

# POWERLINE

NEWSLETTER FOR CO-OP MEMBERS OF CORN BELT ENERGY



EDITION: MARCH 2022

## Help us improve overall efficiency, communication and service by updating your contact information

At Corn Belt Energy we are constantly striving to improve our operational efficiency so we can provide the most reliable electric service possible for our members.

We rely on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, which is why we need your help. By making sure we have your most accurate and complete contact information, we can continue to provide the high level of service that you expect and deserve. Accurate information enables us to improve customer service and enhance communications for reporting and repairing outages. It also allows co-op members to receive information about other important programs, events and activities.

Up-to-date contact information can potentially speed up the power restoration process during an outage. For example, the phone number you provide is linked to your service address to our outage management system. This means when you call to report an outage, our system recognizes your phone number and matches it with your account location.

While we always do our best to provide no service interruptions, we occasionally plan outages to update, repair or replace

equipment. In these instances, we can provide advance notification to affected members, if we have your updated contact information.

Keeping the co-op updated with your information also helps us when there's a question about energy use or billing. In addition, discrepancies on your account can be taken care of promptly if Corn Belt Energy has accurate account information.

Many of you have been members of the co-op for years, and it's likely that your account information hasn't been updated for some time. We recognize that many members now use a cell phone as their primary phone service, and we might not have that number in our system.

We want to emphasize that in providing your contact information to the co-op, we will never share



this information with any third parties. It is only used by Corn Belt Energy to send important information to you.

Please take a moment to confirm or update your contact information by calling us at 800-879-0339, by updating the contact information in your SmartHub account, on your most recent bill stub, or by completing the secure online form at: [www.cornbeltenergy.com/billing/update-contact-info.html](http://www.cornbeltenergy.com/billing/update-contact-info.html). By updating your information, you will be helping us improve service and efficiency so we can better serve you and all members of the co-op.

# How surge protection can protect your home

A power surge is an unexpected increase in voltage, and it can occur from a variety of sources. Regardless of the cause, power surges can majorly damage electronic devices and equipment in your home.

Let's take a look at common causes of power surges and how you can protect your sensitive electronics.

One of the most common causes of a power surge is lightning. Most of us have experienced this during a severe thunderstorm. When lightning strikes an electrical system, the excess current must be channeled somewhere—unfortunately in many cases, it's sent through a home. Your best bet is to unplug all unused devices and electronics during severe thunderstorms.

Another common cause of power surges is electrical overload. This happens when devices or appliances are plugged into an outlet that can't handle the required amount of voltage, or if multiple devices are plugged into one outlet through an extension cord. If you're experiencing power surges due to electrical overload, it's time to call a qualified electrician to evaluate your home's circuits and electrical needs.

Faulty wiring in a home can also cause power surges. Damaged or exposed wires can cause spikes in voltage, creating a potentially dangerous situation. If you notice signs of faulty wiring, like visible burns on outlets, buzzing sounds from outlets or frequently tripped circuit breakers, your

home may be due for electrical wiring repairs and updates.

Although rare, surges can also occur after a power outage as power is being restored. Similar to advice for a surge caused by lightning, it's best to unplug sensitive electronics during the outage—then wait to plug them back in after power is fully restored.

Aside from unplugging devices when you suspect a power surge, there are ways you can take additional precautions to protect electronics in your home.

Point-of-use surge protection devices, like power strips, can protect electronics during most surges. But remember, not all power strips include surge protection, so read the packaging label carefully before you buy, and don't overload the power strip with too many devices. You can also install specialized electrical outlets that offer additional surge protection. Talk to a trusted electrician to learn more.

Another option is a whole-home surge protector, which can help protect your home from larger,

more powerful surges. In most cases, whole-home suppressors are connected to your home's service panel and include features like thermal fuses and notification capabilities that indicate when a device has been impacted by a surge. Whole-home surge protection prices vary based on the size of the home and suppressor. Whole-home suppressors should always be connected by a licensed electrician, so consider the cost of installation as well.

In addition, Corn Belt Energy can install a meter-mounted surge protector on the exterior of your home for a low monthly fee plus an installation fee.

Occasional power surges are inevitable, but by unplugging devices when you think a surge may occur and using additional levels of protection like power strips, whole-home suppressors or meter-mounted surge suppression, you can better safeguard your sensitive electronics and devices.

Contact Corn Belt Energy if you have questions about ways to protect your home from power surges.



## SURGE PROTECTION

Keep your electronic equipment safe.

A power surge is typically caused by lightning, changes in electrical loads, faulty wiring or damaged power lines.

Install power strips with surge protection to protect sensitive equipment.

- Easy to use (just plug them in)
- Protect electronics plugged into the device
- Must be replaced over time or after a major surge event



### REMEMBER:

Not all power strips offer surge protection. Carefully read the packaging labels when purchasing.

