

The SOUTHEASTERN Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

President's Comments



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

As you know, the cooperative's service area in the past has experienced some major storms including ice storms, tornadoes, excessive straight-line winds and severe thunderstorms. These storms typically result in outages caused by downed trees, broken tree limbs and fallen poles. In this article, I would like to take an opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for the cooperative employees that not only work to restore your electric service during these severe weather events but who also dedicate their lives to serving the electric cooperative members every day.

April 18 has been designated as Lineman Appreciation Day. This is a day to honor all of the hardworking men and women in their role to build, maintain and restore electric service that powers our communities. These are the employees that come to work, day or night, rain or shine, to make sure that all members have access to electricity. When the storms roll in and our communities take cover, these employees pick up the phone, grab their gear and go out into the storms to restore your service. In addition to their role of restoring service during severe weather events, your cooperative linemen also work every day to build and maintain over 3,500 miles of distribution system in SouthEastern's territory. The linemen perform much of their work while the systems are still energized so that members will not be without electricity while performing necessary maintenance.

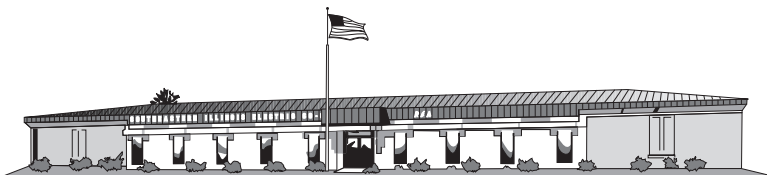
In addition to our linemen, SouthEastern would also like to recognize and show appreciation to all employees

that make our cooperative such a success. From the front office employees like our customer service representatives that answer your calls and provide the needed information, to the engineering personnel that design the energy systems for safe and reliable service, to the dispatch personnel that maintain effective communications with employees, to the accounting personnel who ensure our vendors are paid and track accounts receivable, to our payroll personnel ensuring that employees are paid accurately and timely, to the forestry personnel that perform vegetation management to increase reliability, to the management team that manages every day activities – SouthEastern salutes all of you for your hard work and dedication to our cooperative and the members it serves.

As your electric cooperative, we strive to achieve excellent service while providing members with a very reliable energy supply. As I shared with you in previous articles, the most recent member survey revealed an increase in overall member satisfaction and an American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) score that was the highest ever received. This survey revealed that the cooperative scored higher in all 13 cooperative survey attributes. The survey respondents gave the cooperative the highest ratings for delivering reliable electric service, having knowledgeable employees, excellent customer service and prompt outage response.

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READERSHIP PRIZE WINNER:
Heidi Qualk, Creal Springs, IL



Planting seeds of caution

Tips to stay safe during planting season

The greatest hazard on today's farms is electrocution. Before you head back into the fields this spring, read this information on how to stay safe.

"Make sure everyone knows the location of overhead power lines and to keep farm equipment at least 10 feet away from them," says Molly Hall, director of the Safe Electricity program. "The minimum 10-foot distance is a 360-degree rule – below, to the side and above lines."

Simply coming too close to a power line while working is dangerous as electricity can arc or "jump" to conducting material or objects, such as a ladder, pole or truck.

"Many farm electrical accidents that involve power lines happen when loading or preparing to transport equipment to fields or while working on farm machinery near power lines," notes Hall. "Sometimes a line is closer than it looks. When moving large equipment or high loads near a power line, always use a spotter to help ensure contact is not made with a line."

Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors are now equipped with radios and communications systems that have tall antennas extending from the cab that could make contact with power lines. Avoid raising the arms of planters, cultivators or truck beds near power lines.

"Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path," warns Hall.

When performing other farm chores, as in any outdoor work, take care not to raise equipment



such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination. Do not try to clear storm-damage debris and limbs near or touching power lines or near fallen lines.

Overhead electric wires aren't the only electrical contact that can result in a serious incident. Pole guy wires are grounded to the neutral, but when one of the guy wires is broken, it can cause an electric current disruption. This can make those neutral wires anything but harmless. If you hit a guy wire and break it, call the utility to fix it. Don't do it yourself. When dealing with electrical poles and wires, call the electric utility.

"Operators of farm machinery or moving equipment also should know what to do if the vehicle comes in contact with a power line," Hall says. "It's almost always best to stay in the cab and call for help. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until

the electric utility arrives to make sure power to the line is cut off.

"If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path to the ground and electrocution is the result," Molly Hall continues. "Even if a line has landed on the ground, there is still potential for the area to be energized. Stay in the vehicle unless there's fire or imminent risk of fire."

In that case, the proper action is to jump – not step – with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Hop or shuffle to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area.

Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment. Many electrocutions occur when the operator dismounts and, realizing nothing has happened, tries to get back on the equipment.

For more electrical safety information, visit SafeElectricity.org.



TOGETHER WE SERVE

Cooperation among cooperatives is the sixth of seven cooperative principles. Through practicing this principle, Illinois cooperatives are sharing resources to save labor and equipment costs, coordinating personnel and equipment on a state level to ensure faster outage restoration, and sharing best practices to provide innovative solutions for meeting our industry's and members' changing needs.

We are your cooperative, and our sole purpose is to serve you.
Together, we can serve you better.



**SouthEastern Illinois
Electric Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

President's comments

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As you can see, your cooperative employees are doing an outstanding job for the membership and we hope you will join us in thanking our lineman and all employees for the outstanding service they provide. Your cooperative remains committed to finding new and better ways to serve its members. Your cooperative will continue to work diligently to improve and enhance the level of service and reliability that you receive while keeping rates as affordable as possible.

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



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POWER OUTAGE

If your power goes off, we offer these suggestions

1. Check the fuses or circuit breakers in your service panels. If you have breakers, make sure they are in the "ON" position.
2. If you have a meter pole, check the main breaker panel just below the meter socket. If the breaker is in the "OFF" position, check all of your wiring from the meter pole to your various buildings. If the wiring appears to be okay, reset the breaker to the "ON" position.
3. If you still do not have power, check with neighbors to see if they have power.
4. To report a power failure or other emergency, please phone 1-877-399-8405. This phone number is monitored around the clock, 365 days per year to accept your outage and emergency calls.
5. Your phone call will be handled by SouthEastern's automated outage reporting system and will be identified automatically through ANI (Automatic Number Identification). An outage record will then be generated

for your location. Please note that the phone number from which you place the call will be the number used to generate the record. If the system fails to recognize your phone number, members having touch-tone phones may simply enter their seven-digit phone number (without area code) in order to report the outage. Members not having touch-tone phones will be asked to leave a message. It is important you leave your name, phone number and location of the outage. Retrieving messages and entering them into the system is time consuming; therefore, please leave only a message that will help in restoration of electric service. Do not remain on the line for an operator because a live operator is not there to respond. In order to keep a current listing of all numbers, it is important that you notify the Cooperative of any changes in your telephone number.

6. Handling outage calls electronically allows you to report power failures very quickly. Once your outage has been reported, it will be dispatched to repair personnel who will restore your outage as soon as possible. Calling back repeatedly will not shorten the length of the outage, but may hinder the efforts of other members who are trying to report outages.

OUTAGE CALLS ONLY 1-877-399-8405

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