

It's a car, it's a bird ... no it's a squirrel?

What do cars, birds and, yes, even squirrels have in common? They can all trigger a power outage. We can all pretty much understand when Mother Nature packs a punch to the electrical system and we can even understand about a vehicle hitting a pole causing a power outage ... but animals?

I'm sure you've all wondered what caused that occasional blinking of your lights or thought to yourself, "Hey, why did the power go off, it's nice outside?" The answer very well could be an animal. As the chart indicates, 11% of cooperative power interruptions can be blamed on animals.

Squirrels are the main culprits, but they're not alone. Opossums, raccoons, foxes, snakes, birds and other animals can also trigger outages.

Electricity seeks the fastest route to the ground. Utility pole insulators keep power flowing safely in your neighborhood, but unwitting squirrels offer high-voltage electricity a way around insulators. If a squirrel doesn't jump far enough, a powerful electric current, up to 12,500 volts, makes the squirrel a conduit to the ground. The squirrel does not survive.

If a squirrel's body falls to the ground, the power blinks but stays on. If it falls into equipment, like a transformer, safety measures shut off power.

Animal attraction to power infrastructure hurts animals and leaves our members in the dark. Clean up, recovery and restoring power costs utilities nationwide between 15 and 18 million dollars a year, estimates Tyco Electronics, a utility equipment firm.

Like squirrels, birds may get hurt

and cause power interruptions as high-voltage electricity looks for a path to the ground. You might wonder how can a bird cause a power outage because you see them sitting on the lines all the time. As long as both of the bird's feet are on the same wire (or wires of the same voltage) the bird is safe. The current doesn't have anywhere else to go, so the electricity won't pass through the bird—it stays on the path of least resistance, the wire. If a bird pecks at a bug on the pole or insulator it would create the path to ground, killing the bird and creating a power interruption.

So next time your lights blink or the power goes out on a nice sunny day, you might have a better idea of who the culprit was.



Causes of Co-op Power Interruptions

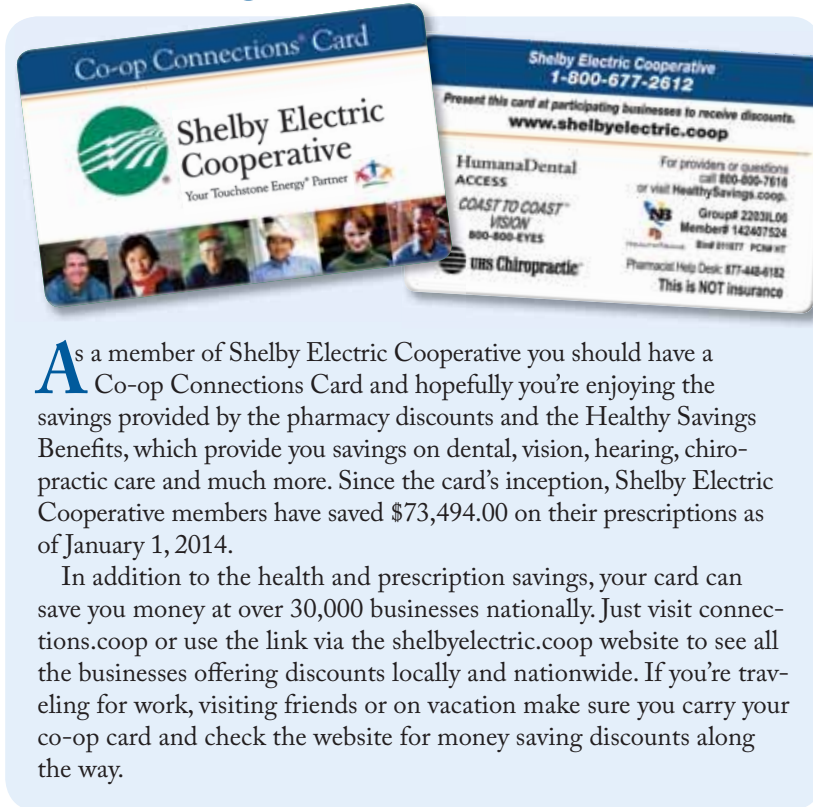
Power outages may be caused by many unknown factors but bad weather remains the primary cause.

Per number of interruptions

Weather	31%
Equipment	14%
Maintenance	12%
Animals	11%
Planned Outages	7%
Other	7%
Power Supply	5%
Public	5%

Source: NRECA

Don't forget to use your Co-op Connections Card



As a member of Shelby Electric Cooperative you should have a Co-op Connections Card and hopefully you're enjoying the savings provided by the pharmacy discounts and the Healthy Savings Benefits, which provide you savings on dental, vision, hearing, chiropractic care and much more. Since the card's inception, Shelby Electric Cooperative members have saved \$73,494.00 on their prescriptions as of January 1, 2014.

