

Norris Electric *News*

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Norris Electric holds 76th annual meeting of members



From l-r, Norris Electric Cooperative Directors Ron Viehman, Dean Dietrich, Dan Strine and General Manager Keith McKinney.

In the midst of one of the coldest and snowiest winters the area has seen in decades, Norris Electric Cooperative held its 76th annual meeting of members, Saturday, Feb. 8, at Newton Community High School. The members, who filled the gym floor seating, heard reports on snow-related outages, the power contract with Southern Illinois Power Cooperative and the addition of a large compressor station which will increase the cooperative's peak load.

Retiring Board President Larry Seals informed members this is the final year of a major rate increase due to the power contract with Southern Illinois Power. He pointed out Norris Electric rates are still the third lowest in the state and might fall lower

as other cooperative's 2014 rates are known.

Seals also announced that after 17 years on the board, he thought it was time to let someone else take on the role. "I certainly enjoyed my time on the board," said Seals. "I have met many members and worked with some other great directors and certainly made new friends."

Cooperative Manager Keith McKinney explained the restoration process after the January 5 storm which left more than 5,000 members without power.

McKinney also addressed how natural gas prices are predicted to increase, just as those of propane have done. He reminded members how there has been a shift from coal-fired

power plants to natural gas-fired power plants.

"Some areas of the country will see electricity prices increase as the cost to produce electricity with natural gas goes up," said McKinney. "We do not see that affecting us too much since the majority of our power is still generated by coal."

A new agreement with a natural gas pipeline for a large compressor station was announced by McKinney. "That load will increase our peak load by 25 percent and will give us more clout in purchases and should overall lower our rates or keep them from going up as much," he said. That new load is expected to come on line at the end of 2015.

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Norris Electric Cooperative • 8543 N. State Highway 130 • Newton, Illinois 62448 • 618-783-8765
Office hours: Monday — Thursday 7:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m

The life of a lineman

They wake before the sun, pour steaming cups of coffee, and kiss their family goodbye. After swinging by the office to get the day's orders, our linemen climb into their trucks and head out. Our lineworkers form a solid team with one job: to deliver safe, reliable electricity. But that job can change in a million ways when rough weather steps in.

We often take power—and the men and women who provide it—for granted. Let's take a moment and stand in their boots.

Linemen have to work safely, smart, and efficiently—all while 40 feet in the air wearing sturdy, thick rubber gloves. On a typical day, lineworkers maintain electrical distribution lines or build service to new homes and businesses in Illinois. They have a lot on their plates. But when our dispatch center calls crews with a problem, everything else takes a backseat.

Power restoration takes precedence on a lineworker's to-do list. These brave men are always on call. We have crews standing by to serve you 24 hours a day, in the middle of the night or wee hours of the morning, weekends and holidays.

Can you imagine getting a call at 3 a.m. telling you to work outside during bad weather? Not many people are willing to face storms. Our lineworkers face harsh elements daily, all to serve you.

Lineworkers also focus on safety; the lives of coworkers are on the line. Job safety is important to everyone, no matter your occupation. But for lineworkers, there can be no slip ups or careless actions. Mistakes can cost a limb or life. That's one of the reasons linemen form a brotherhood. When you put your life in the hands of co-workers every day, they become more than colleagues. They're family.

That sense of family extends to

electric co-ops across the nation. One of our principles is cooperation among cooperatives. We help other co-ops in their time of need, and they extend that service to us, too. It's reassuring to know if a severe storm strikes, a national team of lineworkers stand ready to answer the call.

To be ready to respond no matter the situation or weather conditions, linemen are highly trained. At Norris Electric Cooperative, lineworkers go through regular training to ensure they can work safely with various kinds of equipment. The equipment gets tested regularly, too.

These highly skilled men light our homes and businesses every day. They endure harsh weather and long hours, all to make our lives better. Today (and every day), please take a moment to thank them. Norris Electric Cooperative's lineworkers are the heart of the Co-op Nation, proud and strong.

"Annual meeting" continued from 16a

Board Treasurer Dean Dietrich reported that the cooperative had revenue of \$39,590,265, expenses totaling \$36,855,104 and Net Patronage Capital and Margins of \$2,900,981 used for construction projects that increased the cooperative's plant value.

During the meeting, retiring Board President Larry Seals was presented with a plaque in honor of his years of service at the cooperative. Because there were no contested board positions, results of the board of director's election were announced. Dan Strine of Wabash County was newly-elected and Dean Dietrich of Richland County and Ron Viehman of Lawrence County were re-elected; all to three-year positions on the board.

