



The SOUTHEASTERN LIGHT

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

General Manager's Comments

James M. "Mick" Cummins



"I sure told her off!"

The story's author is unknown, and is told by a character named Hep:

"I've always considered myself somewhat of an orator and a pretty good arguer, but my wife sure told me off the other day.

"I picked up the electric bill, took one look at it and beat it into the kitchen to give her what-for. I stomped into the room, slammed the bill down on the table, squinted my eyes, deepened my voice and bellowed, 'What's the meaning of this electric bill?'

"She was busy baking bread, roasting a chicken and getting some pies ready for the oven. I got a little peeved when she just ignored me and kept on working.

"Answer me, Betty,' I bellowed.

"Hep,' she said, 'Clam up. I'm getting tired of this habit of your barging into my kitchen with that electric bill every month.'

"I'll tell you what we're going to do,' she said. 'You're going down to the electric cooperative office and tell them to unhook the power. Then you're coming back here and take the old wood stove out of the basement and bring it up here into the kitchen. And then you're going out and put the old hand pump in the well and pump me about 80 gallons of water to wash dishes and do some clothes washing. After that, you're going to heat the water on that wood stove and wring out those clothes with the old hand wringer. Then you're going to get the old

kerosene lamps down out of the attic. And you're going to get that old coal stove out of the shed and set it up in the living room, and fill the coal box. After all that, Hep, you'd better make arrangements to eat in town from now on 'cause I'm never going to cook on that old wood stove again!'

"Right about now she took a breath and I retreated with great speed out the kitchen door.

"You know, until she put it the way she did, I just thought of our electric bill as something that had to be paid every month. Today you're listening to a converted man, a man who really knows when he's well off and who isn't about to start doing all those chores over again — those things that had to be done by hand before we got electricity.

"Well, when I left the yard that day, I went to the cooperative office and paid the electric bill. And you know, for the first time ever, I smiled at the clerk who takes my money every month."

We hope you enjoyed this story. While no one complained about the daily chores that Betty described, none of us wants to go back to those days. It's a lot easier to smile in appreciation of what we have today.

This story will stir up memories for some members, who lived through the days of feeding coal into a furnace and wood into the kitchen stove. Others may not remember the smoke, smell and ashes involved in these early home "comforts," but you can still appreciate how important electricity has become in our lives today.

Don't let carbon monoxide sneak up on you this winter!



It has been said that the chief cause of problems is solutions — those things we do to solve one problem leads to another. That is true of the steps we've taken over the years to combat the energy crunch.

Years ago, when coal, oil or propane heated most homes, and when those fuels were inexpensive, it was easy to keep a house warm. If we felt chilly, we just built a bigger fire.

Houses were built with little thought to air infiltration, because it didn't matter much. Then energy costs rose dramatically. There were families whose energy bills matched or exceeded their mortgage payments, and it became necessary to find a remedy to that problem.

One solution was to snug up houses. We did that by adding insulation, weather-stripping, by caulking in places where different kinds of material joined.

People who built new homes were encouraged to "build tight," and that helped with heating and cooling. But it brought problems, too. Those old drafty houses had one advantage: any carbon monoxide generated by the cook stove and/or furnace went out through all those cracks, along with some of the heated air.

When we set out to tighten up our homes, we made it harder for the heat to escape and the carbon monoxide as well.

Carbon monoxide (CO), which is generated any time something burns, is particularly deadly because it is invisible and odorless. Many people save themselves from fire because they can smell smoke, or see it, or they can see flames. CO is a sneaky killer, and its effects can be cumulative. More than 250 people die each year in the U.S. because of CO, and some 10,000 seek medical help after being exposed to it.

Carbon monoxide is more of a problem in winter than in summer, because furnaces use a lot of fuel, and the more fuel that's burned, the more CO that's generated. And we're much less likely to have a window or door slightly ajar, as we are in the summer. Then there's always the temptation to warm up the car while it's in the garage. Never do that!

In addition to furnaces and cook stoves, other sources of CO can be wood-burning stoves, fossil-fueled water heaters and clothes dryers. Barbecue grills, kerosene stoves and camping heaters, which are sometimes

used by people desperate for warmth, are especially hazardous.

People subjected to low levels of CO experience nausea, dizziness, vomiting, headaches, confusion and fatigue, while high-level exposure results in diarrhea, impaired vision, abdominal pain, convulsions and coma. If they don't get away from the CO, death will result.

Low-level CO poisoning is often confused for flu, partly because both tend to be most prevalent during winter.

The elderly, the very young and the sick are the first to suffer the effects of CO poisoning, and in pregnant women, the fetus is the first to be affected.

There are several things you can do to protect yourself. Probably the first line of defense should be to make a point of having any fossil-fueled appliance checked by a professional serviceman every year, preferably at the beginning of the heating season. Obviously, you should seek help immediately any time you smell gas.

Another wise step is to buy and use a CO detector. For years, safety experts urged people to put smoke detectors in their homes and to keep their batteries up to date. That campaign has saved many lives and prevented a lot of property damage.

CO detectors can do the same. While they're not as cheap as smoke detectors, the prices of CO protection are coming down. Now's the time to go to your home supply store and buy a CO detector.

There are different kinds, and part of the difference is in how the unit is powered. Some plug into a wall outlet, while others use batteries. Some have a digital display that shows the CO level in the air, while others sound an alarm when the CO level reaches a certain point.

Your friends at your local electric co-op hope you'll help make the winter season safer by investing in a CO detector.

When something comes up, SouthEastern Illinois won't let you down

Wind, rain, summer or winter storms are just a few things that can cause damage and interrupt your electric service.

Our professional and experienced crews are trained to put things back in order as fast as possible.

As your locally owned electric cooperative, we take pride in serving our members. Our commitment to you and our community is to never let you down, no matter what. In fact, every member of the co-op staff — from lineworkers to receptionists and managers, full-time or part-time — is there to assist you.

So when trouble pops up, so do we. It's all part of being a cooperative. And we wouldn't have it any other day.



Protect Your Valuable Home Electronics & Appliances With our Power Protection Program

Today's home electronics and appliances are made with ultra sensitive digital equipment that can be destroyed by a single electric power surge. That's why SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative now offers it's very own Power Protection Program — the best way to make sure you'll enjoy your home appliances for years to come. So before you plug it in, *protect it* with SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative's

Power Protection Program.

SouthEastern Illinois
Electric Cooperative
585 Highway 142 South
Eldorado, IL
(618) 273-2611 or
(800) 833-2611
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www.seiec.com




Touchstone Energy™
The power of human connections

Who's responsible for electric facilities?

During the stages of new construction or upgrading of electric facilities, questions about ownership of poles, meter loops, wires and breaker panels are usually asked. When existing electrical equipment has been in place for many years, or if new facilities are required, ownership may not be obvious to the member-consumer.

It's good to know who is responsible for maintenance or repairs and we hope that this article will answer most questions.

Overhead electric service *The Cooperative is responsible for:*

- Wires from the transformer to the meter pole and electrical connections on those wires.
- The meter.
- The meter socket.

The member is responsible for:

- The meter loop.
- Fuse and/or breaker panels, including disconnect switches.
- Wires leaving the meter pole to services at other locations such as homes, barns, garages, shops, and connections for those wires.

Underground electric service

The Cooperative is responsible for:

- Wires from the transformer to the meter location or pedestal.
- The meter.
- The meter socket.

The member is responsible for:

- Wires running from the meter location or pedestal to other locations such as homes, barns, garages, shops, and those connections.
- Any disconnect switches, fuse panels or breaker panels at the meter.

Energy saving tips for your kitchen

Have you exhausted your little bag of tricks that help you cut energy costs? Never assume you've thought of everything! Your electric co-op offers the following tips on how to cut energy use — and costs — in the kitchen:

- Do you own gas appliances? Look for blue flames — yellow flames mean the gas is burning inefficiently and needs adjust-

ment.

- If possible, use small electric pans or toaster ovens for small meals rather than your large stove or oven. A toaster oven uses one-third to one-half the energy of a regular oven.

- Use pressure cookers and microwave ovens whenever it is convenient to do so. They can save energy by significantly reducing cooking time.

- If you cook with electricity, turn off the burners and/or oven several minutes before you're done cooking. The heating element stays hot long enough to finish the job without using more electricity.

If you need more energy-saving tips, contact your electric cooperative. Your co-op will be glad to help you find ways to reduce your monthly energy bill.

Standby power: Insurance against Mother Nature

Buying a standby generator is like buying fire insurance — you may never need it, but it is invaluable when trouble hits.

Although our electrical system is highly dependable and reliable, it is subject to the whims of Mother Nature.

How well are you prepared to handle a prolonged outage? Now is the time to take inventory of your home and farm. Determine how you would pump water, move

grain, keep pipes from freezing, and provide heat and ventilation for livestock. How will you heat your home and keep foods from spoiling?

The cooperative does not sell standby generators, but we do have personnel to help you analyze your load and make recommendations. And remember, standby generators are not normally stocked in any quantity, so

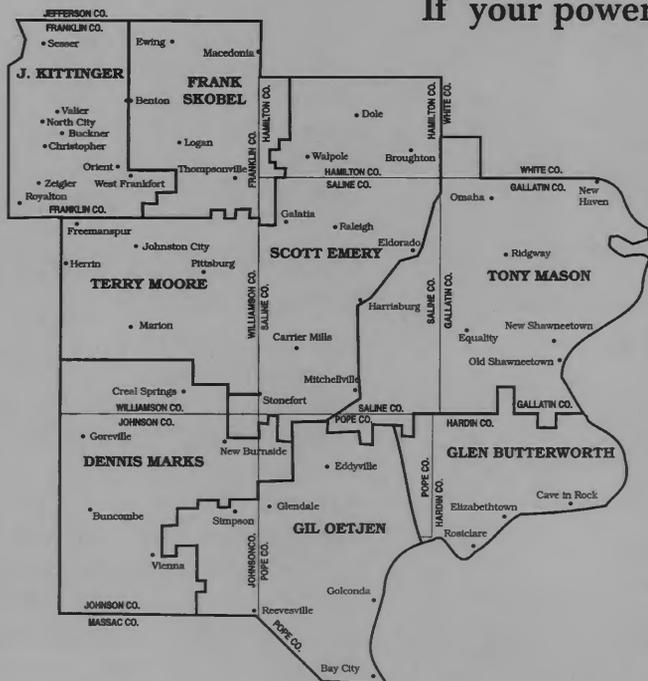
don't plan on buying one after an outage occurs.

Remember, too, the installation of standby equipment requires a positive double-throw switch. Operating a standby generator without one is extremely dangerous and could result in financial liability.

Let us help you guard against any of those acts of Mother Nature no one can foresee.

Power Outage

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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 1-800-833-2611 or 273-2611. These phone numbers are monitored around the clock, 365 days per year to accept your outage and emergency calls.

5. Please be prepared to give the party answering your call the account name and location number as it appears on the envelope that contains your billing tickets.

1-800-833-2611



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General Manager's Comments

James M. "Mick" Cummins



Just like Santa's elves, SouthEastern's employees worked until the wee hours of the morning to insure that almost 32,000 patronage capital checks were in the mail by the second week of December. The smallest check mailed out was for \$5.00, but almost 10,000 members received checks in amounts of \$40.00 or more. In total over 1.4 million dollars was refunded to the member owners of SouthEastern.

Since those checks were mailed, many phone calls, letters and cards have been received from individuals expressing their appreciation not only for the checks, but also for the cooperative form of business. One gentleman wrote, "Thank you for the check, it was very thoughtful...I received service from CIPS for years and they never would have done this. In fact we had a big increase in our rate every summer."

Another wrote, "You folks have given excellent service all year. Thank you!! Sharing the profits with those of us who purchase your service is especially nice..."

The latter comment exemplifies

SouthEastern's philosophy that we are owned by those we serve, and when this corporation does well there is a refund to the users of the service. Conversely, if SouthEastern were an investor-owned utility instead of a not-for-profit cooperative, the bulk of those checks would have been sent to share holders from across the nation and around the world, and not to the residents of Southern Illinois.

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative exists for the sole purpose of providing service to its 21,000 member owners. A strong part of that service is supplying electricity at rates which encourage the economic development of Southern Illinois, which will, in turn, provide jobs and business opportunities and a higher standard of living for our area. As we enter the new year we will continue to look for ways to improve our electric service and investigate other ways in which we can make Southern Illinois a better place to live and work.

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

SEIEC hands/mailed out \$1.4 million in capital credits checks

Representatives of several area businesses were on hand at SEIEC headquarters in Eldorado on Tuesday, Dec. 15. They were feted at a key-account member appreciation luncheon, and received capital credits checks based on their companies' patronage during the past year. Representatives of three organizations are pictured here.

American Coal Co., Galatia, sent Maynard St. Johns, left, and Tom Denton, second from right, to pick up its check. SEIEC general manager James M. "Mick" Cummins, second from left, and Greg Cruse, administrative and financial services manager, right, made the presentation.



Ray Harbison, left, SEIEC member services and industrial development manager, made the presentation to representatives of the Millstone Water District. From left are Harbison, Ralph Aly, Cletis Morris and Norman Lee.

SEIEC board member Kenneth R. Webb, left, and Roy D. Wise, president, right, presented a check to the Gallatin County School District representatives. From left are Webb, Carroll Phelps, Janet Johnson and Wise.



The consumer comes first

No one knows what is best for a local community more than the men and women who live and work there. In fact, local control and consumer ownership were guiding principles that rural communities used 60 years ago to form electric co-ops.

Now, other communities are coming together to do the same thing. While the member-consumers of these new co-ops may already have electric service, they want something more. They seek the promise that electric co-op service makes to customers every day, to put their priorities first, above all others. And they desire what consumers of electric co-ops already have — a voice in determining the direction of their energy provider.

As consumer-owned businesses, we exist to serve you. Our rules are simple — what is best for the consumer is best for us. What hurts the consumer hurts us.

Our history of working for the best interests of consumers puts us in a unique position as electric utilities. In fact, no other utility can lay claim to the remarkable record of consumer advocacy that we can. Nor can any other utility company count as partners the businesses that

purchase their electricity, the labor unions their employees belong to, or the consumer advocacy groups that work alongside us. Finally, no other utility can claim the high level of consumer satisfaction and loyalty that electric co-ops command.

Yes, our commitment to current consumers remains as strong as ever. But, we are also committed to helping others gain the benefits of electric co-op service. We've already helped people in places as diverse as New York City and California form new co-ops. Our work is based on the belief that consumers in any part of the country ought to have the opportunity to benefit from having their own, locally controlled electric utility.

