

# The SOUTHEASTERN Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

## President's Comments



**Dustin Tripp**  
President/CEO

Since 1963 Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC) at the Lake of Egypt has provided the generation and transmission service to your Cooperative. In fact, your Cooperative was one of the three original distribution cooperatives that formed SIPC. Today, SIPC is owned and controlled by seven distribution cooperatives located in Southern Illinois. In 2014, approximately 81 percent of your Cooperative's total expenses were spent on purchased power.

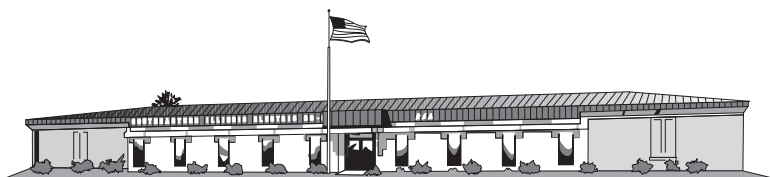
As reported over the past several years, SIPC was facing significant load growth and in order to meet future power needs SIPC made the decision in 2007 to acquire 125 MW of the Prairie State Energy Campus located near Lively Grove in Washington County. Prairie State is a two unit, 1,600 megawatt supercritical coal-fueled power plant featuring advanced technology resulting in high efficiencies, low fuel costs and achieving emissions that are far superior to America's current coal-fired generating fleet. However, the costs to construct these facilities were much higher than the costs to construct the generation facilities at SIPC that were built over three decades ago. Therefore, the wholesale costs increased by approximately 24% beginning in January of 2012 when the Prairie State Energy Campus began operations. Your Cooperative's Board of Trustees and management carefully reviewed the wholesale rate increases and took steps to minimize the rate increase to you as Cooperative members. This plan, which was put in place in 2011, included spreading the necessary

wholesale rate increase over a period of time to minimize the impact of the cost increases. The Cooperative's plan to implement a 2.5% retail rate increase in May of 2015 should complete the Cooperative's phase-in retail rate increase due to wholesale rate increases experienced since January 2012. The Cooperative will increase retail rates another 1% to reflect increases in the cost of distribution operations. After this 3.5% retail rate increase is implemented in May of 2015, the Cooperative's forecast does not indicate the need for another retail rate increase until the year 2018.

As a not-for-profit organization, your Cooperative does not strive to produce profits for shareholders and investors but must maintain a sound financial position for the membership. Your Cooperative sets electric rates high enough to cover the costs of providing service and at the end of the year, any funds collected above the costs of service are allocated to you in the form of capital credits. When the financial condition of the Cooperative permits, the capital credits are then retired and paid back to you, as members and owners. In 2014, your Cooperative's Board of Trustees approved the retirement and return of \$1.1 million of Capital Credits and the capital credit checks were mailed to members in December of 2014. Over the past five years, your Cooperative has retired and returned almost \$7 million of Capital Credits to the members.

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READERSHIP PRIZE WINNER:  
Dwight Howton, Harrisburg, IL



▶ *Continued from page 16a*

I would like to close by stating that all of us can be proud to be a part of the Electric Cooperative program. The founders of the electric cooperative program developed a unique business structure that by its very nature, makes electric cooperatives very accountable to the members it serves. This unique structure has contributed to the success of your cooperative over the years and remains unchanged even today, some 76 years later. Your cooperative is governed by local people

that live and work in your very own communities. Your cooperative is operated by a group of local employees that also live and work in your very own communities. Your cooperative's sole purpose is to provide you, as cooperative member-owners, with reliable and quality service at equitable rates.

See you next month and as always "We'll Keep the lights on for 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](http://www.esfi.org) for more tips on keeping your home and family safe this spring and beyond.





## A HOME FOR ALL SEASONS

Air leaks and low levels of insulation that let heat escape this winter, will plague you this summer when you try to keep your home cool. Spring is a good time to think about making the most adequate and effective use of energy in your home ... for all seasons.

Your Touchstone Energy cooperative can help you plan for maximum comfort, convenience and economy by advising you on everything from upgrading your heating and cooling system to caulking and other easy weatherization steps that cost little and pay big dividends. Or, for more energy efficiency assistance, log on at [togetherwesave.com](http://togetherwesave.com).



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Source: EnergySavers.gov

Your home works hard for you. Consider giving it an energy checkup. Hire a professional energy auditor to diagnose where your house could be losing energy and where you can start saving money. Auditors check for air leaks, inspect insulation, survey heating and cooling equipment and more. After making efficiency upgrades, you could save 5-30 percent on your energy bills!



*Don't forget to  
move your clocks  
forward on Sunday,  
March 8th.*

# POWER OUTAGE

## If your power goes off, we offer these suggestions

1. Check the fuses or circuit breakers in your service panels. If you have breakers, make sure they are in the "ON" position.
2. If you have a meter pole, check the main breaker panel just below the meter socket. If the breaker is in the "OFF" position, check all of your wiring from the meter pole to your various buildings. If the wiring appears to be okay, reset the breaker to the "ON" position.
3. If you still do not have power, check with neighbors to see if they have power.
4. To report a power failure or other emergency, please phone 1-877-399-8405. This phone number is monitored around the clock, 365 days per year to accept your outage and emergency calls.
5. Your phone call will be handled by SouthEastern's automated outage reporting system and will be identified automatically through ANI (Automatic Number Identification). An outage record will then be generated for your location. Please note that the phone number from which you place the call will be the number used to generate the record. If the system fails to recognize your phone number, members having touch-tone phones may simply enter their seven-digit phone number (without area code) in order to report the outage. Members not having touch-tone phones will be asked to leave a message. It is important you leave your name, phone number and location of the outage. Retrieving messages and entering them into the system is time consuming; therefore, please leave only a message that will help in restoration of electric service. Do not remain on the line for an operator because a live operator is not there to respond. In order to keep a current listing of all numbers, it is important that you notify the Cooperative of any changes in your telephone number.
6. Handling outage calls electronically allows you to report power failures very quickly. Once your outage has been reported, it will be dispatched to repair personnel who will restore your outage as soon as possible. Calling back repeatedly will not shorten the length of the outage, but may hinder the efforts of other members who are trying to report outages.

**OUTAGE CALLS ONLY 1-877-399-8405**



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