

JAMUP

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Slow down and experience the season

Can you believe the year is almost over? As we approach the end of 2018, I think back about what's happened over the last year and wonder what 2019 will bring.

In 2018, I became your general manager, and I'm grateful for that. I'm equally grateful that the members, board of directors and employees have welcomed me to my new position. It's an honor to serve you, the member-owners, at this fantastic organization, and I commit to lead with the philosophy of placing your best interest in each decision that is made. Together, we can ensure Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative thrives in 2019 and well beyond.

For now, let's enjoy the holiday season and the joy it brings to our lives.

The days between Thanksgiving and Christmas are some of the most magical days for me. As a child, this time of year thrilled me. The lights, the shopping crowds and the mystery hiding in the presents brought great joy. I believed that these things were what Christmas was all about. Believing there was a Santa Claus. After all, he never seemed to let us down Christmas morning when we discovered the presents under the tree and the cookies and milk both gone. To be a kid again!

Today, even as a 50-year-old, I still get that feeling. Only now,



David A. Johnston
Executive Vice-President
& General Manager

it's when my family is gathered around the Christmas tree and gifts are being distributed. This is one of the few times that we are all gathered in one room on the same day, and as they grow up and start their own families, I'm sure those days will happen less

and less. That's why it's important to slow down. Stop, look and listen to your family members.

But there are so many things to do in just a short time. We find ourselves juggling shopping list, parties, planning and end of year work projects just to name a few. Before you realize it, a joyous holiday season

can turn into a stressful holiday season. Suddenly, you wake up one morning and realize it's January.

Avoid a stressful holiday season by taking the time to enjoy your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers. These people are the purpose. These people are what makes the holiday season exciting. Cherish every moment. Then, when you wake up and realize it's January, you won't have any regrets. **John Behm**

I want to close by telling you what a great group of employees and board of directors you are fortunate to have working for your cooperative. They are dedicated, and they do not take this organization for granted. To them...I say Thank You.

Merry Christmas. Be safe and sincerely, Thank You!



Office Closure Dates:
Christmas – Dec. 25
New Year's Day – Jan. 1

Give gifts that keep on giving

As you grab your hot chocolate and favorite blanket to cozy up and begin making this year's holiday gift list, consider the often overlooked but practical present: an energy efficient gift. While it may not be the usual book, shower gel or coffee mug, energy efficient gifts keep on giving.

According to Energystar.gov, the typical U.S. household spends more than \$2,000 a year on energy bills. Beyond the combined 42 percent of annual energy consumption spent on heating and cooling, the next biggest and fastest growing category is electronics, accounting for 21 percent.

Pamela Hannan

To get you started, Safe Electricity compiled a list of energy-saving gift ideas. Some will appeal to your frugal Uncle Norman who refuses to tip after a good restaurant meal while others will appease your favorite gadget junkie.

Around the house

- **LED light bulbs** – Upgrading 15 incandescent light bulbs in your home to LEDs could save about \$50 per year
- **Smart power strips** – This gadget decreases power to **electronics when not in use**
- **Surge protector or power strip with wireless remote** – Allows the user to completely shut off power,

including standby power, for up to six devices

- **Smart or programmable thermostat** – most smart versions learn your habits to keep your home comfortable and save energy at the same time
- **Blankets and warm clothing** – To use and wear indoors so the thermostat can be turned down a few degrees
- **Tablet or laptop** – Takes less energy to run than a desktop computer
- **Rechargeable battery kit**
- **Room occupancy sensors** – Lights turn on when you enter a room and off when no one's there
- **Kitchen gadgets** – An electric pressure cooker (expedites cooking), a slow cooker (uses less energy to cook) or a multipurpose version, such as an Instant Pot®, that offers several cooking features in one pot, such as pressure, slow, and steam cooking
- **Power tools** – Look for the ENERGY STAR® label for the energy efficient tools

For the energy conscious

- **Home electricity monitor** – Gives real-time feedback on energy use and tracks energy stats

- **Low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators** – These may not be at the top of someone's gift list, but they can reduce water consumption by 50 percent
- **Thermal leak detector** – a device that uses infrared sensors to detect power-draining drafts in the home. Plugging leaks can save up to 20 percent in heating and cooling costs