The strongest competitive advantage we have is our special consumer advocacy position in the utility industry. Our competitors have no claim on our ability to represent consumer interests as well as electric co-ops. Our vision for the future is one that puts the consumer first — above all other priorities. This has always been the commitment of electric co-ops for six decades. It remains so today for us at SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative.

Why do electric bills go up in the winter?

It's a good question. Even if you don't use electric heat, you may notice that your bills are higher during the colder months. Several factors can contribute to those higher bills, including:

- Warm baths feel great on cold days - and heating extra water can increase your consumption and your electric bill. Be sure your water heater is properly insulated if it's in an unheated space, and have it checked for leaks.

- Winter brings holidays, which often mean additional cooking and baking, and those bright holiday lights, all of which can raise your usage of electricity.

- Shorter days and longer nights mean lights stay on longer both inside and out.

- Most heating systems use electricity for some functions, such as operating the fan, and many run almost continuously when it's very cold.

- You may be using space heaters in garages, basements or other unheated spaces.

- That electric blanket or heating pad that feels so cozy on cold nights can cost another dollar or so to operate.

- You may be using engine block heaters on your cars or equipment.

- Most consumers use the clothes dryer more often in winter.

But even if your bills are higher during winter, electricity remains one of the best values around. The pound of sirloin steak you buy at the grocery costs about the same as the electricity needed to heat an electric range for 15 hours. The cost of a box of tissues and a roll of paper towels will power an electric dryer for five hours. For the price you pay for a magazine, you can read by electric light for 50 hours.



Surplus equipment for sale

One — Top Con AG-20 Transit & Tripod

One — K&E P-5138 Transit (sprung) & Tripod

One — Cal Comp Artisan Plus, 8-pen Plotter

One — ME Desktop Computer, AM486 DX4-5, 120 HZ, 16 Meg Ram, 200 and 500 Meg HD's, 1.44 3 1/2" Drive, 1.2 - 5 1/4" Drive (disabled) 13" Samsung & 20" Mitsubishi Diamond Scan Monitor

One — Cumulus Mini tower Computer, 80486, 33 MHZ, 1.44 Meg 3 1/2" Drive, 1.2 Meg 5 1/4" Drive, 8 Meg Ram, 200 Meg Hard Drive, 256K Cache, 13" Monitor, 20" Monitor, Summasketch

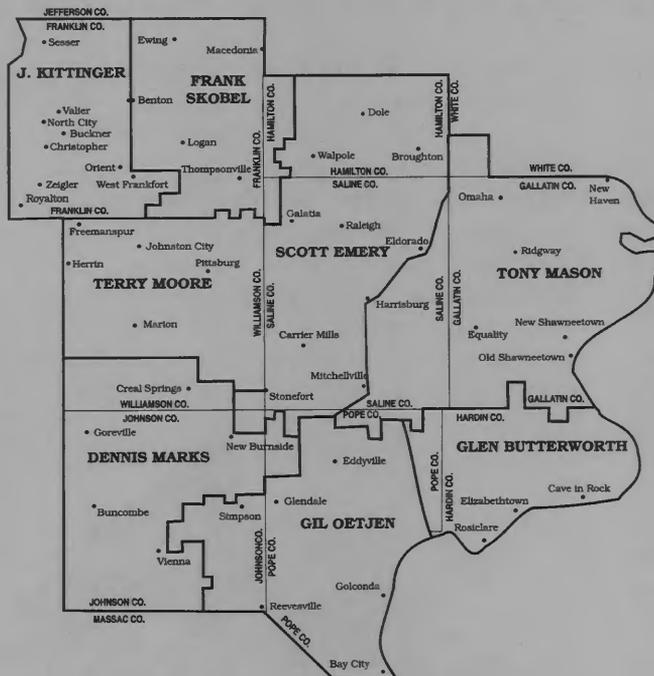
II Plus Digitizer, has Dos 5, SCSIUtil, Artist, QD3 and PE, installed

The above equipment is available for sale and may be viewed at the Eldorado office from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Sealed bids are to be submitted by 4 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 10, 1999. Please designate the equipment you wish to bid on, your bid price, name, address and telephone number. Bids are to be for an exact dollar amount.

Please mark **"Sealed Bid"** on the outside of your envelope and mail it to: Tom Kouts, SouthEastern Illinois Electric Coop., Inc., P.O. Box 251, Eldorado, IL 62930.

Power Outage

If your power goes off, we offer these suggestions



1-800-833-2611

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 1-800-833-2611 or 273-2611. These phone numbers are monitored around the clock, 365 days per year to accept your outage and emergency calls.

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Ice storm

The New Year came in like the proverbial lion with a severe ice storm that struck all ten of the counties served by SouthEastern, leaving some 5,000 members without power. Ice accumulations of up to 1/2-inch caused trees and tree limbs to fall on power lines which were already burdened with their own accumulation of the crystallized liquid, the end result being hundreds of power lines broken and laying on the ground. The area located north of Illinois State Route 13 was hardest hit, and at one time, a transmission line failure left all five of SouthEastern's Franklin County substations without power. To cope with the numerous outages, crews were dispatched from SouthEastern's Benton, Eldorado, Golconda, Marion and Rosiclare Headquarters. In addition, extra personnel were obtained from Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative located in Dongola, Illinois. We sincerely appreciate the phone calls, letters and cards commending our employees for their efforts in restoring electric service.

1999 electric rates

By now all of you should have paid a couple of bills under the new rate schedule. The rate change, which went into effect on 1 January, 1999, reduces SouthEastern's residential revenues by two percent, with average homeowners who use 900 kilowatt hours a month, seeing a reduction of \$1.86 monthly.

Owners of All-Electric homes, who are already on a lower rate than homes with gas heat, and who have average energy usage of 1,800 kilowatt hours per month, will receive an additional reduction of 63 cents per month. Low-income users, who utilize 500 kilowatt hours per month, will see their bills fall from \$53.35 to \$48.65 for a total monthly savings of \$4.70.

Non energy services

In addition to offering low priced energy, your Cooperative offers a variety of outside lighting packages to enhance the security of your home and family. When lights are placed on existing Cooperative poles with 120 volt service available, prices range from \$6 per month for a 90 watt high pressure sodium fixture, up to \$34.79 per month for a 1,000 watt high-pressure sodium fixture. Units above 400 watts are designed primarily for commercial use, so unless you are a "more power" kind of person, we would recommend a 150 watt omni-directional unit, which rents for \$8.75 per month. SouthEastern furnishes all energy and maintenance the fixtures might need. If you look at cost on a daily basis, the 90 watt unit is less than 20 cents and the 150 watt unit is less than 29 cents. Compare our prices with owning your own light and don't forget to factor in the price of maintenance, including those very expensive replacement high-pressure sodium light bulbs.

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

Think conservation

Building or buying a new nest

For many of us, spring brings the urge to migrate. All over Illinois, as the days lengthen and the weather gets better, many will be looking at new homes. Others will put the final touches on plans and drawings, getting ready to build when the weather cooperates.

You can avoid energy-wasting mistakes if you consider climate, local building codes, and energy-efficient construction when you build or buy.

Does the home take advantage of the sun's natural light and warmth in the winter, when those commodities are in such short supply? Has it been designed not to overheat in the summer, when heat and sunlight are so plentiful?

When building a home

- Insulate walls and roof to the highest specifications recommended for your area.
- Insulate floors, too, especially those over crawl spaces, cold basements and garages.
- Ventilate the attic using vent panels under the eaves and gable end or ridge vents rather than motor-driven fans.
- Use double-pane insulating glass throughout the house. Consider windows with low-emissivity (low-E) coatings and gas fills when retrofit or replacement is necessary. They improve comfort, cut condensation, and reduce the fading effect of ultraviolet light on home furnishings. Low-E coated double-pane windows will improve the insulating value of the window area by 40 to 50 percent. A low-E coating is a virtually invisible metal or metallic oxide layer on the glass that reflects heat back into the home during cold weather and back to the outdoors during warm weather.
- Window frames and their quality of construction are as important as the glass unit when making a purchasing decision. Wood and vinyl frames offer the best insulating value today.
- Consider solar heat gain from the windows. Many glazings are available today to control the amount of incoming solar radiation.
- Install windows you can open so you can use natural or fan-forced ventilation in moderate weather.

If improvements are necessary, you may want to seek an adjustment in the purchase price to cover all, or a reasonable share, of the costs of bringing the house up to par.



Office closing

Our offices will be closed Friday, April 2 in observance of Good Friday, and will also be closed on Saturday, April 3.

Energy tips for homeowners

Look for lost energy dollars in your attic and basement

Crawling around your attic or basement may not be your idea of how to spend your free time. However, a simple check of these areas may help you save real money on your energy bills. And while you're at it, remember to check any crawl spaces and the foundation of your home.

Attic. Remember that vents must be left open to allow moisture to escape from the attic. Therefore, adequate ceiling insulation is a necessity. Carefully examine the insulation. How much and what type of, insulation, do you have? Make written notes, so that if you need to talk to energy experts at your electric co-op about improvements, you can tell them what is currently installed.

Basement. When the basement is used for purposes other than storage, the walls and windows should be insulated. If the basement is used only for

storage, the ductwork and the floor above should be insulated and the basement left unheated.

Crawl space vents. Vents should be closed during the winter unless the furnace is in the crawl space or there is a moisture problem. If vents cannot be closed, insulating panels can be inserted. Vents may remain closed during the summer if there is no moisture problem.

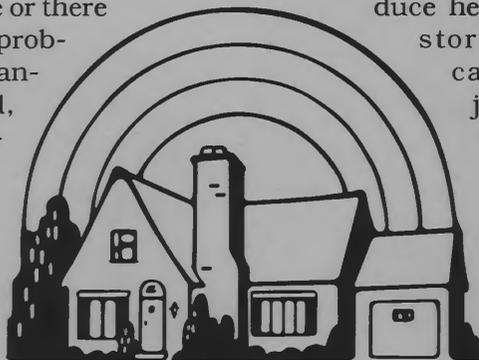
Mobile home and manufactured housing foundations. Insulated skirting should be installed to reduce airflow and raise the temperature below the structure.

Basement foundations (houses). A warm basement space provides warmer floors

above. Most basements are primarily heated by the heat lost from the furnace and ductwork. Heat lost from the basement is just as expensive as heat loss from an upstairs room. To reduce heat loss, install storm windows, caulk the sill joint and insulate the basement walls.

Don't wait for winter winds to blow the dollars out of your wallet. Call your

electric cooperative today to find out how you can take advantage of these and other energy-saving ideas for your home. Remember: Your electric cooperative can help you cut your electric bill.



Energy Star TVs and VCRs now available

TVs and VCRs have become part of the growing list of Energy Star®-labeled products that includes office equipment, household appliances and heating and cooling systems. Energy Star®, the symbol for energy efficiency, is a product label created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department Of Energy to help consumers identify products that save money and protect the environment by saving energy.

A total of 10 manufacturers offer Energy Star® TVs and VCRs; JVC, LG Electronics (Goldstar), Matsushita (National, Panasonic, Quasar, Technics), Philips (Magnavox), Samsung, Sanyo, Sharp, Sony, Thomson (GE, RCA, Proscan) and Toshiba.

The availability of energy-efficient TVs and VCRs is impor-

tant because they use energy even when turned off. Some of that energy is used to power features like remote controls and channel memory, but much of it is wasted. Americans spend about \$3.5 billion each year to power their TVs and VCRs. Of this amount, about \$1 billion is used to power them when they are switched off.

According to DOE, TVs and VCRs with the Energy Star® label typically have the same or better performance, features, reliability and price as conventional models but save money and the environment by using less energy. An Energy Star®-labeled TV consumes up to 75 percent less energy than the average TV when switched off, while a VCR consumes up to 70 percent less energy than the average VCR

when switched off.

The average annual household energy bill in the United States is \$1,300. By choosing Energy Star® compliant equipment when purchasing appliances and electronics, the average household can cut its energy bill by as much as 30 percent. For more information: call toll-free (888) STAR-YES or (888) 782-7937.



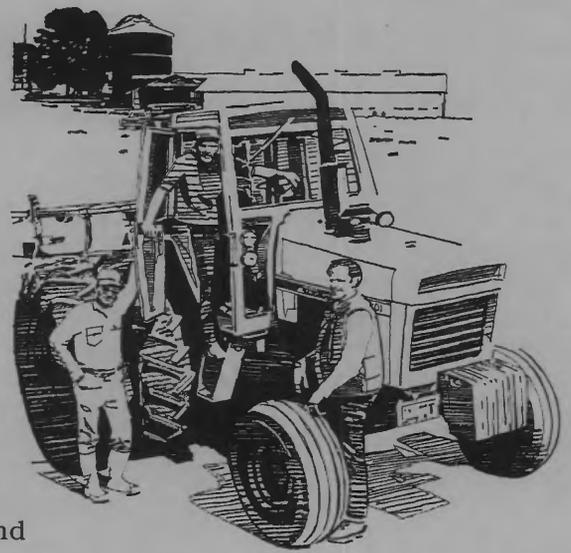
Electrical safety: proper grain bin wiring

When building or expanding crop storage facilities, there are several important decisions that must be made well before the equipment is purchased and construction begins. Several of these decisions involve the use of electric energy in serving large motors, planning for overhead or underground wiring, and locating grain bins the proper distance away from overhead lines.

To ensure safety as well as a wise resource investment, use the following checklist as a guide and allow for enough lead time to properly design the entire construction. Also, be sure to talk with your electric power supplier early in the planning process in order to make energy-smart and safe decisions.

