

The SOUTHEASTERN Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

President's Comments



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

Retail Rate Changes

The past few years proved to be a very remarkable time in the history of your Cooperative with three of the most devastating storms in our 72-year history. These three storms caused damages in excess of \$8 million; however your Cooperative received \$3.8 million in 2009 from FEMA to help pay for these storms.

Due to the 2008 ice storm, your Cooperative experienced an operating loss in 2008. Due to the 2009 storms, your Cooperative was forced to cancel some right-of-way trimming/clearing contracts and other expenditures in order to avoid another operating loss in 2009. As you can see, these storms have had a detrimental impact on your Cooperative's distribution operations and finances.

As reported at the 2009 Annual Meeting, it has become necessary to implement a 2.5 percent general rate increase that will be effective with invoices received in May 2010. However, your Cooperative does have some good news to report as well. As you know, the Cooperative implemented a wholesale power cost adjustment charge in 2007 to only collect what is needed to cover changes in wholesale power costs due to fluctuating coal, carbon and purchased power cost. Fortunately, the wholesale power cost adjustment charge has decreased from last year due to lower coal, carbon and purchased power cost and your Cooperative expects the actual overall rate change for the

average residential member will be a slight rate decrease due to the lower wholesale power cost adjustment charge.

In addition, your Cooperative will restructure the retail rates to reflect a change in the customer charge and the energy charges to more accurately align rates with the actual costs incurred to deliver cost-effective energy. The customer charge is the minimum amount charged by the Cooperative to make electric service available to the property regardless of the amount of energy used. Your Cooperative invests in facilities such as substation equipment, transformers, distribution line, distribution poles, voltage regulators, meters, etc and incurs additional expenses such as interest expense, billing expense and administration expense that are all required to make service available at any location whether energy is consumed or not. The customer charge is not high enough to cover all of these fixed costs and the remaining fixed costs are recovered in the energy rate. Your Cooperative is restructuring the customer charges in all rate classes and will be increasing this customer charge as part of the 2.5 percent general rate increase.

The energy charge is the charge per kilowatt hour for the energy consumed. Historically, the residential energy charge has been a tiered energy charge

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READERSHIP PRIZE WINNER:
Steven Davis, Pittsburg, Illinois





Home Safe Home

May is Electrical Safety Month



Electric energy use is typically on the rise during warmer weather, so as part of the new “Teach Learn Care” TLC campaign, Safe Electricity suggests “there is no time like the present” to conduct an electrical home inspection. During National Electrical Safety Month in May, the program encourages everyone to make sure your home is safe from electrical hazards to prevent electrical-related deaths, injuries and property damage.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), faulty home electrical wiring is responsible for 40,000 fires a year and results in the loss of 350 lives, thousands of injuries from electrical shocks and burns and more than \$2 billion in personal property damage. It’s estimated that more than 50 million homes and buildings have outdated or inadequate electrical wiring.

“Electrical hazards have a tendency to remain hidden until it’s too late to avoid disaster. Don’t let the small cost of prevention stand in the way of protecting your family and your property,” says Mike Ashenfelter, Sangamon County Electrical Inspector. “There are many things you can inspect on your own to ensure electrical safety in your home.”

- Check electrical outlets for loose fitting plugs that can shock or be a fire hazard. Replace missing or broken wall plates so that the inner wiring components are not exposed. If you have young children, make sure safety covers are used on unused outlets and outlets are not overloaded with too many appliance plugs. Consider

installing tamper-resistant receptacles, which have a built-in shutter system that prevents hairpins and other small objects from being inserted into the outlet.

- Check the cords of the appliances in your home as well as the plugs and connectors. Make sure that they are not frayed, cracked or damaged, placed under rugs or carpets, resting on furniture, or located in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple cords to walls, floors or any other objects.
- Extension cords should be used on a temporary basis only because they are not intended for use as permanent household wiring. Have additional outlets installed where you need them instead of relying on extension cords and power strips. If you are using extension cords, make sure that they have safety closures to protect young children from shock hazards or mouth burn injuries. Never use an indoor extension cord for outdoor use. Use an extension cord specifically for outdoors; they are heavier and less likely to be damaged.
- Check your electrical panel to make sure that the breakers and fuses are properly rated for the circuit that they are protecting. If you do not know what the correct rating is, have a qualified electrician identify and label the correct size to be used. If you are replacing a fuse, make sure that you replace it with the same size as the one that you are removing.
- Check light bulbs and appliances to make sure the

wattage matches fixture requirements. Make sure not to replace bulbs with those that have higher wattage than recommended. Additionally, the bulb should be screwed in securely to prevent overheating.

- If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker or gives you an electrical shock, immediately unplug, repair or replace it.
- Check for or install ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). A GFCI is an inexpensive electrical device that shuts off power instantly if there is problem and should be installed in all “wet” areas of the home such as bathrooms, kitchens and basements. GFCIs should be tested monthly to ensure they are working properly. It’s estimated more than two-thirds of the roughly 300 electrocutions occurring each year in and around the home could be prevented if GFCIs were installed in household branch circuits.
- Consider installing arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) on bedroom circuits, smoke detectors in all bedrooms and in hallways within 15 feet of bedrooms, and at least one smoke detector on every level. As always, check with your local electrical inspector if you have questions or concerns.
- Inspect all outdoor connections, appliances and tools for frayed cords, broken plugs and cracked or broken housings.

For more information on electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.com.

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Marathon[®]

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative is now offering Marathon Water Heaters for sale at its Eldorado Headquarters. Please call (618) 273-2611 for more information.

President's Comments

(Continued from 16a)

but the restructuring includes a flat energy charge per kilowatt hour consumed. This means that all energy consumed will be charged at the same rate.

Due to the restructuring of the customer charge and the energy charge, the actual rate change experienced by each member will vary somewhat based upon each member's energy consumption.

After the past few years, your Cooperative is very hopeful that it will not incur another major storm in 2010. In 2010, your Cooperative remains committed to finding new and better ways to serve its members while keeping rates affordable.

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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