Because solar is cool

- **Solar backpack** – Ability to charges a cell phones or other gadgets while walking outdoors
- **Solar-powered electronics** – Items such as lights, battery chargers, wireless speakers and computer keyboards are a few examples
- **Solar-powered toys** – A great way to teach kids about renewable energy

For that special someone (even if that someone is you)

- **ENERGY STAR® rated TV** – These green versions are on average 27 percent more energy efficient than conventional models, saving energy in all usage modes: sleep, idle and on

For more energy efficiency tips, go to SafeElectricity.org.

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A CORD IS NOT A CHEW TOY

- Q:** What's the most common type of electrical injury for household pets?
- A:** Electrocutation from chewing on an electrical cord

TAKE ACTION:

Pet proof your home by covering or enclosing electrical cords and taking steps to prevent other electrical hazards.

Although any pet can chew on a cord, puppies are the most likely culprit.

Learn more about pet safety at SafeElectricity.org.

Electrical Safety Checklist

Nearly half of all home fires occur during winter months. Take a few minutes to identify and correct any potential electrical hazards to ensure the safety of your home.

— SWITCHES AND OUTLETS —

Are any switches or outlets warm to the touch?

YES

NO

Warm switches or outlets indicate an unsafe wiring condition.

Are any outlets or switches discolored?

YES

NO

Discoloration indicates dangerous heat buildup at these connections.

Do plugs fit snugly into outlets?

YES

NO

Loose-fitting plugs can cause overheating and fires.

— CORDS —

Are any cords cracked, frayed or damaged?

YES

NO

Damaged cords can expose wires, causing shock or fire hazard.

Are any cords pinched by furniture or windows, or attached to anything with staples or nails?

YES

NO

Pinching and/or stapling cords can damage the insulation, causing shock or fire hazard.

Do you use extension cords on a permanent basis?

YES

NO

Extension cords should only be used temporarily.

— ELECTRIC PANEL —

Do you have recurring tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses?

YES

NO

If yes, this could indicate you're exceeding a safe level of electrical current.

Do you have arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs)?

YES

NO

AFCIs provide greater fire protection. Check your circuit breakers for the AFCI label.

Show you care with safety-minded gifts

This year give gifts of safety to show you care. From a smart doorbell to a smoke detector, a gift that keeps loved ones safe gives peace of mind and could help save lives.

Safe Electricity offers the following tips and gift ideas to help keep everyone on your gift list safer this holiday season and throughout the year.

For adults

- Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- A flashlight with extra batteries for emergencies
- A roadside emergency kit
- Reflective clothing for runners or walkers
- Gloves with LED lights or hand-held “knuckle lights” designed for runners
- A smart doorbell to see who’s at the door while at home and away
- Gift certificates for home services (home maintenance, such as HVAC inspection or chimney sweeping) *Mike Lowery*
- A fire extinguisher for the kitchen
- A pack of GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter) outlets and a gift certificate for a qualified electrician to install them
- A cozy bed blanket to replace an older electric blanket; those more than 10 years old are often unsafe
- Aftermarket safety systems for cars that don’t have them, which include features such as forward-collision and lane-departure warnings
- For vehicles not equipped with them, a rear-view camera and dash cam
- A pet harness for use in a vehicle; make sure it has earned crash-test certification

For kids

- Buy age appropriate gifts (see recommendations on box or toy); children younger than age 3 should not have access to toys with small parts
- Don’t forget proper safety gear such as helmets and knee and elbow pads when gifting scooters, roller blades, bikes and other riding toys
- Many gaming consoles are equipped with internet browsers and chat features that allow players to communicate with each other, so be aware of these capabilities in any game or electronic device

For other safety tips, visit SafeElectricity.org.





Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors and Employees would like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Thank you for your support throughout 2018. Together, we will continue to accomplish great things in 2019!

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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Heading out of town for the holidays? Remember to unplug electronics that draw a phantom energy load. Some gadgets, like TVs, gaming consoles, chargers and DVD players use energy when plugged into an outlet, even when they're not in use.

Source: *energy.gov*



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

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