

POWERLINE

NEWSLETTER FOR CO-OP MEMBERS OF CORN BELT ENERGY



EDITION: JANUARY 2020

Three DIY efficiency projects to tackle this year

A New Year brings new opportunities to save energy—and money. You may think energy efficiency upgrades require a great deal of time and expense, but that's not always the case.

If you're interested in making your home more efficient but don't want to break the bank, there are several DIY projects you can tackle to increase energy savings. Let's take a look at three inexpensive efficiency upgrades that can help you save energy throughout the year.

Trim Dryer Vent

Level of difficulty: easy. Supplies needed: tin snips, gloves, measuring tape and masking tape. **Estimated cost:** about \$25 depending on the supplies you already have.

If your dryer vent hose is too long, your dryer is working harder than it has to, using more energy than necessary. The vent hose should be long enough for you to pull the dryer out a couple feet from the wall, but the shape of the hose should form a

line—it should not have a lot of slack, with twists and curves. A shorter, unobstructed vent hose increases the efficiency of your dryer, dries clothing faster and reduces lint buildup, which can create potential fire hazards.

Simply measure, mark and trim the hose to the desired length, then reattach the hose to your dryer and exterior vent. If you're unsure about the hose length, check out YouTube.com for a quick video tutorial.

Seal Air Leaks

Level of difficulty: moderate. Supplies needed: caulk and caulk gun, weather stripping, gloves, putty knife, paper towels. **Estimated cost:** \$25 to \$50 depending on the materials you purchase.

Sealing air leaks in your home can help you save 10% to 20% on heating and cooling bills. Apply caulk around windows, doors, electrical wiring and plumbing to seal in conditioned air. You should also weather strip exterior doors, which can keep out drafts and help you control energy costs. Types of caulking and weather stripping materials vary, but ask your local hardware or home store for assistance if you're unsure about the supplies you need. For more information, the Department of Energy provides step-by-step instructions for caulking and weather stripping: <https://bit.ly/2Kesu6W>

Insulate Attic Stairs Opening

Level of difficulty: moderate. Supplies needed (if you build the box yourself): rigid foam board, faced blanket insulation, tape for foam board, measuring tape, utility knife, caulk and caulk gun, plywood. **Estimated Cost:** \$50 to \$100.

A properly insulated attic is one of the best ways to optimize energy savings and comfort in your home, but many homeowners don't consider insulating the attic stairs, or the opening to your attic space. Even a well-insulated attic can leak air through the stair opening, but luckily, there's an easy fix.

An insulated cover box can seal and insulate the attic stairs opening. You can build your own insulated cover box or purchase a pre-built box or kit from a local home improvement store like Home Depot or Lowe's for about \$60. If you decide to build your own, check out these step-by-step instructions from the Department of Energy: <https://bit.ly/36YNCYQ>. It should also be noted, if your attic opening is located in a garage that you do not heat and cool, this upgrade will not be as effective.

Saving energy doesn't have to be hard. With a little time and effort, you can maximize energy savings and increase the comfort of your home. To learn about additional ways to save, contact Jeremy Myers, Energy Advisor, at 309-662-5330 x221 or by email at jeremy.myers@cornbeltenergy.com.



What to do during a power outage

Power outages can be caused by many things; ice accumulation weighs down power lines, tree limbs break off into the lines, an animal gets too close to a warm transformer, or maybe a car hits a utility pole. Here are some steps to take if you experience an outage:

Step 1: Make sure the outage is on our end; check your fuses and breakers and see if your neighbors have lights.

Step 2: Report your outage through our free SmartHub app or by calling our automated outage reporting system at 1-800-879-0339. These two reporting mechanisms tie directly into our outage management system (OMS) for efficient and cost-effective reporting. Some members are concerned when they call in and don't speak to a live person; if the automated phone system tells you that we've recorded your outage, our dispatch center has been immediately notified through the OMS.

To make the outage process even more efficient, **make sure we have your current phone number(s) associated with your account.** Check your latest bill stub or log in to your online SmartHub account to see which number(s) are currently linked to your account. Don't worry - we won't sell or share your contact information with anyone else.

Please do not report your outage to us via Facebook or Twitter as these outlets are not manned 24/7 and are not directly linked to our OMS.

