

JAMUP

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

The Cooperative Way

It is hard for many of us to imagine life without electricity. We are accustomed to easily controlling the temperature in our homes, keeping food fresh and having lights turn on with the flip of a switch. However, not too long ago, most of rural America didn't have any of these comforts that we take for granted.

In 1935, only one in 10 rural Americans had electricity. Private power companies provided electricity to residents of cities and towns but were unwilling to serve rural areas. They deemed the building of lines across rugged countryside into sparsely populated areas unprofitable. Just as it seemed rural America was destined to be without electricity, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed executive order 7037 on May 11, 1937, creating the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). **Joseph Lazzara**

Suddenly, electric cooperatives began to form across America. Neighbors and community members banded together and through blood, sweat and tears began the work of bringing light to rural America. These brave men and women dedicated countless hours in their efforts to better the lives of their families and communities. They performed amazing amounts of work with very little

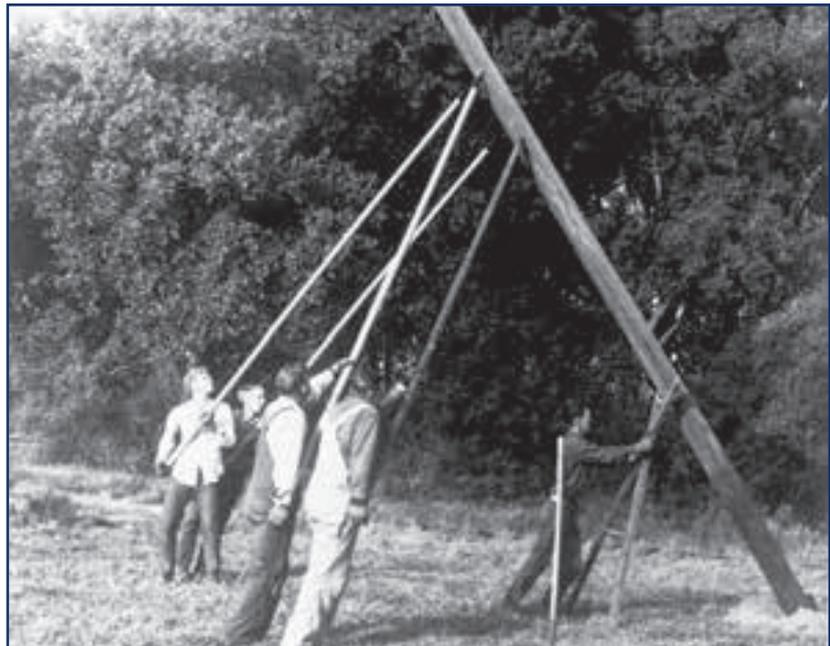


resources. From manually digging holes and walking poles into place, to manhandling heavy wires on poles and cross arms, the work was tough and dangerous. Safety equipment was non-existent, and many lives were lost to the cause. However, the cooperatives slowly succeeded in lighting up the countryside one community at a time. In fact, Southern Illinois

Electric Cooperative (SIEC) was founded in 1938.

Although many things have changed over the years, the

cooperative principles and values remain the same. Our electric poles stand for something. Cooperatives brought light to the darkness and electrified places that nobody else wanted to. Our poles are pillars that were founded on principle by people with principles. Today, these poles are yours. They come to you with a history and a future. And they come to you with a responsibility as a member-owner. Without your support and commitment, we would not exist. We welcome your advice and comments as we continually look for ways to improve SIEC. Working together, we can continue to accomplish great things. It's the cooperative way.



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SIEC studies rate options

Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative’s mission is “to deliver safe, high-quality, reliable products and services to our members at an affordable price while embracing the cooperative principles.” We are proud of the partnership with our members, which is why we think of you first and foremost in each decision that is made here at the cooperative.

Over the course of the next several weeks, the cooperative will study the different options that are available on rate structure and billing format. I want to assure you that we will keep you, the member, in mind as we explore and consider the components that surround these very important matters. The energy industry continues to change at a rapid pace, but one thing that will not change is our commitment to provide our members with high-quality electric services at an affordable price. In fact, our goal is to develop a rate structure that is best for the entire membership that allows us to continue to deliver energy to you at reasonable costs.

We have engaged an external consultant to do a cost of service study. We foresee having the results from this study in time to take to your board of directors toward the end of February. From there, your board will

debate the options available. Once they decide on an option, any rate changes are anticipated to be in effect April 1.

Many other aspects of rates and bills are being considered. One item is a Formulary Rate Plan (FRP). An FRP allows the operating costs to be recognized on a periodic basis which is usually annually. Rather than having a large rate increase all at once, an FRP allows for gradual increases and possible decreases. In other words, instead of having a large but infrequent rate change, there would be smaller but more frequent rate changes. This rate tool only collects the minimum amount required at the time that it is required. Likewise, it returns dollars to you when minimum margins are exceeded. Several cooperatives in Illinois have adopted some type of FRP.