In addition to the health and prescription savings, your card can save you money at over 30,000 businesses nationally. Just visit connections.coop or use the link via the shelbyelectric.coop website to see all the businesses offering discounts locally and nationwide. If you're traveling for work, visiting friends or on vacation make sure you carry your co-op card and check the website for money saving discounts along the way.

Here is a list of local participating businesses as of January 1, 2014.

Bloomington

- **Glass Specialty Company Inc.** 309-664-1087
\$20 Wal-Mart gift card with any auto glass replacement.

Champaign

- **Glass Specialty Company Inc.** 352-4258
\$20 Wal-Mart gift card with any auto glass replacement.
- **Wireless Mike's** 356-9300
50% off car cord or leather case when activating a new line or upgrading an existing plan.

Decatur

- **Creative Media Services, Inc.** 428-9950
1 year of FREE hosting with website design or re-design.
- **Glass Specialty Company Inc.** 429-2371
\$20 Wal-Mart gift card with any auto glass replacement.
- **Scotty's Pest Control** 422-9372
10% discount on all jobs.

Forsyth

- **Herzog Quality Optical** 872-7710
20% off complete pair of prescription glasses, lenses only or Plano sunglasses. 10% off all other products for sale (purses).

Gays

- **Seal & Save** 273-4638
Free inspection of ductwork and 20% discount on all services.

Greenville

- **Enertech, Inc.** 618-664-9010
\$50 per ton equipment discount (max 5 ton) on GeoComfort or Paradise geothermal systems.

Macon

- **Macon Speedway** 764-3000
\$2 off regular admission ticket.

Mattoon

- **Wireless Mike's** 258-8771
50% off car cord or leather case when activating a new line or upgrading an existing plan.

Oconee

- **Hired Hands Services** 539-4218
5% off any carpet or resilient flooring.

Pana

- **Bland Heating & Air Conditioning** 562-4256
10% discount on service calls.
- **Merle Norman Cosmetic/Cut N Curl** 562-4722
10% off retail.

Peoria

- **Glass Specialty Company Inc.** 309-676-6181
\$20 Wal-Mart gift card with any auto glass replacement.

Pleasant Plains

- **Paul Tree Farms, LLC.** 414-9556 971-7876
10% off pines, spruces, maples and oaks.

Shelbyville

- **Best Wedding Chapel** 774-7809
A framed personalized wedding prayer with full wedding package.
- **Beyers Chiropractic** 774-5313
10% off vitamins, braces and pillows.
- **Bogart Vision Care** 774-4422
20% off eyeglasses/sunglasses and 50% off second pair.
- **Carl Grabb Motors** 774-2165
Full service oil change \$23.45 plus taxes, up to 5 quarts and filter, excludes synthetic.
- **Coon Creek Lodge** 756-3147
10% discounts on kitchenettes.
- **Custom Care Cleaners** 774-3422
\$1 off every \$10, \$2 off every \$20, \$3 off every \$30.

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Office Hours:
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

- **Druby's** 774-5143
2 free medium drinks w/ purchase of any everyday Family Deal.
- **Grammy's West Side Floral** 774-4644
10% off, some restrictions apply.
- **Just A Stitch** 774-2227
20% off regular priced merchandise.
- **Leach-Wilson Chevrolet Buick CO.** 774-3975
5% off parts and labor any day of the week.
- **Macari's Service Center** 774-4214
10% discount on furnace/AC clean/checks. Card to be present at time of billing.
- **Merle Norman Cosmetic's & Boutique** 774-4233
Save \$2 on a purchase of \$25 or more.
- **Simply Yours Unique Crafts and Jewelry** 622-8766
\$1 off every \$10 spent, \$2 off every \$20 spent, \$3 off every \$30 spent, etc.
- **Wireless Mikes's** 774-9559
50% off car cord or leather case when activating a new line or upgrading an existing plan.
- **Woodpile Primitives** 254-6955
10% off on any stock item.

Sullivan

- **Coyote Cabins** 728-7150
Regular price is \$125/night, discount price is \$99/night for weekend and \$89 Sunday - Thursday.

Taylorville

- **A Classic Bouquet** 824-6556
10% off purchases - cash & carry.
- **Gordon Pontiac GMC** 824-3381
\$200 off bottom line price after you have made your best deal. Limit - 1 offer per transaction, no cash value.
- **Hear Well Hearing Care Centre** 824-5210
20% off all services.
- **Market Street Inn** 824-7220
10% off single night stay, 20% off two or more nights stay.
- **ProStitch Auto Interiors & Upholstery, Inc.** 824-3228
\$10 off any basic headliner replacement or free black vinyl for ag/commercial seat repairs.
- **Taylorville Community Credit Union** 824-9658
.25% off any new installment loan.
- **The Best 4 Less** 824-4003
10% off already discounted prices.
- **Yard Heating & Cooling** 824-4737
10% off on furnace and/or air conditioner checkup.

Urbana

- **Wireless Mike's** 365-9300
50% off car cord or leather case when activating a new line or upgrading an existing plan.

