

HomE version 2.0

The sequel to HomE is now playing at your local cooperative

As we start a new year, many of us are resolving to make positive changes in our lives. Eating right and exercising are two resolutions a lot of us start out each year striving to keep. Here is an idea that can make a positive change in your life without forcing you to give up chocolate or work up a sweat.

You may remember the HomE program that was offered to members in 2011. The electric cooperatives of Illinois received \$2.5 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act program through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's State Energy Plan for energy efficiency funding. The money helped many of our members upgrade their heating and air conditioning systems or weatherize and air seal their homes. The program was so successful that all the money was used.

If you didn't get a chance to participate in the first round of HomE rebates, now you have a second chance. The HomE Lite rebates are available until funding runs out, or until June of this year. The 2013 version is being called HomE Lite.

HomE Lite Rebate Incentives Include:

- Geothermal system - \$1,500
- Air-Source Heat Pump (16 SEER or higher) - \$1,000
- Insulation and Weatherization - 50 percent of total project cost, up to \$1,000
- Heat Pump Water Heater - \$250
- Commercial installations - \$500 per ton of capacity, up to a maximum of \$10,000 for geothermal and air source heat pumps



- Energy Audit by BPI certified auditor - up to a maximum of \$300

With the help of the first round of HomE funding, 101 Shelby Electric Cooperative member-owners received energy efficiency rebates totaling \$87,520.92.

Member Services Representative Marla Eversole coordinator of the HomE program said, "There is a limited amount of money available. It will be used on a first-come, first-served basis while funds last. So act now and don't delay." It's also important to note that these funds are only available for home improvement projects in 2013 and

are not available for projects started before January 1, 2013," added Eversole.

If you want to learn more about HomE Lite contact Marla Eversole at 800-677-2612. See related story on page 20 of this issue of *Illinois Country Living Magazine*

Editor's note: As this article was written in November to meet publisher deadlines, the rules for the program were still being finalized. If you're interested in HomE Lite, call the cooperative for complete details. We hope you can take advantage of this program, which can save you money not just in 2013, but also for years to come.

Please pardon the interruption

Power blinks, while inconvenient, prevent sustained outages

It's a minor annoyance; ok, maybe major annoyance that almost everyone has to deal with at some point: you return home from work to find every digital clock in the house flashing 12:00 a.m. This state of "eternal midnight" is a strong indication that a power blink has occurred.



Blinks are commonly the result of protective equipment operating to clear a temporary fault. They happen when a breaker, or switch, opens anywhere in the electrical distribution system. The breaker usually opens because of a large, sudden rise in electrical current, known as a fault condition.

"Fault conditions can happen for a number of reasons," explains Jim Matlock, vice president of engineering for Shelby Electric Cooperative. "Most commonly they'll be from lightning strikes, broken wires or a tree-branch coming in contact with a power

line," Matlock continued.

When a fault happens, a relay senses it and directs the breaker to open, preventing the flow of power to the site of the problem. After opening, the breaker quickly closes. The brief delay, which allows the fault to clear, usually lasts less than two seconds. If the fault clears, every home or business that receives electricity from that power will experience a blink. This could include thousands of accounts if the breaker protects a transmission line or a substation.

"Nobody likes having to reset their digital clocks; but while blinks can be annoying for the member-owner, they actually show that an electrical system is functioning correctly," said cooperative operations superintendent Terry Oldham. "The protective equipment that produces that power blink is protecting you from a sustained outage, which is what you'd rather have if the temporary fault isn't

given a chance to clear," added Oldham.

"Given the current available technology, no utility company has the ability to eliminate power blinks completely," Matlock, points out. "But if we work together — the co-op and the members — we can minimize the effects of service interruptions and the frequency with which they happen," continued Matlock.

Shelby Electric Cooperative recommends the following ways for members to help minimize the effect of power blinks.

- 1. Report Excessive Blinking:** If you are experiencing an unusual amount of blinks at your property, please report the issue to the cooperative by calling 800-677-2612.
- 2. Tree Notes:** Vegetation management is one of Shelby Electric's most effective methods for reducing the frequency of power blinks. If you notice tree limbs situated too close

Continued on 16d ▶


SHELBY News

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Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Sleek new flat-panel TVs can consume almost as much electricity as a refrigerator. In general, the bigger the screen, the more power it draws and HD pulls more, too. Plasma screens use the most energy, while LCD TVs use much less. And remember, change your new TV's default settings to a power saver mode and turn down the LCD backlight to save energy without sacrificing picture quality.

Source: Cooperative Research Network

REAL LIFE REAL POWER

Getting real with Marla

Letters arrive in the mail offering to sell you electricity for the low, low price of \$X.xx!! The phone rings and someone (possibly an automated something) offers assistance with your electric bill. In advertising you may see and hear “We can lower your electric bill!” Many communities and counties across the state voted to allow aggregation of electricity. Why is this offered to Ameren customers and not Shelby Electric Cooperative (SEC) members? What does it all mean?

We, your employees at SEC, often learn of these “offers” when our members visit the office or phone in to ask questions. Therefore, very often, we do not have much, if any, information at that time to tell our members. Through various networks, we strive to educate ourselves and our members. I often feel like the old dog trying to keep up with the new tricks!

The current buzz of activity surrounding aggregation and Alternative Retail Energy Suppliers (ARES) does not apply to electric cooperative members. Illinois law allows municipalities and counties to purchase electricity on behalf of residential and small-business utility customers living within their borders.

Electric cooperatives are member-owned (not-for-profit) instead of investor-owned (for-profit). In 1997, electric utility deregulation legislation treated the cooperatives differently than the Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs). Legislation left the decision to enter into a deregulated market up to the cooperatives’ boards of directors. Electric Cooperatives are self regulated, as our member-owners elect their

board of directors. Your SEC Board of Directors work for the best interest of the membership’s long-term energy needs.