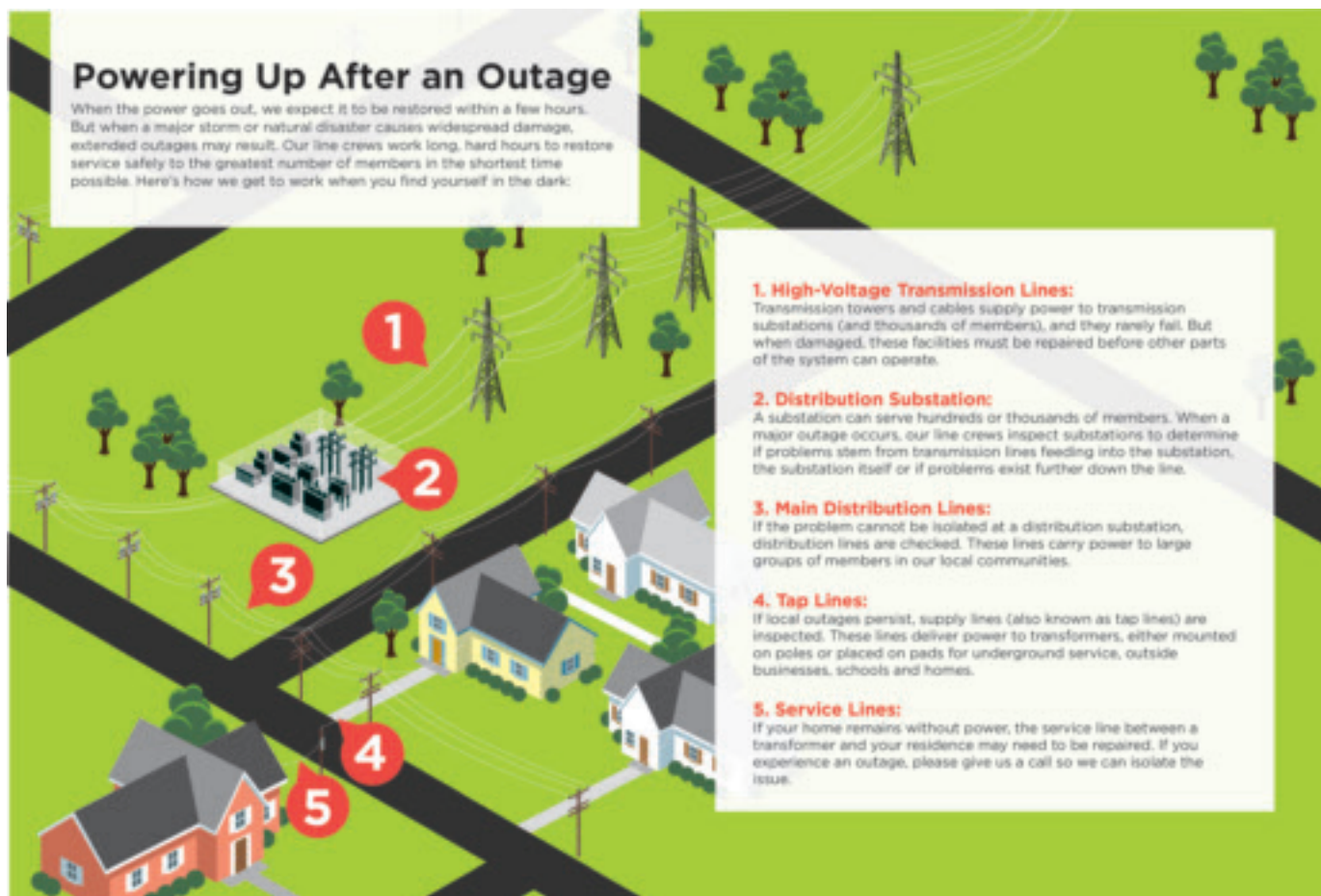
Step 3: Be patient. As our outage management system is predicting the extent of the outage, our dispatch center assigns crews to investigate the issue and make necessary repairs. If your outage occurs after business hours, keep in mind that often times linemen need to stop what they're doing and grab necessary gear and supplies before heading out to the

outage location to restore power, usually in adverse weather conditions. A little bit of patience goes a long way as our linemen work as quickly and as safely as possible.

Step 4: Check our website, Facebook account or Twitter account for updates on major outages. We usually post status updates for larger outage events (*those affecting 500 co-op members or more*).

View a live outage map at www.cornbeltenergy.com to check the extent of the outage. If you don't have internet access, we also post status updates on our main phone greeting at 1-800-879-0339 during major outages.

If you experience a power outage, rest assured that we're doing everything in *our* power to restore yours as quickly as possible.



2020 Nominating Committee meeting scheduled

The Nominating Committee will meet at the Corn Belt Energy office in Bloomington at 11:00 AM on Monday, January 27, 2020.

Any cooperative member who is interested in being nominated to the Board of Directors should contact a committee member prior to the meeting. The committee can nominate no more than two individuals for each expired Directorship.

As an alternative, any active cooperative member may also be nominated for election by petition. Any fifty active members of the Cooperative, by their petition, may propose the name of any qualified member as an additional nominee.

The nominated person must have

active service in the Board district of the vacancy, and no other Directors can live in the same township.

