



Rate increases coming



Alan W. Wattles

Across The President's Desk

MCCEC has finally gotten the information needed from its power supplier, Southern Illinois Power Cooperative, (SIPC), on the amount of rate increases for the next few years. Power costs are going up and for MCEC it is approximately 21 percent for 2012 and then slightly lower for 2013. What does this mean for you the member/consumer? If MCEC can install the rate increase needed over the next year and be at the rates needed for the lower power cost in 2013, estimates are around 12 – 15 percent. The current plan is to implement the increase in stages over the 2012 year and when January 1, 2013 is upon us, MCEC will have rates to carry us through for the next few years.

As stated at our past few annual meetings, power costs were going to go up and the time is upon us. SIPC will start receiving power from Prairie State Energy Campus in 2012 and once that occurs, the repayment of debt associated with the building of the plant will take place. The final cost of the plant will be around 480 million dollars and this will be paid

over the next 30 years. SIPC will have sufficient generation to cover our needs for the foreseeable future.

How we implement the rate increase is still yet to be determined. We have just received our first run of our Cost of Service study (COS) to look at where we need to have rates to cover our expenses. Once the Board of Directors and staff come to agreement on the COS data, we will start to perform a retail rate study and develop rates that provide enough revenue for our mortgage requirements on our debt and also meet the financial ratios as needed by our lenders. Our goal is to have the information on the new rates by November of this year to be published and to prepare you, the member, for the upcoming increase to your monthly bill.

What are the components of your monthly bill? Basically, a facility charge, energy used and a state tax. The facility charge (FAC) is the component of fixed cost that MCEC needs to run and operate the cooperative on a day-to-day basis. The FAC helps cover most of the cost of salaries, materials, and principal and interest payments for our debt. We don't recover all of our cost in this line but a majority of it; the rest is captured in our energy charge per kWh sold to you, the member. We are discussing the concept of having our facility charge unbundled on the bill and also to raise it to the amount needed out of the COS. This would mean that the

kWh or energy charge would be a flat rate and near the cost of power we are currently purchasing from SIPC. Again, let me state that this is one option we are considering for now. More information will be given when we determine our course of action. Our other option is to have the increase in power costs be spread over both line items, the facility charge and energy charge, and have your bill remain looking relatively the same as always.

MCEC will always strive to contain costs here on the distribution side and to continue to provide quality service and reliable electric to our membership. We see costs from all areas rising with such things as material, fuel, medical and pension costs. We always put great effort into maximizing our dollars that are paid to us by you, the member, to run this cooperative. We are working diligently to run more efficiently and yet, still give you what you want as services from the cooperative.

Please keep watching for future updates on the rate increase as we will be using bill stuffers, the MCEC website (www.mcec.org) as well as our Illinois Country Living insert and the Monroe County Echoes for getting you the information you need.

Lite for a Bite Program will launch at Member Appreciation Day

For the second year in a row, your electric cooperative will begin a CFL giveaway program called “Lite for a Bite.” It will start on **Saturday, October 1 at our Member Appreciation Day.** The day will run from **9 a.m. till 1 p.m.**

Any member who brings in canned food items or non-perishable boxed items (\$1.00+ in value) can exchange them for CFL light bulbs. There will be a **limit of 4**, meaning that any member can bring



in up to 4 cans of food and be given up to **4 CFL light bulbs.** **Only 4-bulbs per membership will be allowed.**

The canned food items we collect will be donated to local food pantries and be available to needy families in our area over the holidays.

The program will run on and after the Member Appreciation Day until all the bulbs are distributed.

This **Lite for a Bite** giveaway is part of our Touchstone energy program that demonstrates one of Touchstone Energy’s four core values which is **commitment to community.**

Energy Audits available to members

Ever wonder where your energy dollars are going? Do you feel like your electric or gas usage in the winter and summer is too high?

Call us and we can arrange for an energy audit on your home. This audit will help you identify the key areas where you can make improvements that will improve the energy efficiency of your home. There is no charge to the member for these audits.

The cooperative has a blower door testing system that will show where air is leaking into the home. Air infiltration is the #1 cause of high energy bills, behind poor insulation. Sealing these leaky areas is important to helping your heating and cooling system work more effectively.

We also have an infrared camera that shows temperature differences behind floors, walls and ceilings. The camera, coupled with the blower door test, is very effective in finding these places in your home that you can address with sealing and insulation. Many times the cost to correct these areas is very reasonable and usually shows a quick payback in energy savings. The audits generally take between 2 – 3 hours to do. If you are interested in having an energy audit performed on your home, contact the Member Services department at the cooperative at 939-7171 or 1-800-757-7433, ext. 115. You can also email us at amasterson@mceec.org.



Safely connect a portable generator to your home without rewiring

Homeowners are purchasing portable generators in record numbers to power critical appliances such as furnaces, pumps, refrigerators and home office equipment during a power outage. GenerLink is a product that makes connecting a portable generator easy and safe while providing homeowners the flexibility of using a portable generator to operate virtually any appliance in their home.

GenerLink is a five-inch device that is installed behind your electric meter by your local utility or licensed electrical contractor. When you connect a portable generator to GenerLink and start it up, GenerLink automatically disconnects your house from the electric utility grid

preventing the possibility of back feed, which can damage equipment and harm utility personnel.

Because GenerLink is designed and rated to connect directly to a standard household electric service of 200 amps, or less, all you have to do to operate a critical appliance is flip a breaker on in the household breaker panel once the generator is connected and operating. GenerLink eliminates the hassles of running multiple extension cords or hiring an electrician to install an expensive transfer switch and sub-panel that limits the number of appliances you can operate.



GenerLink is installed by your local electric utility in less than 30 minutes. There is no need for you to be home and there is no need to rewire the house.

To learn more about using a portable generator with GenerLink, please go to www.generlink.com and click on "About Generators" and "FAQs" at the bottom.

MCEC Line Outages - August 2011

Time Off	Duration	# Out	Location	Cause Desc	Sub
08/02/11	1:56	5	Nelson Ln	Unknown	East Carondelet
08/03/11	1:09	7	Hanover Rd	Unknown	N. Waterloo
08/12/11	1:36	17	Merrimac Rd	Lightning	Fountain
08/18/11	4:21	29	Algoniquin Forest Subdivision	Other, Deterioration	Millstadt
08/19/11	1:42	57	Zingg Rd	Lightning	Millstadt
08/20/11	1:50	37	Mule Rd	Lightning	East Carondelet
08/20/11	1:39	2	Autumn Ct	Lightning	Millstadt
08/23/11	1:13	40	Ames Rd	Unknown	Poe

Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Inc.

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A week in Washington

Hannah Farley from Freeburg, Michael Sonnenfelt from Valmeyer and Micaela Smith from New Athens represented Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Inc. in Washington, D.C., during the annual "Youth to Washington" Tour, June 10-17. This event, sponsored by the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois, began 52 years ago to introduce rural youths to our democratic form of government and cooperatives.

The students met with Rep. Jerry Costello and were among 75 rural Illinois youth leaders selected for the trip. The Illinois students joined 1,554 young leaders from across the country. In addition to the Capitol, they also visited Arlington National Cemetery, the Washington National Cathedral, several Smithsonian Museums, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the World War II



Left to right: Michael Sonnenfelt, Hannah Farley, U.S. Representative Jerry Costello, and Micaela Smith.

Memorial, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, the National Archives,

the Newseum and a number of other historical sites.



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