

# POWERLINE

NEWSLETTER FOR CO-OP MEMBERS OF CORN BELT ENERGY



EDITION: OCTOBER 2022

## Billing and payment options available to members

**Budget billing:** Are you looking for a way to budget your monthly electric bill so that you are not surprised with fluctuations throughout the year?

Get peace of mind and an electric bill that remains consistent even when the temperature outside is not. Budget Billing gives you a way to guard against large changes in your monthly electric bill, without ever having to play “catch-up” at the end of the year.

Budget Billing helps manage seasonal changes in your energy bill by dividing the prior year’s usage into predictable monthly payments. With Budget Billing, your monthly electric bill becomes a “rolling average” of your electric usage for the most recent 12 months. By averaging your changes in usage over a 12-month period, your bill will remain fairly consistent every month, even in very cold or hot months when usage may be significantly higher.

Our Budget Billing program is completely free for members with accounts in good standing.

**AutoPay:** Contact us today to set up AutoPay and never miss a payment date again. Payment will be debited from your account on the payment due date. You will need a checking

account number & bank routing number, or a debit or credit card. We accept VISA, Mastercard & Discover.

**SmartHub:** Download the SmartHub app or access your account online at [www.cornbeltenergy.com](http://www.cornbeltenergy.com). You will need a checking account number & bank routing number, or a debit or credit card. We accept VISA, Mastercard & Discover.

**Phone payment:** Call us at 800-879-0339 to pay your bill by phone. You will need a checking account number & bank routing number, or a debit or credit card. We accept VISA, Mastercard & Discover.

**Dropbox:** You may drop off your payment in the dropbox outside of our Bloomington office at 1 Energy Way, Bloomington, Illinois. We only



accept check or money order as payments via dropbox.

**Mail:** You may mail your payment to Corn Belt Energy, 1 Energy Way, Bloomington, IL 61705. We only accept check or money order as payments via mail.

Call us today at 309-662-5330 to sign up and for more information.



## 2023 Education Grant applications available online

Corn Belt Energy is now accepting applications for our 2023 Education Grants Program. Five schools that serve children of Corn Belt electric members will each be awarded a \$1,500 grant and one school will be awarded the \$2,000 Jeff Reeves Memorial Education Grant to fund innovative programs that enrich students' education.

Teachers and administrators of public or private K-12 schools may apply; the facility does not need to receive electricity from Corn Belt Energy, but must serve families within our footprint in Central Illinois. Multiple projects within the same school can be combined to a total of the awarded grant amount.

The application deadline is December 31, 2022, and grants will be awarded in spring of 2023. The application and further details can be found online at [www.cornbeltenergy.com](http://www.cornbeltenergy.com).

## Applications for Illinois Electric Cooperative Memorial Scholarships now available

Fifteen \$2,000 scholarships will be awarded in 2023 through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperative (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

- 9** scholarships awarded to high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members.
- 4** scholarships for high school seniors enrolling full time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors.
- 1** Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship awarded to a high school senior who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric co-op employee or director.
- 1** LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker's Scholarship awarded to a student attending lineworker school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, Illinois.

The deadline to apply for the IEC Memorial Scholarship Program is December 31, 2022. The LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker Scholarship deadline is April 30, 2023. For more information, visit our website at: [cornbeltenergy.com](http://cornbeltenergy.com)

## Tips to stay warm during cooler months

Heating your home uses a lot of energy, so making a few changes can add up to noticeable savings on your energy bills. Corn Belt Energy is here to help by providing you with these money-saving tips:



### Take advantage of sunny days

Take advantage of the sun's radiant heat energy and open your curtains and window shades during sunny days. Let your home make use of those rays!

### Close your curtains at night

When it gets dark, shut your curtains. This acts as another layer of insulation and keeps warmth in your rooms.

### Adjust your thermostat

Program or adjust your thermostat to no higher than 68 degrees during the winter months for maximum cost savings. And make sure to turn down the temperature a few more degrees when you're sleeping and when you leave the house.

### Utilize ceiling fans

Hot air travels upward. If you have high ceilings, use your ceiling fans on a low, clockwise setting to circulate that heat back down.

### Close off unoccupied rooms

Close the heat registers and doors of unoccupied rooms during the winter months.

### Close fireplace damper

Make sure to close your fireplace damper when not in use; you don't want your warm air leaking out through the chimney!



### Prevent drafts

Check around your windows and doors for drafts. A tube of caulk and some weather stripping can go a long way to seal your home from blustery winds.

