

# The SOUTHEASTERN Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## President's Comments



**Dustin Tripp**  
President/CEO

## Capital credits retirement checks

As the electric utility industry continues to evolve, face continual change and explore different ways to serve customers, we can all be proud that we are part of the electric cooperative program. Electric cooperatives have a unique business model that has proven to benefit cooperative members and has stood the test of time for 84 years.

The most profound and distinct difference between electric cooperatives and other utility business structures is that electric cooperatives are not-for-profit organizations that are member-owned and member-controlled. As a not-for-profit organization, your cooperative does not strive to produce profits for shareholders and investors but must maintain a sound financial position for the membership. Your cooperative sets the electric rates high enough to cover the costs of providing service and at the end of the year, any funds that were collected above the cost of service are allocated to you, our members, in the form of capital credits.

These capital credits are retained by the cooperative and used to build and maintain the infrastructure necessary to serve the members and service the long-term debt of the cooperative. When the financial condition and cash position of the cooperative permits, the capital credits are then retired and paid back to you as members and owners. Every year your cooperative mails capital credit statements to every cooperative member notifying them of their

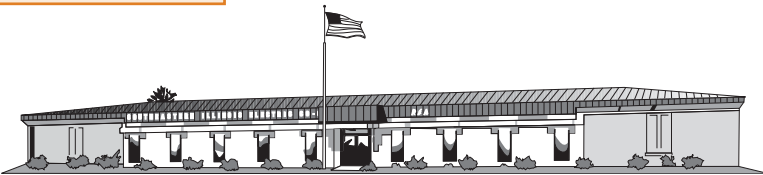
allocated capital credit balance and the amount of capital credits allocated to them in the previous year. This statement shows each member their equity and ownership in the cooperative.

I am pleased to inform you, as cooperative members and owners, that your cooperative's Board of Trustees approved the retirement and return of \$1.8 million of capital credits to the members. The capital credits that are being returned are from the years 1984, 1985 and 2019. This means that if you were a cooperative member in any or all of these years, you will be receiving a check this month (December) for capital credits. Over the past 12 years, your cooperative has retired and returned approximately \$22 million to cooperative members.

I would like to close by stating that all of us can be proud to be a part of the electric cooperative program. The founders of the program developed a unique business structure that by its very nature makes electric cooperatives accountable to the members it serves. This unique structure has contributed to the success of your cooperative over the years and remains unchanged even today, some 84 years later. Your cooperative is governed by local people who live and work in your very own communities. Your cooperative is operated by a group of local employees who also live and work in your very own communities. Your cooperative's sole purpose is to provide you, as cooperative member-owners, with reliable and quality service at equitable rates.

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

READERSHIP  
PRIZE WINNER:  
Rick Vickers,  
Broughton, IL





## Stay safe going over the river and through the woods

**T**he holiday season is a busy time of year for many of us. Along with putting out decorations and baking cookies, we often spend more time in our cars than usual – shopping for presents, traveling to family gatherings or attending holiday events. However, all that time in the car can also mean facing extreme weather conditions that can make safe driving difficult.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, winter weather conditions such as snow, sleet and slush cause more than 550,000 traffic accidents each year, leading to approximately 138,000 injuries and 1,700 fatalities. Along with risk of injury, possible damage to your vehicle and plain inconvenience, collisions may also involve downed power lines or other electrical hazards. Unfortunately, when this happens, it adds another significant danger to the mix that can cause severe shock, burns or electrocution. Knowing what to do in this situation can save lives.

If you are in an accident involving a downed power line:

- Call 911 and tell the dispatcher a downed power line or other electrical equipment is involved in a collision. Co-op personnel will be dispatched to the scene to de-energize the power.
- Put your window down and alert others not to approach the scene. They could be shocked or electrocuted if they walk or run over the energized area or touch anything that is energized.
- Never attempt to drive over a power line or through water, snow or other debris that could be hiding one. There is no way to tell if a power line is energized, even if it is not sparking or buzzing.
- Do not exit the vehicle **UNLESS** the vehicle is on fire or you see smoke. The vehicle acts as an insulator that keeps you safe from stray electricity.
- If you **MUST** exit the vehicle, cross your arms across your chest, put your feet together, and make a clean jump from the vehicle. Then hop with feet together

as far as you can — at least 50 feet away. Once a power line is in contact with a car or truck, the ground or other objects, it energizes the area. The electrical current spreads to the vehicle and ground, and it ripples out. Each “ring” of the ripple represents a different voltage. Stepping from one voltage to the next can cause your body to become a path for electricity and electrocute you.

- If a power line is inside the vehicle due to damage or an open window, stay in the vehicle. **DO NOT** touch or try to move the wire. **DO NOT** attempt to use other objects to move it.
- If your vehicle collides with a pad-mounted transformer, which houses electrical equipment connected to underground power lines, the same safety precautions apply.

Keep your family safe while on the road this holiday season! For more information about safety around electricity, go to [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

# WISHING YOU A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS & THE HAPPIEST OF NEW YEARS!

*From the Board of Trustees and Employees  
of SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative*

**The cooperative will be closed on  
Monday, Dec. 26 for the Christmas holiday and  
Monday, Jan. 2 for New Year's.**





# Energy Efficiency

## Tip of the Month

Blocked air vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and increase pressure in the ductwork, which can cause cracks and leaks to form.

Make sure all air vents are unobstructed from furniture, drapes or other items to ensure sufficient circulation throughout your home. If necessary, purchase a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



# 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

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