

# The SOUTHEASTERN Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

## President's Comments



**Dustin Tripp**  
President/CEO

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative began its operations on October 5, 1938 and is celebrating 72 years of service this year. SEIEC is very proud to be one of a number of businesses in our area that remain locally owned, locally governed and locally operated in Southern Illinois. The founders of the electric cooperative program developed a unique business structure that by its very nature, makes electric cooperatives very accountable to the members it serves. Although much has changed over the last 72 years, there are some things that remain unchanged such as your Cooperative's commitment to the members it serves.

Every few years, the Cooperative membership is surveyed by an independent survey firm in order to determine what areas of our operation need improvement. In the summer of 2009, 1,260 survey questionnaires were mailed to randomly selected members of SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative, in all 499 completed surveys were returned providing a 95 percent confidence level in the results. These results revealed that approximately 94 percent of SEIEC members are satisfied with the service provided by the Cooperative, 42 percent feels their service had improved over the last few years while approximately 52 percent feels their service had remained the same. While these numbers are very good,

your Cooperative will continue to strive to improve service reliability to you.

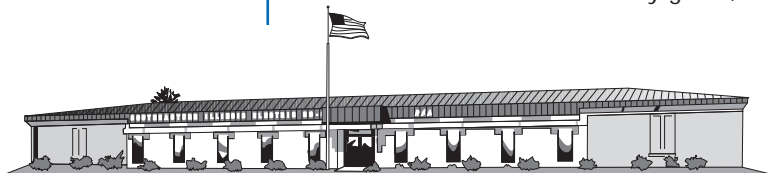
Of the 66.3 percent of the membership that tried to phone the Cooperative in the past year, 75 percent reported they had no difficulty in contacting someone who could help them. Those who reported difficulty contacting a person to help them, were asked what type of difficulty they experienced; the most common problems were with the automated phone system and the phone was busy/not answered after business hours. Your Cooperative is aware that there are problems with the phone system and has been researching ways to make improvements in order to provide better customer service to you as Cooperative members.

Regarding climate change and energy efficiency, 56 percent of the membership feels that CO2 contributes somewhat or a great deal to climate change, however approximately 72 percent would not be willing to pay over \$10 to combat climate change. Approximately 91 percent of the membership has taken steps to reduce energy consumption by turning off lights when not in use, using compact fluorescent light bulbs, changing settings or installing programmable thermostats and by weatherizing their homes.

When asked if what you presently pay for other household goods and

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READERSHIP PRIZE WINNER:  
Marvin Eberhart, Johnston City



# Energy efficiency rebate program

## What's the HomeE program about?

HomeE (pronounced home E) is our program to help our members become energy efficient. Through our statewide organization, the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC), the Illinois Electric Cooperatives will be distributing \$1.5 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds for energy efficiency improvements to their homes.

## Who's eligible?

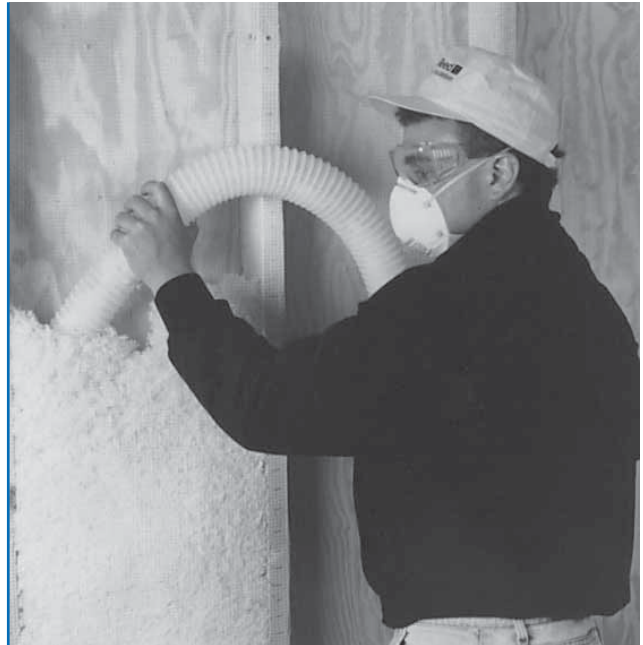
According to DCEO, Cooperative members who qualify for the LIHEAP Home Weatherization Assistance Program through the state of Illinois will NOT qualify for this program as these members are eligible to receive up to \$6,500 in funding for weatherization and energy efficiency improvements. All OTHER residential members of SEIEC are eligible to participate in the HomeE program. The home must be served by the cooperative and be the member's primary residence.

## How does the program work?

Start by contacting the cooperative at 618-273-2611 to arrange an energy assessment by one of our energy experts. We'll take your name and contact number in the order we are contacted. As we near your turn, we'll contact you to schedule an assessment. Assessments will be scheduled M-F, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. An adult member of the home must be present. There is a \$25 fee for the assessment that will be billed to the member. We will provide you with a report of recommendations on how you might best improve your home's energy efficiency, performance and comfort.

