

The SOUTHEASTERN Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

President's Comments



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

As we begin the New Year, I would like to take this time to briefly reflect on the year 2009 and inform you of challenges faced by the energy industry and your Cooperative's plans for the year 2010.

The year 2009 proved to be a very remarkable time in the history of your Cooperative with the 2009 Ice Storm that brought over an inch of ice causing 9,500 outages and the 2009 "Inland Hurricane" that brought estimated wind gusts of up to 121 mph resulting in 12,000 outages. These storms caused damages in excess of \$6.1 million; however your Cooperative applied for FEMA assistance for each of these storms and received \$3.8 million in assistance to help pay for these storms. After three major storms in the past two years, I am hopeful that our Cooperative will experience a calm year in 2010.

Over the past year I have informed you of the proposed climate change legislation that is currently before the Senate. Due to the controversial debate over Health Care Reform, climate change legislation has been on hold during the last quarter of 2009. As Congress reconvenes in January 2010, their efforts will likely focus on the economy as they try to find opportunities to create more jobs and help revitalize our nations' economy. This means climate change legislation may become a priority in the Senate after these efforts are exhausted. Some believe

that if the Senate does not begin the climate change legislation debate early in 2010, it is possible that the climate change legislation will be on hold for another year due to the fact that some Congressmen that are up for re-election in 2010 will be very reluctant to cast yet another very controversial vote if the timing of that vote is nearing the time of the election. However, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) is continuing to pressure Congress to pass a bill that preempts stringent regulations currently being developed by the USEPA. Therefore, the actions taken by the Senate during the first quarter of 2010 will determine whether climate change legislation is considered by the Senate in 2010.

In 2010, your Cooperative is planning to continue making necessary investments in the distribution facilities that serve your energy by rebuilding over 35 miles of aging infrastructure and performing other maintenance activities including pole testing, regulator maintenance, breaker maintenance, sectionalizing, etc. in order to help ensure a reliable electric supply.

In 2010, your Cooperative is planning to continue making significant investments in the vegetation management program to improve the quality and reliability of electric service you receive. Major disturbances in electric service can result

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READERSHIP PRIZE WINNER:
Jeff Adams - Galatia, IL



Wicked Wiring Warnings

Give your home a wiring checkup

Our homes are a lot like us. They age just like we do. They begin to creak and moan. They begin to show their age. They, like us, have aging systems, some that can be seen and some that cannot. Just as we need to get checkups from time to time, our homes also need checkups. When it comes to the electrical system in our homes it is important to have the doctor do a house call when any of the following warning signs are noticed. If you notice any of these signs you should immediately call a licensed electrical contractor and have an electrician give your home a checkup.

If you experience frequent circuit breaker tripping or fuse blowing, take notice. Breakers and fuses are overcurrent protection devices. They are rated in amperes and protect the wiring in our houses from overcurrent. Overcurrent may result from any of the following three conditions. 1. Overload: the operation of equipment or of a conductor in excess of its normal full-load rating, or its rated ampacity. If an overload persists for a sufficient length of time dangerous overheating can occur. 2. Short circuit: a low resistant connection either by accident or intentional between two points in an electrical system. Short circuits can be caused by the failure of the insulation surrounding the conductors of the circuit. They can also be caused by natural sources: lightning, wind and from human intrusion. 3. Ground fault: an unintentional low resistant connection to ground by the system conductors. Ground fault circuit interrupters are devices that protect personnel by de-energizing a circuit or portion of the circuit



when the current to ground is six milliamps or higher.

Over-sized fuses and breakers can be extremely dangerous when an overload condition exists. A licensed electrical contractor can inform you if this condition exists in your home. It is important to note that a short circuit and a ground fault are not overloads.

If you experience a tingling sensation when you touch an appliance or metal object this is a warning sign. Getting a shock when you touch appliances in your house can indicate a more serious problem. You should immediately unplug the appliance and discontinue its use.

This can occur when you have a ground fault in an improperly protected circuit. Many older homes are of the old two-wire circuits. These consisted of the energized (hot) wire and a neutral return wire. These older wiring types can be dangerous in the scenario above because the hot wire has come in contact with the metal frame of the appliance. The breaker

will not trip because it does not see the fault. With newer electrical systems, a third wire is provided with the wiring. This third wire is called the equipment ground. The equipment ground is attached to the metal parts of appliances. When the hot wire comes in contact with the ground, the breaker or fuse is de-energized. In the National Electrical Code, ground-fault circuit-interrupters are required in dwelling units for all 125-volt single-phase 15 and 20 amp receptacles in the following locations:

1. Bathrooms
2. Garages and other buildings that have a floor located at or below grade level not intended as habitable rooms and limited to storage areas, work areas, and areas of similar use.
3. Outdoors.
4. Crawl spaces at or below grade level.
5. Unfinished basements defined as areas not intended as habitable rooms and limited to storage areas, work areas and the like.
6. Kitchens – where the receptacles are installed to serve countertop surfaces
7. Laundry, utility, and wet bar sinks installed within 6 feet of the outside edge of the sink
8. Boathouses.

By installing properly grounded and ground-fault protection in these areas you can greatly reduce the possibility of shock hazards.

Discoloration or an abnormally warm receptacle or wall switch and/or sparks coming from the devices are also sure signs of trouble. These could indicate arcing, smoldering, burning happening behind your outlets due to loose connections, damaged or improperly installed wiring in the outlet, or a problem with the receptacle itself. You should immediately avoid using the outlet or switch

and contact a licensed electrical contractor as soon as possible to correct the problem.

Beware of a persistent burning smell from a light fixture, appliance, room or area. This may indicate that a light fixture may have the wrong size lamp for the fixture. Use only the specified wattage and trims indicated by the lighting fixture. It may indicate an appliance that is overheating or malfunctioning. In this case unplug the appliance or turn off the circuit breaker until a further investigation can be made.

Flickering or Dimming Lights should open your eyes. This could indicate loose connections at electrical termination points on switches causing

arcing and overheating. Left uncorrected overheating can occur resulting in a fire hazard. It could also indicate a short in the wiring system.

All of these warning signs can be detected when your home is given its proper electrical checkup! A licensed electrical contractor may recommend the installation of life saving devices such as the ground-fault circuit-interrupters, smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. He may also introduce you to the Arc-Fault Circuit-Interrupter Breakers required in new homes since 2000. These devices are intended to provide protection from the effects of arc faults and de-energize circuits before

a fire can be started. He may indicate to you that you get a total rewire of your electrical system. This is also recommended by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the National Fire Protection Association and Underwriters Labs when a home is over 40 years old. Know the warning signs and if your electrical system is beginning to show its age get a checkup to insure the safe and proper operation of your electrical system.

– Michael Ashenfelter, Sanagamon County Electrical/Mechanical Inspector Safe Electricity Advisory Team, MikeA@co.snagamon.il.us



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TOGETHERWESAVE.COM

(Continued from 16a)

from fallen tree limbs and overgrown vegetation coming in contact with transmission and distribution lines. Your Cooperative is working with members and landowners to remove many trees that were previously trimmed repeatedly every three to five years. The goal of this program is to pro-

vide safe transmission and distribution services and minimize disruptions caused by trees and other vegetation. A sound vegetation management program is crucial to your Cooperative in order to reduce risks associated with major weather events and to maintain a reliable electric supply for our members.

In 2010, your Cooperative remains committed to finding new and better ways to serve its members. Your Cooperative will continue to work diligently to improve and enhance the level of service and reliability that you receive.

Martin Luther King Jr.
—1929-1968—

**The Cooperative will be closed in observance of
Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday on January 18, 2010.**

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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