

**April 2014**

### Mission Statement:

Improving the quality of life of our member-owners.

#### James B. Riddle

Executive Vice President/  
General Manager

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### Office Closing

Good Friday,  
April 18

### What to do if the power goes off

1. Check your main fuses or circuit breakers to ensure none of them have tripped.
2. Look at your meter. If you can read the numbers on the LCD display, there is power to the meter; you will need to check further for a breaker that has tripped or a fuse that has blown. If there are no numbers present on the display, there is no power to the meter.
3. To report an outage, call 800-606-1505
4. Make sure you have the name as listed on the account and if possible, the account number.



As I write this in late February, it's hard to imagine that the stark and skeletal trees outside will soon change to something with flowers and leaves, and maybe even have a fragrance. Spring will soon be here with warmer weather and a new growth season for flowers, shrubs and of course, trees. While flowers and shrubs are a joy for all, new growth on trees is a lineman's bane. Limbs contacting electrical wires lead to light blinks and of course, power outages.

We all enjoy trees and the shade they bring, especially from the summer heat, but we also know that trees and power lines do not mix. Plain and simple, trees cause outages. Power outages may wake you up, cause a missed meal or maybe some other inconvenience. To a lineman, it means the same inconvenience you experience, plus they have to work in whatever the weather conditions are, no matter the time of day. For the cooperative, it means overtime and increased costs.

After the derecho of May 2009, Egyptian Electric Cooperative began an aggressive right-of-way (ROW) program to get trees trimmed and cleared from our lines. With my accounting background, I always want to know if the funds we spend on ROW maintenance are showing results. In 2010, our members experienced 964 outage incidents, including individual outages caused by transformer fuses blowing. Of those outages, 103 were tree-related and 80 were caused by storms. Last year, the total outage incident number had fallen to 868; outages caused by trees was 58 and 64 by storms. That's

pretty good evidence our increased ROW maintenance is working.

Maintaining tree clearance through ROW maintenance not only reduces the number of outages our members experience, it reduces our overhead due to lower overtime costs. It also reduces what we call line loss. Line loss is the electricity we purchase from the power plant that never makes it to your meter. It's lost due to resistance in conductors that turn electric energy into heat and is lost. It's due to impedance in transformers that again turns energy into heat that does not get to a billing meter. It also happens when a limb bumps the line and an arc occurs. That electricity never makes it to someone's meter to be consumed by a member. In other words, good ROW maintenance reduces your inconvenience and lowers the cooperative's costs.

We use several methods of ROW maintenance at Egyptian Electric Cooperative. The goal is to use the most economical method for the proper circumstance. Rather than use costly manpower to cut and clear brush, we use mechanical means followed by herbicides where possible.

The mechanical systems we use are a hydro-ax and a giraffe. Both are rubber-tired machines that look like tree logging skid steers. One has an industrial-size bush hog on the front

► Continued on page 16b

### Jim Riddle

Executive  
Vice President/  
General Manager



**Integrity : We are credible, trustworthy, honest and believable.**

■ Continued from page 16a

and can mow brush and trees up to 6 inches or larger. The giraffe has a long telescoping fiberglass boom with a saw blade on the end of it.

Our goal is to use these machines in what we call 'private ROW'; along and through woods and fields away from residential areas. The giraffe goes first and side trims trees to remove the overhang from near the wires. The hydro-ax follows, mowing the downed tree tops and brush growing under our lines.

A year or two following the mechanical clearing, we like to use a selective application of herbicide that is manually applied. This reduces the amount of chemical used and possible run-off. The goal is to keep the woody species from growing back and to let fescue and other native grasses begin to grow, reducing future maintenance costs and issues.

At residences and other populated

areas, we trim and remove trees with trimming crews. These crews are trained in the proper method of trimming that does the least amount of long-term damage to trees. In years past, trimming crews did what we call round-overs. They trimmed trees as you might trim an ornamental bush in your yard. Round-overs cause long term issues for trees though. They encourage sucker growth, the rapid growth sprouts you see at the cut end of the limb. Sucker growth is weak and susceptible to wind and storm damage, as well as disease and insects. Proper trimming methods work to eliminate sucker growth and tend to train the tree to grow away from the power lines, reducing (but never eliminating) future trimming needs.