At this time, it appears that most contracts offered by the ARES are short-term, 12 to 24 month contracts. **It is not known what will happen to electricity rates when these short-term contracts expire.** Additionally, the “low rates” apply only to the energy portion of the bill (the kWh charge). All other charges and services will be determined by the IOUs.

Why are electric cooperative rates higher than IOU rates? Our fixed costs are divided among fewer people. We have fewer than five member-owners for every mile of line we provide and serve. This compares to about 34 customers per mile of line for IOUs. Next time you are on a leisurely drive, count the number of homes and businesses in a one-mile span in town. Then, count the number of homes and businesses per a one-mile span in the country.

Your SEC Board of Directors has chosen the approach which appears to be best for the future, not only 12 or 24 months. A long-term power supply has been secured so you, our member-owners, will continue to have reliable, safe and affordable

energy for years to come. We are here now **and** will be into the future. This is why SEC’s Board of Directors has pursued developing jointly-owned electric generation with other Illinois electric cooperatives and our power supplier, Prairie Power, Inc. (PPI). PPI has invested in the new, 1600 MW power plant, Prairie State Generation Station at Lively Grove, Illinois, in order to provide long-term access to very efficient and cost-effective power.

In *any* situation that sounds like it might be too good to be true, I advise people to:

- Ask questions.
- Read the fine print.
- Get a contact person’s name and number.
- Don’t feel rushed or pushed into action.
- Never give personal information unless you are positive you are speaking with someone from a reputable business or organization.
- Keep up-to-date with your electric cooperative by reading this newsletter, visiting our website at www.shelbyelectric.coop and visiting us at Facebook, www.facebook.com/YourCoop.

~ Marla Eversole,

Member Services Representative

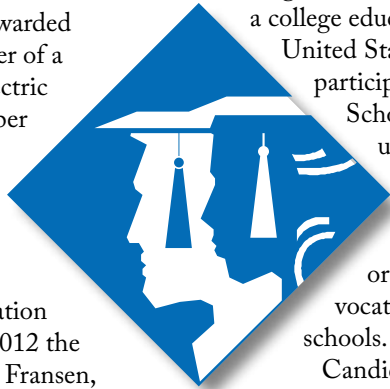
Did You Know?

Utility	Average Number of Customers/ Members per Mile of Line
Municipals/Publicly-Owned Utilities	48
Investor Owned Utilities	34
Cooperatives (National Average)	7.4
Illinois Cooperatives	5.12
Shelby Electric Cooperative	4.55

Three academic scholarships to be awarded

As in past years, Shelby Electric Cooperative will be awarding three academic scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each. Scholarships are awarded to a son or daughter of a current Shelby Electric Cooperative member who is receiving electric service from the cooperative at the time the scholarship application is submitted.* In 2012 the winners were Max Franssen, Decatur; Karli Robinson, Shelbyville and Jana Randolph, Decatur.

“We are pleased to be able to provide students with an opportunity to be awarded a scholarship as a way to give back



to the communities we serve,” said Marla Eversole, who coordinates this program for the cooperative.

High school seniors pursuing a college education in the United States are eligible to participate in the program.

Scholarships may be used for educational costs at any two-year or four-year accredited college or university, including vocational/technical schools.

Candidates are judged based on grade point average, college entrance tests scores, work and volunteer experience, participation in school and community activities, a biographical statement and a short essay that demonstrates knowledge of the

organization and services of Shelby Electric Cooperative. March 15th is the deadline for receipt of completed applications for 2013. Scholarship winners will be notified in June.

Applications can be obtained by visiting the Shelby Electric Cooperative website www.shelbyelectric.coop and clicking on the “Our Community” menu tab or by calling Marla Eversole, Member Services Representative. The telephone numbers for the cooperative are 217-774-3986 and 1-800-677-2612. Applications may also be obtained from high school guidance counselors.

**Sons/daughters of Shelby Electric Cooperative employees and Board members are not eligible to apply.*

Please pardon the interruption *(Continued from page 16b)*

to a power line, please call the cooperative at 1-800-677-2612 and report it. If you’re planning on planting a tree or shrub, check with your utility to make sure it is planted a safe distance from a power line.

3. **Battery Backup:** Nobody wants to be late for work because the alarm clock didn’t go off. You can reduce the frustration of blinks by purchasing an alarm clock equipped with a battery backup. This type of digital clock offers “ride through” ability for momentary outages. It will also keep the correct time and sound an alarm in case of a long-duration outage, provided a charged battery is in place.
4. **UPS:** Blinks affect all electrical equipment, not just digital clocks. If there is a blink while you are operating a computer, your computer may crash and you will have

to reboot, hoping all the while that no files will be corrupted. An uninterruptible power supply (UPS) on your computer can help prevent information loss. The UPS incorporates surge suppres-

sion technology with a battery backup and provides you some time to save whatever you were working on and shut down the computer safely.

Source: NRECA

The four most common power quality issues

1. **Blink:** A momentary loss of power often mischaracterized as a “surge.” Blinks happen when power is lost for a short period of time and then restored. Blinks are commonly the result of protective equipment operating to clear a temporary fault.
2. **Partial Power:** When power is lost to part of a residence. When there is partial power, typically the 240-volt appliances, such as electric dryers, electric stoves and water heaters, do not work.
3. **Voltage Sag:** A brief decrease in voltage. Voltage sags can cause lights to dim when a motor is starting up or an air conditioner is kicking on.
4. **Voltage Swell:** A brief increase in voltage. Voltage swells can cause lights to brighten as a result of a bad neutral connection or a large and sudden decrease in loading.