

JAMUP

published by Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative, Dongola, Illinois

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

See you at the annual meeting



David Johnston
Executive Vice President/
General Manager

Most of us lead busy lives. We find ourselves multitasking, constantly checking phones and email to keep up with the demands of modern life. Thanks to technology, we can accomplish many tasks electronically and remotely to be

more efficient. With so many pressing obligations, we like to protect our “spare” time. Invitations to attend in-person meetings and gatherings are weighed carefully as we decide whether or not our time and effort to attend is beneficial. The answer to the question, “what’s in it for me?” must be compelling. You may think attending Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative’s annual meeting would be easy to lump into the “no benefit to me” category. However, I’d ask you to think again.

SIEC exists to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to its member-owners (that’s you!). Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of all members and to serve the long-term interests of our local communities. This is where you can help.

As a member of the community, you have a perspective that is valuable—and we invite you to share it with the co-op. At the annual meeting, co-op leaders will discuss priorities and challenges, and discuss the financial health and priorities for the coming years. Annual meeting is also



the time to vote for board members who will represent you—the members of the co-op. Board members are member-owners, just like you.

SIEC is one of the few local organizations that is uniquely positioned to bring together all members of the community. It’s worth noting that the health of the co-op and the well-being of the community are closely intertwined.

Perhaps you may feel you have nothing to add to the discussion, so there is no need to attend the annual meeting. However, every energy bill you pay to the co-op helps ensure better service and reliability for the whole community. Your dollars are reinvested locally into improvements that impact the reliability and affordability of your energy, and SIEC wants to hear from you to better inform our decisions as

we plan for the future.

While SIEC provides convenient electronic options for bill-paying and communication, there are times when there is no substitute for in-person engagement. When members of our community come together for a common purpose, we improve the quality of life for all in our corner of the world.

If you’ve never attended our annual meeting, or if it’s been awhile, please stop by. Our co-op directors, employees and staff look forward to visiting with you! We’ll have food, entertainment and door prizes, so mark your calendar for the annual meeting at 6 p.m. on Thursday August 8, 2019, at Shawnee Community College in Ullin, Illinois.

Joshua Franklin

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.

SIEC Board of Directors

David Martin
(President) Massac Co.
 Bob L. McIntosh
(Vice President) Pulaski Co.
 Randall Rushing
(Secretary-Treasurer) Massac Co.
 Scott Miller Alexander Co.
 Lamar Houston, Jr. Alexander Co.
 G. Robert Inman Pulaski Co.
 Carole J. Kelley Johnson Co.
 Bill Littrell Union Co.
 Scott L. Ury Union Co.

Ronald E. Osman (Attorney)
 General Manager David A. Johnston
 Bree D. Hileman (Editor)

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

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.

www.siec.coop

Tips for maintaining an efficient HVAC system

Ah, summer. Cookouts, swimming pools, camping—it's the perfect time to enjoy the outdoors with family and friends. And when it's time to come back indoors, there's nothing better than that cool blast you feel from your home's air conditioning unit.

Your heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) system is essential to keeping your home comfortable during summer months, and if it breaks down, it's also the most expensive equipment to repair or replace. Luckily, there are simple steps you can take to lengthen the life of your HVAC system.

Change or clean filters. Dirty filters block airflow, which can greatly decrease the efficiency of your system. The Department of Energy recommends changing or cleaning filters every month or two during the cooling season. If your unit is in constant use or is subjected to dusty conditions or pet hair, consider checking filters more frequently.

Clean the HVAC unit. Outdoor condenser coils can become clogged with pollen, dirt and small debris. Use a hose to spray the HVAC unit

once each season to ensure maximum airflow. (Warning: Do not use a pressure washer to do this, as it can damage the equipment.)

Clear space around the HVAC unit. Dryer vents, falling leaves and grass left behind from the lawnmower can create buildup. Remove any debris around the HVAC unit. If you have foliage near the unit, trim it back at least 2 ft. around the condenser to increase airflow.

If you want to evaluate the efficiency of your HVAC system, follow the steps in the graphic below.

You should have your HVAC system periodically inspected by a licensed professional. The frequency of inspections depends on the age of your unit, but the Department of Energy recommends scheduling tune-ups during the spring and fall, when contractors aren't as busy.

When HVAC equipment fails, it's inconvenient and uncomfortable—especially during the dog days of summer. Remember, your HVAC system runs best when it's regularly cleaned and serviced. With a little maintenance along the way, you can add years to your system's lifespan.

3-Step HVAC Test

As summer temperatures rise, so do electric bills. Follow these steps to test the efficiency of your HVAC unit.