For more information, contact us today at 309-662-5330 or visit our website at [cornbeltenergy.com](http://cornbeltenergy.com).

## Light up your property with a LED security light

Light up your yard, driveway or business with a dependable LED security light.

For a nominal fee, we will install, maintain and supply the power to an outside yard light. The price includes maintenance and electricity for an automatic dusk-to-

dawn 40-watt LED light. Corn Belt Energy can install these lights for members in an overhead area on a Corn Belt Energy-owned pole where there is currently a service.

For more information, contact us today at 309-662-5330.



**Hillary Cherry**  
Director of Communications & Public Image

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

*What is your role at Corn Belt Energy?*  
My role is to provide reliable, frequent communications to the membership through credible channels. I also facilitate opportunities to reach members with useful information about Corn Belt Energy as well as listen and receive feedback from members.

*What aspect of your role do you enjoy the most?*  
I enjoy designing Corn Belt Energy materials, especially the annual report, as well as speaking with our members and learning more about how we can help them through our programs and services.

*If there is one piece of advice that you could share with our members, what would it be?*

**The cooperative is constantly growing and changing to better serve the needs of our members. New technologies such as social media and apps bring new challenges, but we continue to creatively envision new ways to effectively communicate with our members through these channels.**

*Corn Belt Energy puts SAFETY FIRST. What safety tip would you share with our members?*

**We may not know you are without power. Please always call us at 309-662-5330 to report an outage or downed line or pole.**

*What are your hobbies and outside interests?*

**I enjoy spending time with my family, watching sports, gardening and crafting.**

*Who or what inspires you?*

**My Grandmother is my inspiration. She was an example of the type of woman I always wanted to be and continue to strive to be.**

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

**#Blessed**

# Four ways to boost your cyber hygiene

In today's digital world, cyberattacks are unfortunately nothing new. Cyber criminals can attack on a multitude of levels, from large-scale attacks targeting corporations to smaller phishing attacks aimed to gain an individual's personal information.

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month, but good cyber hygiene should be practiced year-round. This year's theme is "See Yourself in Cyber" – because we all have a part to play in cybersecurity. When we hear about massive data breaches, it can feel overwhelming and lead us to think we're powerless as individuals to stop cyber criminals.

The truth is, there are several practical steps we can take to safeguard our devices and data. Here are four easy ways to boost your cyber hygiene:

1. **Enable multi-factor authentication.** Also known as two-step verification, multi-factor authentication adds a second step when logging into an account (to prove you're really you), which greatly increases the security of the account. This second step could include an extra PIN, answering an extra security question, a code received via email or a secure token. Regardless of the type of authentication, this additional step makes it twice as hard for cyber criminals to access your account. Not every account offers multi-factor authentication, but it's becoming increasingly popular

and should be utilized when available.

2. **Use strong passwords and a password manager.** Remember, passwords are the "keys" to your personal home online. Your passwords should always be long, unique and complex. Create passwords using at least 12 characters, never reuse passwords for multiple accounts and use a combination of upper- and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters. If you have a lot of accounts, consider using a password manager to store them easily and securely in one place.

3. **Update software.** It may seem obvious, but regularly updating software is one of the easiest ways to keep your personal information secure. Most companies provide automatic updates and will send reminders so you can easily install the update. If you're not receiving automatic software updates, set a reminder to do so quarterly. Be aware that some cyber criminals will send fake updates; these typically appear as a pop-up window when visiting a website. Use good judgement and always think before you click.

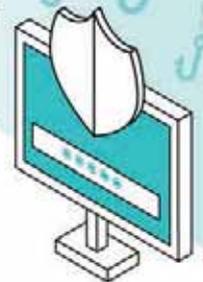
4. **Recognize and report phishing attacks.** Don't take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing. The signs of a phishing attack can be subtle, so take

## See Yourself in Cyber.

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month

Improve your cyber hygiene by doing these four things:

1. Enable multi-factor authentication
2. Use strong passwords and a password manager
3. Update software regularly
4. Recognize and report phishing attacks



the extra time to thoroughly inspect emails. Most phishing emails include offers that are too good to be true, an urgent or alarming tone, misspellings and poorly-crafted language, ambiguous greetings, strange requests or an email address that doesn't match the company it's coming from. Most platforms like Outlook, Gmail and Mac Mail allow users to report phishing emails. If you suspect a phishing attempt, take an extra minute to report it.

Cyber criminals are here to stay, but when we all take a risk-based approach to our cyber behavior, we're creating a safer internet for all. Visit [www.staysafeonline.org](http://www.staysafeonline.org) for additional cybersecurity tips.

## 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

