

The SOUTHEASTERN Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

President's Comments



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

Like many of you, I'm certainly glad to see Spring finally arrive. After experiencing two major ice storms in the past two years, your Cooperative was relieved that we did not have to encounter another major ice storm this winter. Although we did not encounter a major ice storm, this winter proved to be one of the coldest winters in quite some time. The cold winter months resulted in most residential services consuming near record energy consumption resulting in higher electric bills. I would like to take this opportunity to help explain why many residential and business services experienced higher than average energy consumption in the first few months of 2010.

Utilities consistently monitor temperatures to help determine the necessary demand for energy but heating degree days is an index that quantifies the demand for energy needed to heat a specific structure, such as a home or business, during the winter months. A similar index, cooling degree days, is used to help determine the demand for energy to cool a structure in the summer.

Heating degree days is calculated by taking the average base temperature that a specific structure is normally heated to, minus the average outside ambient temperature for each day of the month and then adding all days in that specific month. Many would think that the base

temperature would be around 70 F but for historical reasons and the availability to compare this index over a long period of time, the base temperature is normally defined as 65 F. In order to calculate this index, assume the average outside ambient temperature for the 1st day of the month is 30 F. The number of heating degree days for the 1st day of the month would be calculated as 65 F – 30 F = 35 heating degree days. Assume the average outside ambient temperature for the 2nd day of the month is 25 F. The number of heating degree days for the 2nd day of the month would be calculated as 65 F – 25 F = 40 heating degree days. You would continue this process for each day of the month and then add all the respective heating degree days for the entire month. Below is a table that shows historical values for the heating degree index in Southern Illinois.

As stated earlier in the article, the months of January and February of 2010 proved to be very cold months with colder than average temperatures. As you can see in the table below, the heating degree days for the month of January 2010, as measured in Southern Illinois, equaled 1,162. The average heating degree days for the previous five years in the month of January is 905.9. This means that January

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Heating Degree Days As Measured In Southern Illinois

Month	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	5-Year Avg.	2010	% Above Avg.
January	828	694	904	995	1110	906	1162	28.3%
February	653	857	964	897	744	823	975	18.5%

READERSHIP
PRIZE
WINNER:

Maxine Conner
Mulkeytown, IL

10 family outdoor fun tips

Play it safe this spring with this electrical safety information

Outdoor family fun really takes off in the spring. But before you get out the kites and start those outdoor games, Safe Electricity and South-Eastern Illinois Electric Cooperative recommend you review these safety rules:

- n Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines aren't touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch.
- n Fly kites and model airplanes in large open areas like a park or a field, safely away from trees and overhead power lines. Never fly a kite on a cloudy day when a thunderstorm may be brewing.
- n If a kite gets stuck in a tree that's near power lines, don't climb up to get it. Electricity can travel down kite strings or wires and electrocute you. Contact your electric utility for assistance.
- n Never climb a utility pole or tower. The electricity carried through this equipment is extremely high voltage and could kill you.
- n Don't play on or around pad-mounted electrical equipment. (those large green boxes sometimes located in yards)
- n Never go into an electric substation for any reason. Electric substations contain high-voltage equipment, which can kill you. Never rescue a pet or retrieve a ball or toy that goes inside. Call your electric utility instead.

Be sure all pools and outdoor play areas are away from power lines and call JULIE before installing any new posts.

- n Install and use GFCI outlets outside. Use portable GFCIs if outlets don't have them. Keep appliances 10 feet from pools, ponds and wet surfaces.
- n Don't leave electrical appliances



outside. They could become wet and cause an electrical shock when unplugged later. If the weather looks threatening, pack up and go inside.

- n Spring showers bring more than just puddles to splash in. They can bring flooded areas that are never safe to play or wade in, and may be in contact with energized equipment or fallen power lines.



Visit www.SafeElectricity.org for more information on electrical safety, and on-line games and activities that teach kids to safely use and play around electricity.

Planting seeds of caution

Tips to stay safe during planting season

The greatest hazard on today's farms is electrocution. Before you head back into the fields this spring, read this information on how to stay safe.

"Make sure everyone knows the location of overhead power lines and to keep farm equipment at least 10 feet away from them," says Molly Hall, Executive Director of Safe Electricity. "The minimum 10 foot distance is a 360-degree rule – below, to the side and above lines."

Simply coming too close to a power line while working is dangerous as electricity can arc or "jump" to conducting material or objects, such as a ladder, pole or truck.

"Many farm electrical accidents that involve power lines happen when loading or preparing to transport equipment to fields, or while working on farm machinery near power lines," notes Molly Hall. "Sometimes a line is closer than it looks. When moving large equipment or high loads near a power line, always use a spotter to help ensure contact is not made with a line."

Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors are now equipped with radios and communications systems that have very tall antennas extending from

the cab that could make contact with power lines. Avoid raising the arms of planters, cultivators or truck beds near power lines.

"Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path," warns Hall.

When performing other farm chores, as in any outdoor work, take care not to raise equipment such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination. Do not try to clear storm-damage debris and limbs near or touching power lines or near fallen lines.

Overhead electric wires aren't the only electrical contact that can result in a serious incident. Pole guy wires are grounded to the neutral, but when one of the guy wires is broken, it can cause an electric current disruption. This can make those neutral wires anything but harmless. If you hit a guy wire and break it, call the utility to fix it. Don't do it yourself. When dealing with electrical poles and wires, call the electric utility.

"Operators of farm machinery or moving equipment also should know what to do if the vehicle comes in contact with a power line,"

Hall says. "It's almost always best to stay in the cab and call for help. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until the electric utility arrives to make sure power to the line is cut off."

"If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path to the ground and electrocution is the result," Molly Hall says. "Even if a line has landed on the ground, there is still potential for the area to be energized. Stay in the vehicle unless there's fire or imminent risk of fire."

In that case, the proper action is to jump – not step – with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Hop or shuffle to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area.

Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment. Many electrocutions occur when the operator dismounts and, realizing nothing has happened, tries to get back on the equipment.

For more electrical safety information, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.



Office Closing

Our office will be closed Friday, April 2, in observance of Good Friday.

President's Comments

(Continued from 16a)

2010 had heating degree days that was 28.3 percent higher than the previous five year average. For the month of February 2010, the heating degree days equaled 975. The average heating degree days for the previous five years in the month of February is 822.6. This means that February 2010 had heating degree days that was 18.5 percent higher than the previous five-year average.

As you can also see in the table, the heating degree days in January and February of 2010 exceeded all months in the previous five year period.

This information is helpful in understanding why most residential customers experienced higher energy consumption in the first few months of the year 2010 and subsequent higher energy bills. The electric bills are higher than average due to the colder temperatures we have encountered, equating to higher heating degree days which required the heating systems in our homes and businesses to run longer, consuming more energy than they normally would have. This higher energy consumption would even apply to homes or businesses that heat with propane

or natural gas. In this case, although the primary source of heat is not electricity, electricity is required to operate the fans and blowers to distribute the heat throughout the homes and therefore would still require more electricity to operate.

With Spring finally here, hopefully we have seen the worst of the cold weather for a while and we can all enjoy milder weather conditions and subsequently lower-energy consumption.

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

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.

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