Egyptian Electric News
1732 Finney Road • Murphysboro, IL 62966 • 800-606-1505 • www.eeca.coop
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What causes my lights to blink?

You have just come home from work and notice that all the digital clocks in the house are blinking. There must have been a power outage sometime during the day, right? Possibly, but more than likely it was just a power blink and not a permanent outage. A "blink" occurs when the power momentarily goes off for a couple of seconds, and then comes back on. Overhead and underground electric lines are susceptible to blinks.

Egyptian Electric Cooperative has a network of nearly 2,200 miles of line and over 39,000 poles. This network is divided into sections called distribution feeders. The feeders are protected by devices that interrupt the power when a problem, or fault, occurs on the line. The device will turn the power back on after a short period of time. If the fault is still present, the device will operate again, causing another blink. If the fault clears, then the power stays on. If the fault is permanent, then the power goes out and stays out. The blinks that you see are operations of the protective devices. Because most faults are temporary in nature, your lights just blink and come back on. The protective devices are designed to prevent permanent outages when possible. What problems occur on the lines that cause blinks? Faults may be caused by several items:

Lightning

During storm seasons, electric lines are hit by lightning numerous times. Insulators, lightning arrestors, transformers and other line equipment are exposed to high voltage surges caused by lightning strikes. Lightning puts an enormous amount of stress on this equipment. An example of a problem would be when an insulator gets slightly damaged during a storm. The damage at the time of the strike may be small and the line continues to operate normally. A month or two later, regular operating stress may break down the insulator. The line then starts to blink occasionally.

Tree Limbs

Tree limbs contact lines and cause blinks. Southern Illinois is abundant with trees. It is difficult to find a cooperative distribution line that is not near trees. New pruning, spraying and management methods are being utilized to gain better control of the rights-of-way. Because of the abundance of trees, it takes a while to get through the entire system. The cooperative appreciates members' patience when it comes to tree pruning/cutting requests. You can do your part to help the cooperative most efficiently improve service reliability:

- Do not plant trees within 30 feet of electric lines. Some tree varieties may require more of a set-back distance. Contact the cooperative if you have a specific tree you would like to plant and have questions regarding the proximity to electric lines.
- When possible, allow the cooperative to remove trees rather than just trim them. Trimming is only a temporary measure.
- Please be patient. The cooperative has a program to maintain the ROW on your line.

Animals

Animals can cause problems too. Squirrels, raccoons, snakes and birds cause blinks on the system. Animals may come into contact with electric conductors and other equipment at the same time, causing a fault. Livestock that rub against guy wires can also cause problems. The cooperative uses animal guard products to help prevent animals from causing blinks.

Ice and Wind

Electric conductors that have ice on them tend to "gallop" in the wind. Lines may flop together, and cause blinks. Fortunately, the cooperative does not experience this problem very often. Minimal ice build-up and hilly terrain discourage the galloping effect.

Continual blinks

The cooperative realizes that blinking lights are a nuisance. If you are experiencing an extraordinary number of blinks, please write down the dates and times and call us. Let us know if you see any flashes or arcing on the lines. We will do our best to try to find the problem as soon as possible. Because many problems are not obvious, it may take us a while to track down the problem. We do have devices that can be put on the lines to help isolate the problem. With your patience and cooperation, we will eventually find and correct the problem.

Will power blinks cause damage to appliances and other equipment? As stated earlier, the operation of a protective device on electric lines causes blinks. Some people refer to blinks as power "surges." but, unless lightning is involved, probably no surge occurs on the line. When the power goes off and back on during a blink, it is often just like turning your appliance or other piece of equipment off and

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Egyptian Electric secures $750,000 loan to the Southern Illinois Airport Authority from USDA

The Southern Illinois Airport Authority (SIAA) in Murphysboro and Carbondale has an active 2019 construction season planned. Four new buildings will be constructed in the next year with the price tag of nearly $8 million. Three buildings will be new aircraft hangar facilities and one will house a new airport terminal.

Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association (EECA) worked with SIAA to secure a $750,000 zero-interest loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program. The loan will be used toward the construction of new aircraft hangars.

Those funds will be combined with a $250,000 grant from the Delta Regional Authority and a $3.75 million grant from the Economic Development Administration to fund the construction of two hangar buildings. Several new, skilled aircraft maintenance positions will be created as a result.

"It continues to be important for us to invest in our very own rural communities," says EECA General Manager Shane Hermetz. "The cooperative is happy to act as the intermediary through the USDA REDLG programs, and in this case, assist one of our members right here in Jackson County that is doing big things."

Specifically, the USDA loan will help with the cost of developing Hangar 2, a 12,000 square-foot aircraft hangar to accommodate existing aircraft needs and provide for expansion of the airport's fixed base operator, Flightline. Flightline provides fuel, ground service, flight training and aircraft maintenance to based and transient aircraft.

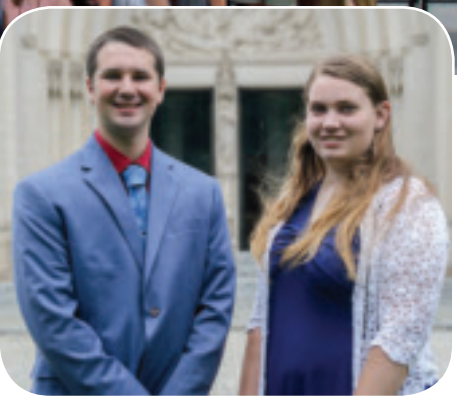
Currently, the airport is without any additional hangar space to accommodate the growing needs of Flightline or meet overnight hangar demand and based aircraft growth. The loan will deliver much needed hangar capacity for the foreseeable future.

