

JAMUP

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Old accountants never die, they just lose their balance

It's difficult for me to believe, but this will be my last column for the JAMUP. After nearly 26 years with SIEC and over 43 years in the electric cooperative field, I'm retiring at the end of business on July 16, 2018.

In May 1975, I graduated from college with a degree in accounting and was fortunate to begin my career as an accountant at Adams Electrical Cooperative near Quincy, Ill. I eventually relocated back to southern Illinois, but I had chosen to first go to west central Illinois to work for an electric cooperative because, even then, I knew what they stood for. At the time, my father was working for an electric cooperative and eventually retired from the same cooperative after 40 years of service as a lineman and later its system engineer. July 17 is my Dad's 93rd birthday, and I plan to see him that day. My days of worrying about ice storms, flooding, tornados and budgets as a cooperative employee will be over, and I look forward to talking with him and both of us recalling similar events in our respective cooperative careers. I know we'll also discuss my grandfather's influence over our lives. Grandpa was a strong Christian man that brought up his family with those values and ultimately influenced those generations to follow. He kept a daily journal



Chris L. Bennett
Executive Vice-President
& General Manager

from the time he got married until the day he passed, and part of his Jan. 1, 1961 entry was, "I don't pray for worldly riches or honors for our family, but I do pray that they may be filled with the right and true Spirit and that they may conduct themselves as to be

worthy of the respect of their fellow men." I sure hope my efforts would not have been a disappointment to him. **George Crispy**

When electric cooperatives were being formed through the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) in the late 1930s, grandpa, a small farmer in the area, had helped to get his electric cooperative formed by contacting his neighbors, as well as those in other areas, to sign-up for what they hoped would be an opportunity to have the same conveniences of those living in the towns of the region. As we all know, the investor-owned utilities saw no profit in serving the rural areas – too few people to serve for the investment it would take to serve them. Once that cooperative got enough members to agree to service, the REA made the loan to bring electric service to their area, and grandpa went on to become a "meter spotter" by going ahead of those building the lines in the area to work with the

home owners to locate their electric service. Later, he learned even more about electricity and went on to become an electrician in the area, giving my father and uncles the opportunity to also learn the trade. I guess you could say electric cooperatives have been a family way of life!

I have truly been blessed by so many other mentors over the years, and one of the truths I have always kept in mind is, "Together, we can do a whole lot if no one cares who gets the credit!" If you think about that, it means we're all working together to accomplish a goal and that's what formed our




electric cooperative program to begin with. Rural folks have always pulled together to accomplish what's needed to be done and no one individual made it all happen. In my office is another saying that I look at when making decisions that impact not only our employees, but also our members through our policies and rates: "The value of a leader is directly proportional to that leader's values." It would be simple to always make decisions that make you popular or a friend to all, but you must

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always think about the whole and not the few.

I want to say Thank You to an outstanding company of employees that are presently working at SIEC, as well as those past ones that I have worked with and are now retired. SIEC has always had some of the best in the business as they love their work and love the cooperative philosophy of everyone working together for a common cause. I will truly miss having coffee with the guys and the overall comradery of those I have worked so closely with in the office for these many years. I also want to thank our Board of Directors for giving me the opportunity to serve as general manager for the last five years. I could not have done so without their support and confidence. Many folks have asked me what I plan to do once retired, and my beautiful wife and I just plan to continue to enjoy life and the countless blessings God has bestowed upon us. But I did tell her one thing I plan to do – I'm going to get more exercise so effective July 17, I am going to start calling the bathroom the Jim instead of the John – that way it sounds better when I say I go to the Jim first thing every morning!!

"We never forget who we're working for." 

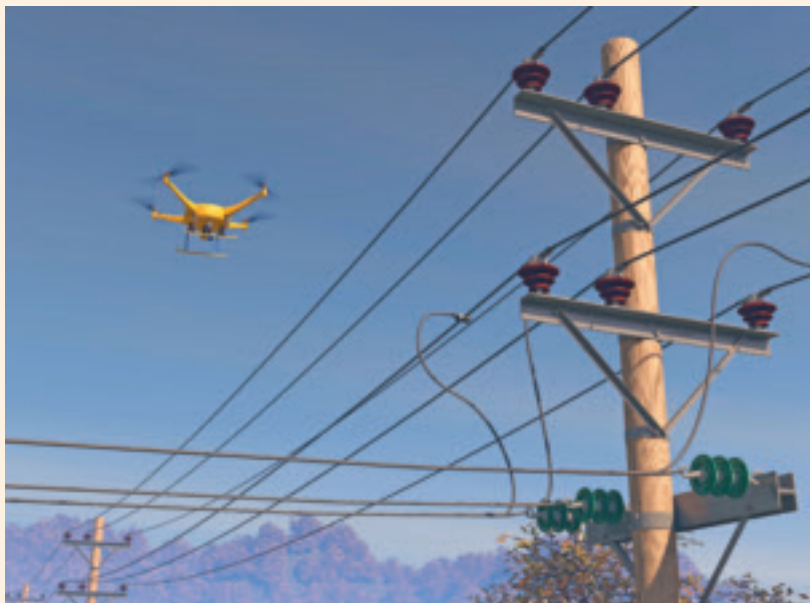
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Use caution near co-op equipment



