

JAMUP

published by Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative, Dongola, Illinois

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Right-of-way maintenance program

Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative (SIEC) proactively engages in a system-wide right-of-way maintenance program to provide safe and reliable electric service to its members – all day, every day.

With over 2,100 miles of power lines, we provide electric services to more than 11,000 members within 1,350 square miles of the southern tip of Illinois. Providing cost-efficient and reliable electric service to our members is challenging because the terrain varies and is covered with many fast-growing species of trees. Our well-managed right-of-way maintenance program has been successful as it has a direct correlation with our 2022 reliability rate of 99.95%.

While trees add to the beauty of our communities, they are also responsible for costly property damage, as well as dangerous and inconvenient power outages. In fact, tree failure is by far the leading cause of outages. A tree that grows into electrical conductors presents a potential hazard to you and others if it becomes energized when contacting a power line. The right-of-way program is a critical part of our business, but most importantly, it is a critical part of your safety – and the safety of your family, friends and neighbors.

What is right-of-way?

In the strict sense of the word, right-of-way refers to the land on which infrastructure is built. Infrastructure could



be anything from a highway, airport or power lines. Projects such as power lines, pipelines or telephone facilities all require right-of-way.

SIEC uses right-of-way to build and maintain power lines. We maintain right-of-way areas by controlling brush and tree regrowth in all easement areas. Right-of-way is usually on private land and is obtained by an agreement with the current landowner when new poles and wires are installed. SIEC doesn't own the private land but is legally granted the right by the landowner to maintain brush and tree regrowth.

Why does SIEC need right-of-way?

SIEC has a legal obligation to provide safe and reliable electric service to our members. This obligation could not be met without a commitment to an effective right-of-way program.

With the vast size of SIEC's service area and its diverse terrain, a well-maintained right-of-way program is a critical part of our everyday functions. It is important to have clearance between trees, brush and power lines and poles, so your power stays on. If the power does go out, a maintained right-of-way helps our line crews spot the cause of an outage so they can get your power back on more quickly. Thick brush and trees in easement areas limit access and cut efficiency and safety for line crews. Before crews can fix a power outage, they need to drive or walk every piece of line before

turning on the power or it could be harmful or even fatal to a line worker or yourself. If line crews can't access the lines because of poor right-of-way, the member is more likely to be without power for a longer period and more often.

Wanda F. Wrye

About SIEC's right-of-way program

Right-of-way maintenance is accomplished through side trimming and removing trees and limbs, mowing underbrush to allow access, and the use of nonrestricted herbicides. SIEC rights-of-way are on a seven-year cycle. SIEC spends approximately \$1 million dollars a year trimming, treating and clearing rights-of-way.

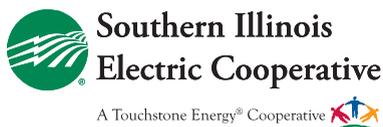
Our crews pay special attention when evaluating line clearance before trimming or removing a tree. The National Electric Safety Code requires us to follow a certain amount of clearance around wires and trees. This can depend on voltage, the tree's growth rate and other characteristics, and the re-clearing cycle – how frequently it will need to be re-cleared. Our right-of-way clearance is 15 feet on each side of the power line for single phase, 20 feet on each side for 3-phase, and 40 feet on each side of transmission lines with SIEC's under-build. If trimming needs to be done, the tree should be left in a healthy state, with some aesthetic value. If this cannot be accomplished, we may opt to remove the tree if it is cost effective rather than create an eyesore and future problems. A danger tree is one that is

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Classroom Empowerment Grants



SIEC's 2022/2023 Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment grants have been awarded! Seven teachers from districts within Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative's serviced counties earned \$500 each for their grant submissions. This is a fantastic opportunity for our local teachers to pursue additional funding to further enhance the educational environment and experience for their students! The dedication these educators show in making a difference in their student's lives is evident by their hard work and effort spent on each submission. We want to say, "Thank you!" to all those who took time out to submit a project this year and encourage all teachers to apply for future classroom grant opportunities! SIEC's own Director of Member Services Brent Goforth and Director of Operations and Maintenance Todd Thurston are shown, presenting a check to each grant winner. **James A. Schwab**



Brandy Thurston, Anna Jr. High, Virtual Reality Classroom



Josh Shearer, Anna Jr. High, Chess Club



Linette Westall, Jonesboro Elementary,
Robotics Club



Tara Peas, Cypress Grade School,
3-D Printing



Jamie Nash-Mayberry, Cobden High School,
Appleknocker News



Lavern Bartlett, Meridian Jr./Sr. High,
Cooking Challenge



Amy Taake, Century Elementary,
Get Them Outside

Member prize

In this issue of the JAMUP, we printed the names of three SIEC members who are eligible to receive a \$10 credit toward their utility bill. If you find your name printed in this center section and it's not part of the story, call Brent with your account number at **800-762-1400** to claim your prize.

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partially dead, shows sign of rot, or has insect infestation, cankers, eroded root systems, conifers with brown needles, or is a deciduous tree that will no longer leaf out and clearly will cause damage to an SIEC power line, which can create an unsafe condition.

In cases where we've encountered large established trees on right-of-way, we have found that the removal of limbs helps to redirect the future regrowth away from the wires, thereby eliminating the need to remove the entire tree. This also keeps maintenance costs to a minimum while helping to ensure that the tree won't need drastic trimming in the future.

After re-clearing, brush and regrowth are maintained with an herbicide treatment, which encourages slow regrowth. The herbicides that are used are varieties which can be purchased over the counter by private

landowners. The products are used in accordance with label instructions and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). We control all species of woody brush and trees.

2023 ROW PLAN

Substations to spray (May – August)

- McClure
- Ullin
- Lick Creek

Substations to bucket trim (January – December) **Dorothy Johnson**

- Ullin
- Karnak
- Metropolis

Substations to Jarraff trim and mow (February – August)

- Metropolis
- Unionville

If you want to know what substation you are on or have other questions, call our office at 800-762-1400.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY WORD SCRAMBLE

Electricity is essential for our daily lives, but it can also be dangerous if you don't play it safe!

Read the safety tips below and unscramble the bolded text to complete the phrase. Use the answer key to double check your work.



1. Never place extension **rdsoc** under rugs or carpet.

2. Make sure electrical cords are not **yrafde** or broken.

3. Smoke **maalsr** should be tested every month.

4. Place electrical cords in areas where you won't **itpr** on them.

5. Keep flammable items at least 3 feet away from space **shetear**.

6. Electricity and **rwtea** never mix.

Answer Key: 1) cords 2) frayed 3) alarms 4) trip 5) heaters 6) water