



HOMEPAGE

www.enerstar.com | A monthly newsletter for co-op members of EnerStar Electric Cooperative

EnerStar members hold 76th Annual Meeting

EnerStar Electric Cooperative held its 76th Annual Meeting of Members at Crestwood School on Saturday, March 14. Those gathered enjoyed the traditional pancake and sausage breakfast prior to the start of the meeting.

During the meeting President and CEO Peter Kollinger addressed the members regarding what to expect in 2015 and shared the improvements that were made in 2014. He hit on three main topics throughout the meeting: service reliability, member services and financial updates of the cooperative.

Service Reliability

Increase Service Reliability

Kollinger reported that EnerStar has developed a prudent work plan to improve service now as well as prepare the system for the next generation of members. "Over the last five years, your electric cooperative has invested \$8.1 million dollars to upgrade our electric system, with about \$1.25 million of that being in 2014," said Kollinger.

In 2010, the cooperative replaced all meters with new solid-state meters that allow the cooperative to get daily readings and check for power quality issues, like blinks and low voltage.

The cooperative built a new substation in the Martinsville area and has refurbished other substations which were built from 1948-1969. It also built 26 miles of 3-phase tie lines to interconnect all of the substations, which allows the co-op to backfeed any substation to reduce outage times.

He emphasized that work on system improvements will continue. "We have replaced 20 miles of old, copper wire that was installed in the 1940s with new larger gauge wire," said Kollinger. "In addition, all rental dusk-to-dawn lights were replaced with new energy efficient LED lights and work continues on the 10-year cycle of pole testing and replacement."

He added that the co-op will be purchasing a spare mobile transformer that can be used in 5 different substations. If necessary, it can quickly replace a faulty transformer to reduce outage times.

New Cooperative Electric Load

Kollinger informed the audience that the new Paris High School complex is being served by the cooperative. Classes will begin in the fall of 2015. In preparation for the school, about 2.5 miles of 3-phase tie-line was replaced between the Baldwin substation (located on the Clinton Road, west of Paris) and the Paris substation. He explained that many co-op members will benefit from this new tie-line. New switch gear will be installed that will automatically transfer load – from either direction – between the two substations if there is any interruption of



Members enjoy a traditional pancake and sausage breakfast served by EnerStar employees prior to the meeting

service. Underground facilities are in place, and the 1500 KVA transformer, which is one of the largest on the system, has been installed.

Improving Outage Response, Communications

Over the last three years, improving outage response and communications has been a top priority at EnerStar.

In early 2014, the cooperative transitioned to a new Outage Management System (OMS) which is integrated into the co-op's billing software. While members do not directly see the benefits, the new system changes how the co-op manages power outages and improves restoration efforts.

"Regardless of the size of the power outage, gathering accurate info and prioritizing it is essential," said Kollinger. "The OMS system predicts where the problem may be occurring and then provides a detailed history of outages can be used later to help find trouble areas that may be experiencing a higher than average number of power outages." He added that the OMS system also comes with an outage map that members can view on the cooperative's website.

In the next few months, EnerStar will be upgrading their automated

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phone system. The new system, named Call Capture, is tightly integrated with the co-op's billing software and outage management system. Members can continue to call the office to quickly report outages or make secure payment over the phone but the added bonus is that the system offers outbound calling as well.

The co-op can now call members regarding upcoming planned outages, verify current outages and restoration when necessary, or even call members if we have tree trimming or workers in the area.

Member Services

SmartHub Launches

In early 2014, EnerStar upgraded its online e-bill system and launched the SmartHub, a mobile communications tool. Kollinger explained about 23% of the membership can now manage their account, receive

detailed energy usage and even report power outages via their desktop computer or mobile device. "The free mobile app can be downloaded for both Apple and Android phones, member reviews have been very positive," said Kollinger.

Energy Efficiency Grants and Rebates

To promote energy efficiency and savings, EnerStar, in conjunction with our power supplier, is pleased to offer several money saving rebates. We currently offer lighting rebates for both CFL and LED lights for the home and business. In addition, rebates are available for heat pumps and geothermal heating units. Recycling of old fridge and freezers is also available with free pick up. Members can earn a \$35 rebate for up to two appliances. Kollinger explained members should visit www.powermoves.com for more information.