Checklist:

- Did a licensed electrician install the system?
- Is all electrical equipment dry and free of corrosion?
- Are all conductors (wires), fuses and circuit breakers of the proper size and type?
- Are all outlets, switches and other devices surface-mounted for easy inspection and maintenance?
- Do all motor circuits have disconnects located within sight of the motor?
- Do motors have correctly sized overcurrent protection



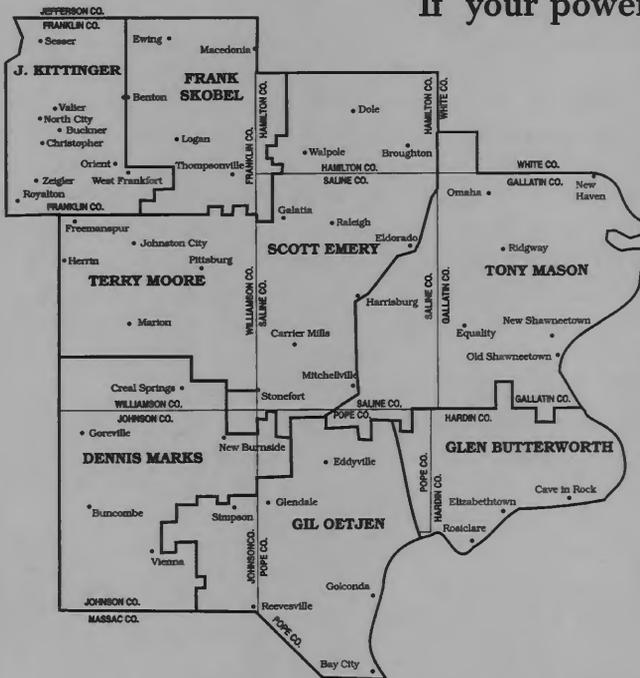
and are they rated for farm duty?

- Does each motor have circuit overload protection?
- Are lights enclosed by globes or guards?

Source: National Food and Energy Council

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General Manager's Comments

James M. "Mick" Cummins



OUTAGE REPORTING SYSTEM: SouthEastern's automated outage reporting system is now on line and is enabling us to respond to your outages more efficiently than ever before. For those of you who are not accustomed to using such a system, I offer the following suggestions. First of all, listen very carefully to the recorded message. If you do not have a "touch-tone" phone, or don't know whether you have one or not, just stay on the line and you will be asked to leave a recording. When leaving the recording, be sure to state your name, phone number and your cooperative location number or the address where the outage is occurring. Once you have recorded that essential information, you may leave other information related to the outage at your property, but be as brief as possible since the whole recording lasts only 30 seconds.

Those of you who have touch-tone phones will be prompted by the Outage Reporting System to simply enter your 7-digit phone number in order to report your outage. Once that is done you will be asked if you have additional information concerning the outage; if so, you will be asked to leave a recorded message about the cause of the outage. Cooperative personnel will then retrieve this information and relay it to the field personnel assigned to your outage.

If SouthEastern personnel know the cause of the outage and the anticipated restoration time, we will alert you to that fact when you make initial contact with the Outage Reporting System. Remember that it's very important to us that we receive your outage call as

quickly as possible. Knowing the extent of an outage allows us to dispatch the appropriate number of personnel to restore service, and alerts us if there is a need to obtain help from neighboring cooperatives. Handling outage calls electronically allows you to report power failures very quickly and then frees up the phone lines so that others may do likewise.

Once your outage has been reported, it will be dispatched to repair crews who will restore service as soon as possible. Calling back repeatedly will not shorten the length of your outage, but may hinder other members who are trying to report outages.

SATURDAY OFFICE CLOSING: Several months ago, your Cooperative, in an effort to serve you better, extended its office hours to include Saturdays from 8 a.m. through noon. Despite the fact that the new hours have been published in various community newspapers and this magazine, SouthEastern members are not utilizing the service, and it will be discontinued after April 10, 1999.

READER PRIZE: Starting with this issue, each month we will print the name of a SouthEastern member who is eligible to receive a \$30 monthly "Readership" prize. If your name and address appear in this issue of the *SouthEastern Light*, please contact me by the fifteenth of this month and I'll see that you receive a check in the amount of \$30.

See you next month and as always, "We'll keep the lights on for you" and especially for you, Victor A. Aydt of Ridgway, Illinois.

Spring brings increase in tornado activity

Even though most thunderstorm and tornado activity normally takes place in April, May and June, Illinois has already had some severe storms, and we shouldn't be surprised if more come soon.

Normally, tornadoes and severe thunderstorms tend to develop in the late afternoon and early evening, but that's not always the case.

Now is the time of year when you might want to stash a few items in the safest place in your house, and leave everything there until you're sure the storm season's over. A flashlight should be in your kit, as well as a battery-powered radio and blankets and pillows. If you have a basement you should store your emergency kit in this safe area.

There are two different kinds of warnings involving tornadoes. A tornado watch simply means that the weather is getting rotten and that a tornado may develop if things get worse. You can go about your normal business if you "watch" the weather.

A tornado warning means that the weather is already rotten, and it's time to seek shelter in that little nest you prepared earlier. Warnings aren't

issued unless a tornado shows up on radar, or one has actually been sighted.

If you hear a warning, go to your basement, if you have one. That's by far the safest place. In many homes, a stairwell, inside hallway or bathroom on the lowest floor will be the safest place. Get into a closet or bathtub, if you need to.

If you're in a public building, look for a designated shelter. Often, there'll be one in an interior area on the lowest floor. Stay away from outside walls, doors and windows. Stay out of large rooms, such as gyms, and avoid parked vehicles.

If you're outside when a tornado comes, head for the nearest shelter. If you're caught out in the open, lie down in the nearest ditch or depression, preferably away from trees and power lines. Since flying debris is a major cause of deaths and injuries during tornadoes, cover your head as well as you can.

If you're in your car, get out and find shelter. If there is none, lie flat in a depression. Don't try to outrun a tornado in your car. This isn't the movies, it's reality!

One of the worst places to be in a tornado situation is a

mobile home. Leave a mobile home immediately if you hear a tornado warning and take your chances in the best shelter you can find. Experts agree that you're better off in a ditch or small depression than in a mobile home.

If you're stuck in a tornado-prone area and a house without a basement, there is an option you may want to look into. Years ago, it was common practice to have a small storm shelter out in the yard, usually about half underground and mounded over. As more and more homes were built with basements, they fell out of favor. If you have a mobile home, and no access to a better form of protection, you may want to give some thought to building such a shelter.

After the storm can be a dangerous time. Watch for downed power lines. They may look safe lying on the ground, but they are **not** insulated and they could still be energized and deadly.

Be careful clearing trees after a storm. Contact your local electric co-op if the trees are near power lines. They have the tools and training to handle the job safely.

Time to Duck Again!

Ahhh, it's great to be outside again, even if it means there's work to be done. The TV antenna's a little crooked, there are some tree limbs to cut, and the old swimming pool will need cleaning. That means it's time to DUCK. When you're moving the grain auger, raising the TV antenna — anytime you use tall equipment — make sure you stay clear of the power lines. Duck down and keep poles, augers and other equipment away from overhead electric wires. Whether you're outside your home or out in the farm field, get your jobs done the safe way.

Look up and live!

DUCK!



Warn children about the dangers of substations

We all know that children love to climb up, on and over things. Fences are particularly inviting. Now is the perfect time to talk to your children about electrical substations and why they must never climb the fences surrounding them. Your electric cooperative has placed signs, "Danger — Keep Out" or "Warning — High Voltage", on substation fences for your protection. Make sure your child understands this fact.

If your child is somewhat older, he or she may ask plenty of questions about the dangers

involved. If a more detailed answer will help get the message across; here is a simple explanation that should help your child respect a substation fence — and the power of electricity.

The electrical substation changes the extremely high voltage carried by the long-distance transmission lines into the lower distribution voltage that serves homes and businesses. In order to perform this task, the substation needs a direct feed from the transmission line into the substation structure. The

equipment within the substation is always under high-voltage electrical load.

Substation technicians, co-op linemen and maintenance crews are trained to work in high-voltage situations and to recognize and avoid potential hazards in the substation. Just how high is the electric voltage? *Some of the pieces of equipment in the substation could be energized at more than 100,000 volts.* Remember: Substation fences mark the danger zone for you. You are safe if you stay away from them.

Some people are shocked by what they find when they dig in their yards

It's that time of year when people begin poking all kinds of holes in the ground. New trees, shrubs, fence posts, mailboxes; you name it. All require some digging, and a hole from a foot to several feet deep. The problem these days is that you don't really know what you are going to dig into. It may only

be a few earthworms or the ballpoint pen you lost a few years ago. On the other hand, it could be a buried utility line, like 220 volts of electricity. Or you may chop right into the cable TV line just in time for your favorite program. All of which would be unpleasant and some of which could be down-

right dangerous. So, call your local utility before you start to dig. They'll help you avoid the shocks.



Train your kids to operate farm equipment safely

Training adolescent kids to operate farm equipment properly -and safely - is important. Consider age, size and ability when determining what and when to teach them. In cases where people are being trained to operate machinery, it may be necessary to have an instructor riding with the trainee. In this situation, special caution should be taken to ensure that everyone involved pays close attention to safety.

The Farm Safety 4 Just Kids

Foundation recommends the following guidelines for helping provide a safe environment for novice drivers - your kids.

- Provide instruction in proper driving procedures.
- Enroll adolescent-aged kids in tractor certification classes.
- Do not allow friends of your children to ride with young operators. Be a role model yourself and don't ride as a passenger; refuse to allow children to ride as passengers.

- If your tractor has a buddy seat, follow all the manufacturer's safety guidelines.
- Consider safety when assigning machinery to young operators. Older tractors without rollover protective structures (ROPS) or cabs can be especially dangerous.

If you would like more information about Farm Safety 4 Just Kids, call (800) 423-5437.

Source: Farm Safety 4 Just Kids

Surplus equipment for sale

1991 CHEVROLET 3500HD CAB AND SERVICE BODY; White with Beige Interior 135.5" wheelbase, 11,000 lb. Rear axle, 7.4L, V8 Engine, (454) 4-Speed automatic, power steering, brakes, cruise control, tilt wheel, sliding rear window, AM/FM stereo radio, 31 gal. fuel tank, approximately 151,450 miles, full mechanics service body. Minimum Bid \$5,000. **UNIT # 12-G**

V60B CATERPILLAR FORKLIFT; SN 87M2278, 6,000 lbs. Capacity, hydrostatic transmission (rebuilt in 1994) pneumatic rough terrain tires. Minimum Bid \$750. **UNIT #CATFL**

1988 FORD E-150 ECONOLINE VAN; Yellow with Tan Interior, 124" wheelbase, 4.9L, 6 Cylinder engine, automatic transmission, limited slip rear axle, AM/FM radio, swing out side/rear glass, sliding side cargo door, power steer-

ing, power brakes, 114,929 miles, storage bins for tools and material in back of van. Minimum Bid \$2,000. **UNIT # 87-E**

The above surplus equipment is available for sale and may be viewed at the Eldorado headquarters from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., the week of April 5, 1999. Sealed bids are to be submitted by 4 p.m. Monday, April 19th.

Please designate the UNIT Number you wish to bid on, your bid price, name, address and telephone number. Bids are to be for an exact dollar amount.

Please mark "**Sealed Bid**" on the outside of your envelope and send it to: **Mr. Don Allen, Surplus Equipment, SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative, Inc., P. O. Box 251, Eldorado, IL 62930.**

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.

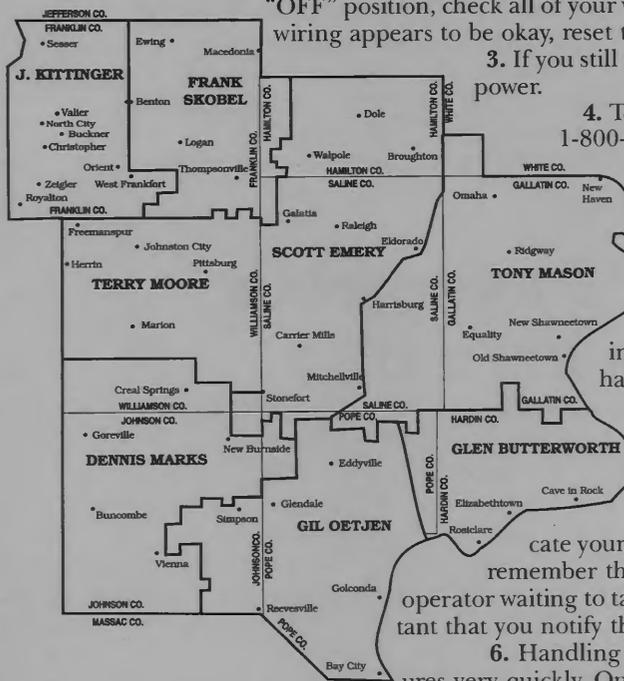
3. If you still do not have power, check with neighbors to see if they have power.

4. To report a power failure or other emergency, please phone 1-800-833-2611 or 273-2611. These phone numbers are 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. Those members having touch-tone phones can simply enter their seven-digit phone number (without the area code) to report power failures or power problems. These reports will be immediately logged into the system. Members who do not have touch-tone phones will be asked to leave a recorded message with their name, phone number and location of the outage. Since these messages must be retrieved by SouthEastern personnel and then manually entered into the system, they take more time to report, so please do not leave messages that will not help the Cooperative locate your problem and make the necessary repairs. It is important to remember that the system does record your outage and there is not an operator waiting to take your call if you elect to leave a message. It is also 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.



(800) 833-2611



The SOUTHEASTERN LIGHT

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative

Eldorado, Illinois

General Manager's Comments

James M. "Mick" Cummins



All across the nation companies of all sizes and types are trying to exterminate a little critter know as the Y2K bug which is the culprit behind the Year 2000 problem.

This particular computer "bug" or problem exists because much of the computerized equipment manufactured in the past few decades can only recognize a two-digit dating system. This computerized equipment can recognize "98" as indicating the year 1998, but will be unable to recognize "00" as the year 2000. So when the century changes on 1 January, 2000, the old equipment will not know if it's 1900 or 2000 and may malfunction, or shut down.

To avoid such a situation, companies such as your Cooperative that use computerized equipment must identify all software and equipment, including equipment with computerized chips in it that may fail at the turn of the century.

There are four general areas at SouthEastern that are Y2K sensitive.

(1) Our Administrative System which includes billing, record keeping, accounting and collections is highly computerized. Fortunately, our Computer Services Manager recognized the two-digit dating system as a problem some time ago, and every in-house program written since 1987 has been designed to recognize a four-digit date. We expect to be compliant in all Administrative areas by September 1999.

(2) Our Distribution System which includes the poles, power lines, transformers and substations dispersed

throughout the service area is not highly computerized and is for the most part, mechanically operated. Nevertheless, an inventory of all known equipment containing computerized controls has been taken and some monitoring apparatus, although not critical to providing continuous service, is being updated or replaced.

(3) Our Fleet contains line trucks, utility service trucks and other vehicles which have embedded computer chips in their controls. All machinery has been inventoried and certified by the suppliers as Year 2000 compliant.

