

# Member vs. Customer

**B**y and large, we don't get to choose who provides our electric service. Folks on opposite sides of the road may be served by different electric providers, some by a stockholder-driven investor-owned utility, others a city-owned municipal electric system. We are a not-for-profit electric cooperative owned by you and your fellow members.

But there's one major difference between these entities. Every home or business that receives power from an electric cooperative—18 million in 47 states—owns a portion of the utility. As a result, anyone who receives cooperative electric service becomes a **member** and consumer, **not a customer**. Across the nation, electric co-ops serve more than 42 million people.

Being a member matters. Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative (SIEC) doesn't exist to make profits for distant investors on Wall Street. We exist to provide you with safe and reliable electric service—and doing so in a way that raises the quality of life in our communities. Because SIEC operates on a not-for-profit basis, we have no need to increase revenues above what it takes to run this business in a financially sound manner. This structure helps keep your electric bill affordable.

Membership also matters because SIEC cares about improving the quality of life in the areas we serve. From offering classroom empowerment grants to taking donations for the local food bank, SIEC invests in local communities where you live and work.

Membership matters because it entitles you to certain benefits like home energy audits that help you find ways to lower your electricity use, or college scholarships for your children. You receive this magazine because you're a member of an electric cooperative that wants you to stay abreast of important co-op news and events.

Membership matters because you have a voice and a vote in how your co-op is governed. Through



democratic control, members like you elect our board of directors at our annual meetings.

Control stays in local hands. Your board of directors and SIEC employees are your friends and neighbors.

Membership matters because you receive returns on your investment in your co-op. SIEC aims to operate at-cost, so any excess revenues, or margins, are returned to you in the

form of capital credits, based on your electric use.

Bottom line: Membership matters because you matter to Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative. This is a very special year for SIEC...It's our 75th anniversary!

We encourage you to attend our annual meeting in August and discover more benefits of being a member of a utility that cares very much about YOU!