Petitions to nominate Directors must be filed at Corn Belt Energy's office no later than Monday, April 20, 2020. The election to fill the Director seats will occur at the Annual Meeting, scheduled for Friday, June 19, 2020, at Central Catholic High School in Bloomington.

The Board of Directors is comprised of 13 active members who represent the membership in the operation of the Cooperative. The detailed procedure for choosing a Director is stated in our cooperative bylaws, which can be found at www.cornbeltenergy.com.

Now accepting Director nominations

The terms of the following Corn Belt Energy Directors will expire at the 2020 Annual Meeting on June 19:

- Rae F. Payne, District 1
- Jerry Starkey, District 1
- Dennis Fredrickson, District 6
- Albert Hagenbuch, District 8

The Board of Directors has appointed the following persons to the Nominating Committee. If you are interested in running for one of the Board's vacant seats, contact one of these persons or an existing Director with your credentials by January 20:

- Brad Johnson, 1499 N 2550th Rd., Ottawa 61350
- Bruce Thomas, 3011 Clearwater Ave, Bloomington 61704
- Todd West, 2273 Knox Rd. 2250 E., Victoria 61485

- Gerard Besenhard, 3154 E 11th Rd., Utica 61373
- Kevin Remmers, 1427 County Rd. 2250 E, Roanoke 61561
- Cheryl Sample, 10630 Greenswitch Rd., Maroa 61756
- Ken Schertz, 14025 Lara Trace, Bloomington 61705
- Charles Read, 17243 1600 East St., Princeton 61356
- Bart Bittner, 19754 E 1300 North Rd., Bloomington 61705
- Stanley Otto, 6938 E 1700 North Rd., Danvers 61732
- Mark Young, 27126 Golden Acres Drive, LeRoy 61752
- Wayne Cremeens, 26863 Wildfire Dr., Hopedale 61747
- Scott Baum, 7277 Sawmill Rd., Clinton 61727

Meet our employees



Diana Thomlinson
Executive Assistant

How long have you worked at Corn Belt Energy?
19 years

What is your role at Corn Belt Energy?
Assistant to the President/CEO, the Vice Presidents and administrative support for the Board of Directors.

What aspect of your role do you enjoy the most?
All of it. I'm blessed to have had this job and to have worked with so many good, dedicated people led by the best management there could be. This cooperative and its board are truly member-oriented. From the newest apprentice lineman to the most seasoned director, I have been witness to a great place to work and phenomenal, dedicated people. Our annual meeting is living proof of that - from the smiles of our members to the pride of the employees and directors who have come together to share an informative, pleasant, fun day together.

If there is one piece of advice that you could share with our members, what would it be?
Focus on the positive, it's the best we've got.

Corn Belt Energy puts SAFETY FIRST. What safety tip would you share with our members?
We should all follow Corn Belt's lead on Safety commitment. At the end of the day, we all want everyone home safe with our families.

What are your hobbies and outside interests?
My 8 grandchildren especially and my family. And, I want to get back into crafts such as knitting & crocheting and an exercise routine.

Who or what inspires you?
My family and grandchildren and good friends.

If you had to select a hashtag to describe yourself, what would it be?
#Mama

Is there anything else that you'd like to share with our members?
Thank you for your cooperative support. I've heard so many good stories from linemen about how well they've been treated and appreciated for their work. We wouldn't be a cooperative without those hard working, nice guys and that whole great department.

**SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 19, 2020
CORN BELT ENERGY 82ND ANNUAL MEETING**



Check your electric usage online with SmartHub

Are you interested in checking your electric usage online? You can view your own electric usage compared to previous months by logging in to your SmartHub account at cornbeltenergy.com. You can also overlay temperature data with your usage to see how the weather plays a significant role in your energy use.



<< To access SmartHub from your desktop, simply click "Account Log-in" at cornbeltenergy.com and log in with your email address and password.

Levelized billing option



Levelized Billing gives you a way to guard against large fluctuations in your monthly electric bill, without ever having to play "catch-up" at the end of the year. With Levelized Billing, your monthly electric bill becomes a "rolling average" of your electric usage for the most recent 12 months. By averaging your changes in usage

over a 12-month period, your bill will remain fairly consistent every month, even in very cold or hot months when usage may be significantly higher.

Our Levelized Billing program is completely free for members with accounts in good standing and with at least 12 months of service history.

Members can deactivate the Levelized Billing program at any time by contacting the Corn Belt Energy Billing Department at 800-879-0339. If a member on Levelized Billing becomes delinquent or enters into a delayed payment agreement, they will be removed from the program.

CONTACT US

1-800-879-0339 | cbec@cornbeltenergy.com | www.cornbeltenergy.com |  
1 Energy Way, Bloomington IL 61705 | Office hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