(4) The product that we deliver through our Distribution System is electric energy. That product is purchased from the Southern Illinois Power Cooperative at Marion, Illinois. Southern Illinois Power Cooperative is, in turn, interconnected with other regional suppliers through the Mid-America Integrated Network (MAIN). As one of the three regional owners of Southern Illinois Power Cooperative, we are working diligently with them to eliminate any disruption of electric service resultant from the calendar change to year 2000. Southern Power has hired Sega Consultants to assess all control equipment, and Tim Reeves, the President of Southern Power has notified us that, "all power generation and transmission systems will be tested and verified to be Y2K compliant."

In the past few months I have received many phone calls and letters in-

(Continued on page 18d)

Quick, cheap and clean ways to save in the kitchen



Aside from heating, air conditioning and water heating, the kitchen is one of the most energy-expensive places in the average home. Things you do in the kitchen influences those costs.

As you cook in the kitchen, the house warms up and the air conditioner has to work more, so your electricity usage goes up. As you use more hot water to cook or wash dishes, that expense increases, too.

There are many things you can do to save energy in the kitchen, and all of them together can help you save a bundle on your energy bill. As you work at meal preparation, keep the following items in mind—any or all of them will help, both in comfort and savings.

If you have a gas stove with a pilot light make sure it is burning efficiently, with a blue flame. A yellowish flame indicates that you need to have it adjusted.

Never boil water in an open pan. It will come to a boil faster and use less energy in a covered pan.

Keep range-top burners and reflectors clean. They'll reflect the heat better, and you will save energy. Match the size of the pan to the burner or heating element. More heat will get to the pan, and less to the surrounding air.

If you cook with electricity, get in the habit of turning off the burners several minutes before the allotted cooking time. The heating element will stay hot long enough to finish the cooking for you without using more electricity.

When using the oven, make the most of the heat from that single source. Cook as many foods as you can at one time. Prepare dishes that can be stored or frozen for later use, or make all oven-cooked meals.

Watch the clock or use a timer; avoid the temptation to open the door and peek. Every time you open the door heat escapes and your cooking takes more energy.

Use small electric pans or ovens for small meals rather than the kitchen range or oven. They use less energy.

Use pressure cookers and microwave ovens when you can. They can save energy by reducing cooking time, and microwaves don't put nearly as much heat into your house.

The average dishwasher uses 14 gallons of hot water per load. Be sure to use it energy efficiently. Make sure your dishwasher is full, but not overloaded, when you turn it on.

If you're in the market for a new dishwasher, look for a model with air-power and/or overnight-dry settings. These features automatically turn off the dishwasher after the rinse cycle. This can save you up to one-third of your total dishwashing energy costs.

Let your dishes air dry. If you don't have an automatic air-dry switch, turn the control knob to "off" after the rinse cycle and prop the door open a little, so the dishes will dry faster.

Don't use the "rinse-hold" on your machine. It uses three to seven gallons of hot water every time you use it.

Scrape dishes before loading them into the dishwasher so you won't have to rinse them. If they do need rinsing, you can save pennies by using cold water.

Don't keep your refrigerator or freezer too cold. Recommended temperatures: 38 to 40 degrees for the fresh food compartment of the refrigerator; five degrees for the freezer.

If you're buying a refrigerator, be sure to look for the more efficient models. Once you get past the sticker shock, note that refrigerator technology has improved over the last few years, and that the more efficient new models will do a good job at a far less cost than the older ones. Get one that's as energy-efficient as you can afford.

Remember that those frills, such as automatic icemakers and ice and water through the door, add a lot to the cost of such units, and you get little benefit in return.

Consider buying manual-defrost refrigerators and freezers. While they're inconvenient to defrost, they cost quite a bit less to operate.

Regularly defrost manual-defrost refrigerators and freezers. Frost buildup increases the amount of energy needed and makes the motor run longer and more often. Never allow frost to build up to more than one-quarter of an inch thick.

Make sure your refrigerator door seals are airtight. Test them by closing the door over a piece of paper or a dollar bill so that it is half in and half out of the refrigerator. If you can pull it out easily, the latch may need adjustment or the seal may need replacing.

Stay warm without getting into hot water!

Spring may well be on its way, but that doesn't mean the nights are warm yet. You may still need the extra comfort of a space heater, heating pad or electric blanket during cool spring nights. Enjoy the warmth—do it safely by following these tips:

- Keep space heaters at least three to four feet from curtains, rugs, furniture, newspapers or other materials that could catch fire.
- Avoid using extension cords with space heaters. If someone should trip or fall over the cord and turn the heater over, it could cause a fire.
- Check your electric blanket or heating pad for cracks or breaks in the wiring or plugs, and look for charred spots on the blanket material. These are signs that present serious potential fire hazards.
- To keep heat from building up to dangerous levels, make sure nothing covers your electric blanket, including other bedding or pets.
- Never tuck in your electric blanket. Bending the coils could cause them to crack or break.
- Sleeping on a heating pad can cause serious burns even at relatively low settings. Use a heating pad only for short periods, and never when you feel sleepy. Shut it off and unplug it before you go to sleep.

Source: *TECO Energy website*

Use that standby generator safely!

For most of us, a standby generator can be a nice thing to have in case the power goes off. For some people, such as those dependent on life-support equipment, such a generator is essential.

Whether you really need a generator, or if you simply want to be prepared for the unexpected, it's important to keep it in good working order and use it safely to get the maximum benefit from your investment.

- Know your generator! Read all the information on installation, safety and maintenance, and follow instructions regarding maintenance and testing.
- When you need to use the generator, first turn off the main power switch or breaker in your home.
- Use it wisely. Don't overload the generator. It should be used only when necessary, and

only to power essential equipment. Overloading it will cause wear and tear and could present fire and safety hazards.

- Plug appliances directly into generator itself. Don't try to wire your home's electrical system into the generator. The generator could feed power back into utility lines as power crews work to restore your electric service, putting those workers' lives at risk!

- Take care when fueling your generator! Never try to refuel the unit while it's operating. Avoid spilling gasoline or other fuels on hot components.

Provide adequate ventilation and air cooling for the generator to prevent overheating and the accumulation of toxic exhaust fumes.

Sources: *Cooperative and utility sites*

Capital credits for 1998

The most economical method of notifying members of their capital credit allocation is to furnish them with a multiplication factor, which when applied to the total electric bill for the year 1998 will determine the notified amount of patronage. Notices will be mailed to large commercial consumers who are not on self-billing.

Self-billing members may determine their capital credit allocations from SouthEastern by multiplying their bills paid (less tax) by a factor of 0.03990728; for Southern Illinois Power Cooperative use a factor of 0.6635758.

For those paying accounts under the Small Commercial Schedule, a factor of 0.03844143 for SouthEastern and 0.06392019 for Southern Illinois Power Cooperative should be used.

If you are unable to determine your 1998 allocation, the amount credited will be furnished on request.

The bylaws of your cooperative provide that each member

shall be notified of the amount of patronage capital credited to his account. Of the total allocation, approximately 25 percent is due to capital credit allocation received from the Southern Illinois Power Cooperative.

A capital credit plan is an arrangement under which: (1) a cooperative and its members expressly agree that any payment by any patron over the cost of serving him is capital furnished by the patron to the cooperative; (2) the Cooperative credits such patronage capital on its books to the patrons; and (3) such capital will be retired when, in the opinion of the board of trustees, such retirement will not impair the cooperative's financial position.

The capital credit plan provides for service at cost for paying off the REA and CFC loans, for acquiring complete local ownership of the cooperative system, for giving all patrons full credit for all payments in excess of cost,

(Continued on page 18d)

(Continued from page 18a)

quiring as to SouthEastern's year 2000 readiness. No utility can guarantee uninterrupted electric service, and the fact that our electric supply system is interconnected with numerous systems subjects it to problems outside of our control. However,

our business for the past sixty-one years has been to provide electric service to the residents of rural Southern Illinois and it is our intent to "Keep the lights on for you" in the new millennia. Becky Byron, Harrisburg.

Surge Protection: Electrical Safety for Your Home Electronics

POWER SURGES
ARE GOOD
FOR SOME PEOPLE

For everyone else,
there's Power Quality Plus™ from
South Eastern Illinois Electric
Cooperative.

Choosing a surge protection system can be scary. There are so many choices, but which one offers the level of protection that you need? It's no mystery — choose Power Quality Plus from your local electric cooperative.

Power Quality Plus protects your home appliances and sensitive electronics with a "whole house" surge protection program. When you sign up for Power Quality Plus, one of our co-op technicians will come to your home and install a surge protection device on your electric meter. The device offers coverage against incoming electrical surges, including lightning.



Power Quality Plus offers peace of mind:

- ◆ Benefit from a connected product warranty that offers repair or replacement of your appliances in the unlikely event that they become damaged by a surge.
- ◆ Select a secondary line of defense with optional high-grade surge protection plug strips that also feature the connected product warranty.
- ◆ Enjoy the convenience of primary coverage — there's no need to worry about coverage by your home-owners insurance.

To learn more about our complete product offering, including residential well pump protection devices, call one of our member services representatives today. Don't wait until your home is hit by a power surge. Because choosing the wrong surge protection device can come back to haunt you.

(800) 838-2611
SouthEastern Illinois
Electric Cooperative

(Continued from page 18c)

and for the eventual repayment to the patrons of all capital furnished by them. Capital credits are not necessarily available in the form of cash, but are represented largely by investments in poles,

wire, transformers and other equipment required to provide service. In general, no patronage capital can be retired until the cooperative has obtained enough capital to take care of all its needs.



The SOUTHEASTERN LIGHT

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

General Manager's Comments

James M. "Mick" Cummins



After watching an endless number of television commercials from AT&T, MCI and Sprint, I'm still confused about which is the lowest cost provider. Each company quotes its per minute charges, displays a small printed insert at the bottom of the screen stating additional monthly fixed charges apply, and then promotes its rates as the lowest available.

Electric rates can be very confusing also. Each winter someone comes into SouthEastern's office with a bill from one of the area power companies and points out that the rates are lower than SouthEastern's. When this happens, we call the individual's attention to the fact that both area power companies have two rates, a winter rate and a summer rate, with the summer rate charge being substantially higher in cost. Your Cooperative, on the other hand, charges the same rate year around. When comparing Cooperative bills against power company bills, be sure to use four months of energy at the summer rate, and eight months of energy at the winter rate. Also, don't forget to factor in the non-energy charges which frequently appear on power company bills and vary from month to month. Consider, for example, the following bill from one of the area power companies:

Current Meter Reading		50825
Previous Meter Reading		<u>48871</u>
Amount of Electricity Used KWH		1954
Customer Charge		\$ 8.91
Summer Energy Charge	300 KWH x \$ 0.088540	26.56
	1,654 KWH x \$ 0.080040	132.39
Decommissioning Expense	1954 KWH x \$ 0.000410	.80
Environmental Activities	1954 KWH x \$ 0.000100	.20
Electricity Excise Tax	1954 KWH x \$ 0.003300	<u>6.45</u>
TOTAL COST FOR ELECTRIC SERVICE		\$ 175.31

In addition to the above detail billing, the power company's invoice has a statement informing the consumer that he saved \$30.57 this month from a 15% rate reduction, with the prior cost of comparable energy usage being \$205.88.

Cooperative members with identical current and previous meter readings, as noted in the above example, would simply look up 1,950 kilowatt hours in their rate handbook and send SouthEastern a check for \$136.75 along with their billing ticket.

To assist you in bill comparisons the following residential rate chart has been annualized to reflect average energy costs:

(Continued on page 18b)

(Continued from page 18a)

Kilowatt Hours	S.E.I.E.C. 1999 (Includes Tax)	CIPS 1999 (Includes Tax)	IL Power 1999 (Includes Tax)
300	\$ 35.49	\$ 28.34	\$ 35.17
500	\$ 48.65	\$ 43.77	\$ 49.61
1000	\$ 81.55	\$ 82.34	\$ 85.73
1500	\$111.01	\$120.91	\$121.84
2000	\$139.61	\$159.48	\$157.95
3000	\$196.57	\$236.51	\$230.07
4000	\$253.27	\$313.54	\$302.19

Keep in mind, however, that the above chart does not consider the patronage capital that's returned periodically by SouthEastern to its member/owners. Last fall alone, over \$1.4 million was returned to member/owners, and \$1,000,000 of those dollars were refunded to members who received service from the Cooperative in 1997, providing an average rate of \$74.40 for 1000 kilowatt hours of residential energy use.

See you next month, and as always, "We'll keep the lights on for you", and especially for you Mr. Warren G. Curry of Benton, Illinois.

Nominating Committee chosen

As provided by the bylaws of SOUTHEASTERN ILLINOIS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., a Nominating Committee was chosen April 27, 1999, consisting of the following Cooperative Members:

District No. 1

Cindy Friend, 2443 Rentfro Lake Road, Royalton, IL 62983

District No. 6

Eugene Cobb, 4969 Market Road, Marion, IL 62959

District No. 9

Joseph C. Whitehead, 4845 Tunnel Hill Road, Tunnel Hill, IL 62991

District No. 2

W. D. Fisher, 22397 East Heard Lane, Macedonia, IL 62860

District No. 7

John L. Beal, 6615 Highway 145 South, Harrisburg, IL 62946
Anthony Gulley, 1264 North Battleford, Carrier Mills, IL 62917

District No. 10

Sandra L. Potts, RR 1 Box 59, Rosiclare, IL 62982

District No. 3

Carl L. Smith, RR 5 Box 164, McLeansboro, IL 62859

District No. 11

R. C. Davidson, Jr., RR 3 Box 136, Golconda, IL 62938

District No. 5

Lloyd Williams, RR 1 Box 186, Omaha, IL 62871

District No. 8

David W. Wiman, RR 1 Box 124, Herod, IL 62947

The Committee will meet at the office of the Cooperative on Tuesday, June 8, 1999, at the hour of 10 a.m. for the purpose of nominating three (3) candidates for three-year terms as Trustees of SOUTHEASTERN ILLINOIS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. Trustees whose terms are expiring include: Robert Tiberend, 8240 Urbain Road, Benton, IL 62812 (District #1); Bill Cadle, 318 Red Row Drive, Marion, IL 62959 (District #6); and Sherry Gross, P.O. Box 224, Elizabethtown, IL 62931 (District #10).

/s/ Sherry Gross
Sherry Gross, Secretary
Board of Trustees



Office closing

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative's office will be closed
Monday, May 31, in observance of **Memorial Day**.
The cooperative office will resume normal business hours on Tuesday, June 1.

