

The SOUTHEASTERN Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

President's Comments



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

In 2010 and 2011, SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative participated in the Home Energy Efficiency Program to help Members make improvements to their homes that resulted in consuming energy more efficiently. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) granted Illinois Electric Cooperatives \$2.5 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds for home energy efficiency improvements. With the help of this funding, SEIEC Cooperative members installed 50 geothermal heat pumps, 73 air-source heat pumps and 27 members made insulation and weatherization improvements.

In January 2013, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) granted Illinois Cooperatives an additional \$600,000 for home energy efficiency improvements also known as the Home Lite Rebate Program. This program applies to existing homes as well as new construction. In order to qualify for this grant, the home must be served by the Cooperative and be the Member's primary residence. Residential members could be eligible for a rebate up to \$1,500. Rebates for Commercial accounts are also available for geothermal and air source heat pumps up to \$10,000. Rebates will be available until funding runs out, or until June of this year. All heating-cooling system upgrades must meet federal Energy Star standards to be eligible. Following are items eligible for the rebates and the amount:

- Geothermal Heat Pumps – \$1,500
- Air-source Heat Pumps – \$1,000
- Heat Pump Water Heater – \$250

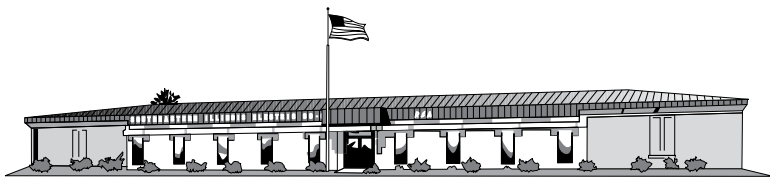
- BPI Energy Audit – \$300
- Insulation/Air Sealing – 50% of project costs, maximum \$1,000
- Commercial Installations – \$500 per ton of capacity, up to a maximum of \$10,000 for geothermal and air source heat pump

According to DCEO, 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 other funding for weatherization and energy efficiency improvements from the state. 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 \$46,100 for a family of four.

In addition, the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 passed by Congress on January 3 provides extensions of energy tax credit provisions for homeowners seeking energy-efficiency improvements. Under section 25C, homeowners can claim a \$500 maximum tax credit to cover material costs of energy-efficient upgrades to existing homes for all taxable years; however if a taxpayer has claimed \$500 or more of this tax credit in any year prior to 2013, they may not claim any additional credit. The credit is only redeemable if the upgrades are in place by the end of 2013.

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READERSHIP PRIZE WINNER:
Tara Jacobs, Marion, IL





Staying safe during electrical storms

Myth or truth – If it’s not raining and it isn’t cloudy, I’m safe from lightning. You should never touch a lightning victim or you will also be electrocuted. If I’m in a house, I’m safe from lightning. If trapped outside and lightning is eminent, lie flat on the ground. All of the above are common misconceptions. As part of the new “Teach Learn Care” TLC campaign, Safe Electricity urges everyone to be sure their loved ones are aware of the dangers associated with lightning and how to protect themselves.

Often underrated, lightning kills more people per year than either tornadoes or hurricanes and causes billions of dollars in damage. Given these statistics, it’s extremely important to take lightning seriously and to stay educated on lightning safety.

“Plan outdoor activities around the weather and be prepared to seek shelter if the weather turns threatening,” says Molly Hall, Safe Electricity Executive Director. “If thunderstorms and lightning are approaching, the safest location is indoors away from doors and windows with the shades drawn. Avoid water, electric appliances and other objects that could conduct electricity, and use only cordless or cell phones to make emergency calls.”

Phone use is the leading cause of indoor lightning injuries in the U.S. A direct strike is not necessary for lightning voltage to enter your home through phone lines, electrical wires, cables and plumbing. Other recommendations to avoid lightning shock and damage include:

- Turn off and unplug appliances well before a storm nears – never

during. Don’t expect a surge protector to save appliances from a lightning strike, unplug it as well.

- Stay away from electrical outlets, appliances, computers, power tools, and TV sets. Take off headsets and stop playing video games.
- Turn off your air conditioner to protect the compressor from a power surge and avoid a costly repair job.
- Avoid water and contact with piping, including sinks, baths and faucets. Don’t wash dishes, shower or bathe during a thunderstorm. Also avoid washers and dryers since they not only connect with the plumbing and electrical systems, but also contain an electrical path from the outside through the dryer vent.
- Do not lie on the concrete floor of a garage as it likely contains a wire mesh.
- Basements typically are a safe place to go during thunderstorms, but avoid concrete walls that may contain metal rebar.
- Don’t forget your pets. Dog houses are not lightning-safe and dogs chained to trees can easily fall victim to a strike.

Lightning can strike up to ten miles from the area in which it is raining and you do not have to see clouds. This means that if you can hear thunder, you’re within striking distance. A good idea is to use the ‘30-30 Rule’. According to this rule, if you count less than 30 seconds between a lightning flash and the thunder following it, you should seek shelter from the storm. When the storm is over, wait thirty minutes after the last lightning strike

you see before going back outside.

If caught outdoors during a thunderstorm and unable to take shelter in a building, take the following precautions:

- Try to take shelter in a vehicle with a solid metal roof. Close the windows and avoid contact with electrical conducting paths, such as the steering wheel, ignition, gear shifter, or radio.
- Avoid water, high ground, or open spaces.
- Do not seek shelter under tall, solitary trees; canopies; small picnic or rain shelters; or in any open-frame vehicles such as jeeps, convertibles, golf carts, tractors or mowers.
- Do not stand near power, light or flag poles, machinery, fences, gates, metal bleachers, or even other people. If you are in a group, spread out so that you are at least twenty feet apart.
- If your skin tingles or your hair stands on end, lightning may be about to strike. Squat down low to the ground with your head between your knees making yourself the smallest target possible.
- If a person is struck by lightning, call 911 and care for the victim immediately. You are not in danger of being electrocuted by the victim. Ninety percent of lightning victims survive with timely medical treatment.

More information on lightning safety can be found at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website at www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov.

Before You Buy A Water Heater Of Another Brand... Save your energy!



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Envirofoam Insulation

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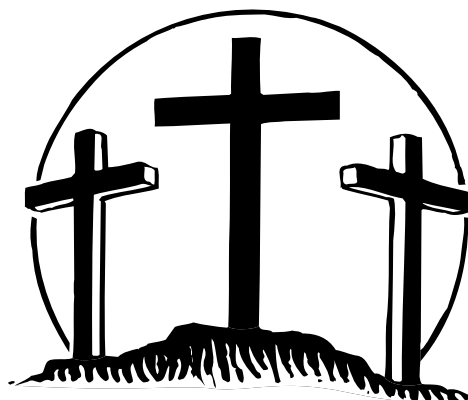
**SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative is now offering
Marathon Water Heaters for sale at its Eldorado Headquarters.
Please call 1-618-273-2611 or 1-800-833-2611 for more information**

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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.

For more information regarding the Home Lite Rebate Program please visit our website at www.seic.com or contact Stefanie Tripp, Administrative Assistant & Human Resource Manager at 618-273-2611 ext. 169.

See you next month and as always, "We'll keep the lights on for you."



**Our office will be closed
Friday, March 29 for
Good Friday.**

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