

President's Comments



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

Now's the time to improve your energy efficiency

In the April 2010 issue, I notified Members that residential energy consumption for the months of January and February was significantly higher than normal due to the colder temperatures experienced during these two months. These colder temperatures resulted in heating-degree days that were 28.3 percent and 18.5 percent higher respectively, resulting in higher than average energy consumption to heat homes and businesses. As it turns out, the energy consumption for the month of June was also considerably higher than normal and the cooling-degree days were the highest on record for the last 25 years and 24.4 percent higher than the five year average. This means that June was significantly warmer than normal resulting in higher than normal energy consumption to cool homes and businesses.

As you can see, the weather has a significant impact on the amount of energy consumed to heat and cool our homes and businesses and 2010 has experienced some extremely cold and extremely hot weather leading to higher than normal energy consumption. Although we can't control the weather, we can make some improvements that will lead to consuming energy more efficiently and ultimately save money by consuming less energy.

On May 10, 2010, SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative announced the Home Energy Efficiency Program to help members make improvements to their homes that will result in consuming energy more efficiently. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) granted Illinois Electric Cooperatives \$1.5 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds for home energy efficiency improvements. Your Cooperative received \$109,000 of this grant to distribute to SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Members.

In order to qualify for this grant, the home must be served by the Cooperative and be the Member's primary residence. The first step is to contact your Cooperative to arrange an energy assessment. There will be a \$25 fee for the assessment. Once we have assessed your home we will provide you with a report on how you could improve your home's energy efficiency performance and comfort. Based on these recommendations, you could be eligible for a rebate up to \$1,500 per residence per member. This grant will be distributed to qualified projects based upon a first come, first serve basis. All heating-cooling system upgrades must meet

(Continued on 16d)

READERSHIP PRIZE WINNER:
Vinson Foe, Golconda, Illinois



First lesson every college student should learn

As students make their treks to campuses nationwide, whether into dorm rooms or apartments, it is imperative that they first learn about electrical safety. Often times students innocently plug in all of the typical college tools – study lamps, laptops, TVs, stereos, grooming and other electrical devices – unaware of the potential dangers. Rather than chance a mishap that could be avoided, be sure that your student is educated on safe appliance use and precautions against electrical hazards.

In its most recent report, the National Fire Protection Association estimates that U.S. fire departments respond to an average of 2,460 fires in dormitories, fraternities, sororities and barracks each year. “Sadly, the tragic results culminate in an average of five deaths, 73 injuries and \$29.4 million in direct property damage per year,” says Molly Hall, Executive Director of the Safe Electricity program.

“The limited number of electrical outlets in student rooms tempt many to use multiple extension cords and power strips, which can cause cords to overheat, creating shock and fire hazards,” warns Hall. “Student residences crammed with books, papers and bedding can allow the smallest spark to quickly become a blaze.”

Safety steps to prevent and reduce the risk of electrical fires in student housing include:

- Purchase and use only UL-rated electrical appliances and power cords
- Do not overload extension cords, power strips or outlets.
- Never use extension cords on a continuous basis; they serve as temporary solutions only.



- Use power strips with an over-current protector that will shut off power automatically if there is too much current being drawn.
- Never tack or nail an electrical cord to any surface, or run cords across traffic paths, under rugs or furniture.
- Use light bulbs with the correct wattage for lamps. If no indication is on the product, do not use a bulb with more than 60 watts.
- Keep all electrical appliances and cords safely away from bedding, curtains and other flammable material.
- Make sure outlets around sinks are GFCI equipped before use.
- Unplug small household appliances when not in use and all electronics when away for extended periods.

Older wiring in student housing and apartments may not be able to handle the increased electrical demand of

today's college student. If use of an appliance frequently causes power to trip off, or if its power cord or the outlet feels hot, the appliance should be disconnected immediately and the condition reported to the landlord or campus housing staff.

A fire escape plan is essential for every student and it is important to know evacuation procedures and emergency exit locations in the event of a fire. Smoke detectors should never be disabled, nor should fire alarms ever be ignored or taken casually as a drill. If a fire alarm sounds, calmly and quickly follow practiced procedures and immediately exit the building. Doors should be closed when leaving to prevent fire spread.

“It is important to remind and stress to students that in the event of a fire, follow safety procedures and get out of harm's way immediately,” remarked Hall. “Property and valuables can be replaced, but lives cannot.”

For more fire and electrical safety information, visit the SafeElectricity.org Web site.

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(Continued from 16a)

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federal Energy Star standards to be eligible. Above are items eligible for the rebates and the amount.

According to DECO, Cooperative members who qualify for the Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program through the State of Illinois do NOT qualify for the Home energy efficiency program as these members are eligible to receive up to \$7,500 in funding for weatherization and energy efficiency improvements from the state. The Weatherization Assistance Program reduces energy costs

for low-income households by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes, while ensuring their health and safety. In order to qualify for the Illinois Weatherization Assistance Program, the household income must be below 200 percent of the national poverty level which equates to an annual income of \$44,100 for a family of four.

Members not eligible for the Illinois Weatherization Assistance Program can receive a tax credit for 30 percent of the cost (credit not to exceed \$1,500) for qualified energy efficiency projects

completed on existing homes in 2009 and 2010. From replacing windows, doors and insulation to installing an energy-efficient heating and cooling system, there are many ways you can use the tax credit to offset some of the costs for efficiency upgrades.

A renewable energy tax credit also exists for members investing in geothermal heat pumps, solar water heaters and other green technologies. The credit covers 30 percent of the cost for approved projects completed on any type of home between 2009 and 2016. If you have ever thought about installing a geothermal heat pump, these tax credits provide a good opportunity to achieve higher efficiencies at a much reduced overall cost. The ENERGY STAR website, www.energystar.gov (keyword: "Tax credits") provides a great overview of what qualifies for tax credits and includes guidance on how to apply for them.

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