Surge protection

Our way of life has been revolutionized by the development of the computer chip and correspondent electronic devices. Perhaps the only drawback to this new technology is its sensitivity to lightning and other electrical surges. Several manufacturers now offer protective equipment, which ranges in price from just a few dollars to several hundred dollars. Many also offer warranties against damage to your appliances resulting from surges. The problem is that some of these products are useless,

and the warranties offered are not worth any more than the paper they are printed on. Your Cooperative is now offering a lease arrangement for quality surge protective equipment. As a part of this program, Cooperative personnel will come to your home, farm or business and check ground resistance to the flow of electricity and install additional grounding rods, if needed. At that time a meter socket surge protective device will be installed. A warranty against equipment damage is included and warranty claims are handled

through SouthEastern by our personnel. The service, equipment and a \$10,000 maximum damage warranty are available from SouthEastern for the lease rate of \$6.00 per month and includes two 120-volt receptacle type, plug in devices. Optional equipment, which will enhance the protective characteristics of the meter socket surge protection device, is available for purchase. Contact Don Allen at (800) 833-2611, Ext. 160 for more detailed information on this service.

June is time to think safety (still/again)

June is Safety Month, and while we should practice safety the year around, we might be wise to use the month to recommit ourselves to safe practices in and around the home, much as we use the beginning of a new year to work on self-improvement.

Let us hope we are more successful with safety than with New Year's resolutions.

While we tend to deal with electrical safety most often on this page, it is important to review all kinds of home safety occasionally, and these tips are intended to remind you of the many hazards in the modern household. You may be able to think of more.

Do you have smoke detectors? If not, run out and get some. They're your first line of defense in saving you and your family from fire, and they're very inexpensive. Make it a point to check your batteries twice a year, when you change your clocks back and forth for daylight-saving time.

While not very common, carbon monoxide detectors are be-

ing installed in more and more homes, and you should get one if you have any fuel-burning appliances. They are more important now than they were in the past, because homes tend to be tighter, and the natural ventilation that used to provide air exchanges is no longer there.

Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupters, or GFCIs, are also an important part of home safety. Like smoke detectors, they are recognized as being so important that they're now required by law in new construction, in kitchens, bathrooms and for outdoor electrical outlets. Unfortunately, they're uncommon in even fairly new homes, and they offer enough protection that you might want to talk to an electrician about having some put in your home. They're intended to protect you from shock or electrocution if you come in contact with a faulty circuit or appliance.

There are some on the market that can be used with existing wiring, and you'd be wise to invest in some of them until you can get your home wired. Some

extension cords intended for outdoor use have them built into one end, and you can buy plug-in units to use in kitchen and bathroom receptacles.

Be sure to have an emergency evacuation plan, so all family members can escape in the event of a fire. Have a designated place to meet outside, so nobody goes back in to look for someone who may be perfectly safe but out of view. Practice your plan, especially if you have children.

It's a good idea to have fire extinguishers where you can get at them, and near an exit. If firefighting efforts fail, it's important to be able to get away from smoke and flames. A multipurpose dry chemical ABC extinguisher is best for general home use.

Keep a well-stocked first-aid kit handy, and be sure the contents are up-to-date, since some medications have expiration dates. Make sure family members know how to use the kit. First aid kits should be checked periodically for expiration dates and to restock those items which

are missing from prior use.

It's important to get help quickly in an emergency, and one good way to do that is to have a list of emergency telephone numbers posted near every phone in your home. If you have children, teach them to dial emergency numbers. And stress that they should not dial emergency numbers unless there's a real emergency!

While it's nearly impossible, make a special effort to keep flashlights handy, and try to keep the batteries current. You may want to change them out when you check your smoke detector batteries. It's a good idea to have at least one flashlight for each bedroom. Since kids tend to find flashlights terribly fascinating, get toy ones for them,

and tell them they can use them any way they want to, but that the real flashlights are off limits. That doesn't always work, but it's worth a try.

Know how to shut off all the energy sources coming into your home. Put a tag on the valves for gas, oil, water and electricity, and know how to shut them off safely. Some valves take a special wrench, and it's a good idea to have one taped to the pipe leading to the house, or kept in a similarly handy location. Know how to use them.

An emergency kit is essential in Illinois homes, because of the danger, nearly any time of the year, that the weather will do something very unpleasant. Tornadoes can strike at any time, and lesser windstorms can

also cause prolonged power outages. Winter storms can do the same thing, and cold weather may be life-threatening. And there's always the possibility, however remote, of a flood or earthquake.

Your emergency kit should include a battery-powered radio (keep fresh batteries, too), a flashlight, clothing and bedding, non-perishable food that needs minimal preparation, containers of water and a first-aid kit. During winter time, you may want to have a portable space heater that burns kerosene, butane or propane, just to be on the safe side.

We're sure you can think of more, but the main thing is to get started planning now — don't wait for New Year's day!

Get a clear view on energy savings

Was your house cold last winter? During winter in colder climates and during the hot months in warm areas, windows can account for about one-fourth of the heat loss or gain in a typical home. About half the houses in this country still have old single-pane windows, which are major sources of lost heat in the winter and lost cool air in summer. Replacing all your windows is likely to be an expensive proposition, but there are many other, less expensive things you can do to make them more efficient:

- Replace old, dried or loose window glazing with new glazing to ensure that your windowpanes fit tightly.
- Caulk around the outside frame of your windows, where the frame meets the home's siding. Weather-strip around the window itself to provide a tight seal when the window is closed.
- Use heat-shrink plastic, installed with a hair dryer, to provide an extra layer

of insulation. This simple step can really cut heat loss and gain through the window glass.

- In cold weather, insulating shades or drapes can keep drafts out; in warm weather, they'll keep conditioned air in and cut down on heat gain.
- During hot weather, keep shades drawn on windows that let in a lot of sunlight. In the winter, open those shades to collect the heat energy from the sun. Awnings can also help deflect the sun's rays in hot weather.
- Hang white window shades or blinds, which can reduce solar heat gain by 40 to 50 percent.
- Close south and west-facing curtains during the day, and keep the windows closed.
- Install awnings on south-facing windows where there's no roof overhang to provide shade. Canvas

awnings are more expensive than window shades, but they're more pleasing to the eye, they work better, and they don't obstruct your view.

- Alternatively, hang tightly woven insect screens or bamboo shades outside windows during the summer. They'll reduce your view, but they'll stop 60 to 80 percent of the sun's heat from getting to the window.
- Plant trees or build a trellis to block out solar radiation. Deciduous (leaf-bearing) trees planted to the south, east and west of your building provide valuable shade in the summer, then drop their leaves in the winter to allow half or more of the sun's heat to warm you on clear winter days.
- Apply retrofit window films to the inside of east, south and west-facing windows and glass doors.



The SOUTHEASTERN LIGHT

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

General Manager's Comments

James M. "Mick" Cummins



Early payment of patronage capital to estates:

Purchasing products and service at the lowest possible price provides a great deal of personal satisfaction to each of us. Car dealers, in particular, are aware of this fact and often advertise vehicles at a fixed dollar amount over their invoice cost. In a cooperative electric system, any margins over and above the actual cost of providing electric service are proportionally credited to users based on their energy usage for the respective year. These margins are periodically returned to members when such returns are deemed financially prudent by the Board of Trustees. Such refunds provide lower energy rates for members and satisfaction in knowing they purchased their electric energy at "invoice cost". In the past ten years alone, some 4.5 million dollars (\$4,500,000) has been returned to the member/owners of SouthEastern.

Occasionally, however, a member will pass away before all of his or her patronage capital has been returned. Should this occur, the Cooperative has a method in place which provides for the early retirement, on a discounted basis, of patronage capital to the deceased member's estate. A legal representative of the estate must make a written request for the early return of such patronage capital, and to protect the

Cooperative against unplanned expenses, a maximum amount of \$50,000 per year has been allocated for this purpose. If you or another family member need to avail yourself of this service, please contact Greg Cruse, SouthEastern's Manager of Administrative & Financial Services, at 1-800-833-2611, Extension 161 for more information.

Energy diversion:

Visitors at SouthEastern are often amazed at the effectiveness and efficiency of SouthEastern's self-read metering and self-billing system. One of the first questions asked is, "Don't you have a lot of cheating and energy diversion with such a system?" It is with a great deal of pride that we inform them that some 97% of SouthEastern members submit accurate monthly meter readings and never try to use energy in any manner without paying for it, which bring us, unfortunately, to the other 3%. In a cooperative system, a member who steals energy or falsifies meter readings is stealing from his neighbors because stealing lessens margins which are periodically returned to the membership as patronage capital.

To protect the membership against theft, your Board of Trustees has established a policy which provides for full and immediate payment for any amounts properly owed. In addition, the Coopera-

(Continued on page 18b)

(Continued from page 18a)

tive may charge \$250 for broken meter socket seals combined with evidence of tampering, \$500 for tampering with the watt-hour meter, and \$1,000 for the use of mechanical devices to purposely bypass the watt-hour meter or impede its registration.

The Cooperative may also elect to disconnect electric service or file criminal action against the perpetrators.

Reader Prize:

Just a reminder that readers of this column who spot their

name here and who contact me by the 15th of this month will receive a check in the amount of \$30.00. See you next month and as always, "We'll keep the lights on for you, and especially for you, Jack Dyszczakowski of Johnston City, Illinois.

Notice of 1999 Annual Meeting

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN That the Annual Meeting of the Members of SOUTHEASTERN ILLINOIS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., will be held at the Southeastern Illinois College, Illinois Route 13 east of Harrisburg or south of Eldorado on College Drive, on August 3, 1999; that the period of registration for

said Meeting of Members will be from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m.; business meeting of said Members will convene at 7 p.m. for the purpose of taking action upon the reports of Officers, Trustees, and Committees of said Cooperative, for the election of three (3) Trustees for terms of three

(3) years each, and for such other matters as may properly be considered at such meeting.

You are further notified that the number of Trustees to be elected at the 1999 Annual Meeting is three (3) and that one Member is to be elected from each of Districts 1, 6 and 10.

Report of Nominating Committee

As provided by the by-laws of SOUTHEASTERN ILLINOIS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., a Nominating Committee, consisting of the following Cooperative members:

Cindy Friend	District #1
W. D. Fisher	District #2
Carl L. Smith	District #3
Lloyd Williams	District #5
Eugene Cobb	District #6
John L. Beal	District #7
Anthony Gulley	District #7
David W. Wiman	District #8
Joseph C. Whitehead	District #9
Sandra L. Potts	District #10
R. C. Davidson, Jr.	District #11

met at the office of the Cooperative on June 8, 1999, at the hour of 10 a.m., for the purpose of nominating three (3) candidates for three-year terms as Trustees of SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative, Inc.

The undersigned presided as Secretary of the meeting.

The following candidates were nominated:

Robert Tiberend	District #1
Bill Cadle	District #6
Sherry Gross	District #10

DATED at Eldorado, Illinois, this 8th day of June, 1999.

/s/Cindy Friend
Secretary of the Meeting



Office closing

Our office will be closed on Monday, July 5, in observance of Independence Day — July 4th.

Attend the

**SouthEastern Illinois
Electric Cooperative**

Annual Meeting

**Tuesday, August 3
Southeastern Illinois College**

**Illinois Route 13 east of Harrisburg
or College Drive south of Eldorado**

**Registration begins at 6 p.m.
Business meeting begins at 7 p.m.**

- **Reports of officers**
- **Election of trustees**
- **Other cooperative business**

***\$10 electric bill credit
for all members
attending the annual
meeting***

on your next electric bill!

Co-op reps visit legislators in Washington

The rural electrification program was born in politics some 65 years ago, and politics is still an important part of its business as we go into an uncertain era of deregulation and competition.

In order to ensure that those who represent us in the legislature understand the importance of the cooperative way of doing business, electric co-op leaders from all over the U.S. converge on Washington D.C. in early May to discuss issues of importance to co-ops.

While there, they visit with as many legislators as possible,

often at breakfasts, dinners and receptions.

SEIEC's delegation was made up of James "Mick" Cummins, manager, Roy D. Wise, president, Bill Cadle, Kenneth Webb, Robert Tiberend, Trustees and Ray Harbison, member services & industrial development manager.

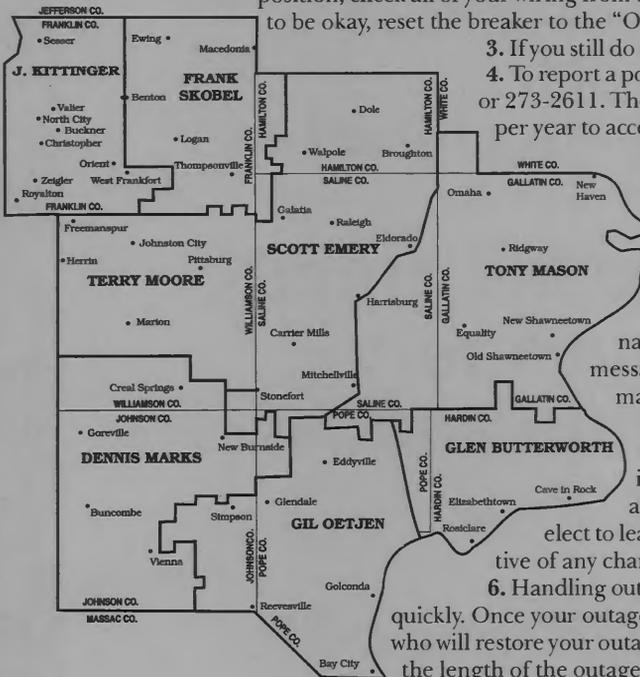


Electric co-op representatives visit over breakfast with Congressman David Phelps. From left are Ray Harbison, SEIEC member services & industrial development manager, Congressman Phelps and Earl Struck, President/CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

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 1-800-833-2611 or 273-2611. These phone numbers are 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. Those members having touch-tone phones can simply enter their seven-digit phone number (without the area code) to report power failures or power problems. These reports will be immediately logged into the system. Members who do not have touch-tone phones will be asked to leave a recorded message with their name, phone number and location of the outage. Since these messages must be retrieved by SouthEastern personnel and then manually entered into the system, they take more time to report, so please do not leave messages that will not help the Cooperative locate your problem and make the necessary repairs. It is important to remember that the system does record your outage and there is not an operator waiting to take your call if you elect to leave a message. It is also 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.