Norris Electric Cooperative



is a member of Touchstone Energy — an alliance of 750 local, consumer-owned electric utilities around the country. Norris Electric is committed to providing superior service based on four core principles: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. The co-op serves more than

19,313 meters over 4,072 miles of line in parts of Clark, Crawford, Cumberland, Effingham, Jasper, Lawrence, Richland and Wabash counties. For more information visit www.norriselectric.com. Norris Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Retirement at Norris Electric



Vic's family joined him for his retirement party held at the Cooperative Headquarters in Newton.

Vic Klingler, Groundman/Truck Driver, retired on February 4, 2014 after working at Norris Electric Cooperative for 44 years. Vic first started his employment while in high school working after school doing janitorial jobs around the office. Then in 1970 he was hired full time working with the Forestry Department spraying and chipping brush. He eventually transferred to the Construction Department driving a digger/derrick truck.

Vic and his wife Dorothy have a daughter, three sons and two grandchildren. His plans after retirement include spending more time with his family, hunting, fishing, and to tackle Dorothy's "honey-do list". Vic also helps on the family farm.

Vic said "It is bittersweet to leave a job I have enjoyed since I was a teenager and I'll miss the great co-workers I know over these past years."

Everyone at the co-op wishes Vic a long and enjoyable retirement. We'll miss you!

Enjoy a safe start to spring

As the spring season approaches, many will usher in the warmer weather by thoroughly cleaning their homes and tending to yard work. The Electrical Safety Foundation (ESFI) recommends homeowners ensure that electrical hazards are eliminated along with unwanted dust and clutter.

ESFI suggests starting with the basement, an important, but often overlooked space when it comes to home inspection and fire safety. These low-level rooms contain two leading causes of home fires - heating equipment and electrical distribution systems.

- Check the label inside the door or cover of your electrical service panel to see when your electrical system was last inspected. If the date has passed or is approaching, contact a licensed, qualified electrician to schedule an inspection.
- Be sure circuit breakers and

fuses are correctly labeled with their amperage and their corresponding rooms, circuits or outlets. Use correct size and current rating for breakers/fuses.

- Increase your fire protection by having a licensed electrician replace your standard circuit breakers with arc fault circuit interrupters - AFCIs.
- Have your furnace cleaned and inspected annually by a licensed professional.
- Make sure all fuel-burning equipment, such as furnaces, stoves, and fireplaces, is vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Check for excessive vibration or movement when the washing machine or dryer is operating. This can put stress on electrical connections.
- Make sure the area around your dryer is clutter free and that the dryer lint filter

is cleaned after each load. Build up can be a fire starter.

- Don't overlook your basement when it comes to smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. These devices should be installed in these spaces as well as on every level of your home and outside every sleeping area. Test these alarms to ensure that they are in working order, and replace the batteries when needed.

Visit www.esfi.org for more tips on keeping your home and family safe this spring and beyond.





Beauty of Nature Can be Deceiving

Lightning may be one of the most beautiful and awesome forces of nature, it is also one of the most deadly. Although elevations, such as mountains, buildings, antenna, trees, and power lines receive frequent lightning strikes, lightning will also strike flat terrain, such as baseball diamonds, parks, farm fields. Those are all places where a person may be the highest point around, and become a path to the ground for thousands of volts of nature's deadly electricity.

But even if you are not the highest point around, do not stand near flag or power poles, bleachers, or other objects that may attract a cloud to ground discharge. Animals and humans, who frequently seek cover under trees at the onset of rain, have

become casualties when lightning struck the tree.

An old adage that warns, "Beware the oak, it draws the stroke," refers to the fact that hardwood trees serve as better lightning conductors than softwood trees. And in fact, that was the reason the Ancient Greeks and Romans decorated the heads of their leaders and heroes with laurel leaves, knowing the soft-fibered laurel rarely was hit by lightning.

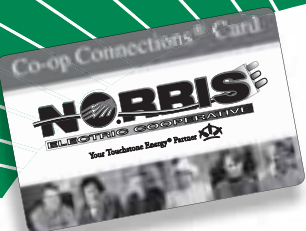
If you hear thunder or see a storm approaching, it is no time to find your handy tree identification guide. Instead, seek shelter where you will not be hit by lightning, or be near the point of contact with the Earth and become a burn or electrocution victim.

Stay away from open vehicles, metal

framed open canopies, or any tall metal object. Seek shelter in a building which is grounded. If caught in the open, crouch as low to the ground as possible, with minimal contact with the ground. If static electricity is increasing in your body, causing your skin to tingle and your hair to stand on end that is the indication of a potential electrical discharge that initiates a lightning bolt. Remain low to the ground until the static electricity dissipates.

If someone is struck by lightning, call 911 and care for the victim immediately.

Heed the motto "If thunder roars, go indoors." If you see lightning, seek shelter immediately.



Co-op Connections[®] Card Saving Members \$\$\$

Norris Electric Cooperative members saved 35.7% on prescriptions in 2013 using their Co-Op Connections card. 1,289 prescriptions were filled for a total savings of \$20,826.98