As you find yourself spending more time outdoors this summer, Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative (SIEC) reminds you to exercise caution near electrical equipment maintained by the co-op.

Substations and power lines carry extremely high voltages, and if contact is accidentally made, the results can be dangerous—or even deadly.

Never climb trees near power lines. If you make contact with a tree that is touching a power line, your body could become the path of electricity from the line to the ground. If you encounter an animal trapped in a tree near power lines or inside a substation, do not attempt to remove it—no matter how furry and cute! Call SIEC for assistance.

These days, we are seeing more remote-controlled toys, like drones and airplanes, which can be a great way to have fun outdoors. But these gadgets also bring new safety concerns. Remote-controlled toys

should never be flown near power lines, substations or other electrical equipment. **OLD PE**

Remember these safety tips when flying a remote-controlled toy:

- Keep a safe distance from electrical equipment when you fly. If contact is accidentally made with a power line or a transformer inside a substation, many members of your community could be left without electricity.
- Keep the remote-controlled toy in sight at all times.
- Avoid flying if weather conditions are unfavorable. High winds could cause you to lose control of the remote-controlled toy.

Here at SIEC, your safety is important to us. We hope you will share the message of electrical safety so that you and others can enjoy plenty of summer days filled with fun!

Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative

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Save during vacations

Summertime means vacations are in full swing. It can also mean higher utility costs, but some big and small changes can help you save some money while you are away.



Make big energy savings by changing the temperature of your home. "Turning up your thermostat to 85 degrees could lower your bill by 35 percent a week," says energy expert, Sam Adair.

If you have pets, 85 degrees will still be cool enough to keep them comfortable while you are away. If no one will be in the home, turn the unit off completely until you return.

Another big cost saver is turning off your water heater. If you are not going to be home, your water heater does not need to be running.

"A water heater can cost about a \$1 a day, so you could save a few bucks just by switching that breaker while you are on vacation," adds Adair.

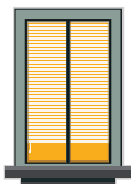
Some smaller things to lower bills include shutting the blinds and curtains to keep the sun from heating up your home, turning off all power strips and unplugging small appliances.

Adair recommends buying a timer if you want to leave some lights on while you are away. The timer will ensure that your lights will be on for a short amount of time versus using energy all day long.

For more ways you can save on your utility bill, visit SafeElectricity.org.

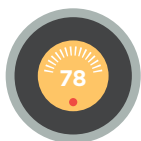
Summer Energy-Saving Tips

Costs associated with cooling your home can make up a large portion of your summer electric bills. Stay cool and save money with these energy efficiency tips!

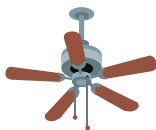


NO-COST TIPS

Close blinds and drapes during the day to keep heat out.



Set your thermostat to 78 degrees when you are home. Set it to a higher temperature when you're away.

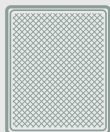


Turn off lights and ceiling fans when you leave a room.



LOW-COST TIPS

Plant trees and shrubs to shade the exterior of your home.



Replace disposable air filters (or clean permanent filters) once a month to maximize efficiency.



Use solar lighting to brighten up your outdoor space. Solar lights are easy to install, low maintenance and provide free electricity.



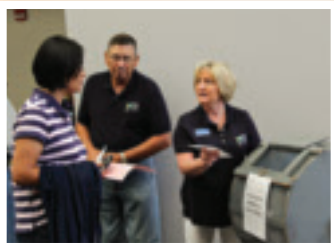
AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES



Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting of Members

6 p.m. • August 2, 2018

Shawnee Community College • Ullin, Illinois



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.