

The SOUTHEASTERN Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

President's Comments



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative is a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, which means your Cooperative is part of an alliance of more than 700 cooperatives in 45 states that collectively deliver energy solutions to more than 30 million members every day. Touchstone Energy Cooperatives own and operate transmission and distribution systems consisting of over 2.6 million miles of line that serve approximately 56% of the land mass in the United States.

As a member of this alliance, your Cooperative firmly believes in the seven principles of Voluntary and Open Membership, Democratic Member Control, Member Economic Participation, Autonomy and Independence, Education, Training and Information, Cooperation Among Cooperatives and Concern for Community:

Voluntary and Open Membership: Membership in a cooperative is open to all persons who can reasonably use its services and stand willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, regardless of race, religion, gender, or economic circumstances.

Democratic Member Control: Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Elected representatives (directors/trustees) are elected from among the membership and are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote); cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

Member Economic Participation: Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for

any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative; setting up reserves; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

Autonomy and Independence: Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control as well as their unique identity.

Education, Training and Information: Education and training for members, elected representatives (directors/trustees), CEOs and employees help them effectively contribute to the development of their cooperatives. Communications about the nature and benefits of cooperatives, particularly with the general public and opinion leaders, helps boost cooperative understanding.

Cooperation Among Cooperatives: By working together through local, national, regional and international structures, cooperatives improve services, bolster local economies and deal more effectively with social and community needs.

Commitment To Community: Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies supported by the membership.

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative is very proud to be one of a number of businesses in our area that remain locally owned, locally governed and locally operated for the past 84 years in Southern Illinois. 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 while keeping rates affordable.

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

READERSHIP PRIZE WINNER:
Glenn Rountree,
McLeansboro, IL



Avoid distractions while driving

Some temptations are hard to resist. For me, it can be especially challenging to turn down that last piece of chocolate cake.

While driving, we typically hear that “ding” on our phone, alerting us to a text or call coming through, and we sometimes feel the urgent need to check it. We know we shouldn’t, but we reason that we’re going to make an exception—just this once.

So, why do we indulge in behavior we know to be wrong, dangerous and in many states, illegal? Call it hubris. According to AAA research, most people feel they are better-than-average drivers. After all, we have busy lives and are accustomed to multitasking. But mounds of research and thousands of deaths every year prove otherwise.

August is Back to School Safety Month. As a new school year begins with young drivers and school buses back on the road, I thought it would be a good time to remind folks, including myself, of the dangers of distracted driving.

The reality is that using a phone while driving creates enormous potential for injuries and fatalities. Distractions take a motorist’s attention off driving, which can make a driver miss critical events, objects and cues, potentially leading to a crash.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, one of every 10 fatal crashes in the U.S. involves distracted driving, resulting in more than 3,000 deaths annually. I find this statistic heartbreaking considering so many of these accidents could easily be avoided if we’d simply put down our phones while driving.

Distracted driving is considered any activity that diverts our attention, including texting or talking on the phone, and adjusting the navigation or entertainment system. Texting is by far one of the most dangerous distractions. Sending or reading one text takes your eyes off the road for an average of five seconds. At 55 mph, that’s like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed.

In addition to refraining from texting while driving, we can help keep the roads safe by moving over for first responders and other emergency vehicles. Additionally, if you see utility crews conducting work near the roadside, I’d encourage you to move over when possible and give them extra space to perform their work safely.

At SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative, Inc. safety is foremost in everything we do—for our employees and the members of the communities we serve. We routinely remind our crews of the dangers of distracted driving, and we hope you’ll have similar conversations with your teens who may be new to the roadways and are especially susceptible to the lure of technology.

Let’s work together to keep everyone safe on the roads. Remember: that text can wait and waiting just might save a life.





Driving behind farm equipment: Do your part

Spring planting and fall harvest are busy times. Farmers and workers have big equipment and implements on the road. Navigating roadways can be dangerous for farm equipment operators and auto drivers who follow behind them.

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 410 farmers and farm workers died from work-related injuries in 2019. Transportation incidents, which included tractor overturns, were the leading cause of death for these farmers and farm workers.

Follow these safety tips to make it safer for everyone involved.

Equipment operators:

1. Make sure all flashers and lights are operational.
2. Drive as far to the right side of the road as possible when going around a curve.
3. Pull over and allow vehicles to pass when traffic builds up behind you.
4. Take care at railroad crossings.
5. Avoid traveling during busy traffic times.

6. Be mindful of the height and width of machinery, watching power lines, bridges and other hazards.
7. Along with turn signals, use hand signals.
8. Stay rested; do not drive when you are too tired or hungry.
9. Keep a first-aid kit in case of accidents.

Auto drivers:

1. Think about how long it will take to get to your destination and add extra time for busy farm roads.
2. Give farmers plenty of room on the road. If a piece of equipment takes up the entire road, pull into a driveway or area and wait for them to pass.
3. When passing, be sure you do so in a passing zone and that there is clear visibility around farm equipment. Watch for oncoming vehicles.
4. Go slow. Farm operators often stop or turn into fields. In addition, cars going at or over the speed limit can catch up to farm

machinery quickly, since farmers in equipment move slowly.

5. Do not assume that a farmer can move over in narrow areas; it is not always possible.
6. Honk or motion when passing farmers, they may not see you or know you are there; their equipment is big and noisy.
7. Do not tailgate; the farmer often cannot see you.
8. Do not pass and then slow suddenly in front of equipment with implements behind it or farm trucks full of grain. They cannot stop quickly.
9. Farmers make very wide turns; give them plenty of time and room.

These are a few tips to make it safer for both the equipment operator and auto drivers and to provide a more pleasant drive for all. For information about safety around electricity, including farm and ranch safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

FARM SAFETY

FOR A SAFE HARVEST

Take these steps to help keep you and everyone on your farm safe during a busy harvest.

Meet Daily

Have morning safety meetings to brief everyone on the day ahead and to discuss potential electrical hazards. Review power line locations, clearance requirements and the proper positioning of extensions for transporting.

Train Others

Train anyone working on your farm, including seasonal workers and family members, on potential electrical hazards.

Use a Spotter

Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines or poles. Always keep equipment and extensions at least 10 feet from power lines.

If your equipment makes contact with a power line, pole or guy wire, stay in the cab, call 9-1-1 and warn others to stay away.



Safe
Electricity.org®

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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