

The SOUTHEASTERN Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

President's Comments



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

79th Annual Meeting of Members Report

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative held its 79th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 1, 2017 with approximately 960 members registered and approximately 1,200 in total attendance. For those of you who were unable to attend your Cooperative's annual meeting, this article will summarize the report members received at the annual meeting.

During the year 2016, your Cooperative constructed 302 new services to homes, farms and businesses and upgraded 65 services. For the third year, your Cooperative achieved the milestone of delivering more than 1 billion kilowatt-hours to Cooperative members.

Your Cooperative ended the year 2016 in sound financial condition. 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. In 2016, your Cooperative's Board of Trustees approved the retirement and return of \$1.4 million of capital credits, and the capital credit checks were mailed to members in December of 2016. This means that over the past seven years, your Cooperative has retired and returned more than \$13 million of capital credits to the members.

Cooperative members were informed

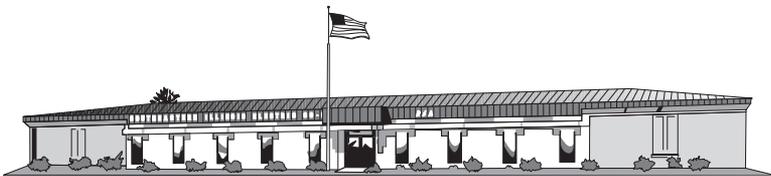


that in the most recent American Customer Satisfaction Survey, your Cooperative received the highest score it has ever received and is well above the national average for electric cooperatives, well above the investor owned utility average and well above the municipal utility average. The key drivers to member satisfaction included reliable service, knowledgeable employees, prompt outage response, employee performance and excellent customer service.

Cooperative members were informed that the past decade has proved to be the most regulated time in our history with new, very aggressive and expansive regulations around the use of fossil fuels and especially coal.

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READERSHIP PRIZE WINNER:
William Jackson, Rosiclare, IL



Attention Local Teachers!

Apply for your 2017/2018 Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants

Does your school or classroom need new materials? Can your students benefit from new programs and educational resources? We thought so.

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative is once again coordinating this grant program with Touchstone Energy for our local teachers and administrators. The grants will be

provided for innovative, unfunded projects or materials. Qualifying projects are those that improve the learning environment or increase educational resources for the school.

A panel of judges will determine which projects will be awarded the grants. Grant applications are due by November 10. Grant awards will be announced on January 12. For a grant

application and guidelines, please visit our website at www.seiec.com or contact Stefanie Tripp at 1-618-273-3806. It only takes a few minutes to apply.

Since 2006, SEIEC has distributed a total of \$46,400 Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants throughout the Cooperative's service area.



Paying the price of power theft

It's often an "invisible" crime. Someone illegally hooks into a power supply, hooks up a line that has been disconnected or tampers with a meter to avoid recording electricity usage. Legitimate electricity consumers do not engage in these behaviors, so the impact of electricity theft – including the danger – is often unrecognized.

Power theft carries deadly risks. Many thieves have paid for the power they are stealing with their lives. But the danger does not end with those who are engaging in illegal activity.

"Tampering with electrical equipment or attempting to steal electric power carries the potential to harm many people," says Molly Hall. "The innocent consumers on the same line and utility personnel that work on those lines are all at risk when someone tampers with electricity or electrical equipment."

An overload of electricity could result in extremely high voltages that may damage appliances of paying customers.

Excessive current that is not safeguarded by a fuse is especially dangerous. In emergency situations such as fires, power has to be shut off to help firefighters and ambulance crews to enter a building safely. If lines have been interfered with illegally, the lines could remain energized, endangering the lives of the emergency personnel.

From a reliability standpoint, illegal connections to power sources and attempts to divert metering devices can

overload the system, cause interruptions and compromise power quality.

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative reminds that everyone can help prevent and reduce power theft:

- Notify your electric utility immediately if you know of an illegally connected consumer.
- Do not cut the seal on your meter base or tamper with your own meter for any reason.
- Apply for a legal connection if you do not have one.
- Remain aware of your surroundings and report any suspicious activities to your electric utility.

Most electrical theft crimes occur through meter tampering, bypassing meters and tapping power lines. Other less frequent crimes include tapping into neighboring premises, using illegal lines after being disconnected, self-reconnection without consent and electrifying fences. Possessing fraudulent electricity bills is also a federal crime and is punishable by law.

The theft of electricity is a challenge that the electricity distribution industry faces to remain sustainable and viable and safe. If illegal connections were curbed, more power would be available to customers who obey the law, power quality and safety would increase and people would experience fewer service interruptions.

Everyone is affected by power theft, and detecting and reporting illegal activity will help reduce the price paid.

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However, the election of President Donald Trump and his administration represents a dramatic shift in environmental policy. On March 28, President Trump signed an executive order to roll back several environmental regulations by instructing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to start the process of withdrawing and rewriting these plans. The Trump Administration believes that rewriting these plans will help keep energy cost affordable and help the coal industry.

Cooperative members learned that new technological advances in the oil and natural gas drilling techniques are leading to many changes in the electric generation industry. These new drilling technologies allow more economical extraction methods and are creating an abundance of supply in these resources. These new technologies have allowed oil and gas producers to extract these resources much more efficiently, resulting in natural gas becoming a low-cost fuel for electricity generation.

The new technological advancements along with increased regulation of coal fired generation facilities over the past decade have created a significant shift in electric generation in the United States. In 2008, coal provided 48 percent of the total electricity generation in the United States while natural gas only provided 21 percent. In 2016, coal generation had declined and provided only 30 percent of the total electricity generation while

natural gas increased and provided 34 percent, surpassing coal to become the leading natural resource for electricity generation. As the industry moves forward, only time will tell how the dramatic shift in environmental policy surrounding fossil fuels and new technologies for natural gas will shape our industry in the future.

As you know, your Cooperative is part owner of Southern Illinois Power Cooperative located at the Lake of Egypt. SIPC utilizes a diversified portfolio of electricity generation including coal, natural gas, hydro and wind power. However, the vast majority of your Cooperative's power production (like that in many other Midwestern states) remains coal-fired. Your Cooperative understands the importance of coal to the Southern Illinois economy. SIPC provides numerous direct and indirect jobs while making significant contributions to our local economy while providing you, as our member owners, with electricity for many years into the future.

Lastly, the members were informed that your Cooperative will receive a slight increase in the cost of wholesale power that is purchased from Southern Illinois Power Cooperative to cover their cost of operations, and will be reflected in the wholesale power cost adjustment charge. Your Cooperative has no plans to increase the retail rates in 2017; however, sales to large industrial loads have begun to



decline. Therefore, your Cooperative will be reviewing the level of energy sales for the remaining part of 2017 and all of next year in order to determine the need for a slight increase in the base retail rates.

Your Cooperative was formed 79 years ago to bring electricity to rural areas of southeastern Illinois. 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. Your Cooperative is governed by local people who live and work in your very own communities. Your Cooperative is also managed and operated by a group of local employees who also live and work in your very own communities. Your Cooperative is owned by the people it serves and will continue to be an electric cooperative that is truly operated "for the people and by the people."

See you next month and as always, "We'll keep the lights on for you."



Find us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/SouthEasternIllinoisElectric/>



**Our office is closed on Monday,
September 4 for Labor Day**

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

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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618-273-2611 or 800-833-2611 • Office hours: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. M-F