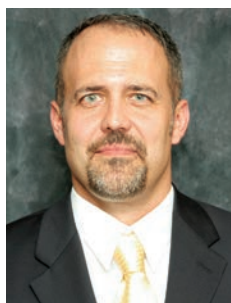


The SOUTHEASTERN Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

President's Comments



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

Bill payment options

The digital age of communication and automation has provided some opportunities for all of us to simplify some of the routine and ordinary tasks that we perform on a monthly basis. One example of this is the various methods that are available for members to pay their monthly electric bill. Your cooperative offers a variety of options that you can select that best suits your preferences, lifestyle and your needs. In this article, I would like to briefly explain the various options that are available for members to pay their bill.

SEIEC offers an automated payment plan that automatically draws the necessary funds from your checking or savings account to pay your monthly electric bill. With this option, you will still receive a statement in the mail that is virtually identical to the invoice you receive now but the funds necessary to pay the total amount due will automatically be withdrawn from your checking or savings account on the due date. Please contact the office if you would like an enrollment form for this option.

SEIEC also offers online payments through SmartHub. SmartHub offers members quick and easy access to



perform functions including view their bill, pay their bill, schedule a future payment, review past payments, receive bill reminders, update your account and view daily and monthly electric use. Please visit our website, seiec.com, to

see how you can sign up for SmartHub.

SEIEC also offers a pay by phone option. This option allows you to make your payment by calling the toll-free number 800-833-2611. Once you have dialed this number, select the menu option for account information, then select the pay by phone option to make a payment using your debit card or credit card.

SEIEC also offers reoccurring credit card payments, which will automatically charge your credit card to pay your monthly electric bill. With this option, you will still receive a statement in the mail that is virtually identical to the invoice you receive now but the funds will be automatically charged to the credit card on the due date. Please contact the office if you would like to receive an enrollment form for this option.

These automated options were implemented to give members a choice in selecting the most appropriate and convenient way to pay their bill. It is great to see that members are taking advantage

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READERSHIP
PRIZE WINNER:
Barbara McCarthy
Pittsburg, IL



Reap what you sow

Stay safe during planting season

Long hours and fatigue are a constant battle for farmers during planting season. If you farm, remember to take care of yourself by getting as much rest as possible and allowing yourself breaks to clear your head.

Be especially aware of electrical hazards around the farm. Be cautious and think twice before acting around electricity. Safe Electricity offers farmers the following reminders:

- If your machinery or vehicle comes in contact with a power line, do not get out. Once contact has been made with a live line (even when your tractor or truck makes contact), you are now a “pathway to ground” and you could get electrocuted if you step out. Instead, stay where you are and call 911 to dispatch the appropriate utility to de-energize the power.
- If you come across an accident or incident near a downed power line, alert individuals (from a distance) to stay in the tractor or vehicle as long as there is no imminent danger. Do not approach the scene.
- When using machinery with long extensions or tall antennas and when using ladders, look up to avoid contact with overhead power lines.
- Even if there is no contact, an electrical current can jump or arc, so always keep equipment at least 10 feet from surrounding power lines.
- Remember, non-metallic materials (such as tree limbs, ropes and hay) can conduct electricity, depending on dampness and dust/dirt accumulation.
- Visually inspect overhead lines, which may not meet height codes due to age or pole damage. If a wire is hanging low or is on the ground, consider it energized and stay at least 50 feet away; call 911 to have the operator dispatch the utility.
- Every day, map out where equipment will be moved to ensure it will clear power lines.
- When working in the vicinity of power lines, always use a spotter who has a broad vantage point.
- Train anyone working with or for you (including seasonal employees) to be aware of power line locations and teach them proper clearance distance. Also design and implement a safety training program that includes a review of electrical hazards and how to safely deal with power lines.
- According to American Family Insurance, “know your PTO.” To stay safe when working with a power take off (PTO), always disengage the PTO, turn off the engine and remove keys before getting off the tractor. Also, never step across a rotating power shaft.

For more information on electrical safety, go to SafeElectricity.org.