(800) 833-2611



The SOUTHEASTERN LIGHT

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

General Manager's Comments

James M. "Mick" Cummins



OUTAGE REPORTING: It's hard to believe, but some sixty-one years ago when your Cooperative was first formed, members were supplied with pre-addressed, stamped post cards which were used to report power outages. Later on as SouthEastern grew, after-hours phone calls to the Cooperative's 273-2611 number were transferred to the homes of employees who were on duty for a week at a time. Members living in Pope, Hardin, Franklin and Williamson Counties had the option of calling the 273-2611 number "collect" or could also call their area utility serviceman directly, provided he was not already out responding to an outage. That system remained intact until 1985, when an after-hours answering service with two employees began to take outage reports via a single phone line. Needless to say, the number of calls that could be taken with such a system were very limited, with maximum access of about 24 calls per hour, based on our average call length of 2.5 minutes. However, during larger outages, SouthEastern employees were called into the office and all eight phone lines were opened up, allowing us to take almost 200 calls per hour when all eight phones were manned.

In 1996, three phone lines were extended to a multi-employer, after-hours answering service which improved our ability to receive calls during light and moderate outage conditions. During heavy outage conditions SouthEastern employees were still called into the office and a new phone system with eleven incoming lines was installed, but our ability to take member calls was still

impeded by the average call length of 2.5 minutes. If, for example, 2,100 members were out of service, it would take over seven hours to receive all those calls. Various options were reviewed to improve the situation, but the only viable choice was automation.

In December 1998, SouthEastern installed an automated outage reporting system. Those of you who have a touch-tone phone can simply enter your 7-digit phone number to report your outage. If you do not have a touch-tone phone, or you have more than one account (a security light at a location separate from your residence is considered a second account), you will be asked to leave a message describing the location of the outage. Remember that it is very important for us to receive your outage call as quickly as possible. Knowing the extent of an outage allows us to dispatch the appropriate number of personnel to restore service and alerts us if there is a need to obtain help from neighboring cooperatives. Handling outage calls electronically allows power failures to be reported as quickly as 45 seconds, and frees up the phone lines so that other members may call.

As fast as the automated outage system is, there will still be times such as the recent May 17th storm, which affected over 7,500 members, when telephone lines were busy for hours with incoming calls. We recognize these problems and are evaluating the addition of more phone lines to provide you with even better service.

(Continued on page 16b)

(Continued from page 16a)

STORMS, TREES, ANIMALS & MEN: Sounds like the title to a novel doesn't it. In reality the above listings are the most common cause of power failures and since we have already had an abnormally high number of outages this year, I thought I would review them briefly with you.

On May 17th, a severe thunderstorm, which produced high winds, passed through Southern Illinois resulting in a loss of power from our power supplier. Some 7,500 members were without electric service primarily as a result of trees and debris being blown into the high voltage transmission power lines. In addition, six high voltage transmission poles were blown over in Gallatin County

because they had been excavated around.

On May 22nd, a large snake crawled into our Cave-In-Rock Substation resulting in a loss of power for several residences and businesses in and around the town of Cave-In-Rock.

On June 4th, a severe thunderstorm moved through the southern counties of our service area resulting in a loss of power for some 2,500 members, primarily as a result of trees and debris being blown into power lines. In addition, a raccoon climbed into our Webb Substation which is located near Goreville, Illinois and apparently knocked a large bird nest into energized conductors, resulting in a loss of service to some 650

members and some rather expensive repair work.

On June 7th, a high voltage fuse opened at our Vienna Substation resulting in a loss of power for residents of the area. This substation had been previously damaged in the storm of June 4th. The substation was taken out of service on June 7th and carefully inspected for damage before it was re-energized.

READERSHIP PRIZE: Just a reminder that readers of this column who spot their name here (*Linck Evard, Marion, Illinois*) and who contact me by the 15th of this month will receive a check in the amount of \$30.00. See you next month, and as always, "We'll keep the lights on for you."

Official Notice of 1999 Annual Meeting

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DATED at Eldorado, Illinois, this 8th day of June, 1999.

/s/Cindy Friend
Secretary of the Meeting

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on your next electric bill!

Is your crop dryer ready?

Don't wait 'til you start harvesting to find out if your crop dryer is going to operate properly. Take a few minutes now and run through the following checklist. It may save you hours or even days of harvest delay.

- Inspect all wiring and panels for worn insulation, loose connections and worn-out circuit breakers. Also, check to be sure grounding wires are properly connected and not broken.

- Make sure all guards, shields and overcurrent devices are properly installed and secured.

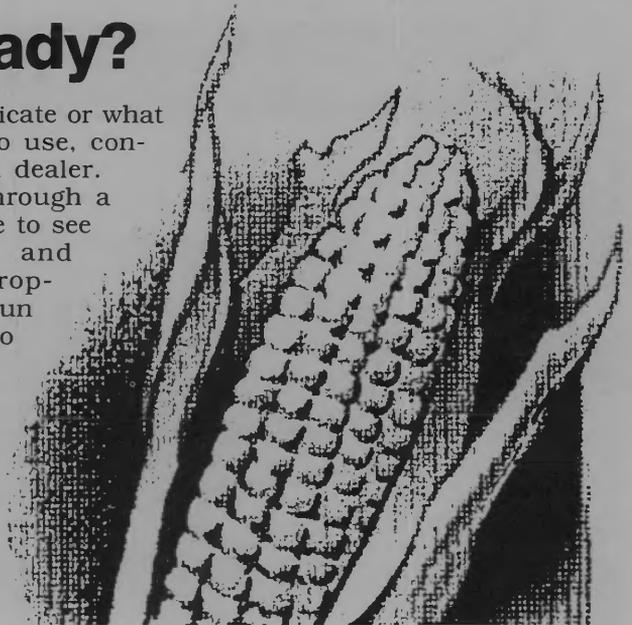
- Check for worn bearings, pulleys, gear boxes, belts, shafts, etc. Pay particular attention to excess play in motor bearings. Bad bearings can ruin a motor.

- Lubricate all equipment before you start it. If you are not

sure of where to lubricate or what type of lubrication to use, consult your equipment dealer.

- Test it. Run through a complete drying cycle to see that all timers and switches operate properly. Let the motors run for several minutes to heat and distribute the new lubricant. Start the dryer at least twice to be sure the starting capacitors perform properly.

- If you have added motors, it would be a good idea to check with the Engineering Department of SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative to make sure the electrical service is adequate to handle the additional load.



- Don't forget to check over any fossil fuel-fired equipment used in conjunction with the dryer.

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.

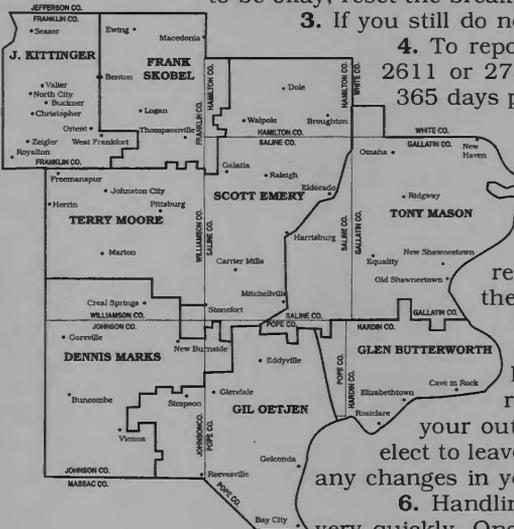
2. If you have a meter pole, check the main breaker panel just below the meter socket. If the breaker is in the "OFF" position, check all of your wiring from the meter pole to your various buildings. If the wiring appears to be okay, reset the breaker to the "ON" position.

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(800) 833-2611

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The power of human connections





The SOUTHEASTERN LIGHT

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

General Manager's Comments

James M. "Mick" Cummins



Those attending the 61st Annual Meeting of SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative (SEIEC) at Southeastern Illinois College on Tuesday, Aug. 3 learned their Cooperative had another successful year in 1998.

Each member in attendance received an Annual Report which provided an overview of the Cooperative's operations for the year 1998, including total electric sales of \$35,370,000, which produced an operating margin of \$960,000 for the Cooperative. The Cooperative's net margin was \$2,900,000 which included \$1,800,000 in patronage capital allocated, but not yet paid, from the Cooperative's power supplier, the Southern Illinois Power Cooperative at Marion, and its banker, the Cooperative Finance Corporation of Herndon, Virginia.

In 1998, SouthEastern residential members paid an average price of 7.4 cents per kilowatt for electricity, one of the lowest rates in the State. Those members without electric heat and who had average usage of 900 kilowatt hours

per month, paid \$1.86 less per month, in actual unadjusted dollars, than they did in 1985.

In its on-going goal to provide reliable electric service to its members, the Cooperative invested over \$4,500,000 in new construction and improvements in 1998, and spent some \$2,000,000 on system maintenance; \$1,000,000 of which was spent on tree trimming and related rights-of-way maintenance projects.

Those in attendance learned that there were other values to the Cooperative, in addition to those which appeared in the Annual Report, including the value of an organization established for service rather than profit, the value of purchasing at cost, and the value of a locally owned and controlled organization.

Thanks to all of SouthEastern's members for making 1998 a success, and a special thanks to Mr. Hubert Futch of Goreville, Illinois. See you next month and as always, "We'll keep the lights on for you!"

Notice of closing

Our office will be closed Monday, Sept. 6, in observance of the Labor Day holiday.

We will resume normal business operations on Tuesday, Sept. 7.

Enjoy your holiday!



The area residents who were re-elected to SEIEC's board of trustees are pictured receiving congratulations from James M. "Mick" Cummins, general manager. From left are Cummins, Bill Cadle of Marion, Sherry Gross of Elizabethtown and Robert Tiberend of Benton. The election was held Tuesday, August 3, at Southeastern Illinois College near Harrisburg and Eldorado.

Cadle, Gross, Tiberend re-elected at 61st annual meeting

Old news is good news. That's what members attending the 61st annual meeting of SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative learned. During the meeting, held Tuesday, August 3, at Southeastern Illinois College near Harrisburg and Eldorado, members were told — again — that the co-op will not increase its rates in the coming year.

Members also re-elected three area residents to the co-op's board of trustees. They were Robert Tiberend of Benton, Bill Cadle of Marion and Sherry Gross of Elizabethtown.

Speaking to 1,500 members and guests, James M. "Mick" Cummins, general manager, noted that with SouthEastern's current rates, the average residential consumer using 900 kilowatt-hours (kwh) of electricity a month will actually pay \$1.86 less for it than he would have paid 15 years ago.

"I want to talk to you about

value, he said, "and what it means to you in relation to your co-op. Your electric plant has a value of \$83.5 million, and we had operating margins of \$960,000, a net margin of \$2.9 million and \$1.8 million of patronage capital allocated, but not yet paid to us by our power sup-

plier, Southern Illinois Power Cooperative and the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation, or CFC.

"Other numerical values include an average residential kwh rate of 7.4 cents, which is one of the lowest in the state, and the \$35,370,000 that mem-



Roy D. Wise of Harrisburg presided over the meeting.



Top photo - There was a large crowd, and they listened attentively as James M. "Mick" Cummins, manager, gave his report.

Bottom photo - Many members followed the proceedings in the agendas printed in their annual meeting books.

bers paid for electricity last year, most of which stayed here in southern Illinois and benefited our local economy."

But while those values are important, there are other values as well, which co-op members share in, he said. One is being part of a not-for-profit organization that's working to serve its members, rather than provide a dividend for far-off investors. SouthEastern was not created to generate profits, he added, but was established to provide electric service to the residents, farms and businesses of southern Illinois.

"In the past four years," he said, your co-op has returned more than \$2.8 million to its members, in cash. We've been doing that for years. When the

investor-owned utilities return money the law forces them to, it's in the form of a credit that goes against future consumption. We like to think our members deserve better than that."

Gross spoke briefly, and remarked that SEIEC now has 21,233 members, and that number

included 812 members who began receiving service last year. "The value of our plant is \$83.5 million," she said, "and that's up five percent from last year. We



Delores Stuby, left, of Harrisburg, won the combination TV/VCR, while Vicki Aly, right, of Eddyville, won the microwave oven. Greg Cruse, administrative and financial services manager for SEIEC, made the presentations.



Sherry Gross, secretary-treasurer, gives her report.



Members had an opportunity to have a free blood pressure check.

also had a four percent increase in kWh sales in 1998," she added.

After the meeting the board met to reorganize for the coming year and elected James M. "Jamie" Scherrer of Equality president, Gary Hise of Golconda vice president, and Sherry Gross, secretary-treasurer. Board members in addition to the officers are Roy D. Wise of Harrisburg, Victor G. Knight of McLeansboro, David Ramsey of Omaha, William S. Richardson of Ewing, Richard Rister of Harrisburg, Robert Tiberend of Benton, Bill Cadle of Marion and Kenneth Webb of Tunnel Hill.

Right top photo - The attendance prize this year was a large calculator, and these youngsters are practicing using them.

Right bottom photo - While adults worked at serious business, members of the younger set had an opportunity to go for a short stroll.



Power Outage

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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.

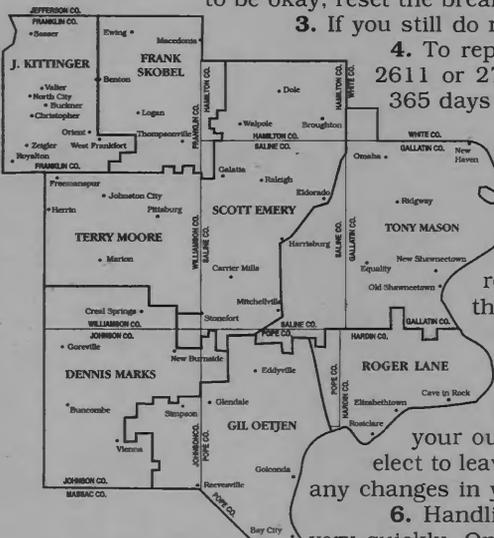
3. If you still do not have power, check with neighbors to see if they have power.

4. To report a power failure or other emergency, please phone 1-800-833-2611 or 273-2611. These phone numbers are 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. Those members having touch-tone phones can simply enter their seven-digit phone number (without the area code) to report power failures or power problems. These reports will be immediately logged into the system. Members who do not have touch-tone phones will be asked to leave a recorded message with their name, phone number and location of the outage. Since these messages must be retrieved by SouthEastern personnel and then manually entered into the system, they take more time to report, so please do not leave messages that will not help the Cooperative locate your problem and make the necessary repairs. It is important to remember that the system does record

your outage and there is not an operator waiting to take your call if you elect to leave a message. It is also 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.