The outdoor temperature should be above 80 degrees, and you should set your thermostat well below the room temperature to ensure the system runs long enough for this test.

1. Using a digital probe thermometer (about \$12), measure the temperature of the air being pulled into your HVAC filter.
2. Measure the temperature of the air blowing out of your A/C vent.
3. Subtract the A/C vent temperature from the HVAC filter temperature. You should see a difference of about 17 to 20 degrees. If the difference is less than 17 degrees, you may need a licensed technician to check the coolant. If the difference is greater than 20 degrees, your ductwork may need to be inspected for airflow restrictions.





Unplug to be more connected

"Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you." Author Anne Lamott cleverly captures the benefits of unplugging in today's device-driven, multi-tasking world. Keeping up with work, family and school activities or the latest trends on social media makes most of us feel compelled to constantly check our devices.

Summer is a great time to take a family vacation, but it's also a good opportunity to unplug from our devices and enjoy the great outdoors with family and friends. Research has shown that we all need downtime after a busy day to recharge—even though we may resist it. Take a moment to slow down and enjoy some peaceful hours away from technology.

While you're unplugging from your devices, look around your home to identify electronics that consume energy even when they are not in use (this is known as "vampire" energy loss). TVs, gaming consoles, phone chargers and computers are some of the biggest culprits.


If your summer plans include a staycation, take time to recharge your relationships and be more present with those you love. Enjoy our beautiful surroundings with your family and friends.

Speaking of spending time outdoors, you can also enjoy energy savings by incorporating LED products and fixtures for outdoor use, such as pathway, step and porch lights. Many include features like automatic daylight shut-off and motion sensors. You can also find solar-powered lighting for outdoor spaces.

Save energy by keeping warm summer air outside where it belongs. Add caulk or weather stripping to seal air leaks around doors and windows. You can also employ a programmable thermostat to adjust the settings a few degrees higher when no one is home.

Collin Parker
In our connected world, we have forgotten how to slow down. We multitask and text. We check email, then voice-mail, then Facebook. Do yourself and your family a favor. Put down the device and smell the fresh air.


While Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative can't help you recharge your relationships, we can help you save money and energy by connecting you with our energy-saving programs and services. When you do plug back in, we're just a call or click away.



**Happy
4TH
of JULY**

INDEPENDENCE DAY

**SIEC's office
will be closed
Thursday, July 4th for
Independence Day**



Don't just pack your bags, prepare your home for vacation too

Your bags are packed and you're ready to leave your humdrum routine for a much-needed vacation. As you pack for your destination, remember your home needs a little prep too. Along with the usual tasks such as having your mail stopped, there are other steps you can take to help deter burglars and even save you a little green.

Before you leave, here are some ways to save money on your energy bill:

- Adjust your hot water heater. For a natural gas water heater, turn it to low or vacation mode. For an electric version, turn it down or off at the circuit breaker panel.
- Set or program your thermostat to a temperature that mimics the outside temperature (about 80 to 85 degrees). This still protects your wood floors and furniture and keeps any pets comfortable but saves on energy costs.
- Do not completely turn off your air conditioning during vacation, however, so the air in your house continues to circulate.
- Unplug small appliances and electronic devices including gaming systems so that they don't draw power. Also, do not leave chargers plugged into an outlet. (This tip is important when you're home as well. Do not leave chargers plugged in when they're not in use since they can overheat. Unplug charging devices after electronics are fully charged.)
- Make sure your sump pump is working.

Take these electrical and plumbing precautions:

- Turn off water valves to the dishwasher, washing machine and all sinks. Or, consider shutting off the main water valve, which cuts off water to the house but still allows water supply to an outdoor sprinkler system.

Here are some ways to keep your home looking lived in to ward off burglars:

- If you have a smart home, it's easy to regulate lights in your home remotely. Turn various lights on and off intermittently or have them timed to do so.
- If you do not have smart lighting, put various lights on timers.
- Ask a trusted neighbor to park in your driveway occasionally while you are gone.
- Use motion detectors on outside lights.
- Before you leave, check all windows and doors to make sure they are locked.

Finally, remember to clean out your fridge before leaving so that you don't come home to moldy leftovers. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

5 EASY WAYS TO PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR Vacation

- 1. Set or program your thermostat to 85 degrees** while you are away.
- 2. Unplug** small appliances and electronic devices including gaming systems so that they don't draw power.
- 3. Adjust your hot water heater.** For a natural gas water heater, turn it to low. For an electric version turn it off at the circuit breaker.
- 4. Shut** all your curtains and blinds.
- 5. Make sure your sump pump is working.**

SafeElectricity.org