SPRING INTO SAFETY

Spring is in the air and that means more than just a change of season for farmers. During the busy planting season, follow these eight safety tips:



TRANSPORT SAFELY

Ensure equipment is compliant with agriculture road and travel safety rules



SHARE SAFETY TIPS

Teach anyone working or doing business on your farm about electrical hazards



ENCOURAGE YOUNG WORKERS

Be sure to match age and ability level with each chore



BE CLEAR

Explain where the “back 80” or Smith field is; not everyone may know how to get there



WRITE IT DOWN

Keep directions (with proper road and farm ground names) at home, in the shop and in cabs



LOOK AROUND

Inspect your space and look for hazards before you start planting



EVALUATE PROCEDURES

Consider new safety precautions you can implement, such as lockout/tagout



MEET AND DISCUSS

Conduct morning safety meetings to brief everyone on the day and talk about potential hazards

Sources: Rural Mutual Insurance Co., farmprogress.com

Safe Electricity.org®



Be prepared and stay safe

Storm watches vs. warnings

At any moment, 1,800 thunderstorms occur worldwide, according to the National Weather Service. That is 16 million storms a year. In an average year, 1,200 tornadoes cause 60 to 65 fatalities and 1,500 injuries in the U.S. alone.

To protect yourself, your family and your property from seasonal thunderstorms and tornadoes, you need more than a flashlight and a few cans of food (although they are essential parts of your emergency kit). Beyond the items in your preparedness kit, it is a good idea to fully understand how dangerous storms can be and how to interpret weather alerts to minimize risk.

Watch versus warning

When bad weather is approaching, people typically turn on the TV, pull up a weather app or look online for information. If you see a severe weather watch or warning, something bad could be heading your way. However, many people do not consider the differences between the two.

A “watch” means there is a significant chance of a severe thunderstorm or tornado. Watch and wait for more information while taking precautionary measures, like unplugging electronics and checking the contents of your emergency preparedness kit.

A “warning” means a severe thunderstorm or tornado has been spotted or seen on radar. The moment you get a warning, take shelter in the safest part of your home, which is usually in your basement or the interior part of your home.

Thunderstorms

Thunderstorms are some of the most common yet destructive weather events on Earth. Most of the damage comes from flooding caused by heavy rains, lightning strikes and high winds. Some storms also deliver hail and can even spawn tornadoes. Bad weather systems, such

as those that cause thunderstorms, can cause broken windows, extreme water damage, fallen trees, serious fires, downed power lines and more.

Do not ignore the potential hazards of thunderstorms. Keep flashlights or battery-operated lights well supplied with batteries or charge them regularly. Keep a supply of nonperishable food and drinking water on hand. Turn off and unplug electronic equipment to protect it from power surges. Move valuables out of the basement or other locations that may flood. If a power outage occurs, never use a portable generator in your home, enclosed structure or garage. Do not step into a flooded basement or area since the water could be electrified.

Tornadoes

The central part of the U.S. is sometimes referred to as Tornado Alley because it is the most common geographic location for these disastrous storms. The Great Plains have the perfect environment and climate for severe storm creation. While tornadoes can happen in any month, they are much likelier in the spring and summer than in other seasons. April, May and June have more than twice as many reported tornadoes than any other time of the year.

To stay safe during a tornado, be aware of weather conditions during thunderstorms that could breed tornadoes. Know the best place to shelter both indoors and out, and always protect your head, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Understanding severe thunderstorm and tornado watches and warnings can help keep you and your family safe. Do not underestimate the potential power of these weather systems. Take steps to protect yourselves and your property before a storm hits. For more information about storm preparedness and electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

"Bill payment" continued from page 18A

of these automated options. In fact, SEIEC currently receives approximately 11,000 payments per month through these additional options.

In addition to these automated payment options, your cooperative offers budget billing. Budget billing, also known as "levelized" billing, allows eligible members to pay the same or slightly varied amount each month so that you know exactly how much your monthly payment will be regardless of the current month's actual usage and charges. This plan provides 11 "fixed" budget months with one "settlement" month each year. Budget billing does not reduce your overall energy expense; it simply allows you to

spread out your annual energy expense over a 12-month period.

Last but certainly not least, your cooperative still offers the traditional methods of paying invoices including receiving your checks in the mail, at the front counter of the headquarters facility and with our new facility you are conveniently able to make your payment through our drive-thru. We certainly understand that these automated options for paying invoices may not be appropriate for everyone but they are available so that members can select the option that best suits their needs.

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



**Remember to
SPRING FORWARD
on Sunday, March 13
for Daylight Saving.**

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

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative, Inc.

100 Cooperative Way • Carrier Mills, IL 62917-2275
618-273-2611 or 800-833-2611 • Office hours: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. M-F

Find us on 

Facebook.com/
SouthEasternIllinoisElectric