## What do I need to do?

Based on the recommendations we make, you could be eligible for a rebate up to \$1,500 per residence, per member. Once you have your recommendations, you decide what is best for you. You will then submit a proposal form and estimate to us. We will return a signed copy to you, indicating that funds have been set aside for you. You will then have 60 days to complete your project. Once you have made your purchase or completed your project, you will send us a completion form with copies of the paid receipts. We will then issue a check to you.



## How much are the rebates?

Geothermal Heat Pumps	\$1,500
Air-source Heat Pumps	\$1,000
Central Air Conditioning	\$350
Natural gas or LP Furnace	\$350
Heat Pump Water Heater	\$250
Insulation/Air Sealing	30% of project costs, maximum \$500

The maximum total rebate is \$1,500 per Cooperative member/residence. Rebates will be approved for only one piece of heating or cooling equipment.

Please contact South-Eastern Illinois Electric Cooperative at 618-273-2611 for more information regarding the program or to sign up for an energy assessment. The program will run until the funding is exhausted.



# Electrical storms can be deadly

**Safe Electricity offers tips for Lightning Safety Awareness Week, June 22-28**

**"L**ightning never strikes twice in the same place."

"You have more of a chance of getting struck by lightning."

These often-repeated sayings give the impression that lightning strikes are extremely rare - predictable and avoidable. This idea, however, is wrong.

Although seemingly less dangerous, lightning kills more people per year than either tornados or hurricanes and causes billions of dollars in damage. Given these statistics, it's extremely important to take lightning seriously and to stay educated on lightning safety.

"Plan outdoor activities around the weather and be prepared to seek shelter if the weather turns threatening," says Molly Hall, Safe Electricity Executive Director. "If thunderstorms and lightning are approaching, the safest location is indoors away from doors and windows. Avoid water, electric appliances and other objects that could conduct electricity and use only cordless or cell phones to make emergency calls."

Phone use is the leading cause of indoor lightning injuries in the U.S. A direct strike is not necessary for lightning voltage to enter your home through phone lines, electrical wires, cables and plumbing.

Other recommendations to avoid lightning shock and damage indoors include:

- Turn off and unplug appliances well before a storm nears – never during.
- Stay away from electrical outlets, appliances, computers, power tools and TV sets. Take off headsets and stop playing video games.
- Avoid water and contact with piping, including sinks, baths and faucets. Don't wash dishes, shower or bathe during a thunderstorm. Also avoid washers and dryers since they not only connect with the plumbing and electrical systems, but also contain an electrical path from the outside through the dryer vent.
- Do not lie on the concrete floor of a garage as it likely contains wire mesh.
- Basements typically are a safe place to go during thunderstorms, but avoid concrete walls that may contain metal rebar.



Lightning can strike up to 10 miles from the area in which it is raining. This means that if you can hear thunder, you're within striking distance. A good idea is to use the '30-30 Rule'. According to this rule, if you count less than 30 seconds between a lightning flash and the thunder following it, you should seek shelter from the storm. When the storm is over, wait 30 minutes after the last lightning strike you see before going back outside.

If caught outdoors during a thunderstorm and unable to take shelter in a building, take the following precautions:

- Try to take shelter in a vehicle with a solid metal roof. Close the windows and avoid contact with electrical conducting paths, such as the steering wheel, ignition, gear shifter, or radio.
- Avoid water, high ground or open spaces.
- Do not seek shelter under tall, solitary trees; canopies; small picnic or rain shelters; or in any open-frame vehicles such as jeeps, convertibles, golf carts, tractors or mowers.
- Do not stand near power, light or flag poles, machinery, fences, gates, metal bleachers or even other people. If you are in a group, spread out so that you are at least 20 feet apart.

If you are outside and your skin tingles or you hear crackling sounds, this could signal that lightning is about to strike. Drop immediately into a crouching position and make yourself as small as possible with minimal contact with the ground.

If a person is struck by lightning, call 911 and care for the victim immediately. You are not in danger of being electrocuted by the victim.

More information on lightning safety can be found at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Web site at [www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov](http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov). Also visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org) for more electrical safety information.

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services including other energy sources, would you say that electricity from SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative is less economical, about in line or more economical, approximately 62 percent felt that it was about in line, 21 percent felt it was more economical while 17 percent felt it was less economical. Unlike other electric utility business structures that strive to produce profits for investors, your cooperative is a not-for-profit organization that strives

to provide the highest level of reliable, quality service at rates just high enough to cover the costs of operation. Your Cooperative will continue to strive to provide reliable electric service at the most reasonable cost.

The 2009 survey incorporated a series of ACSI (American Customer Satisfaction Index) questions which allowed SouthEastern to be ranked with other electric cooperatives and investor-owned utilities across the country. Your Cooperative

scored an 82 in 2009 while the overall score for the Illinois Cooperatives was an 81.

Your Cooperative remains committed to finding new and better ways to serve its members. Your Cooperative will continue to work diligently to improve and enhance the level of service and reliability that you receive.

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.**

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