

# JAMUP

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

## Cost of service update

As we have communicated in previous articles, raising electric rates is an important matter that encompasses a great deal of consideration and analysis. Over the last three months, an extensive cost-of-service study and rate study were completed by an independent third-party firm. The cost-of-service study was developed to



committed to the cooperative's mission to deliver safe, high-quality, reliable products and services to our members at an affordable price.

Because we are a not-for-profit organization that is owned by our members, we do not raise rates to generate profits. In fact, any margins that we generate are returned to our members

in the form of capital credits. The cooperative only increases rates to cover the cost of doing business. The last rate increase at the cooperative was in 2012.

The cooperative recognized an operating margin loss of \$219,485 for 2017. This was due mainly to reduced kWh sales to our members and the increasing cost of electrical service. Sales of kWh were down due both to loss of load and mild weather patterns. The cost of electrical service i.e. labor, supplies, equipment, etc. increased at the normal

pace. With kWh sales forecasted to be much like they were in 2017, a wholesale power cost increase of 5 percent and the increasing cost of electric service, 2018 will most likely generate an even larger loss in operating margins that could potentially result in the cooperative not meeting its financial goals.

At the March 2018 board of directors meeting, the board voted to adopt the rate increase proposal from the rate study, effective April 1, 2018. Overall, the rate increase will raise revenue for the cooperative by approximately 6 percent, about 1 percent per year since 2012. The most significant change will be in the facility charge as it will increase to \$46 from \$33 while the per kWh charge decreases \$0.008 (first 500 kWh) and remains unchanged over 500 kWh (Farm & Home Rate).

Please contact your cooperative at 618-827-3555 if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions.



*Our office will be closed May 28 for Memorial Day.*

# Safety above all else

“Safety” is a universal word that is mentioned often and used loosely. Communities large and small as well as companies across all industries are committed to safety. Sports leagues at every level take safety seriously. Unfortunately, when it really counts, steps to keep the public, workers, athletes and loved ones safe are often ignored in the interest of expediency or convenience.

However, safety is a serious issue, especially when it comes to electrical safety. For Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative (SIEC), it’s the number one priority. This is not empty talk. Over time, SIEC has created a culture of safety by putting our employees’ safety and that of the community above all else. At its essence, SIEC’s mission is to provide *safe, affordable and reliable* electricity to its member-owners. At the end of the day, we strive to deliver affordable and reliable electricity to our member-owners, but equally important, we want to return our workers home safely to their loved ones. To do this requires ongoing focus, dedication and vigilance.

## Following leading national safety standards

Working with electricity is an inherently dangerous job, especially for

lineworkers. SIEC’s focus is on keeping employees and the community safe around electricity. We establish and follow safety protocols based on leading national safety practices for the utility industry. We require our lineworkers to wear specialized equipment when working next to or with power lines. There are specific protocols that our lineworkers follow when dealing with electricity. Our employees have regular meetings where they discuss upcoming projects from a safety perspective. We also discuss near-misses of accidents to understand them, share “lessons learned” and improve in the future.

As importantly, we encourage all our crews to speak up and hold each other accountable for safety. By cultivating a culture of openness and transparency, we promote problem-solving regarding safety, rather than defaulting to a blame game.

## Keeping the community safe

Because we live and work in the community we serve, we care about our neighbors. SIEC conducts electrical safety demonstrations in schools and for community events.

May is National Electrical Safety Month. According to the Electrical Safety Foundation, each year

thousands of people in the United States are critically injured and electrocuted as a result of electrical fires, accidents and electrocution in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. There is much you can do to keep yourself and your community safe around electricity.

**Kristina Myers**

Don’t attempt electrical DIY projects or overload your outlets. Report downed power lines, unlocked substations or padmount transformers that look amiss. Contact SIEC for additional electrical safety tips. If you would like us to provide a safety demonstration at your school or community event, please call 1-800-762-1400. Be mindful when it comes to electrical safety. Pause and take the extra time to plug into safety.



