

A monthly newsletter for the members of  
**Egyptian Electric Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

January 2016

[www.eeca.coop](http://www.eeca.coop)  
800-606-1505

## The more it changes, the more it's the same

The French critic, journalist and novelist Jean-Batiste Alphonse Karr was known for his frequent epigrams, including “the more it changes, the more it's the same thing”. At first glance, this statement appears to be a paradox, until I look back on the years I've spent with rural electric cooperatives. While some of our tools, policies, equipment and other things have changed, the mission of your electric cooperative remains the same. How we communicate with our members is a great example of how things change, but the objective remains the same.

One of our employees has copies of some early newsletters and magazines that Egyptian Electric and our statewide association in Springfield (the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives) published and mailed to our members. I enjoy taking a trip back in time when I read some of these old publications. While I get a kick out of the old photos and ads, I also recognize that many of the articles back then were doing the same things we do today: educating our members.

An April, 1959 issue discusses the Humphrey-Price bill in Washington and how Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn and Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson were leading the charge in seeking approval for the cooperative friendly bill.

There are articles on the comfort

of electrically heated homes, new electric appliances, a new business near Metropolis that made ornamental iron pieces, and yes, even recipes. While the paper has changed from black and white newsprint to slick, glossy paper with full-color photos, the goal of the words inside are similar to the ones of today; education, training and information. Which just happens to be the fifth of the seven cooperative principals.

If you read our magazine and newsletter today, you'll find similar pieces. You're likely to find articles on legislation, both state and national, that may affect your electric supply or how you live. There are educational articles on how to most efficiently use electricity; from energy efficient appliances and heating systems, to insulating for efficiency and comfort. And yes, there are still recipes today.

While the words and goals have not changed, how we bring them to you has. Not only is the magazine slick paper and full-color, you also have access to an electronic version that includes past issues. Go to our web-site and click on the Illinois Country Living link in the top-right corner. No matter where you are, if you have internet access you can read the Illinois Country Living magazine.

While the link above does not include our four-page newsletter,

you can access our newsletter from our website by going to the My Co-op tab. You'll find the current newsletter as well as an archive of newsletters back to 2012. If you are interested in Board of Director minutes, just go to the My Membership section to find them.

While the goal of our communications with you has not changed, I think you may be starting to see that how we deliver that communication to you has. Electronic (internet) communication means we can craft a message and put it in front of you in a matter of seconds. Our website [www.eeca.coop](http://www.eeca.coop) is a starting point for much of our communication with you. Many of our policies and procedures are published here so that you have instant access to what you need. Interested in putting

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Jim Riddle -- Executive Vice President and General Manager

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in a solar array and interconnecting to the distribution system? Start by reading up on the website. Our policies and procedures are all there. We also provide education on how NET metering works. Answers to many billing questions can be found under the My Billing area.

Electronic communication like Twitter and Facebook allow us to communicate with members almost immediately. Back in November, one of our poles caught fire north of Murphysboro. It just so happened one of our employees was driving by and was able to take a photo of the pole and fire and send it to our Member Services Manager. He posted it on our Facebook page nearly the same time as the pole broke and caused a wide-spread outage. That photo reached over 9,500 people in less than 24 hours. While some of these may not have been

cooperative members, many were. Due to smartphones, many of our members were made aware of the outage, the cause and the expected time to repair in very short order.

If you use Facebook, I highly recommend you search for Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association and click on the Like button and then choose Posts in News Feed to see our posts on your timeline. While we won't post every single outage on our Facebook page, we will put information about major outages on it. As the page is not monitored 24/7, please do not use it to communicate outages to us, instead use our 800 number that is monitored.

While some might think of our SmartHub access portal as a billing tool, I believe it is another communication tool. SmartHub gives you 24/7 access to your account. You can

view your energy usage on a daily basis and can compare it to prior usage. You can pay bills, change your mailing address, access prior bills, and send us emails regarding service changes (again, use the 800 number to report outages). You can even set up a monthly budget amount and check your status to see your progress as the month goes along.

How we communicate with you may have changed, the why we communicate has not. Our communication tools have changed appearance and there are many new ones. The goal to educate, train, and inform our members however remains the same. You are the cooperative and we believe educated, trained and informed members make for a stronger cooperative.

## Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants

Six area schools have been selected to receive \$500 Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants from Egyptian Electric Cooperative.

The schools are: Coulterville High School; Perandoe Special Education District, Tilden; TRICO High School, Campbell Hill; General John A. Logan Elementary, Murphysboro; Trinity Lutheran School, Red Bud; and Murphysboro Middle School.

Classroom Empowerment Grants from Egyptian Electric Cooperatives are intended to fund innovative and unfunded projects that improve the learning environment or increase educational resources for the school or classroom.

Egyptian Electric Cooperative is proud to be able to assist our schools during these tough fiscal times.



## Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association

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## Why does my electric bill go up in the winter?

The amount of your electric bill is dependent solely on how much electricity you use. Egyptian's rates are the same year round, so if your bill gets larger in the winter, it's because you are using more electricity. Determining where it is being used is essential to reducing your bill.

The colder it is outside, the more energy it takes to keep our homes warm. When it's 70 degrees out, your heating system doesn't have to work to keep it 70 degrees indoors. When the temperature drops to 10 degrees outside, your heating system has to work very hard to keep it 70 degrees indoors.

