

JAMUP

published by Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative, Dongola, Illinois

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Energy-saving tips for winter

Well, it is that time of year again. You can sit back and watch the daily temperatures go down and your electricity usage go up. I would not advise waiting until January to start asking about things you can do to lower your electricity bill. Most



of these projects should take place in the spring, summer or fall. Things like replacing an old, inefficient heating and cooling system or adding insulation to your attic can really give you the most bang for your buck. With that being said, there are things you can do now that can help lower your electricity usage. Here are some effective energy-saving tips for winter.

Open your curtains during the day – Windows should be left uncovered during the daytime hours. This will allow the sun's energy to naturally warm your home and lower your need for your heating system to run as often. Just be sure to close the curtains after the sun sets to help insulate the windows.

Seal leaks – The average home with all of its foundation and wall cracks, holes around plumbing and electrical outlets, and other areas around windows and doors has enough air leakage that is equivalent

to leaving a door open. Apply weatherstripping, caulking or spray foam insulation in these areas as needed.

Make changes to your thermostat – For every one degree you lower your thermostat you save anywhere from one to three percent on your electricity bill. Programmable thermostats allow you to lower your temperature settings during the

day when no one is home or at night when everyone is asleep. You can then increase those temperatures before you get home or before you wake up. I would not recommend you lower the temperature more than three degrees from normal. Lowering the temperature any more than three degrees will require your heating system to operate overtime to catch up, thus giving away any savings from doing so. Smart thermostats are now available that monitor your daily activities and make these changes for you.

Unplug your electric heater – I receive phone calls all the time from members who have purchased a miracle heater. You know one of those things that are “too good to be true.” Most plug in electric heaters use 1,500 watts of electricity or 1.5 kWh (kilowatt-hours). So, in a day the heater will use 36 kWh, and if you leave it on all month, that is roughly 1,080 kWh. To put

this more into perspective, most of you reading this article will use around 1,080 kWh for your whole home during the month of April. In comparison to your heating system, which was designed to heat your whole home, the portable electric heater puts out very little heat.

Make lifestyle changes – Turn off the lights whenever possible. Use LED light bulbs. Fix hot water faucet leaks. Reduce phantom loads. Many appliances are quietly using electricity around the clock even though you think they are turned off. The power supplies to your instant on televisions, computers, cell phone chargers and clocks on microwaves are all examples of “phantom loads” that steadily consume electricity whether you are using them or not. **Kayla Suits**

Sign up for Smarthub – SIEC offers an app that allows you to monitor your daily electric usage as well as see past usage history. This will allow you to be more informed. Visit www.siec.coop for more details.

I hope you find these tips useful and they help you save money on your electricity bill. Just keep in mind that warmer temperatures will be here soon.



Be prepared for winter storms

When winter temperatures drop and storms hit, it can be challenging to stay safe and warm. Winter storm severity varies depending on where you live, but nearly all Americans are affected by extreme winter storms at some point. Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative (SIEC) cares about your safety, and we want you to be prepared. **James Windings**

Heavy snow and ice can lead to downed power lines, leaving co-op members without power. During extremely low temperatures, this can be dangerous. During a power outage, our crews will continue to work as quickly and safely as possible to restore power, but there are a few things you can do to prepare yourself.

■ **Stay warm** – Plan to use a safe alternate heating source, such as a fireplace or wood-burning stove during a power outage. These are great options to keep you and your loved ones warm, but exercise caution when using, and never leave the heating source unattended. If you are using gasoline-, propane- or natural gas-burning devices to stay warm, never use them indoors. Remember that fuel- and wood-burning sources of heat should

always be properly ventilated. Always read the manufacturer's directions before using.

■ **Stay fed** – The CDC recommends having several days' supply of food that does not need to be cooked handy. Crackers, cereal, canned goods and bread are good options. Five gallons of water per person should also be available in the event of an extended power outage.