We post our planned ROW maintenance maps on our website, [www.eeca.coop](http://www.eeca.coop), on the Tree

Trimming page under the My Service section. You can look to see if we'll be doing any work in your area in the upcoming months. If we are in your area, I urge you to take a hard look at where our lines are on your property, and the trees that may be around them. Consider allowing us to remove trees under or near our lines that require frequent trimming. Planting a tree further away from the lines may still give you shade and enjoyment, while never causing an outage in the future.

Trees are a natural part of our southern Illinois landscape. They provide habitat for birds and other wildlife and are good for our environment. We all have to make choices and sometimes we have to decide which is more important; a replaceable tree or reliable electric service.

## MARATHON WATER HEATERS READY FOR THE FUTURE TODAY



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30, 50 and 85 gallon units in stock



**Marathon**  
WATER HEATERS

**Accountability : We act in accordance with our core purpose and values.**

## Heat Pumps— Leave On or Turn Off?

Every winter when temperatures drop, the question surfaces as to what temperature heat pumps should be turned off, because they can't keep up, and running them when it's cold will hurt the unit. This piece of advice is kind of like the story of the wife cutting the end of the ham off before she put it in the roaster. When asked why, she claimed her mother did it and she learned it from her mother. When Grandma was asked why she cut the end of the ham off, she promptly replied "because my roaster wasn't large enough to put a whole ham in."

Maybe in the early days of heat pumps, a portion of this might have been true, but today's heat pumps are designed to operate at very low temperatures. There is no question that when it gets below 30 degrees heat pumps run more, but keep in mind heat pumps are 300 percent

efficient. For every unit of energy it consumes, it delivers 3 units of heat to the home. The auxiliary heat is only 100 percent efficient, so economically it's pretty evident we want to get as much of our heat from the heat pump as we can.

Heat pumps are efficient because they move heat, they don't create heat like electric coils or gas furnaces do. Heat pumps are like your refrigerator. Freon evaporates in the evaporator coil (in the winter, the outside unit) and becomes cold. Heat always moves from the warm temperature to the cold, so the coil outside absorbs heat from the air (there is heat in the air until absolute zero, about -460 degrees F). The Freon is then compressed in the compressor, raising its temperature. The hot Freon then moves to the coil in the duct system that is inside the house. As the Freon is hotter than the air in the house, heat

moves from the coil to the air.

We could install heat pumps large enough to give us all of the heat we need without the assistance of auxiliary heat strips. The problem with doing that is the heat pump is also our air conditioner. If we over-size the heat pump, then the air conditioner will be too large and would operate with very short cycles or cooling periods. These short cycles would not let the system remove moisture in the air, so we would end up with a cold, clammy house. Not what we want from our air conditioning system.

The best advice then is to leave your heat pump thermostat on the heat setting, and not the auxiliary or emergency setting. Even if the unit outside fails, the thermostat will automatically switch to the auxiliary heat system.