# PAYMENT OPTIONS FOR MEMBERS



**Alan Meissner**  
Planning Engineer

## WAYS TO PAY

<p><b>AutoPay</b></p>  <p><b>SmartHub</b></p> <p><b>Phone Payment</b></p>	<p><b>Walk-in</b></p> <p><b>Dropbox</b></p>	<p><b>Send via mail</b></p>	<p><b>MoneyGram</b></p>
---	---	-----------------------------	-------------------------

## PAYMENT RECOGNITION

<p>Payment posted immediately after payment is made</p>	<p>Payment posted immediately after payment is made</p> <p>(may be next business day for dropbox payments)</p>	<p>Payment posted within 7-10 business days depending on mail delivery</p>	<p>Payment posted immediately after payment is made</p>
---	--	--	---

## TRANSACTION COST

None	None	None	\$1.50 fee
------	------	------	------------

## FORMS OF PAYMENT ACCEPTED

<p>AutoPay: account number &amp; bank routing number, debit card, VISA, Mastercard &amp; Discover</p> <p>SmartHub and Phone Payment: Checking account number &amp; bank routing number, debit card, VISA, Mastercard &amp; Discover</p>	<p>Walk-in payments: Cash, check, money order, debit card, VISA, Mastercard &amp; Discover</p> <p>Dropbox payments: Check or money order</p>	<p>Check or money order</p>	<p>Cash</p>
---	--	-----------------------------	-------------

## OTHER DETAILS

<p>Set up AutoPay through SmartHub online or over the phone.</p> <p>Sign up online for SmartHub. SmartHub is offered online or as the SmartHub app on your Apple or Android phone. With SmartHub, you can check usage, receive notifications.</p> <p>Phone Payments are offered 24/7/365 and can be made by calling 800-879-0339.</p>	<p>Pay at our office location: Corn Belt Energy 1 Energy Way, Bloomington, IL 61705</p> <p>Walk-in payments may be made Monday - Friday during regular office hours.</p>	<p>Member is responsible for the cost of postage.</p> <p>Mail payments to: Corn Belt Energy 1 Energy Way, Bloomington, IL 61705</p>	<p>Make your payment at a location near your home or work. No bank account needed. Many locations are available throughout the Corn Belt Energy service territory.</p> <p>Visit our website to find MoneyGram locations.</p>
---	--	---	--

*How long have you worked at Corn Belt Energy?*  
**25 years**

*What is your role at Corn Belt Energy?*  
**Planning related activities including minimizing outages and work plan activities. Many times I find myself in both regions of our system. More recently I've also been tasked with working with distributed generation projects as they interconnect with our system safely.**

*What aspect of your role do you enjoy the most?*  
**Interactions with our membership and fellow co-workers in solving any issues they may have.**

*If there is one piece of advice that you could share with our members, what would it be?*  
**Be safe and interact with respect to others.**

*Corn Belt Energy puts SAFETY FIRST. What safety tip would you share with our members?*  
**Look up and live. Members may not be aware that overhead conductors are not covered by insulation and may pose a danger to people and overhead equipment working nearby. In addition, call JULIE 811 prior to any underground excavations.**

*What are your hobbies and outside interests?*  
**Family, Friends, and Religion. Also, community involvement and conservation efforts are important to me. I enjoy the outdoors and the fishing, hunting, gardening aspects are where my roots run.**

*Who or what inspires you?*  
**My family.**

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

*Is there anything else that you would like to share with our members?*  
**Thank you for your membership and participation in a wholesome organization and if you have any questions of Corn Belt Energy please call.**

**CORN BELT ENERGY LETS YOU CHOOSE  
THE BEST PAYMENT OPTION FOR YOU**



## Hardened house — unique alternative to traditional wood framing offers several advantages for homeowners

**The COVID-19 pandemic caused a roller coaster rise and fall in the cost for lumber, a necessary component for building a new home. Yet an intriguing alternative rests underneath homeowners' feet: concrete.**

Insulated concrete forms (ICF) blocks are made from a foam exterior with rebar placed on the inside, which has connective plastic webs, before concrete is poured in between. The concrete dries and the blocks together form the exterior structure walls. While ICF has existed for decades, it has gained attention in recent years from people building more energy efficient structures. Also, as lumber prices skyrocketed during the COVID-19 pandemic, some people have considered ICF as an alternative to traditional framing.

In addition, more homeowners are demanding efficiency when they

build a new home. By combining a foam exterior with concrete, ICF has a more consistent – and frequently higher – R-value than traditional framing, which can allow for more heat transfer than ICF (the greater the R-value, the greater ability to keep conditioned air where you want it). ICF's R-value can mean lower costs to heat and cool the home while keeping occupants comfortable during extreme weather.

The ICF system is comprised of blocks that can be “formed” over several days – less time than traditional framing processes. The concrete walls also will not have the same moisture issues as wood framing, which can lead to a more resilient structure that will last for decades.

Several homes are being built with ICF, including one as part of the Power Moves Home program.

Homes in the program are at least 20 percent more efficient than traditional homes, and come with an energy efficiency report and HERS score, as well as a heating and cooling cost guarantee.

“We have seen multiple ICF homes in the last few years,” said Dan Phillips, senior analyst of grid innovation and energy efficiency at Wabash Valley Power Alliance, which administers the Power Moves Home program. “The advantages that ICF brings make it very appealing, and new homeowners incorporating ICF into their new homes have been pleased with the results.”

For more information, contact Corn Belt Energy at 309-662-5330.

Article by: Austin Arceo, digital marketing specialist at Wabash Valley Power Alliance

### CONTACT US

309-662-5330 | [cbec@cornbeltenergy.com](mailto:cbec@cornbeltenergy.com) | [www.cornbeltenergy.com](http://www.cornbeltenergy.com) |



1 Energy Way, Bloomington IL 61705 | Office hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

