Egyptian Electric News
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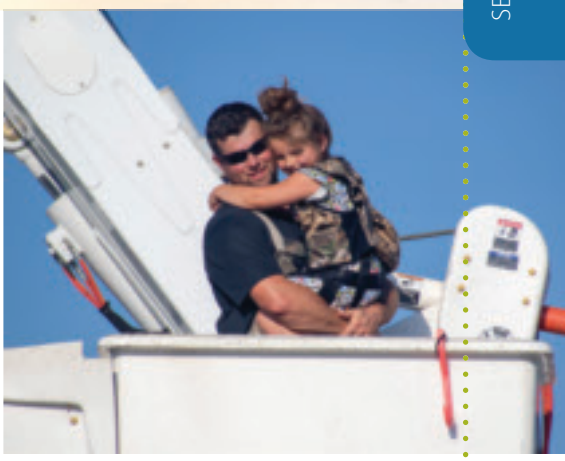
SEPTEMBER 2019



81st Annual Meeting of Members

Members of Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association (EECA) braved the heat to attend their co-op's 81st Annual Meeting of Members at EECA's headquarters in Murphysboro on July 18. There was a great turnout with 446 members registered and 758 in attendance. Members were served dinner, enjoyed bucket truck rides, watched a Live Line demonstration, were treated to kettle corn, Dilly Bars and balloon animals, and received an update about the co-op.

EECA General Manager Shane Hermetz welcomed the members and discussed three main topics: affordability, reliability and safety. "Safety is of utmost importance," Hermetz said. "Linework is dangerous enough. We encourage employees to slow down and focus on the task at hand. Taking shortcuts can lead to injuries and even death."

He then asked the members to do their part to keep co-op employees safe by slowing down and moving to the other side of the road when in a work zone. Additionally, he asked members to report downed lines and never approach them. Hermetz then discussed reliability stating that while electricity is available 99.9 percent of the time, outages do occur. However, over the years, members have seen fewer outages than ever before, and when there are outages, the average outage time is decreasing. "As time and technology changes, we will continue to modernize our outage response," Hermetz said. "Every outage is different and individual outage times may vary, but overall outage response times have improved."

Elected board members: Kevin Liefer, Ken Jarrett and Kevin Bame

Finally, Hermetz discussed affordability. While rates are anticipated to remain stable through 2020, there are possible adjustments in 2021 that may be made due to forces out of EECA's control including federal tariffs, motor fuel tax and legislation/regulation. **51-13-0027**

During the meeting, the membership voted to approve several proposed amendments to EECA's bylaws to improve cooperative transparency and address any potential governance issues as business methods and models have evolved since the cooperative's existence. This includes changes to pronouns, joint membership, elections and director qualifications.

Additionally, members voted to approved Article XIV: dispute resolution. This means that any claim or controversy between EECA and any member which arises out of or relates to the provision by the co-op to the member of electric power or other related services shall, at the request of any such party, be submitted to arbitration as provided under

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Meeting ▶ *Continued from page 20a*

the laws of the state of Illinois, as the first method to resolve conflict, with efforts to save the cooperative, in turn its members, immeasurable legal costs.

During the meeting, members re-elected Ken Jarrett of Jacob and Kevin Liefer of Red Bud to EECA's board of directors. Kevin Bame of Ava was re-elected to the board. He was appointed to the position following the retirement of Allen Haake this past May. These men will serve three-year terms.

At the close of the meeting, several attendance prizes were given away as well as drawings for $1,000 scholarships for college-bound students that are members or dependents of members. The co-op planned to give five scholarships but decided to raise the number to 10.

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MEMBER PRIZES

Every month we will have three map location numbers hidden throughout our Egyptian Electric News section. If you find your location number, that corresponds to the one on your bill, call our office and identify yourself and the page that it is on and you will win a $10 credit on your next electric bill.

Scholarship winners

Pictured below left to right, front to back.

- **Grace Pense** of Carbondale, 2019 Carbondale graduate, daughter of Seburn & Vicki Pense of Carbondale, attending John A. Logan Community College.
- **Katie Daniels** of Sparta, 2017 Sparta graduate, daughter of Philip & Linda Daniels of Sparta, attending Southwest Illinois College.
- **Ellen Blechle**, 2017 Chester High School graduate, daughter of Chris & Valerie Blechle of Chester, attending Southeast Missouri State University.
- **Alyssa Hoops**, 2019 Chester High School graduate, daughter of Royce & Rachelle Hoops of Chester, attending Southeast Missouri State University.
- **Melissa Crosby**, 2018 Chester High School graduate, daughter of Steven & Jill Asbury of Chester, attending Southwest Illinois College.
- **Taylor Hobbs**, 2018 Murphysboro High School graduate, daughter of John & Emily Hobbs of Murphysboro, attending Kaskaskia College.
- **Ryan Chambers**, 2018 Murphysboro High School graduate, son of Larry & Christine Chambers of Murphysboro, attending University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.
- **Lynon Smith**, 2017 Herrin High School graduate, son of Chad & Leslie Smith of Carterville, attending University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.
- **Jessica Kattenbraker**, 2018 Chester High School graduate, daughter of Philip & Shannon Kattenbraker of Chester, attending Southeast Missouri State University.
- **Nick Camarato**, 2015 Herrin High School graduate, son of Matt & Stephanie Camarato of Herrin, attending Northern Illinois University.

How humidity affects your home and energy bill

Heating and cooling your home may seem simple in theory. Your furnace heats when you need it to, and when the weather is hot, your air conditioner cools the air in your home. However, several factors affect your overall comfort level and energy efficiency of your home.

