

The SOUTHEASTERN Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

President's Comments



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

Since 1964, October has been designated as National Cooperative Month, providing cooperatives with an opportunity to explain the cooperative difference to their members. In this month's article, I would like to explain some of the cooperative differences and how it benefits all of us as cooperative members.

As the electric utility industry continues to evolve and face continual change, we can all be proud that we are part of the electric cooperative program. Electric cooperatives have a very unique business model that provides many benefits for its members and has proven the test of time for over 82 years. Your electric cooperative is a not-for-profit, member-owned business and exists for the sole reason of serving members. Your electric cooperative sets the rates just high enough to cover the cost of doing business unlike investor-owned utilities that strive to maximize profits for investors or shareholders. Any money that is collected by the cooperative above the cost of operations is allocated back to you as capital credits. This allocation becomes your equity ownership in the cooperative and when the financial condition of the cooperative permits, the capital credits are returned to you in the form of cash. Over the past 10 years, your cooperative has paid back over \$17.8 million in capital credits as cash to members.

Electric cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by the members

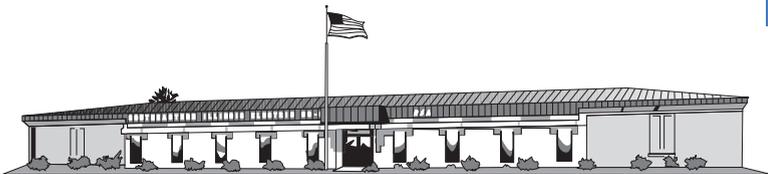
who actively participate in electing representatives, setting bylaws and making decisions. The members of a cooperative have equal voting rights – one member, one vote. Each customer of the cooperative is a member and owner of the business with an equal say as every other member, unlike investor-owned utilities where the amount of governance is determined by the number of shares held in the company.

Electric cooperatives and their employees support the local community and local economy in various ways. Commitment to community is a founding principle of electric cooperatives and as a local business, your cooperative is staffed by your friends and neighbors that work hard for you. Whether the employees are working thru storms to restore your power, volunteering their time to help install lighting on local ball fields or finding ways to help provide grants for local schools, your cooperative employees are finding ways to make a difference in your community.

In summary, your local cooperative has a very unique business model that benefits all of us as cooperative members. As the utility industry continues to evolve and explore different ways to serve its customers, all of us can be very proud to be member-owners of our electric cooperatives, what we stand for, how we operate and how we truly make a difference in our very own communities.

See you next month and as always, "We'll keep the lights on for you."

READERSHIP PRIZE WINNER:
Kelley Uselton, Harrisburg, IL



Knowing what to do around a downed power line could save your life

Mother Nature can be unpredictable. Whether it's a thunderstorm or blizzard, severe storms can interfere with power distribution or even bring down lines. What is the most important thing to remember about a downed power line? **DO NOT GO NEAR IT** for any reason.

After a storm has caused damage, be alert and slow down. Do not attempt to drive over downed lines or through water or over snow or debris that could be covering downed lines. Driving over a line can pull more lines or related equipment down. If you encounter a downed line, pull over and report the location to 9-1-1.

Here is some additional information about downed lines, which can occur after a severe storm or an accident involving a power pole.

Q: Can I tell if a downed line is energized by looking?

A: No, there's no way to tell. Always assume a downed line is live even if it's not buzzing or sparking.

Q: What should I do if I am in an accident involving a power line or electrical equipment?

A: **DO NOT** get out of your vehicle. It is always safer to remain inside, which acts as an insulator and keeps you out of the path of stray electricity. Call 9-1-1 and tell the dispatcher a downed line or other electrical equipment is involved. Co-op personnel will be dispatched to the scene to de-energize the power.

Q: Is there any reason I should get out of the vehicle?

A: Yes, but only if your vehicle is on fire or you see smoke. If that's the case, make a clean jump from the vehicle without touching it (cross your arms closely to your chest), and



hop with feet together as far as you can—preferably 50 or more feet away.

Q: What happens to the electrical current when a line is down?

A: Once a power line is in contact with a vehicle, the ground or other objects, it energizes the area. The electrical current spreads to the vehicle and ground, and it ripples out. Each “ring” of the ripple represents a different voltage. Stepping from one voltage to the next can cause your body to become a path for electricity and electrocute you. That's why you should hop or shuffle once you make a clean jump from the vehicle. Always keep your feet together – think of hopping like a bunny or shuffling like a penguin.

Q: What else can I do?

A: Put your window down and yell to others not to approach the scene. They could be shocked or electrocuted if they walk or run to the energized area or touch anything that's energized.

Q: What if I can't tell what type of line is down?

A: It doesn't matter – still stay in

your vehicle and wait for the utility personnel to arrive.

Q: Are there any other instances when these same safety tips apply?

A: Yes, the same rules apply to any type of equipment in contact with overhead lines or electrical equipment.

Q: Why am I safe in my vehicle?

A: Because you are not a path for electricity while in a vehicle.

Q: What should I do if the windshield is broken and the downed wire is in my vehicle?

A: Stay in the vehicle and do not touch the wire or attempt to use other objects to move it.

Q: What if I hit a pad-mounted transformer in a yard?

A: Pad-mounted transformers house electrical equipment connected to underground power lines. The same safety precautions apply to all of these cabinets as the voltage could stray if it's damaged.

For more information about staying safe around electricity, go to SafeElectricity.org.



National Co-op Month

October is National Co-op Month and we honor you, our consumer-member. When you call our office, you talk to people like you. We live in your neighborhood, you see us at the grocery store, our kids play sports with your kids and we lose power during storms just like you do.

We're not in a corporate office in some far away state. We are right here where we always have been and always will be. We are your local electric cooperative, and our only purpose is to serve you.

Brought to you by SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative.





Find us
on 

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

The average household owns 24 electronic products, which account for roughly 12% of home energy use. When shopping for electronics, consider purchasing ENERGY STAR®-certified products, which can be 70% more efficient than conventional models.

Source: www.energystar.gov



POWER OUTAGE

If your power goes off, we offer these suggestions

1. Check the fuses or circuit breakers in your service panels. If you have breakers, make sure they are in the "ON" position.
2. If you have a meter pole, check the main breaker panel just below the meter socket. If the breaker is in the "OFF" position, check all of your wiring from the meter pole to your various buildings. If the wiring appears to be okay, reset the breaker to the "ON" position.
3. If you still do not have power, check with neighbors to see if they have power.
4. To report a power failure or other emergency, please phone 1-877-399-8405. This phone number is monitored around the clock, 365 days per year to accept your outage and emergency calls.
5. Your phone call will be handled by SouthEastern's automated outage reporting system and will be identified automatically through ANI (Automatic Number Identification). An outage record will then be generated for your location. Please note that the phone number from which you place the call will be the number used to generate the record. If the system fails to recognize your phone number, members having touch-tone phones may simply enter their seven-digit phone number (without area code) in order to report the outage. Members not having touch-tone phones will be asked to leave a message. It is important you leave your name, phone number and location of the outage. Retrieving messages and entering them into the system is time consuming; therefore, please leave only a message that will help in restoration of electric service. Do not remain on the line for an operator because a live operator is not there to respond. In order to keep a current listing of all numbers, it is important that you notify the Cooperative of any changes in your telephone number.
6. Handling outage calls electronically allows you to report power failures very quickly. Once your outage has been reported, it will be dispatched to repair personnel who will restore your outage as soon as possible. Calling back repeatedly will not shorten the length of the outage, but may hinder the efforts of other members who are trying to report outages.

OUTAGE CALLS ONLY 1-877-399-8405

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