Take a look around your home to see what types of devices you use to keep your home warm. If you have electric heat, whether baseboard heaters, electric furnace or a heat pump, you know where it's going. If you have a gas furnace though, you might not think your electric usage would increase. Remember, the more your furnace runs, the more the blower runs and it runs on electricity.

Even if you have gas heat, you may have some portable electric heaters to keep certain rooms warm. Just remember though, portable electric heaters are meant for warming small areas for short periods of time, not entire houses, all of the time. No matter what the ads say, all portable electric heaters have the same efficiency as an electric furnace and use the same amount of electricity.

Electric blankets will also increase electric usage. You may also have some electric heat tapes on water lines to keep them from freezing.

Here are some tips to help reduce your electric usage.

### Heat Pumps

Heat pumps are very efficient heating systems. If the heat pump malfunctions however, they become electric furnaces and can lead to

high electric usage. Verify the outdoor unit is functioning on a weekly basis by listening to it run or by observing that its fan is operating. Keep filters clean and make sure the coils on the unit outside are clean as well. Do not turn the thermostat up and down on a heat pump, this will cause the auxiliary heat strips to provide more of the heat than they need to. If you wish it to be cooler at night or to set it back when absent, use a programmable thermostat designed for heat pumps. They can raise the temperature without causing the auxiliary heat strips to come on.

### Space Heaters

Use electric space heaters to only heat small areas for short periods of time, such as reading the paper or watching television. All space heaters are created equal, in other words, none or more efficient than any other, no matter what the ads say.

### Showers

Make sure showers are no longer than they need to be. It's easy to wake up under a warm shower in the morning, but that causes your water heater to operate more than needed. Pay attention to children's showers and time them if necessary. Make sure you have low-flow showerheads in place.

### Laundry

With new laundry detergents, washing machines and fabrics, hot or even warm water is not necessary to get clothing clean. Use cold water washing for all but the dirtiest clothing. Don't over load the machine, but do use full loads.

### Dish Washing

Wash only full loads of dishes and then use the water heat option



on the cycle with no drying. This allows you to set your water heater to 120 degrees (more than adequate for household and laundry use) yet have water that gets your dishes clean. With the warmer water in the machine, you won't need to use the dry cycle, especially if you'll crack the door when the cycle is done.

### SmartHub

While our on-line access to your energy usage won't directly save you energy, you can't control what you can't measure. With SmartHub, our on-line account portal to your energy usage, you can see how much energy you used yesterday (the system updates the information around noon each day). If your energy usage suddenly takes a spike, there may be a problem you can fix before you get the bill at the end of the month. You can also use the Budget Gauge (under Billing & Payments section) to input a dollar amount you would like to keep your bill at. By periodically checking the gauge, you can see whether you are staying within your budget or if you will miss it.

While these tips will help reduce energy usage, making sure your home is properly insulated and air-sealed will provide the greatest energy savings. In addition to saving money and energy, a properly insulated and sealed home will also be more comfortable and healthy. Your cooperative can help you figure

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out if your home is insulated and sealed adequately with an energy audit. A comprehensive audit that includes a blower door, infra-red camera scan, photos and physical inspection followed with a written report and recommendations is \$400.

If you complete any of the recommendations within 120 days of the audit, you can receive up to \$300 of that back. If you don't believe you need a comprehensive audit, a walk through audit is \$50. This audit is just as it sounds, we'll walk through

the home, peak into the attic and crawlspace if present, and verbally inform you of some things you might consider. No written report will be made.

## Youth to Washington

If you're looking for a way to get your high school sophomore or junior child or grandchild out of the house for a week this summer, we have the perfect answer. Just have them complete an application for the Youth to Washington tour and they might be one of two Egyptian Electric Cooperative students selected to visit Washington D.C. from June 10 through June 17, 2016. They'll take a bus trip to D.C. with more than 60 other students from throughout Illinois. While there, they'll visit the Arlington National Cemetery, Gettysburg Battlefield, Smithsonian Museums, and the Sunset Parade at the Iwo Jima Marine Corps War Memorial.



They'll also take a cruise on the Potomac River with other students from throughout the nation and visit our Capitol and other Washington historic sites, as well as many of our nation's leaders.

Most importantly, they'll have an experience that will influence and open doors for them for the rest of their lives.

To apply for the Youth to Washington program, visit our website at [www.eeca.coop](http://www.eeca.coop) to download an application or call our office for a mailed copy. One student from each high school in the Egyptian Electric Cooperative service area will also be selected to represent the Cooperative at Rural Youth Day in Springfield on April 13, 2016.

For past Youth to Washington alumni from Egyptian Electric Cooperative, check out two new Facebook pages, Egyptian Electric Cooperative Youth to Washington Alumni and the Illinois Youth to Washington Tour page. Join in and let everyone know what you've been up to. You might resurrect an old acquaintance from your trip.

## Pay your bill online

Don't forget you can pay your bill online with a credit card or electronic check, as well as view your historic use at [www.eeca.coop](http://www.eeca.coop). Just click on the Pay Online button.

If it's your first visit, you'll need to create an account and password.

If you wish to make an online payment without establishing an account, you can do so by going to the SmartHub Online Payment link under My Billing and using the Pay Now option. All you will need is the account number on your bill.

**Our office will be closed January 18, 2016 for Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday.**