

The SOUTHEASTERN Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

President's Comments



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

One of the many advantages of living in Southern Illinois is the beauty of this area including the Shawnee National Forrest and the great variety of trees and vegetation that grow throughout the region. Although your Cooperative realizes the significance of this important natural resource and are advocates for retaining as many local trees as possible, we must implement a sound vegetation management program to ensure you with reliable energy solutions.

SouthEastern's current vegetation management program sets the goal of trimming on a 4- to 5-year cycle. This means that what is trimmed or cut today will be trimmed again in four to five years. Your Cooperative feels that if this goal can be achieved, you as Cooperative members will experience less momentary blinks, less outages and faster restoration times which will increase the quality and reliability of your electric service. Over the past few years, your Cooperative has experienced extreme storms resulting in devastating damages which reminds all of us of the importance of a sound vegetation management program.

In order to achieve this goal, SouthEastern needs to trim and cut trees along approximately 700-900 miles of power line per year. The maps that were displayed on page 16b and 16c of the February issue showed the areas where the Cooperative will be trimming trees, removing trees and applying necessary herbicides in 2011. If you would like additional information regarding your Cooperatives vegetation management activities for 2011,

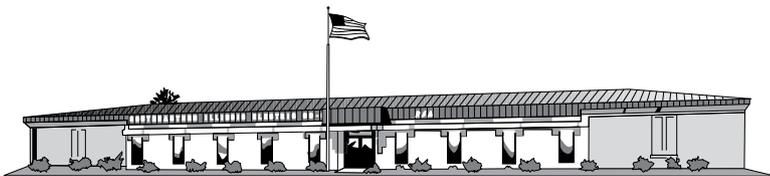
please contact the Cooperative.

As Cooperative members and owners, you can help us maximize the use of your money and improve your electric service by allowing us to achieve proper trim clearance on your trees and participating in other programs. Your Cooperative initiated a program several years ago known as "Swap a Tree". The "Swap a Tree" program has been enhanced to allow members an additional option. If you allow the Cooperative to remove a lawn tree that is interfering with primary lines and which is being periodically trimmed by the Cooperative, you are eligible to receive one of the following two options:

1. SouthEastern will cut the tree down, cut it up into firewood-length pieces, chip the small brush and plant a new tree of your choice such as oak, maple, tulip poplar, willow, pear and gum (additional species are also available) in a location that is at least 40 feet from the primary line.
2. SouthEastern will cut the tree down, cut it up into firewood-length pieces, chip the small brush and allow members a \$2 per inch in diameter cash credit for lawn tree stump removal and provide a \$75 per lawn tree cash credit.

If you are interested in participating in this program which will increase the reliability of electric service to yourself and your neighbors while helping to preserve our environment, please call Jeff Crisp, Property and Right-Of-Way Control Manager, at (800)-833-2611 ext. 165 and he will help you get started with these options.

READERSHIP PRIZE WINNER:
Carl Lutz, Marion, IL



Do your research before planting trees

Many people plant trees during the spring, especially around National Arbor Day (April 30) and Earth Day (April 22). There are many environmental and beautification benefits to planting young trees. However, Safe Electricity wants to remind everyone to be aware of electrical hazards while planting this year. Always seek help from professionals when choosing and placing trees and bushes.