## 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](http://www.siec.coop)

## Nominating Committee to meet May 17, 2018.

Members to serve on the 2017-2018 Nominating Committee were appointed by Scott Miller, President of the Board of Directors, at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Members held Aug. 3, 2017. The committee will meet at the cooperative headquarters, 7420 U.S. Highway 51 South, Dongola, IL at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 17, 2018 to consider nominees for election to the board of directors at the 2018 Annual Meeting of Members. **Scott Miller**

The following committee members were appointed to the 2017-2018 Nominating Committee to represent their respective counties:

### Alexander County:

Delegate: Tim J. Pierce, 27753 State Highway 3, Thebes, IL 62990

Alternate: Robert Porter, 66 Eastwood Drive McClure, IL 62957

### Johnson County:

Delegate: Linda M. Wood, 4145 Indian Point Road, Vienna, IL 62995

Alternate: Nancy Breeden, 2390 Lick Creek Road, Buncombe, IL 62912

### Massac County:

Delegate: Randy Wilke, 1389 Karnak Road, Karnak, IL 62956

Alternate: Jackie A. Klaffer, 1484 Dornbush Road, Brookport, IL 62910

### Pulaski County:

Delegate: Brandon King, 4774 Feathertrail Road, Ullin, IL 62992

Alternate: Danny J. Thurston, 819 Sandusky Road, Pulaski, IL 62976

### Union County:

Delegate: Bruce Mosby, 1215 Bauer Road, Jonesboro, IL 62952

Alternate: Glenn Russell Heisner, 3605 Nash Road, Anna, IL 62906

The bylaws of the cooperative provide the nominations to the board of directors may be made by: (1) nominating committee, (2) petition received not less than 45 days prior to the actual meeting, signed by 15 or more active members, or (3) an active member from the floor at the annual meeting. The three-year terms of the directors are expired alternatively so that each year elections are held for a portion of the board. At the 2018 annual meeting, elections will be held for a director from each of these three counties: Massac, Pulaski and Union County. Additionally, there will be one (1) candidate nominated for election to fill a one (1) year unexpired term from Alexander County.

## Change Habits to BEAT THE PEAK

You can beat the peak (and save money!) by decreasing your power use when energy demand and prices are at their highest. Here are a few tips to help you get started:

### Laundry for Less:

Full loads mean fewer cycles, and washers and dryers run in the late evenings add less heat and humidity to the home. Energy can cost less outside of peak hours.



### Intramural Competition:

Online gaming with each active player using their own computer, display, gaming console and internet connection gets pricey. Play each other at home on one screen and save.



### Cool Off/Calm Down:

Turn off unnecessary lighting and electronics that generate heat, resist the urge to turn down the thermostat and remember, lower fan settings use less energy.



### Countertop Convenience:

Range or oven cooking can really warm up a kitchen. Microwaves, convection ovens, induction cooktops, Crock-Pot® and toaster ovens put more cooking heat where you need it.





## Know what's below

### *Dial 811 before you dig*

**S**pring is an optimal time of year to dream up and achieve your landscaping masterpiece in many parts of the country. Perhaps you're planning to build a new deck to enjoy the warm weather. If any of your spring projects require digging—such as planting trees or shrubs or setting posts—remember to dial 811 first.

Underground utilities, such as buried gas, water and electric lines, can be a shovel thrust away from turning a spring project into a disaster.

Play it safe by dialing 811 to find out where utility lines run on your property. Your call will be routed to a local “one call” center. Tell the operator where you're planning to dig and what type of work you will be doing, and affected local utilities will be notified.

In a few days, a locator will arrive to designate the approximate location of any underground lines,

pipes and cables. These areas will be marked with flags or paint so you'll know what's below. Then the safe digging can begin.

Although many homeowners tackling do-it-yourself digging projects are aware of “Call Before You Dig” services, the majority doesn't take advantage of the service. A national survey showed that only 50 percent of homeowners called to have their lines marked before starting digging projects, according to the Common Ground Alliance (CGA), a federally mandated group of underground utility and damage prevention industry professionals. CGA data also shows that an underground utility line is damaged every six minutes in the U.S. because someone decided to dig without first dialing 811.

Even simple tasks like installing a new mailbox post can damage utility lines, which

can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm diggers and potentially result in fines and repair costs.

Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. There's no need: the 811 service is free, prevents the inconvenience of having utilities interrupted and can help you avoid serious injury. For more information about local services, visit [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com).

**NOTE: Homeowner and excavators should be aware of any privately-owned underground utilities that may fall within their project limits. Calling 811 will only notify public utilities. If SIEC members would like assistance in locating a privately-owned underground electric line, please call us directly at 1-800-762-1400.**