Updated heating and cooling equipment and mindful energy usage can increase the energy efficiency of our homes, but what about other factors such as humidity? Most people aren't aware of the impact that humidity can have on energy use.

Humidity is a way to measure the amount of water vapor in the air at any given time. In the hot summer months in Illinois, we feel that moisture when we're outside. Humid air can be challenging to properly cool. **54-20-0019** Because humidity reduces the rate of evaporation of moisture from our skin, it prevents our bodies from cooling properly and can make us feel hotter than we were at the same temperature in a drier climate.

If your home has high humidity levels, your air conditioner condenser will have to run longer and more frequently to reach a comfortable temperature, and even when you reach the right temperature, you might still feel too warm. High indoor humidity ultimately increases wear and tear on your air conditioner, costing you more down the road, but it also means higher bills as you try to cool to a level that is comfortable. Not only will the increased humidity cause comfort issues but many manufacturers will not warranty equipment or other items such as wood floors if the humidity level in your home is too high.

How can you reduce the relative humidity levels in your home and decrease your utility bills during summer months? Here are some tips:

Make your home energy efficient by ensuring that it is properly insulated and sealed to keep the heat and humidity from getting inside.

Leaky ducts (in unconditioned space), windows and doors can cause energy loss, making the HVAC system work harder to wring the moisture out of the air and

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Humidity ▶ *Continued from page 20c*

exacerbate potential indoor air quality issues. Homes that are "sealed tight" are easier to keep cool and dry.

Make sure your HVAC system is the right size.

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that most current residential systems are oversized. If your HVAC unit is too big, you will pay higher energy bills, and you won't get the efficiency level or comfort you want and expect. It is likely that the unit is "short cycling," constantly turning off and on, never achieving optimum efficiency. When the unit runs in short bursts, it will not operate long enough to eliminate the humidity in your home. Likewise, when the HVAC unit is too small, it will run constantly. Damp, cool indoor air creates a muggy atmosphere that can lead to the growth of mold and mildew. This can be a concern for those who suffer from allergies.

If you have a multi-stage variable speed system or if your air conditioning unit is properly sized, you may not need to remove humidity because it will act as a dehumidifier.

Reduce the humidity you are already producing through fans and dehumidifiers.

Kitchens and bathrooms are the biggest contributors to higher humidity levels. When cooking, especially when boiling water, run the vent fan. In the bathroom, run the vent fan when bathing or showering. Keep the fan on up to 30 minutes after you have finished in order to eliminate the residual moisture in the air.

Run dehumidifiers to reduce humidity in your home. You can program your dehumidifier for a certain percentage: generally, 40 percent is best for comfort during the summer months. A target of 40 percent relative humidity will also prevent mold and damage to interior woodwork, windows and walls.

If you reduce the indoor humidity level, you may be able to maintain a comfortable indoor temperature using ceiling fans or a whole house fan. The air movement from the fan will create a "wind chill" effect and increase comfort. Continue to run ceiling fans when not in the room or when not at home if humidity is high. This helps to continue air movement and reduce stale or musty smells in the home.

Dehumidifiers and vent fans cost money to run. However, the energy used to exhaust the humidity is worth it due to the overall energy savings you will receive from running your HVAC system less.

Make sure your home and basement are dry and do not have water running in.

Check outside causes of additional moisture in your home such as gutters and downspouts to make sure that they are directed away from your home as well as make sure there are no leaks or blockage. If rainwater leaks out and saturates the ground surrounding your home, some of the moisture can eventually migrate into your house.

Relocate house plants outside during the summer months.

Excess moisture from plants can cause humidity to rise indoors.

Insulate duct work in unconditioned spaces and have coils and filters cleaned in your HVAC unit.

Humidity can also impact your home during winter months. As the temperatures outside drop, the humidity in the air decreases, which is why you don't feel a pressing cloud of moisture in the winter like on warm summer days. **13-13-0004** As a result, the air inside your home can often feel dry as you raise the temperature. Water in the air increases how well and how long the air in your home can remain heated. Without moisture, you might feel chilly even though your thermostat reads a pleasant 72 degrees. This may prompt you to crank up the heat even more especially during a cold snap which will cause an increase in your utility bills.

How can you make your home more comfortable during the winter months? Here are some tips.

Run a humidifier during winter months.

You can program your humidifier for a certain percentage: generally, 40 percent is best for comfort in the winter. If a humidifier is not in your budget, place shallow pans of water near heating vents and sunny windows.

Utilize the humidity that you are already producing in your home.

Use a room fan to push damp air into the other rooms instead of the bathroom exhaust fan. This will save you energy by not having to heat the air to replace air going out of your home from your bathroom exhaust fan. Instead of using the drying cycle on your dishwasher, leave the dishwasher door open to air dry the dishes. It not only will add humidity to your house, but it will also save you energy.

Use a dryer bypass box to direct moisture and heat back into your home when using the clothes dryer. If you don't have a dryer bypass box, you can hang damp laundry inside your home on laundry racks instead of using the clothes dryer. You might even want to use a room fan to increase drying time and to spread the humidity faster around your home. Not using your dryer will save you energy and increase your home's humidity.

Most of the humidity leaves your home through the attic. Therefore, it is important to air seal and insulate your home. Add insulation to your home such as foam or cellulose and check to make sure seals around windows and doors are tight.

Water houseplants regularly and keep them sprayed with water.

This will help add moisture to the air as well as keep your plants healthy during winter months.

For more information on improving the overall comfort of your home through energy efficiency, contact Egyptian Electric Cooperative at 800-606-1505.