PowerShift Load Control Program

Kollinger said that the number of members participating in PowerShift, a load control program that is administered by co-op's power supplier, continues to increase. Under this voluntary program, load control switches can be installed on central air conditioners, electric water heaters, and fixed pool pumps. These devices will be cycled off and on during peak usage when EnerStar's electricity costs are at their highest. By cycling the power off and on, there is little inconvenience to the member. He asked members to please contact the office to sign up for this service by May 15.

Construction - Paris High School

- Replaced portions of 3-phase tie line (2.5 miles) between Baldwin substation and high school
 - Many members on Baldwin and Paris subs will benefit
- Purchased automatic switching – switches to Paris sub if Baldwin feed experiences problems
- Installed 1500 KVA transformer and underground facilities





EnerStar employees, Julie Wineinger, Kelly McCrocklin, and Susan Watson (left to right) greet members at this year's annual meeting.

Financial Update

Member Equity and Improving Financials

At the 2005 annual meeting, Kollinger reported that the co-op's main focus would be to return to the core business of providing electricity and improving the balance sheet. The goal was to increase equity to a level recommended by the co-op's national organization and lenders. "Our equity level has increased from 25% back in 2004 to nearly 45%," said Kollinger. "This is good news for member-owners as this represents their ownership in the cooperative."

Financially, 2014 was a good year for EnerStar as members enjoyed improved reliability with fewer power outages and the cooperative spending less on operating expenses. Kollinger also announced that "while the co-op originally anticipated the current rates to be in effect for two years, it now appears the rates will remain in effect for a four-year period, other than possible changes to the power cost adjustment from our power supplier."

Member Rebate and Member Refunds

Because of last year's margins were higher than anticipated, the cooperative board felt it was important to give back to the members. The co-op will retire approximately \$502,000 in capital credits and issue refund checks in mid-April to members who received electric service for the years 1969 to 1976. This is the fourth general retirement of capital credits since 2006.

In addition, EnerStar Electric issued rebate checks, totaling about \$273,000, to members who had active accounts in November 2014.

"The board was pleased to be able to benefit both older and newer memberships by issuing both capital credit refunds and member rebates," added Kollinger. "It truly is a benefit of being a cooperative member."

Kollinger closed the meeting telling members: "We are here to serve you. We appreciate hearing from our members because our focus is you. With your input we can always find ways to improve our cooperative."

Time matters.



Register for Power Shift by May 15 and earn up to \$117.

The time of day that you use power changes how much that power costs. It's like going to a movie: Evening shows cost more because that's when more people want to see movies. Use power when everyone else is, like when the afternoon is hottest, and that power costs more for everyone.

Power Shift helps everyone save by shifting energy usage to off-peak times.

Have us install a switch on your air conditioner, electric water heater, or pool pump that may be activated when demand is up—typically in the afternoons, and for no longer than 15 minutes an hour on your air conditioner. We won't activate the switch on weekends or holidays, and most people don't even notice the difference.

You'll stay cool (and keep your water hot) while you save energy and help out your community. That's time well spent.

To sign up for Power Shift or for more information, contact EnerStar Electric Cooperative at 800-635-4145.



POWER MOVES



2015 Annual Meeting Board Director Elections

EnerStar is a democratically controlled electric cooperative and the Annual Meeting offers members an opportunity to vote on candidates to represent them. At this year's meeting, three incumbents were re-elected to serve. In the photograph from left to right are Gene Higginbotham, of Martinsville representing District 7, John Fell, of Kansas representing District 4, EnerStar CEO Peter Kollinger, and Kevin Julian, of Metcalf representing District 2.



EnerStar's office will be closed Monday, May 25, 2015, in observance of Memorial Day.

EnerStar would like to thank the following vendors and businesses who donated door prizes to our 76th Annual Meeting of Members

Your support is greatly appreciated!

31 Gifts/Nicole Shaughnessy	Illini FS/Brad Young
Benjamin's Office Connection	J&L Gifts
Brownstown Electric	Murphy Farm Seeds
Dewitt Advertising	Paris First Bank
Edgar County Bank & Trust	Rachel's Red Barn
Farm Credit Services	Scentsy Gifts, Jeni Lueken
Faulk Garage	State Farm - Terry Elston
First Bank & Trust	T & R Electric
First Farmers Bank	Tastefully Simple, Deann Brown
First Neighbor Bank, NA	United Utility Supply
Fred Biggs Supply Company	Vadas Car Quest
HD Supply	Vermeer Sales & Service
Henigman Oil	

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