


JAMUP

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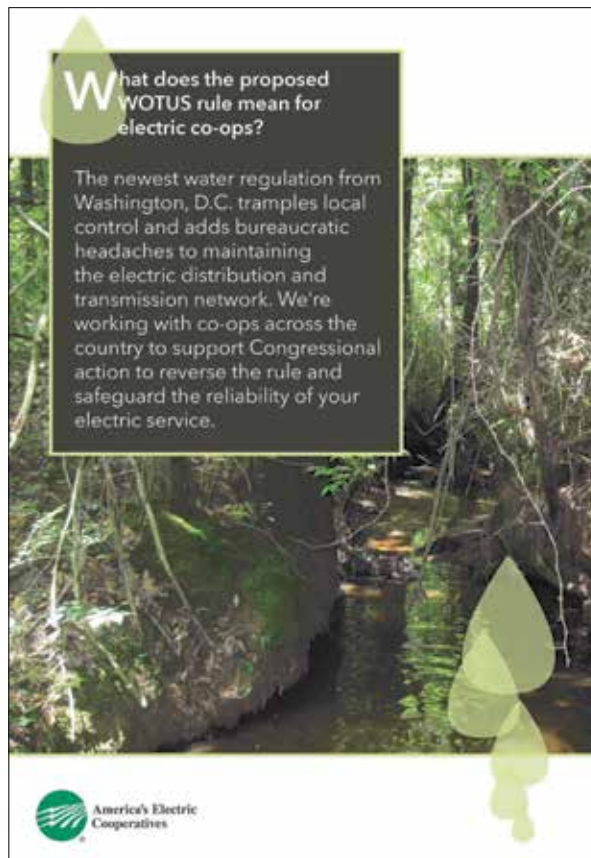
WOTUS regulation will impact electric co-ops

By Mark Hayes

In May, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) finalized a water regulation that removes power and responsibility from local officials and relocates it to Washington, D.C.

It's called "WOTUS," standing for "waters of the U.S.," and defines what is subject to federal regulation under the federal Clean Water Act. These "waters" include the "60 percent of streams in the United States [that] flow only seasonally or when it rains" as Ken Kopocis, the EPA acting assistant administrator for water, explained recently. Currently, most of these are subject to state control.

In this new regulation, the EPA and the Corps maximized their regulatory reach by suggesting only federal employees



network – that's over 2,118 miles of power lines covering approximately 1,100 square miles. And past experience does not suggest a quick and timely response.

Rosetta Keith
The reliable electricity you pay for every month depends on a robust and well-maintained system—and our ability to quickly make necessary adjustments to keep your lights on. That's why we've been advocating for a new rule.

SIEC takes our responsibility to protect our land and water seriously – after all, we live here, too. But we believe this task belongs close to home, here in Illinois, where folks understand the opportunities and challenges.

Electric cooperatives across the country are working together with other interested groups in supporting Congressional action directing the EPA and


can adequately protect our water. And they did this without consulting with their state and local co-regulators.

They continued down the path of more Washington-based decision making, meaning that federal agencies will be regulating everything from the Mississippi River and Ohio River to ponds and dry creek beds that only temporarily have water after rainfall.

What does this mean for members of SIEC? Well, more regulated streams (with or without water in them) mean more federal permits to maintain and expand our electric distribution

the Corps to withdraw the rule, return to the drawing board and consult with affected parties – especially state and local governments – before re-proposing anything.

Mark Hayes writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.



LABOR DAY

The office will be closed in observance of Labor Day on Monday, September 7, 2015

What are my payment options?

- **Budget Billing:** A monthly budget plan where your monthly amount is always the same for 11 of the 12 months. On the 12th month, you “catch-up” to actual, plus or minus.



- **SmartHub:** SmartHub is our free online bill payment system which can be found at www.siec.coop. Even if you mail in your payment each month or have it automatically debited, you can still use SmartHub to review your payment history, billing preferences and notification information. You can even download copies of previous billing statements and monitor your daily energy usage to get a better idea how much your upcoming bill will be. (registration is required)



- **Pay Now:** Pay Now is an easy bill pay option with no registration required. If you just want to make a payment, use your billing account number and last name or business name to access your account to do so.
- **EFT:** We can draft your monthly bill from your checking account.



- **Credit/Debit Cards:** We accept MasterCard, Visa, Discover and American Express.

- **Pay-by-Telephone:** Call 1-855-356-6361.

- **Pre-Pay Metering:** Pre-Pay metering is a pay as you go plan that offers you the opportunity to pay when you want and in the amounts you want. Pre-Pay members never pay a late charge and avoid paying large deposits. If it would be easier for you to make daily, weekly, or biweekly payments rather than one large payment each month, then Pre-Pay might be your best option.