(800) 833-2611



The SOUTHEASTERN LIGHT

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

General Manager's Comments

James M. "Mick" Cummins



The old adage, "A stitch in time saves nine" is still very applicable today, especially when electronic devices are involved. The convenience of the new generation of televisions, microwave ovens, video recording devices and home entertainment systems is truly remarkable; however these devices are very sensitive to damage caused by lightning and other power surges, including those power surges which can result when a car hits a utility pole, or when birds and animals manage to get into the power lines.

Electronic devices can be damaged by a single large power surge resulting in instantaneous failure, or a series of smaller power surges, commonly known as "electronic rust" which produces eventual failure.

Fortunately there are "Surge Protection" devices available to serve as a "stitch in time". A quality setup will include a meter socket or breaker panel device combined with a receptacle-type device for each appliance to be protected. Quality devices will also contain an internal fuse to open the circuit under extended over-voltage situations. If you are shopping for a quality system, be sure to look for the Underwriter Laboratories' Rating of 1449, and be prepared to pay an initial price of about \$200 for a premium system. The individual com-

ponents of the system range from \$30 to \$100 in price and may fail over time, so be prepared to bear the expense of replacing them.

As an alternative to this expense, SouthEastern will lease a quality system to you for \$6.00 per month. As a part of the lease program, a Cooperative employee will come to your home, farm or business, check the meter service entrance and install additional grounding rods if necessary. The employee will also install a meter socket-type surge protective device. Two 120-volt receptacle devices are included in the lease package and the Cooperative will replace any of the leased components that fail at no additional cost to the member. Members selecting this service from the Cooperative are also protected by a \$10,000 warranty should any protected equipment be damaged by a power surge. Damage claims are handled locally through your electric Cooperative. Contact Don Allen at 1-800-833-2611, extension 160, for more information on this service.

See you next month, and as always, "We'll keep the lights on for you." Mr. Acie E. Gwaltney of Marion, Illinois has just earned \$30.00 for spotting his name in this column, provided he contacts me by the 15th of the month.

Roger Lane is new Hardin County serviceman

Members in the Hardin County area will notice a different gentleman driving the Cooperative's service truck. On July 9th, Roger Lane replaced Glendell Butterworth who retired after being the area serviceman for the past fourteen years.

Roger has been a Lineman in the Hardin County area since February 1973; and for the past four years he has been SouthEastern's Line Foreman at their Rosiclare Headquarters; therefore, he may be new to the service truck, but he is no stranger to the Hardin County area.

In 1969, Roger and his wife, Marla, bought a farm in rural Hardin County and for the past 31 years, they have been engaged in raising Texas Longhorn cattle there. For several years, Marla was employed at Ozark Mahoning Company, and currently is the Associate Pastor of the Honey Comb Church of God, located on the Karbers Ridge



Roger Lane

Blacktop. They are the parents of two married children; daughter, Lori, is married to Rodney Adams and lives in Harrisburg with sons Seth and Ethan; and son, Darus, is married to Cyndi (Dunstan) and they reside with their two sons, Greg and Jacob in Hardin County.

October is cooperative month

Today many electric cooperative consumers don't remember the first day electricity came to their homes. In fact, your electricity was probably already there when you moved in — one of those automatic things like the telephone line and running water.

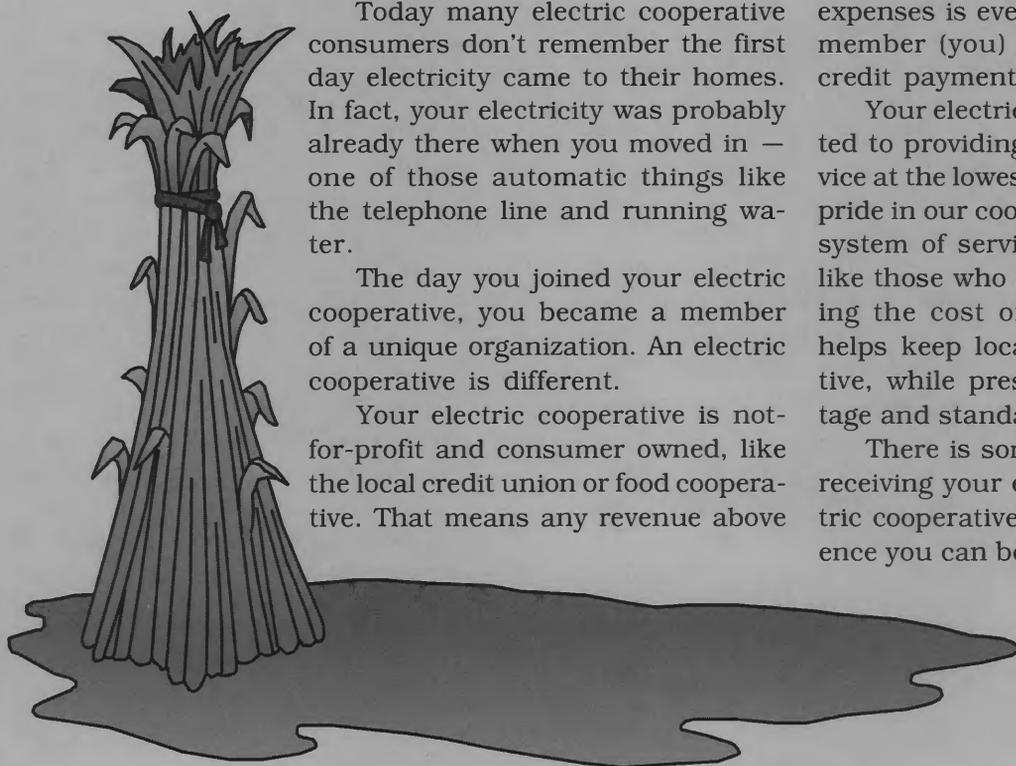
The day you joined your electric cooperative, you became a member of a unique organization. An electric cooperative is different.

Your electric cooperative is not-for-profit and consumer owned, like the local credit union or food cooperative. That means any revenue above

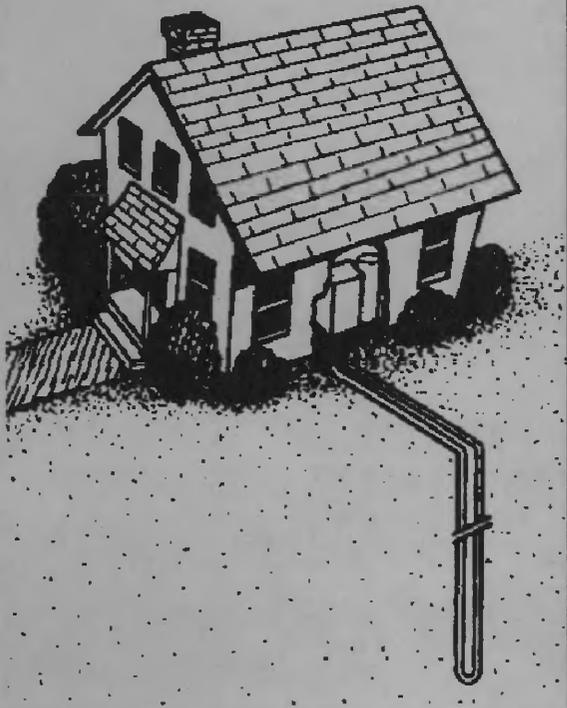
expenses is eventually returned to the member (you) in the form of capital credit payments.

Your electric cooperative is committed to providing the best possible service at the lowest possible cost. We take pride in our cooperative — a grassroots system of service started by pioneers like those who settled this area. Keeping the cost of electricity affordable helps keep local businesses competitive, while preserving our rural heritage and standard of living.

There is something different about receiving your electricity from an electric cooperative. We think it's a difference you can be proud of.



Choose electric!



October means that the days are getting shorter and that cold weather is just around the corner. Before it arrives, check the furnace to make sure that it will be dependable on those chilly mornings. If considering a new unit, think about electric heat. There are many different types on the market today.

The most energy efficient type is geothermal. The basic theory is that the unit uses Mother Earth's ground temperature to heat and cool your home. Because it works with the constant temperature of the earth, operating a ground source heat pump is *dirt-cheap*. After last July's scorcher, that's something to think about. Users say that they experience more consistent comfort than they did with conventional heating and cooling systems. The units are quiet, odor-free and energy efficient, too.

Is your wiring a



hazard?

Today's average home uses electricity as a home did a generation ago. If you have an older home your electrical system of powering all the equipment we

use today may not be up to the task commonly use today.

In fact, some estimates indicate that four out of five American homes are inadequately wired. And inadequate wiring causes one out of eight home fires.

How do you know if your home is properly wired? If you answer yes to three of the following questions, chances are that your electrical system needs upgrading.

- Is your home more than 10 years old?
- Do you have problems with circuit breakers tripping frequently?
- Is the picture on your television constantly shrinking or fading?
- Are your lights dimming or electric motors running more slowly than they should?

Rewiring a home is an expensive proposition, but it's almost certainly cheaper than a fire. Have a licensed electrician review your electrical system and advise you of the measures that you need to take to minimize the risk of an electrical fire.

Source: Reliant

Electrical safety: Proper grain bin wiring

When building or expanding crop storage facilities, there are several important decisions that must be made well before construction begins. Several of these decisions involve the use of electric overhead or underground wiring, and away from overhead lines.

To ensure safety as well as wise investment, use the following checklist as a guide and allow for enough lead time to properly design the entire SEIEC early in the planning process in order to make energy-smart and safe decisions.

When building or expanding crop storage facilities, there are several important decisions that must be made well before construction begins. Several of these decisions involve the use of electric overhead or underground wiring, and away from overhead lines.

To ensure safety as well as wise investment, use the following checklist as a guide and allow for enough lead time to properly design the entire SEIEC early in the planning process in order to make energy-smart and safe decisions.

Checklist:

Source:
National
Food and
Energy
Council

- Are all conductors (wires), fuses and circuit breakers of the proper size and type?
- Do all motor circuits have disconnects located within sight of the motor?
- Does each motor have circuit overload protection?

- Was the system installed by a licensed electrician?

- Is all electrical equipment dry and free of corrosion?

- Are all outlets, switches and other devices surface-mounted for easy inspection and maintenance?

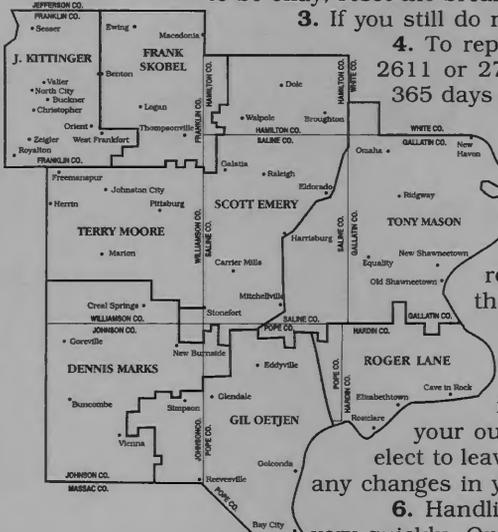
- Do motors have correctly sized over-current protection and are they rated for farm duty?

- Are lights enclosed by globes or guards?

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(800) 833-2611



The SOUTHEASTERN LIGHT

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois



General Manager's Comments

James M. "Mick" Cummins

In keeping with SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative's mission statement of providing reliable energy and other services which benefit and involve our membership, and enhance our communities, I would like to, once again, remind our members of your Cooperative's involvement in providing financial assistance to deserving children who are planning to further their education.

SouthEastern's Board of Trustees initiated a scholarship program in 1976 to assist such students, by annually providing four \$400 scholarships to local junior colleges. Southeastern Illinois College at Harrisburg receives two, John A. Logan College at Carterville receives one, and Rend Lake College at Benton receives one.

Applications for the above scholarships must be obtained from these schools, each of which has established a Scholarship Committee. These Committees select the recipient of the scholarship based on the following criteria:

1. The student must demonstrate financial need.
2. The student or parents must be a current member of SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative.
3. The student must be in good academic standing.

The selection of the scholarship recipient is left entirely to the discretion of the participating schools, who in turn

notify the Cooperative of the selected student and request advancement of the scholarship funds.

In addition to the above scholarships, the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, provides a \$1,000 IEC Scholarship each year to high school seniors whose parents are members of an Illinois Electric Cooperative. Applications for this scholarship have increased significantly over the last five years, so this year the Association will be offering two \$1,000 IEC Scholarships. These scholarships may be used for educational costs at any two or four-year accredited college, or university in Illinois, including vocational and/or technical schools. The following conditions apply:

1. Scholarship winners must begin undergraduate studies within a year of being notified they have won.
2. Scholarship winners will be expected to be "full time" students (12 hours or more).
3. Scholarships are for one year and are not renewable.
4. Scholarships will be awarded based on grade point average, college entrance test scores, work and volunteer experience, participation in school and community activities, biographical statement and knowledge of electric coopera-

(Continued on page 16b)

(Continued from page 16a)

- tives as demonstrated by a short essay.
5. Deadline for receipt of completed applications and submissions is 1 January of each year.
 6. Scholarship winners will be notified by 1 May of each year.
 7. Applications for the two IEC Scholarships are available upon request from SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative.
 8. Scholarship winners are selected by Northern Illinois University.

For more information or an IEC Scholarship application, please contact SouthEastern's Scholarship Coordinator, Ray Harbison, at SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative, P. O. Box 251, Eldorado, IL 62930, or phone (618) 273-2611, or call toll-free at (800) 833-2611, Ext. 163.

See you next month, and as always, "We'll keep the lights on for you", especially for you, William P. Hyden of Johnston City, Illinois, if you contact me prior to November 15th.

Surge protection

Our way of life has been revolutionized by the development of the computer chip and correspondent electronic devices. Perhaps the only drawback to this new technology is its sensitivity to lightning and other electrical surges. Several manufacturers now offer protective equipment, which ranges in price from just a few dollars to several hundred dollars. Many also offer warranties against damage to your appliances resulting from surges. The problem is that some of these products are useless, and the warranties offered are not worth any more than the paper they are printed on. Your Cooperative is now offering a lease arrangement for quality surge protective equipment. As a part of this program, Cooperative personnel will come to your home, farm or business

and check ground resistance to the flow of electricity and install additional grounding rods, if needed. At that time a meter socket surge protective device will be installed. A warranty against equipment damage is included and warranty claims are handled through SouthEastern by our personnel. The service, equipment and a \$10,000 maximum damage warranty are available from SouthEastern for the lease rate of \$6.00 per month and includes two 120-volt receptacle type, plug in devices. Optional equipment, which will enhance the protective characteristics of the meter socket surge protection device, is available for purchase. Contact Don Allen at (800) 833-2611, Ext. 160 for more detailed information on this service.