Your cooperative is also considering a bill format that provides more detail by unbundling your rate. Within our current rates are power and transmission costs, delivery cost as well as other fees.

As you know, the cooperative distributes (delivers) electricity to you. This requires us to have and maintain substations, poles, wire, transformers and meters. Consideration is being

given to stating the distribution charge separately on your bill.

In order to distribute electricity, we first must purchase it from a power generator. SIEC purchases the power that it delivers from Southern Illinois Power Cooperative at Lake of Egypt. The cost of this power is passed on to you at the same price we pay for it. This too may become a separately stated item on your bill. Again, our focus is you the member and our desire is to provide you with the information that is essential to understanding your bill.



As we work toward a satisfactory rate adjustment, our first since 2012, please know that we are dedicated to doing what we can to balance reliability with affordable rates. We will never lose sight of our mission to provide you with just that – reliable electricity at affordable rates.

SIEC Board of Directors

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For Outages Call:
800-762-1400 * 618-827-3555



Member prize

In this issue of the JAMUP, we printed the names of three SIEC members who are eligible to receive a \$10 credit toward their utility bill. If you find your name printed in this center section and it’s not part of the story, call Bree with your account number at **800-762-1400** to claim your prize.

Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative

7420 U.S. Highway 51 South • P.O. Box 100
 Dongola, Illinois 62926
 618-827-3555 • Office hours: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.
 Web address: www.siec.coop



Keep your home safe from electrical fires

Your lights turn on in an instant, and your plug slides into outlets without sparks or shocks. You can't see it, and typically don't think much about it. However, the electricity that we take for granted every day requires attention to prevent potential hazards. Safe Electricity offers these tips to help keep your home safe from electrical problems and fires:

- Have all work done by a qualified electrician.
- Get regular check-ups for older homes, which have older wiring and are often designed for fewer appliances and electronics. Have the electrical system checked every five to 10 years, depending on the age of your home. If your home is older than 30 years, make sure the wiring meets updated National Electrical Code standards.
- Watch for warning signs such as hot or discolored switch plates,

cords or plugs; dimming or flickering lights; buzzing or sizzling sounds. If you smell a burning odor, check it out immediately and unplug electric items in that area.

- Immediately repair loose outlets, and discard or replace cracked, cut or broken insulation on electric cords.
- Keep cords out of walkways and high traffic areas so they don't get stepped on, damaged or cause a tripping hazard.
- Use extension cords temporarily, not as permanent wiring. Too many extension cords in one area creates a risk of overheating or overloading circuits.
- Never use cords or appliances that have exposed, damaged or faulty wiring. Have them repaired or replaced.
- Avoid using nails or staples to secure electric cords in place.

When an electrical cord is punctured, it increases the likelihood of electric shock and fire.

- When you replace light bulbs, ensure that you match the recommended wattage for your lamp or other light fixtures. Using an incorrect wattage increases the likelihood for electrical fires.
- If small children are present, install tamper resistant outlets or use outlet covers to reduce the risk of shocks and fire.
- Educate your loved ones on the dangers of electricity and provide guidance on care for your appliances and electronics.

Electrical safety can also reduce energy waste and save on the power bill. Turn off electronics and lights when they are not in use. This reduces heat as it lower electricity use.

Learn more about home electrical safety at SafeElectricity.org.



Our office will be closed on Monday, February 19 for Presidents Day.

Stay Back!

Know the difference between types of lines and wires. If you see a downed electric line, be aware that it could be live and dangerous!

<h3 style="color: green;">Electric Wire</h3> <p>Electric wires are larger and can be easily identified by the three separate twisted wires, one being uniquely silver or uninsulated.</p>	<h3 style="color: green;">Cable Wire</h3> <p>Cable lines are round and look similar to the coaxial cable that connects to the TV in your home.</p>	<h3 style="color: green;">Phone Wire</h3> <p>Telephone wires are typically smaller, flat wires.</p>
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DO NOT TAMPER WITH YOUR ELECTRIC METER

Meter tampering can result in electric shock, is illegal and increases electricity rates for other co-op members.

- ⊘ Never break a meter seal.
- ⊘ Never open a meter base.
- ⊘ Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.

If you know or suspect that someone has tampered with their meter, please contact us immediately.

Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative
Your Electricity. Your Partner.

WORKSHOP SAFETY

Make your home workshop safe.

With so many power tools in one place, it is smart to take steps toward preventing electrical shocks and other hazards:

- Choose electrical outlets equipped with **ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs)**.
- Make sure metal **workbenches are grounded**. Have a professional do that work.
- Check for **damaged cords, plugs**, and signs of wear before using equipment.
- Replace** old, worn power tools.
- Use **heavy-duty extension cords** rated for the tools you plan to use.
- Make sure the area is **clean and dry** before undertaking any project.
- Store flammable liquids and materials **away from the workbench**, and where spark-producing tools like grinders and cutters are used.

Always stay focused when working with power tools. If you are tired or distracted, wait until another time so you can give the project full concentration and **work safely**.

Learn more at