(L-R): Mary Warren, Business Program Director, Rural Development, USDA; Gary Schafer, Manager, Southern Illinois Airport Authority; and Shane Hermetz, Executive Vice President/General Manager, Egyptian Electric Cooperative.

"We are grateful to both the USDA and our partner, EECA, for this source of funding," SIAA Manager Gary Schafer says.

This is the second REDLG loan EECA has assisted in attaining, and the co-op is accepting applicants from qualified member or non-member taxing entities within its service territory interested in the REDLG program.

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. The funding awards for these projects are through the REDLG program to support rural businesses. For more information about this program, visit www.rd.usda.gov.



Youth Tour

For more than 50 years, the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois have sponsored a group of high school sophomore, junior and seniors to Springfield to learn more about our state government as well as cooperatives. Each year, approximately 300 students get chosen to attend the Illinois Cooperative Youth Day. This year's Youth Day is April 3, 2019. During the Youth Day, students will meet with their elected senators and representatives. They will also tour the State Capitol, the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, as well as the Old State Capitol.

Two of the students that attended Youth to Springfield will be selected to attend the weeklong, all-expense paid trip of a lifetime to Washington, D.C. June 14 – 21, 2019. During the Youth to Washington Tour, these students get an up-close look at democracy in action and get to meet with their downstate Illinois Congressmen. They will also see the Smithsonian Museums, monuments, war memorials, the Capitol, and much more. Several fun and exciting activities are scheduled, and your student will meet others from across the nation.

Senator Lyndon Johnson inspired the Youth Tour when he addressed the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Annual Meeting in Chicago in 1957. The Senator and future president declared, "If one thing goes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents." Consequently, some Texas electric cooperatives sent groups of young people to Washington to work in Senator Johnson's office during the summer of 1957.

In 1958, a rural electric cooperative in Iowa sponsored the first group of 34 young people on a week-long study tour of the nation's capital. Later that same year, another busload came to Washington from Illinois. The idea grew and other states send busloads of young people throughout the summer. By 1959, the Youth Tour had grown to 130 youths. In 1964, NRECA began to coordinate joint activities among the state delegations and suggested that cooperative representatives from each state arrange to be in Washington, D.C. during Youth Tour week. The first year of the coordinated tour included approximately 400 students from 12 states.

Word of the program has continued to spread and today, more than 1,500 students from across the country participate in the Youth Tour every year. The Youth to Washington Tour is recognized as one of the best youth tours of Washington, D.C. and many alumni of the program have gone on to leadership positions in our communities and government.

Egyptian Electric Cooperative has contacted the high schools in our area to provide them with the information and ask them to select at least two students to apply to represent their school at the Youth to Springfield. The cooperative pays all student expenses for the Youth Day and Youth Tour, including transportation and meals. For more information, contact the cooperative office or your school's guidance department to learn more.

Retirements

At the end of 2018, we lost five of our 41 employees to retirement! We wish them all the best during their retirement years as they will be sorely missed! We also thank them, and their families, for their dedication to Egyptian Electric Cooperative over the past 150 years combined!

Tom Ernsting
(32 years of service)

Tom began his career with Egyptian Electric on Sept. 3, 1986. He came to us from GTE and began as a lineman out of the Steeleville office, and later a serviceman in 2003. He was the serviceman out of the Steeleville office, Truck 29, that covered all areas south of route 150, south of Steeleville and Pinckneyville areas.

Jim Grothaus
(34 years of service)

Jim started here with Egyptian Electric Cooperative on Jan. 9, 1984 as an apprentice lineman out of the Steeleville office. He later became a journeyman lineman and then line foreman in 1992. In 2003 he became the operations manager out of the Steeleville office, and the operations manager in 2017 when both offices were in the process of consolidation.

Michael Chamness
(27 years of service)

Michael started his career with Egyptian Electric as an apprentice lineman out of the Steeleville office on April 8, 1991, later becoming a line foreman. He later transferred as a journeyman lineman to the Murphysboro office in 2006. He retired at the end of 2018 as a line foreman.

Michael Ellis
(27 years of service)

Michael began his career with EECA as the mechanic out of the Murphysboro office on April 15, 1991. In 1996 he became an apprentice lineman, then journeyman lineman in 1999.

Roger Stuva
(33 years of service)

Roger came to EECA from Carlisle Municipal Utilities and began as an apprentice lineman on April 10, 1985 in the Murphysboro office. He went on to become a journeyman lineman and then line foreman. In 2013, he bid a serviceman truck and was maintenance lineman until his retirement in December 2018.

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on with its own switch. No damage to your equipment should occur. If lightning is involved, a surge may occur and could cause damage. The cooperative installs lightning arrestors on its lines to minimize the effects of lightning; yet, lightning can still cause damage.

What can I do in my home to lessen the effects of blinks? Members can do several things to help prevent annoyances due to power blinks.

- Buy digital clocks that have a battery backup. The battery will ride through power blinks, and you will not have to reset the time.
- Purchase an Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS) for your computer. Nothing is more annoying than losing data on a computer because of a power blink. A relatively inexpensive UPS will ride through the blink, preventing data loss. More sophisticated UPS equipment can be bought that keep your computer up and running for several minutes after a permanent power outage, allowing you to save your data.
- Safeguard solid state equipment, computers, and household appliances by installing surge protectors. Nothing is available that will protect your home from a direct lightning strike, but small surges often can be prevented. Wholehouse secondary surge protectors that prevent surges from coming into the home can be purchased. Sensitive equipment should also be protected independently.

Cooperative personnel can assist with your questions regarding any problems or concerns you may have involving power blinks.