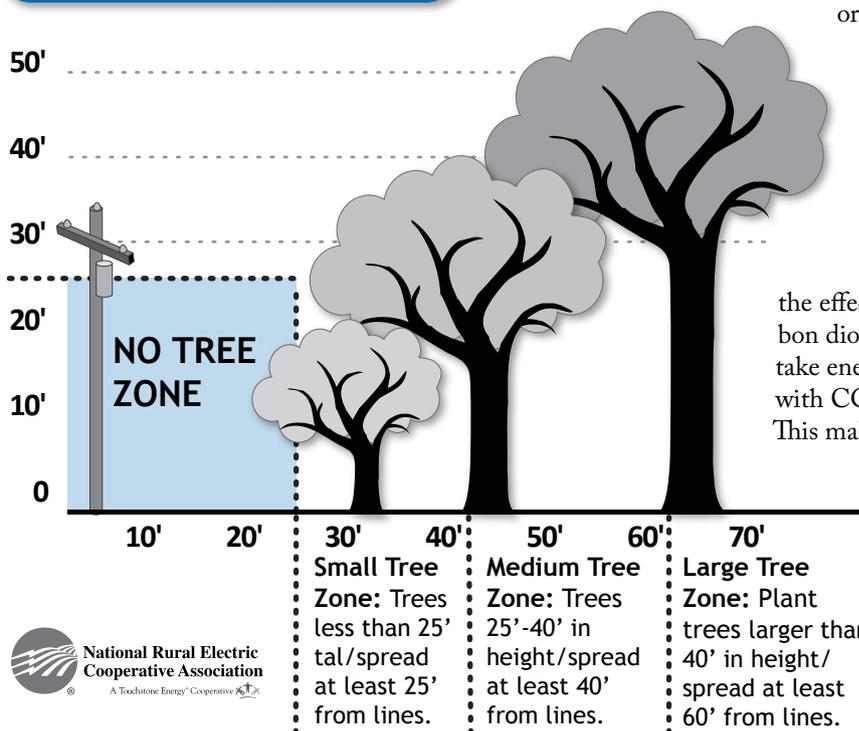
Trees that grow too close to electric lines can create shock and fire hazards as well as power outages. More importantly, children can become victims of electric shock when they climb trees that have grown too close to the power lines as well. Trees growing into power lines can also create electrical hazards for people who might be trimming branches, hanging lights or otherwise working around them.

“Trees provide many aesthetic, environmental and economic benefits” said Safe Electricity Executive



Director Molly Hall. “But everyone needs to be aware of the dangers and risks created when trees grow into power lines, and the importance of calling the utility or utility locator service before beginning any landscaping project.”

Tree Planting Guide



Take the time to research tree selections by consulting your local arborist, tree nursery or utility. These experts can provide assistance in designing a beautiful, shade-filled yard with trees appropriate for each area of the landscape. With their help, trees can provide economical cooling in the summer, and a windbreak for harsh winter winds.

In addition, trees help combat the effects of pollution by absorbing carbon dioxide (CO₂). When trees grow, they take energy from the sun and combine it with CO₂ from the air to photosynthesize. This makes trees a natural “carbon sink” or, a living source of carbon reduction. Some trees are better suited for this task than others and, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), tree species that grow quickly and live long are ideal carbon sinks.

Choosing the right tree

for the right place is crucial, especially when it comes to power lines. Trees and wood in general can potentially conduct electricity and can create a safety hazard if grown close to electric lines. Power outages or momentary interruptions can occur when branches come into contact with overhead lines. Electrical arcing and sparking from a wire to a nearby branch can also cause fires.

“Keep in mind expected height when you purchase trees to plant this year,” Hall said. “Just because a tree is far from the power line right now, doesn’t mean it always will be.”

If you have trees that appear to be growing into power lines, contact your electric utility. Never try to prune them yourself. Utilities have or can recommend skilled professionals trained to safely prune and trim trees for electric line clearance.

To avoid future electrical hazards, safe planting tips to remember include:

- Consider mature height of trees. Never plant a tree near a power line that could grow within 25 feet of it. Tall growing trees should be planted a minimum of 20 feet away from power lines, and 50 feet away to avoid future pruning. A mature height of less than 15 feet is recommended for trees planted near power lines.

- Do not plant near underground utility services. Tree roots can grow to interfere with underground pipes, cables and wires. Future repairs to these facilities also could damage the health and beauty of nearby plants and trees, or even require removal.
- Keep areas around electric meters, transformers or other electrical equipment free of any vegetation that could limit utility service access.
- Before digging, call the local underground utility locator service to mark the location of underground utilities so that accidental contact, damage and injuries can be avoided.

“There are many beautiful varieties of low-growing trees and shrubs that provide color, screening and shade, and enhance the quality of life in our communities and environment,” said Hall. “Consider the types of trees that co-exist well with power lines and the environment to avoid the need for trimming for line clearance.”



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.

585 Highway 142 South • P.O. Box 251 • Eldorado, Illinois 62930
618-273-2611 or 800-833-2611 • Office hours: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. M-F