### Clip & Save

#### **How to keep your unit operating at peak efficiency:**

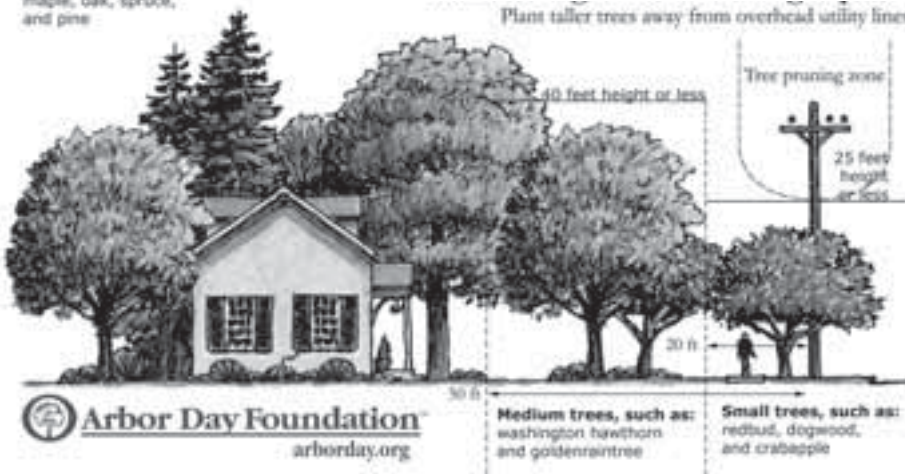
- Wash the coils of the outside unit at least twice per year with a garden hose (not a high pressure washer that can damage the coils). Make sure you disconnect the power to it first. And keep vegetation clear so air can circulate freely around the unit.
- Keep filters clean. Check frequently and remember, the more the unit runs as it gets cold, the more frequently you may have to clean or replace filters.
- Unless you have a programmable set-back thermostat designed for a heat pump, set the temperature where you want and leave it. Constantly turning a heat pump thermostat up and down forces the auxiliary heat to operate more frequently and use more energy.
- Make sure the outside unit is functioning. A heat pump has two systems, the heat pump and the electric coils or furnace. If the outside unit fails, the furnace will automatically take over heating the home. When you hear the indoor fan running, periodically verify the outdoor unit is running by listening to it from a nearby room, or by visually inspecting that the fan is running on the unit.
- Ice buildup on the outside unit is not uncommon. Today's units will automatically sense ice buildup and will go into defrost mode when needed. If the ice lasts longer than an hour, you may need to call a service technician.
- Consider having a professional "clean and check" your unit at least once, preferably twice, per year in the spring and fall.



**Commitment to Community: We show compassion, care and courtesy to our members and the communities we serve.**

Tall trees, such as: maple, oak, spruce, and pine

Plant taller trees away from overhead utility lines



Arbor Day Foundation  
arborday.org

## Plant the right tree in the right place

Plant taller trees away from overhead power lines

# National Arbor Day is April 25



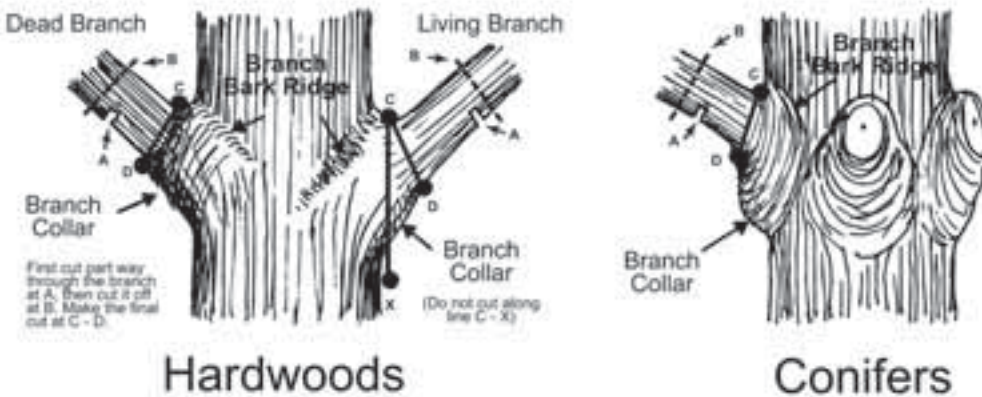
Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.

### Six things you should know when planting a tree.



- 1. Call Before You Dig** - Several days before planting, call the national 811 hotline to have underground utilities located.
- 2. Handle with Care** - Always lift tree by the root ball. Keep roots moist until planting.
- 3. Digging a Proper Hole** - Dig 2 to 5 times wider than the diameter of the root ball with sloping sides to allow for proper root growth.
- 4. Planting Depth** - The trunk flare should sit slightly above ground level and the top-most roots should be buried 1 to 2 inches.
- 5. Filling the Hole** - Backfill with native soil unless it's all clay. Tamp in soil gently to fill large air spaces.
- 6. Mulch** - Allow 1 to 2 inch clearance between the trunk and the mulch. Mulch should be 2 to 3 inches deep.

For more tree-planting tips and information, visit [arborday.org](http://arborday.org).  
Source: Arbor Day Foundation



Arbor Day Foundation

## Proper Pruning Principles

Teamwork: We work together to provide excellent service.