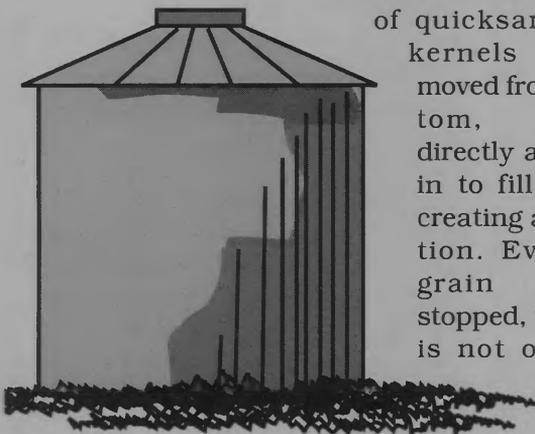
Handle grain harvest with care

Harvested grain traps like quicksand

If you are handling loose, harvested grain, it is all too easy to get trapped in the grain — or even die of suffocation. Grain handling accidents happen very quickly, and flowing grain can draw in a person in seconds. If you are in a large wagon or a grain bin, you could become completely submerged in as little as 15 seconds.

A grain surface may appear solid, but it's not — a small opening in the unloading gate gives the

entire surface the quality of quicksand. When kernels are removed from the bottom, kernels directly above rush in to fill the void, creating a fluid motion. Even if the grain flow is stopped, the danger is not over. It is



very difficult to remove people from grain once they are trapped. For example, the force required to remove a person buried in grain can exceed 2,000 pounds — the same as lifting a small car.

Don't be a victim of suffocation when handling loose grain. Follow these safety tips:

- Lock out power to all types of grain-handling equipment. Disconnect power, and place locks over operating switches. This also helps discourage grain theft.
- Always use the buddy system when you are unloading or loading grain. Notify a second person of your whereabouts at all times, so that he/she can obtain help if necessary. Ideally, have a second person on site.
- Never permit children to ride in grain wagons or enter grain storage areas.
- Apply suffocation hazard decals to all grain wagons, grain bins and storage structures.
- Lock access doors to grain bins; limit access to the top of grain wagons.

Source: The National Ag Safety Database/Iowa State University Extension

Disaster prepared: Don't let a leave you quaking

QUAKE

With the recent earthquakes in Greece, Turkey, and Taiwan fresh in our minds, now may be a good time to reflect on the state of our own preparedness in the event of a similar disaster. Granted, earthquakes are few and far between in this part of the country, but southern Illinois is situated on or near the New Madrid fault, and a damaging tremor can't be ruled out completely.

That fissure hasn't done any serious acting up in a long time, but the last time it did it was a real spectacle. As heavily populated as our area is now, even a minor tremor on the fault could cause serious property damage. And, there are other forms of disaster that can cause problems.

The idea behind these guidelines is to offer you some quick, inexpensive tips that will enable you to reduce the damage to your property if a moderate quake or tornado were to hit. They involve little chores that even the all-thumbs handyman can accomplish, and that can be done at very little expense. Please note that they are simple steps designed to help you minimize property damage, and will not save your life if your house is blown away or if it collapses on you.

Elementary quake preparations are fairly simple. You need to secure your water heater so it won't fall over. To do that, you need a strip of plumber's tape, which is available at hardware stores and home centers. It's a metal strip about three-quarters of an inch wide, with nail holes about every inch. You need to nail one end of the strip to a stud behind your water

heater, run the strip around the unit and nail it to another stud. It's not enough to simply drive a nail into drywall!

Next, you should secure freestanding bookshelves and the like. You do that by using a heavy line, such as a high-strength fishing line, and hooks that screw into the wall and the back of the unit you need to anchor. Affix a hook into the bookshelf, another in the wall (be sure it's screwed into a stud), and tie the two together.

No matter what the problem is, whether it's Y2K, a tornado or an earthquake, it's important to know where your electrical main switch is so you can turn off all power if you have to. If you have natural gas or propane, you need to know where that shutoff is, and you'll really need one of the special wrenches it takes to shut them off.

Have a supply of bottled water on hand, and fill your bathtub so you'll have water to flush toilets with. Keep some canned foods that can be eaten cold, if necessary. While many soups and stews are palatable cold, they're much better warmed, so you may want a small camp stove and some spare fuel. A battery-powered radio would come in handy for weather reports. Whatever you do, don't forget a manually operated can opener.

Don't forget blankets and/or sleeping bags. Always keep candles, matches and a flashlight handy, and spare batteries, too. Remember that battery-powered lanterns are safer than coal oil lamps or those that use fossil fuels.

With any luck, you shouldn't have to go through the things we've outlined here. But if you do, you'll be pleased that you took our simple precautions. They take little effort and even less expense, and they can help a lot.



Happy Thanksgiving

CLOSING DATES!

**We will be closed on the following
dates in November:**

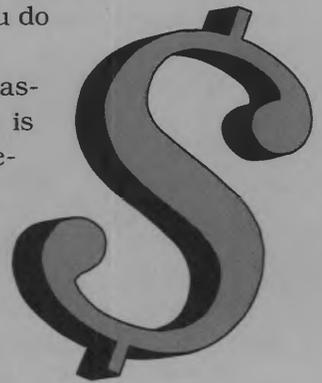
- Thursday, Nov. 11 for Veteran's Day. The office will reopen at 8 a.m. on Friday, Nov. 12.
- Thursday and Friday Nov. 25 & 26 for Thanksgiving. We will reopen at 8 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 29.



Low income energy assistance offered

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is available again this winter to help families experiencing hardships to pay their energy bills. The program started on September 1, earlier than in past years. LIHEAP offers a one-time benefit payment for eligible households based on income, household size, fuel type and geographic location. You do not have to own your home to be eligible.

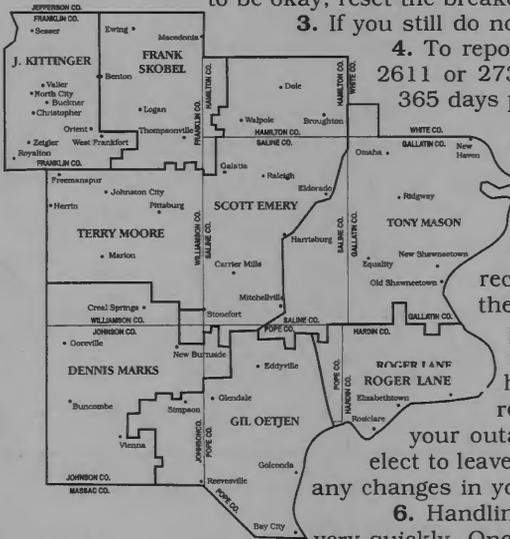
You may be eligible to receive LIHEAP assistance if your household's combined income is at or below 125 percent of the Federal poverty guidelines. The billing department can direct you to the local agency that administers LIHEAP in your county for more information. Or, you can call the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs' Energy Information Line at (800) 252-8643.



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The SOUTHEASTERN LIGHT

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

General Manager's Comments

James M. "Mick" Cummins



Although the number of working coal mines in Southern Illinois has decreased dramatically over the past ten years, coal continues to be the number one fuel choice for power generation in this country, with some 56% of our electric energy being produced by coal. Nuclear energy is second with 21% of the market, followed by hydroelectric which has 11%, and natural gas with 8%. Our own State of Illinois leads the nation in installed nuclear capacity, despite an abundance of coal reserves.

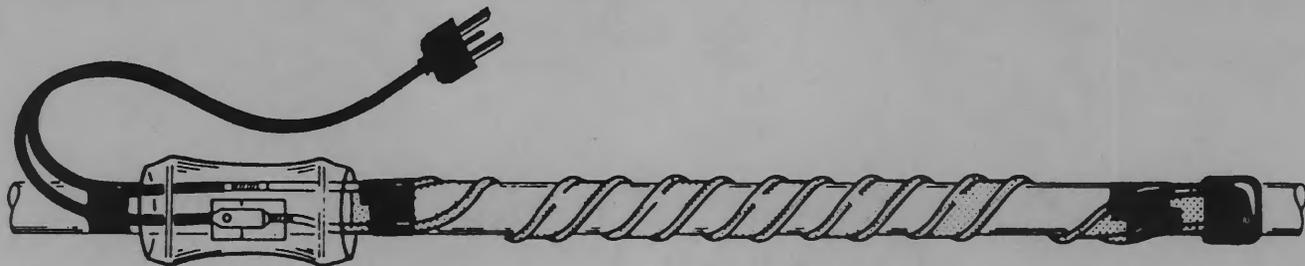
The problem with most Illinois coal is its high sulfur content, which has resulted in most Illinois utilities electing to import low sulfur coal from Wyoming, thus avoiding the high capital cost required to install "scrubbers" or other high tech, but expensive sulfur removal devices.

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative is one of three rural electric cooperatives that jointly own the Southern Illinois Power Cooperative Generating Plant at Marion, Illinois. This plant is one of the few in Illinois that is equipped to burn high sulfur Illinois coal and is also capable of burning the waste material known as "gob" from closed area coal mines. This capability allows Southern Illinois Power to purchase locally mined coal in order to promote our area economy, and the burning of the gob allows us to rid Southern Illinois of an environmental blight. In addition to

the 272 Megawatts of installed coal generation capacity, Southern Illinois Power also receives 28 Megawatts of hydroelectric capacity from dams, which are installed on the Cumberland River.

Southern Illinois Power also purchases a small amount of power that is being generated locally from coal mine gases. These gases, which are primarily methane, are abundant in Saline, Franklin and parts of Williamson Counties. When these gases, which are directly resultant from underground coal mining activities, are pumped or vented directly into the atmosphere, they are reported to contribute to the phenomenon known as global warming. SouthEastern is working with Southern Illinois Power and local investors to further promote the use of coal mine gas as a viable fuel for electric generation in Southern Illinois, not only to promote our local economy and resources, but also, to help clean up our environment. As a result of those efforts, an additional 1.5 Megawatts of generating capacity is expected to come on line early in the year 2000. The generators for this project are to be located adjacent to the old Grayson Mine site near Eldorado, Illinois.

See you next month, and as always, "We'll keep the lights on for you." Roger Isenhour of West Frankfort, please give me a call by the 15th of this month and I'll send a gift of \$30.00 to you.



Use heat tapes properly for results, safety

This is the time of year when electric heat tapes get a real workout, to keep water pipes from freezing. And with that in mind, this is an especially good time to check your heat tapes and replace them, if necessary.

The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) says consumers (including residents of mobile homes) should replace uncertified heat tapes that are more than three years old with certified ones that meet recognized voluntary standards.

An electric heat tape resembles an electric cord. It may be round or flat. Some varieties have an overall covering of light metal braid. There is an electrical plug on one end and sometimes a pod or box with a thermostat switch to control the power to the heating conductors in the tape.

Heat tapes are usually installed in crawl spaces or attics. Often, they are used on mobile homes to heat water supply pipes that come from underground up to a mobile home.

For all the benefits heat tapes offer, they can be dangerous. According to the CPSC, electric heat tapes are involved in about 2,000 fires each year, resulting in about 10 deaths and 100 injuries. CPSC urges you to help reduce this risk of fire and death by using only certified heat tapes on your pipes. One way you can tell the differ-

ence is that all new certified heat tapes will have three-prong plugs; the older uncertified ones have two-prong plugs. Currently, there are three organizations that are certifying heat tapes to meet recognized national voluntary standards: Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. (UL), the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), and Factory Mutual Research Corporation (FMRC).

Buying heat tapes that meet voluntary standards offers you and your family a degree of protection, but heat tapes also must be installed and used properly and inspected annually to provide the most protection against freezing pipes, as well as the highest level of safety for you and your family.

CPSC offers these safety tips for electric heat tapes:

- Inspect heat tapes each year and replace them if you notice signs of deterioration. Look for discolored surfaces (especially at the plug), charring, cuts or breaks in the insulation, or bare wires.
- When installing heat tapes, carefully observe installation instructions. Different heat tapes have different installation requirements.
- Always plug the three-prong plug into a three-prong outlet to make sure the heat tape is grounded.
- Use a ground fault circuit

interrupter (GFCI) whenever heat tapes are plugged in.

- Make sure the heat tape that you use is intended for use on water pipes (other tapes heat roof, gutters, or garden soil).
- Do not wrap heat tape over itself unless advised by the manufacturer. Use non-flammable insulation such as fiberglass. Do not use foam or vinyl insulation. It could catch fire if the heat tape fails.
- Apply heat tape directly on the pipe to be protected, never on top of the insulation covering the pipe.
- Keep the end cap sealed and off the ground to prevent water from getting in. Moisture can lead to a fire.
- If heat tape has a thermostat, check instructions to see if the thermostat should be placed against the pipe and covered with insulation or if it should be left hanging and uncovered.

Heat tapes perform a useful function, but like any electrical product, they need to be treated with care and respect. Don't create a fire hazard trying to keep your pipes from freezing. Replace uncertified heat tapes that are more than three years old. Buy heat tapes that meet voluntary standards. Install and use heat tapes properly.



You have decked the halls and you are ready for the holiday season, but do not forget to think safety when it comes time to light the tree.

- ✓ *Make sure bulbs do not touch any branches.*
- ✓ *Do not use lights on a metal tree.*
- ✓ *Check each set of Christmas lights to be sure they are in good repair. If a cord is damaged, frayed or gets hot when in use, unplug it immediately and do not use it.*
- ✓ *Use three-prong, grounded electric outlets for lighting. If none is available, have one installed by a qualified electrical contractor.*
- ✓ *Never run an electric cord from indoors to the outdoors.*
- ✓ *Check for loose prongs on the plug.*
- ✓ *Use caution when installing outdoor lights. Be aware of overhead power lines and have someone help hold tall ladders.*
- ✓ *Turn off lights when you are away or sleeping at night.*

OFFICE CLOSINGS

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative will be closed Dec. 24 in observance of Christmas. The office will also be closed on December 31 for the New Year's Day holiday.