■ **Stay safe** – When an outage occurs, it usually means power lines are down. It is best not to travel during winter storms, but

if you must, bring a survival kit along, and do not travel alone. If you encounter downed lines, always assume they are live. Stay as far away from the downed lines as possible, and report the situation to our dispatchers by calling 618-827-3327, if possible.

Winter weather can be unpredictable and dangerous, and planning ahead can often be the difference between life and death. SIEC is ready for what Mother Nature has in store, and we want you to be ready, too.



SIEC Board of Directors

Scott Miller (President)..... Alexander Co.
 David Martin (Vice President) Massac Co.
 Bob L. McIntosh (Secretary-Treasurer)..... Pulaski Co.
 Lamar Houston, Jr. Alexander Co.
 G. Robert Inman Pulaski Co.
 Carole J. Kelley..... Johnson Co.
 Bill Littrell..... Union Co.
 Randall Rushing Massac Co.
 Scott L. Ury..... Union Co.

Ronald E. Osman (Attorney)
 General Manager Chris L. Bennett
 Bree D. Hileman (Editor)

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

Rate change is coming

In February 2012, SIEC raised its electric rates just over 6 percent to what they are today. In the six years since, the cost of most items SIEC uses on a daily basis has increased beyond our control and makes a rate change in 2018 necessary. At this time, we do not know how much it will change, but our goal is to make the change as economical as possible.

Our biggest cost, which is purchased power, is increasing approximately 5 percent as of Jan. 1, 2018. Presently, we are paying just over 8 cents per kWh purchased, and to it we must add our own operating costs.

SIEC will have both a Cost of Service and Rate Study immediately after the books are closed for 2017 in order to adjust our rates in the best way to continue to provide our members with the best service and support system we can. The change in our rates will not take place until April 1 so the colder weather should be behind us.

Space Heater Safety Tips

Space heaters are a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without having to crank up the thermostat, but using space heaters doesn't come without risk! Use the tips below to keep your home safe.

DO: Plug your space heater directly into the wall outlet.

DO: Buy a unit with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over, or you forget to shut it off.

DO: Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms.

DO: Keep your space heater at a safe distance (at least 3 feet) from kids, pets and flammable items.

DO: Always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center.

DON'T: Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.

DON'T: Place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.

DON'T: Use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to over-heat, and can be a tripping hazard.

DON'T: Try to repair a broken space heater yourself.

DON'T: Put your space heater in your bathroom. The moisture can damage the unit, which could cause it to malfunction.

2018 Area Notifications

During the year 2018, SIEC forestry and contract crews will be performing trimming, herbicide application, and clearing of trees and brush in power line rights-of-way in the following areas:

- Mechanical and manual tree work will occur on portions of the Lick Creek, Foreman and Cobden substation areas. **Patricia Pennington**
- Selective Herbicide application will be applied throughout the entire service region to encourage low-growing, sustainable plant communities that are compatible with the electric facilities.
- Feel free to contact us with any vegetation related issues.

During the year 2018, SIEC engineering technicians and line construction and contract crews will be performing pole inspection, testing and pole changeouts in the following areas:

- Massac County
- Southern Johnson County
- Northern and western Union County
- Eastern Pulaski County
- Northern Alexander County

Areas of tree trimming or clearing, herbicide application, pole testing, and pole changeouts may be added in other areas if the need arises or plans are altered.



Our office is closed on Monday, January 1 for New Year's Day.



Our office is closed on Monday, January 15 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

10 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Looking to lower your bills this winter? Use the 10 tips below to conserve energy.

- 1  Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.
- 2  Reduce waste heat by installing a programmable thermostat.
- 3  Turn off lights when not in use.
- 4  Lower your water heater temperature. The Dept. of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120 degrees) during fall and winter months.
- 5  Unplug electronics like kitchen appliances and TVs when you're away.
- 6  Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home.
- 7  Close blinds and curtains at night to keep cold, drafty air out.
- 8  Use power strips for multiple appliances, and turn off the main switch when you're away from home.
- 9  Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.
- 10  Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

We're Proud to Power YOU.

Local, Safe, Reliable Electricity. For all the ways you live.