

# JAMUP

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

## SIEC has many convenient billing options



**Chris Boyd,**  
Director of Member  
Services

**A**re you looking for a different payment option?

Payments can be mailed or made at the Dongola office during regular business hours (8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday thru Friday). They

can also be deposited in our 24-hour night deposit boxes located at our main office at 7420 US Highway 51 South in Dongola and at our Massac County office located at 2652 Illinois 145 Road in Metropolis. You can also make a payment over the phone by calling 1-855-356-6361. We accept MasterCard, VISA, Discover and American Express. Additionally, we offer the following options for you to consider:

**Automatic Bank Draft** – If you would like to save time, checks and postage each month, you may want to consider Automatic Bank Draft. This service enables you to have your electric bill payment automatically deducted from your checking or credit card account each month.

**Budget Billing Plan** – This service makes managing your cash flow easier by providing predictable monthly payments. Utility bills are usually highest during the winter and summer months, but budget billing avoids these highs by creating a consistent monthly payment based on your 12 months of electric use. Because of this, members do not need to have at least 12 months of usage history at their current residence. The first 11 monthly payments will be the same. On the 12th month, the cooperative offers a “catch-up” month. This is where any credit or balance due on your account for the budget year end is reflected.

**Pay As You Go** – With pay-as-you-go you have the opportunity to pay for electricity when you want and in the amounts you want. Instead of receiving a traditional paper bill that is generated once each month, usage is calculated daily. Members never pay a late charge and avoid paying large deposits. If it would be easier for you to make daily, weekly or bi-weekly payments rather than one large payment each month, then this may be your best option.

**SmartHub** – SmartHub provides a safe and secure environment for bill payments and transactions between

SIEC and your financial institution, using encrypted technology during every transaction, and no personal information is stored on your mobile device. It is a free online bill payment option that allows our members to securely pay their bill from the website as well as from your smart phone or other mobile device. You can pay your bill 24 hours a day, 365 days a year – at your convenience. Perhaps the most useful feature is the ability to track your energy usage in greater detail. You can see your daily usages to help determine how you are using electricity. Do not forget to use SmartHub to sign up for paperless billing.

**Pay Now** – For those members who do not want to create an online account for SmartHub, you can use a feature called Pay Now. This is a quick-pay option that allows users to make a payment without registering or logging in.

You only need your account number and the first five letters of the account owner’s last name.

If you have questions, please contact the cooperative and ask for our billing department at 618-827-3555. Access more billing information at our website [www.siec.coop](http://www.siec.coop) under the My Account tab.

### 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.

## Help us provide better service during outages!

**S**IEC dispatchers monitor outage calls 24/7 through our automated outage reporting system. There are simple things you can do to help our dispatchers provide better service.

### 1. Make sure your primary phone number is up-to-date.

*The primary number we have on file is listed on your bill.* This is the number our outage system will key to when you report an outage. If this number is incorrect or if you have changed your primary number, please call to update our records. If you call to report an outage using a different phone, the system will ask for the primary phone number on your account to report the outage.

### 2. Have your Account Number available before calling in your outage.

*The Account Number is listed on your bill.* If the system does not recognize your phone number or if you have multiple accounts, you will be prompted to enter your Account Number.

Please only leave a message if the system does not recognize your phone or account info or if you know the specific cause of your outage. Not having to listen to messages helps our dispatchers efficiently get crews out to restore service.

Again, SIEC dispatchers monitor outage calls 24/7 through our automated system. This system helps to efficiently group outages by location and helps our dispatchers serve you better. Each member can help by following the above recommendations.

## Smart houses no longer a fantasy

**U**sing smart home devices doesn't mean your home will have a higher IQ, but it does mean you could have a smaller energy budget. "Smart homes" are houses that have several interconnected devices and home appliances that perform certain actions or functions, and many are designed to save money, time and energy. SafeElectricity.org suggests several smart home devices — in no order that may or may not be interconnected — that could save some green:

1. Energy monitoring devices, which give real-time feedback on energy consumption and track your energy stats; these typically cost between \$200 and \$300 but can make a real difference in your energy bills if you adjust based on feedback.
2. A smart lighting outdoor module. This allows you to control all your outdoor lighting and appliances, including seasonal and landscape lighting. Schedule or turn outdoor lights on or off from anywhere.
3. Smart bulbs, which are internet-capable LED bulbs that allow lighting to be controlled remotely. Many of them can even change color; some can play music, and specialty smart bulbs may help you sleep better by emitting colors designed to help regulate natural melatonin production or provide soothing light that doesn't disrupt circadian rhythm.
4. Smart sprinkler systems that water your garden only when plants need it. They take local weather forecasts

- into account and will delay watering if rain is headed your way.
5. Water leak detectors and shut-off systems. The simplest versions sit on the floor and alert you when they get wet. More elaborate versions continually monitor the flow of your water system, informing you if water pressure changes and allowing you to shut off the water supply if a leak is detected.
6. A smart thermostat — they learn your habits to keep your home comfortable and then do so in the most efficient way possible.
7. A moderately-priced smart plug that turns your electronics on or off from anywhere using your phone or tablet.
8. Smart garage door openers—prevent thieves (and hot or cold air) from coming in your home if you forget to close your garage door. You can check it and close it from your smartphone with the companion app.
9. Motion sensors that shut off lights when there's inactivity in a room.
10. A smart power strip that monitors and turns off power to plugged-in items when not in use.

