarded a \$1,500 grant and one school will be awarded the \$2,000 Jeff Reeves Memorial Education Grant to fund innovative programs that enrich students' education.

Teachers and administrators of public or private K-12 schools may apply; the facility does not need to receive electricity from Corn Belt Energy, but must serve families within our footprint in Central Illinois. Multiple projects within the same school can be combined to a total of the awarded grant amount. Applications and further details can be found online at [www.cornbeltenergy.com](http://www.cornbeltenergy.com).

An impartial panel of judges will review the grant applications and preference will be given to projects and programs that enhance learning and are not currently being funded through the school's budget.

The application deadline for the 2017 Education Grants is December 31, 2016.

## Connect with your co-op

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## 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

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