

JAMMUP

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

What makes us different

By Jerri Schaefer

It is my turn to update you on what is going on in my department at SIEC. I spent the latter part of 2013 preparing for continued programs and creating new ones for 2014. Although fun, it is also quite challenging to create ideas to peak the interest of all members. Some of you remember when you first received electricity and have lived on our lines your entire lives. Some of you moved on our lines from the city. Some members only pick up this magazine to read the recipes, and some don't think about us at all until it's time to pay their electric bill.

I get it ... it's electricity. It's not the most

exciting topic, and it's not the most enjoyable bill to pay. But, electricity has become a necessary utility. You probably don't get excited about your telephone or water company either. I don't. But we are

a Cooperative, and in my mind, it's my job to give all of you a reason to care about your membership and to feel more connected to our Cooperative. After all, you are a MEMBER of SIEC. Most of us aren't part-owners of our telephone or water companies, so there is a difference.

Co-op Connections® Card

This new program was created to give value to your membership. You received one of these FREE

cards with your December issue. Throughout 2014, I hope to increase the number of participating businesses. I alone cannot control your electric rates, but with this card, I will certainly do my best

to help you save money at local businesses. Every dollar you save adds up, no matter where it's saved. Please check page 9 each month and read all updates. There is more to the card than local business

savings. Depending on your prescriptions, it can also save you money at participating pharmacies, and on vision, dental, hearing and chiropractic services.

Blood Drives

This is a brand new program for us. SIEC is planning a blood drive with the American Red Cross in each county we serve. For those of us who can, giving blood is very important and helps save lives. Even if you cannot give for health reasons, your life may be saved by another SIEC member who can give blood. This is why we will credit your account \$10 when you give blood at one of our blood drives this year. (Only one bill credit per membership at each blood drive,



Office Services Representative Lana Livesay



Crew Foreman LaRue Parr has donated over 13 gallons of his blood

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POPE

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and you must bring your most current electric bill statement) Please make every effort to give blood. Our first blood drive is scheduled in Johnson County at the Cypress Grade School on Monday, March 10, from 1 – 6 p.m. Future county dates will be announced soon.

Youth to Washington

SIEC has participated in this program with our youth for over 40 years. We send two high school juniors each year to Washington, D.C. to meet our politicians and experience our nation's history and government. If you know a local high school junior, please encourage him/her to go to www.siec.coop and fill out a Youth Tour application. It's free and easy. Along with the all expense paid trip, the two deserving juniors will also receive a \$1,000 scholarship each. If you



Youth to Washington students: Sarah Panici of Dongola, Michael Schmidt of Karnak, Priciliano Fabian of Alto Pass, Adam Rader of Metropolis and Andrea Francies of Metropolis.



First grade teacher and member Janet Boyd.

don't have access to the internet, call me at 1-800-762-1400, and I will mail you an application. The deadline to apply is February 28.

Classroom Empowerment Grants

Each year we give away seven \$500 teacher grants. Many local teachers spend a lot of money out of their own pockets for classroom items, because our schools' budgets keep getting cut. This is another way SIEC gives back to its communities. When our youth have good, solid learning environments, this creates better schools, which attracts more residents to our communities, which helps our local economy.

Commitment to Community

Another new program we are planning for 2014 is a "round up" project. For those of you who "opt in", we will use the extra change to help local community betterment groups and organizations. Let's say your electric bill is \$279.50 this month, and you round your check up to \$280.00. This means that \$.50 will go into a community account here at SIEC, and when enough has

accumulated, an employee committee will decide which local community project to help sponsor. More details are coming soon.

Member Survey

Every few years, we send out a detailed survey to random members to assess satisfaction. Later in 2014, we will mail out a shorter survey to get your opinions on some very specific items. Because your opinion is so important to us, and we understand your time is valuable, we will be offering five \$50 bill credits, to be chosen randomly from your responses.

Barn Quilts – Local Tourism

We believe commitment to community is very important. Our employees are your neighbors and friends. This is why, when we can, we assist our local communities by putting up lights at ball parks, teaching children about electricity at local events, drilling holes for playground equipment, etc. Recently we were approached by the Alexander County Tourism Bureau to help hang a few barn quilts. We

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have beautiful old barns all over southern Illinois. Throughout the Midwest, barn quilt tours are becoming more and more popular. We all know that tourism brings in revenue to our local communities. So, to help increase barn quilt interest and do our part to enhance local barn quilt tours, we have decided to hang one on our property as well



Journeyman Lineman Nathan Menees hanging a barn quilt on Grapevine Trail.

here in Dongola.

Action.Coop

SIEC steers clear of partisan politics, but when it comes to the EPA's outrageous proposals to regulate greenhouse gas emissions, which would require technology not yet created, electric cooperatives must step in politically. If we don't, it's you, our members, who will pay the ultimate price with increased electric bills. Our goal is to work with politicians on a common sense solution that balances energy needs and environmental concerns. We fight with you to keep energy rates affordable. We urge you to use our national website www.action.coop to let your voice be heard.

Together We Save

Did you know that turning your thermostat down 10-15 degrees for 8+ hours shaves 5-15 percent from heating costs? Learn many more energy saving tips about your refrigerator, CFLs, air ducts, insulation, blinds, air filters, HVAC, etc. by visiting our national Touchstone

RENEWABLE ENERGY NUCLEAR POWER
NATURAL GAS CLEAN COAL

America needs an
ALL OF THE ABOVE STRATEGY
to keep electric bills affordable

VISIT ACTION.COOP

**TELL EPA TO RECONSIDER
ITS "ALL-BUT-ONE" APPROACH**

Energy website www.togetherwesave.com. Take the virtual home tour which will show you specifically how you can save money and energy in your home.

I hope you see that we are not just another electric company. Our board of directors and most employees are members of this Cooperative, too. I hope you see there is a difference in what we do, and I also hope that you find a good benefit to your membership. There are many more benefits to list; I just don't have enough space in JAMUP to write about all of them! I truly enjoy serving all of you and encourage you to stay updated with our many communication efforts, such as this magazine, Facebook, Twitter, local newspapers, local radio stations, electric bill inserts, our annual meeting and our website.

Jerri Schaefer
Director of Communication





**"Like" Us
on Facebook and
"Follow" Us
on Twitter:**

Once we reach 1,000 "likes" on Facebook, we are giving away a special SIEC promotional package which includes: SIEC cap, coffee mug, insulated lunch bag, t-shirt and a \$25 *electric bill credit*. To be eligible, you must be a member of SIEC and either "like" us on Facebook... *Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative (SIEC)* or "follow" us on Twitter... @SIEC_Dongola.

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**For Outages Call:
800-762-1400 * 618-827-3555**



**Our office will be closed
Feb. 17 for Presidents' Day.**



Brian Dirden of Anna recently moved from our forestry department to our line department and is now an apprentice lineman.

Congratulations Brian!



Marathon Water Heaters

We have your Marathon water heater right here! Call us at 1-800-762-1400 or stop by the SIEC office in Dongola, and choose either a 50 or 85 gallon model. It's guaranteed to last as long as you own your home, and it's the most efficient water heater you can buy.

Member prize



In this issue of the JAMUP, we printed the names of three SIEC members who are eligible to receive a \$10 credit toward their utility bill. If you find your name printed in this center section and it's not part of the story, call Jerri with your account number at **800-762-1400** to claim your prize.

Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative

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