- **Smart Phone:** You can download our SmartHub App for FREE through the Apple App Store or Android Google Play.

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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 Cathy with your account number at **800-762-1400** to claim your prize.

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Office hours: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. • **Web address:** www.siec.coop

Look up for hazards during harvest

After working in a field on a neighbor's farm, Jim Flach parked his equipment and stepped out of the vehicle. Sadly, Jim did not realize his equipment was touching an overhead power line, and he became a path for the electrical current as he placed his foot onto the ground. Jim received a severe electric shock that ultimately resulted in his death a few months later. Safe Electricity urges farmers to take the proper precautions when working around power lines.

"The rush to harvest can lead to farmers working long days with little sleep," cautions Kyla Kruse, communications director of the Energy Education Council and its Safe Electricity program. "It is important to take time for safety. Before starting work, make sure to note the location of overhead power lines."

To stay safe around overhead power lines, Safe Electricity urges farm operators and workers to:

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines.
- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from power lines — at all times, in all directions.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always remember to lower extensions when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, call SIEC at 800 762-1400.

If contact is made with a power line, stay on the equipment. Make sure to warn others to stay away, and call 911. Do not leave until the utility crew says it is safe to do so. The only reason to exit is if the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together, without



touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

Some additional safety tips from Safe Electricity include:

- Do not use metal poles when breaking up bridged grain inside and around grain bins.
- Always hire qualified electricians for any electrical issues.

- Do not use equipment with frayed cables.

"You need to double check, even triple check, to see what is above you," says Marilyn Flach, Jim's widow. His son Brett adds, "Be conscious of your surroundings. You need to keep your eyes open and beware of overhead lines."

For more electrical safety information, visit SafeElectricity.org.

A cooperative day in YOUR life

Co-ops are all around us.

By Adam Schwartz

So how did you spend your day? Chances are cooperatives were a big part of it from dawn until bedtime. Take a moment to read this quick overview of how co-ops might be impacting you every day. *Love James*

Your morning orange juice might have come from Florida's Natural, a producer-owned cooperative based in – you guessed it – Florida, but distributing throughout the U.S. If your morning coffee came from Equal Exchange (www.equalexchange.coop), you get bonus points because they source their coffee from farmer-owned co-ops in developing countries, and they are a worker-owned co-op. If you like milk in your coffee or cereal, check this out: more than 86 percent of all fluid milk flows through a co-op!

The wheat in your muffin or toast was most likely processed through a farmer-owned grain elevator in the Midwest. If you had cranberries in that muffin, they likely came from Ocean Spray, or maybe you used Land O'Lakes Butter or Welch's Concord Grape Jam – all producer-owned co-ops that make the products we love on our toast.

After that big co-op breakfast, it is time to start the day. Working parents

might drop off their young children at one of the over 1,000 pre-school co-ops that operate throughout the U.S.

Perhaps this is the day to make some improvements to your home. Ace Hardware, True Value and Do It Best are all examples of purchasing co-ops. These are small businesses that come together to form a co-op so that they can compete with big box retailers that are not owned by people in the local community.

You might need to stop by the credit union for a loan or pick up some cash for that home project from one of their 25,000 ATMs in their network. More than 100 million people in the U.S. are members of a credit union, and yep, you guessed it, credit unions are co-ops.

On your way home, you may stop at one of the 300 community-owned cooperative grocery stores in the country, like the Neighborhood Coop Grocery in nearby Carbondale. Many of the meat products and vegetables are also sourced from co-ops. If you are in a hurry, maybe you swing by KFC, Taco Bell or Pizza Hut to pick up dinner. The franchise owners of these fast food restaurants are all

members of a purchasing co-op, just like the hardware stores above. So are the owners of Dunkin Donuts and many other franchises.

After dinner, perhaps you are watching TV from one of the more than 1,000 small cable companies that serve rural America that have come together to form a co-op that helps keep costs as low as possible. Or maybe you are surfing the Internet through services provided by your local telecommunications co-op.

Travel plans? If you are on a business trip or vacation and staying in a Best Western – that is also a purchasing co-op!

And when it's time for "lights out," you can flip that switch knowing you're receiving safe, reliable electricity from your local electric cooperative, your friends at SIEC. From morning until night, you can have a very cooperative day.

Adam Schwartz is the founder of The Cooperative Way a consulting firm that helps co-ops succeed. He is an author, speaker and a member-owner of the CDS Consulting Co-op.

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