Smart appliances and devices save money because in many cases they allow you to use less energy. They're also convenient, fun to use and can give you peace of mind. In short, they may be worth it in the long run, but only if the initial outlay fits your budget.

**Clint Middleton**  
For more information on electrical safety, go to [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

### KEEP SAFE DURING WINTER STORMS

				
<p>Unless it's an emergency, stay home during ice and snow storms, and wait until roads are passable. Heavy snow and ice can bring down power lines, creating hazardous conditions.</p>	<p>Have a storm kit prepared with food, medicine, first aid supplies, battery operated clock radio, and other items you may need if you can't leave your home for several days.</p>	<p>When using a portable generator for power, always place it outside, well away from the garage, doors, windows and air-intake vents.</p>	<p>Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors with battery backups. Test them to make sure they work.</p>	<p>Never use a stove to heat your home.</p>
				<p>Learn more at: <a href="http://SafeElectricity.org">SafeElectricity.org</a></p>

## You're more than a customer

Author Anthony J. D'Angelo observed that, "Without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community."

To a large degree, this reflects Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative's philosophy toward our member-owners and the broader service territory that we serve. As a cooperative, we have a different "bottom line." While our priority is always to provide reliable and safe energy, there is another equally important part of this equation. Your well-being and that of the larger community that we serve are of paramount concern.

To us, you are not just a customer; you are a member-owner of our co-op and without you, we would not exist.

In 1938, SIEC was founded to fulfill a vital need in our community that would not have otherwise been met. Concerned local leaders came together to build this co-op and bring electricity where there was none.

At that time, members of the community understood we were different because they likely knew someone who helped to create SIEC. For most people, our founding and its circumstances have been long forgotten. Over time, folks in the community may have come to think of us as simply another energy provider. But we are not. We are a co-op that is constantly evolving to meet the needs of the communities we serve, and we can do this because of members like you.

Since our inception, we have sought feedback and engagement from you and that of the larger community to guide our long-term decisions. Therefore, we hold annual meetings to engage with you and obtain your feedback.

We constantly strive to find new ways to help you use energy more efficiently. In short, we are always seeking to keep pace with the changing energy environment, evolving technology and shifting consumer expectations.

SIEC member-owners help guide important co-op decisions that improve and enrich the community.

We value the perspective of our board members, who are members of the co-op and community – just like you.

As a local business, we have a stake in the community. That's why we support local charitable organizations and our schools. When you support these efforts, you are supporting the community and making it a better place for everyone.

While the times may have changed, our mission and outlook have not. We view our role as a catalyst for good. Working together, we can accomplish great things for our community now and in the future.

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

**Laundry Tip:** Dry towels and heavier cottons separately from lighter-weight clothing. You'll spend less time running the dryer for lighter-weight items, which saves energy.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



## Types of Heat Pumps

There are three main types of heat pump systems. Use the information below to determine the system that's best suited for your climate and home.

### Air-Source Heat Pumps

- Most commonly used heat pumps
  - Moves heat rather than converting it from a fuel like combustion heating systems do
  - Can reduce heating costs by about 50 percent when compared to baseboard heaters or electric furnaces
  - Newer, more efficient systems now represent a legitimate space heating alternative in colder regions like the Northeast and Midwest.
- Note: If temperatures in your area drop below 10 to 25 F, you will need an auxiliary heating system (depending on the size of the system).*

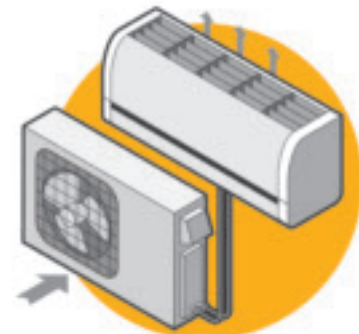


### Geothermal Heat Pumps

- More expensive to install but provide more energy savings for heating and cooling
- Move heat through pipes buried underground
- When compared to a conventional heating system, can reduce energy use by 25 to 50 percent
- Effective in extreme climates
- Not ideal for smaller lots and certain soil conditions

### Ductless Mini-Split Heat Pumps

- Easier to install, quiet, small in size
- Flexible for heating and cooling individual rooms and smaller spaces
- No energy loss through ductwork, which accounts for more than 30 percent of a home's energy use for space heating/cooling.
- Installation can be pricey, but federal incentives may be available



Heat pump systems should be installed by a licensed professional. Contact your local electric cooperative for more information about options and potential incentives.

Sources: Dept. of Energy and Consumer Reports



# HELP KEEP ELECTRIC LINE WORKERS SAFE

**Be patient** when the power goes out. Workers need to work efficiently and **safely** to restore power.

## ZONE IN ON SAFETY

Respect roadside work crews.

Don't drive distracted. Reduce your speed. Change lanes.

- 1 work zone crash occurs every 5.4 minutes
- 70 work zone crashes result in injuries each day
- 12 work zone crashes result in at least 1 fatality each week

**Never plug a generator into a wall outlet** in your home or garage. The power that back feeds into the electric line could electrocute a utility worker or neighbor.

**DON'T** post signs on utility poles.

Foreign objects can tear utility workers' protective clothing, which is the first line of protection from an electric shock.

Electric line workers **RANK 15** on the list of **25 MOST DANGEROUS JOBS** in America. Help keep them safe!

Learn more at **Safe Electricity.org**

## 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)

## Office closure notice

Our office will be closed on Feb. 18 for Presidents Day

## SIEC Board of Directors

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**For Outages Call:**  
**800-762-1400 • 618-827-3555**