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Imagine if you will, what it must have been like after dark in the farms, ranches and small towns of America 75 years ago... before there was power...before there was electricity. But that was all about to change and change it did, when farmers, ranchers and rural families banded together to shine a light on the need to turn the lights on in rural America.

Cooperation created the electric co-ops, and the co-ops created a movement so profound, that President Franklin Roosevelt said, "The forward march of electric cooperatives has an even more profound significance in terms of our fight to preserve democracy." Is there any finer representation of democracy at work than neighbors helping neighbors? When the electric co-ops were born, something much bigger happened. When we turned the lights on, we helped democratize the American dream... for the people, families, farms, ranches and businesses of rural America.

The effect was so powerful that in 1940, a man sitting in a pew in a small, rural church in Tennessee was moved to say, "Brothers and sisters, I want to tell you two things...the greatest thing in the world is to have God in your heart. And the next greatest thing on earth is to have electricity in your home."

Seventy-five years ago, a handful of farmers and ranchers united by the common values of honesty, responsi-


bility, equality and solidarity, and armed only with the powerful purpose, took the lead, banded together and answered the call.

Today, a new generation of electric co-op members, just like the farmers, ranchers and rural families did 75 years ago, must again answer the call. We are the owners of the co-ops and are the fabric of the communities in which we live and work. It is faith and trust in other institutions, seeing the need to empower, inspire, and immobilize each other to take care of ourselves, our neighbors and our communities. Let it be known, it is time for this new generation to turn the lights on again, to power, protect and grow our communities. Not just with the electricity of our infrastructure, but with the electricity of our purpose, passion, ideas, and will, to ensure that the quality of life in all of the communities in which we live and work is improved. For our purpose is a mighty one, to power communities and empower members to improve the quality of their lives, and when we live up to our purpose, we re-light the American dream.

Think back now about the profound impact our founding members made three-quarters of a century ago and grab hold of that same spirit, because we are the electric cooperative members of tomorrow. And our work has just begun.



**Southern Illinois
Electric Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 



We're celebrating
75 years in 2013