Windsor

- **Hickory Hills Crafts & Collectibles** 459-2347
10% off on \$20 or more.

Also available on the connections.coop website, you can download the Connections mobile app for your Apple or Droid phones and tablets. There is also a link to money saving coupons for you to download before you head out to the store. If you shop online be sure to sign up for My VIP Savings tab and earn cash back while shopping online with over 1,000 businesses including most of the major retailers. The Co-op Connections Card and connections.coop website are here to help you save money. This is just another way we are looking out for our members.

If you have any questions about the Co-op Connections Card and the many benefits associated with it, please contact the office at 1-800-677-2612 or visit www.connections.coop.

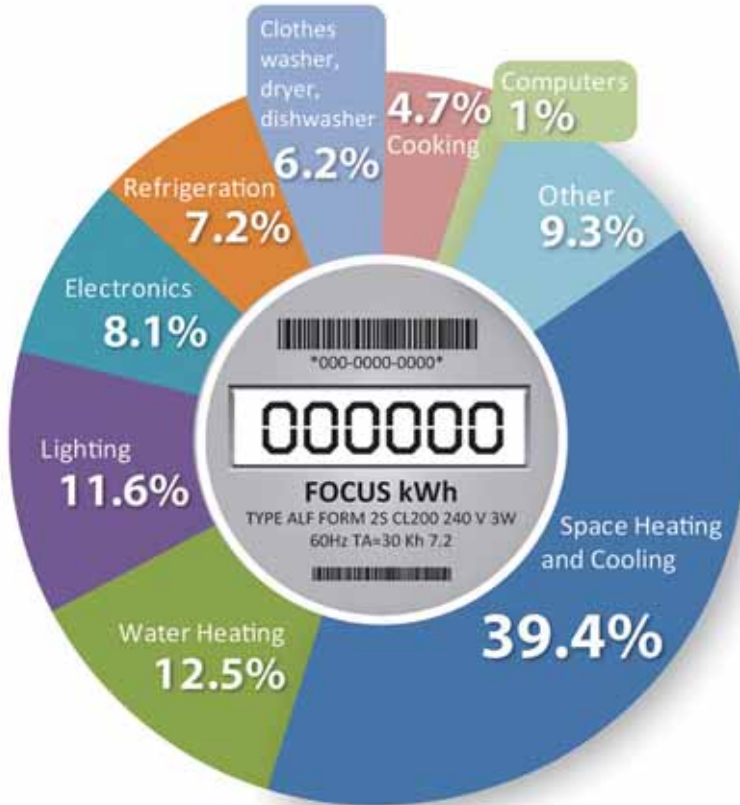


A quick look at the Healthy Savings discounts:

- 10 to 60 percent discounts on eyeglasses, contact lenses, eye exams and LASIK.
- 20 to 40 percent discounts on dental care such as cleanings, x-rays, root canals, crowns and orthodontics.
- 35 percent discount on hearing aid prices at 2,000+ locations and a complimentary hearing evaluation.
- 10 to 60 percent off usual charges for MRI and CT procedures plus savings on blood tests and other lab testing.
- 50 percent savings on chiropractic diagnostic services and 30 percent savings on chiropractic treatments and other services, along with a free initial consultation.

To locate providers of these discounts in your area, go to HealthySavings.coop and click on "Locate Provider."

How Your Home Uses Electricity



Source: 2009 Buildings Energy Data Book, U.S. Department of Energy, Table 21.5. Represents an all-electric home. Updated February 2011.

DID YOU KNOW?

Type of Utility	Number of consumers per mile of line
Municipals/ Publicly-owned Utilities	48
Investor Owned Utilities	34
Electric Cooperatives (National average)	7.4
Illinois Electric Cooperatives (State average)	5.12
Shelby Electric Cooperative	4.4

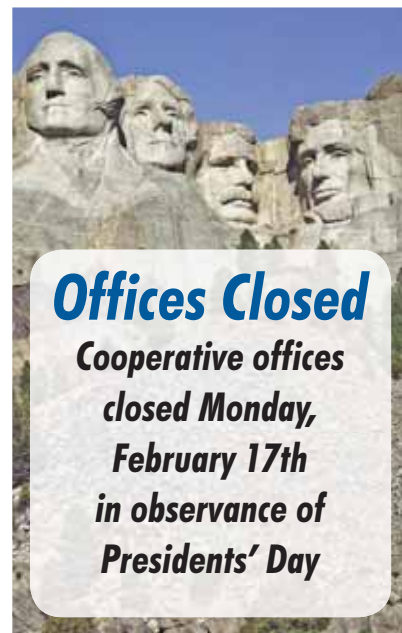


Energy Efficiency

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 TVs pull more too. Plasma screens use the most energy while LCD TVs use much less. Remember to 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



Offices Closed

Cooperative offices closed Monday, February 17th in observance of Presidents' Day