


The SOUTHEASTERN Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

President's Comments



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

Like many of you, I'm certainly glad to see Spring finally arrive, although the El Nino effect caused the winter months of November, December of 2015 and January, February of 2016 to be one of the mildest winters in southern Illinois over the past 32 years of record. This mild winter weather resulted in most residential services consuming less energy resulting in lower electric bills. I would like to take this opportunity to help explain why many residential and business services experienced lower than average energy consumption and subsequent lower electric bills this past winter compared to other winters.

Utilities consistently monitor temperatures to help determine the necessary demand for energy and heating degree days is an index that quantifies the demand for energy needed to heat a specific structure, such as a home or business, during the winter months. A similar index, cooling degree days, is used to help determine the demand for energy to cool a structure in the summer.

Heating degree days is calculated by taking the average base temperature that a specific structure is normally heated to minus the average outside ambient temperature for each day of the month and then adding all days in that specific month. Many would think that the base temperature would be around 70°F but for historical reasons and the availability to compare this index over a long period of time, the base temperature is normally defined as 65°F. In order to calculate this index, assume the average outside ambient temperature for the first day of the month is 20°F. The number of heating degree days for the first day of the

month would be calculated as 65°F - 20°F = 45 heating degree days. You would continue this process for each day of the month and then add all the respective heating degree days for the entire month.

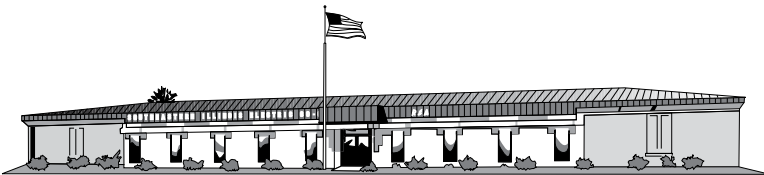
The El Nino climate cycle occurs when the sea surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean become warmer than normal. This effect typically causes the temperatures to be warmer than normal. The El Nino climate cycle occurs irregularly but averages every two to seven years. The El Nino certainly appears to have contributed to the past winter months being warmer than normal. The heating degree day data from southern Illinois for the months of November, December, January and February revealed that this past winter was the second warmest winter over the past 32 years of record.

Conversely, the La Nina climate cycle occurs when the sea surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean become cooler than normal. This effect typically causes the temperatures to be cooler than normal. As many of you may remember, the Polar Vortex that occurred over the winter months of 2013-2014 produced the coldest winter months in southern Illinois over the past 32 years of record.

This information is helpful in understanding residential energy consumption during the winter months. The El Nino effect helps explain why most residential customers

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READERSHIP PRIZE WINNER:
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Planting Seeds of Caution

Tips to stay safe during planting season

The greatest hazard on today's farms is electrocution. Before you head back into the fields this spring, read this information on how to stay safe.

"Make sure everyone knows the location of overhead power lines and to keep farm equipment at least 10 feet away from them," says Molly Hall, Executive Director of Safe Electricity. "The minimum 10 foot distance is a 360-degree rule – below, to the side and above lines."

Simply coming too close to a power line while working is dangerous as electricity can arc or "jump" to conducting material or objects, such as a ladder, pole or truck.

"Many farm electrical accidents that involve power lines happen when loading or preparing to transport equipment to fields, or while working on farm machinery near power lines," notes Molly Hall. "Sometimes a line is closer than it looks. When moving large equipment or high loads near a power line, always use a spotter to help ensure contact is not made with a line."

Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors are now equipped with radios and communications systems that have very tall antennas extending from the cab that could make contact with power lines. Avoid raising the arms of planters, cultivators or truck beds near power lines.

"Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path," warns Hall.

When performing other farm chores, as in any outdoor work, take care not to raise equipment such



as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination. Do not try to clear storm-damage debris and limbs near or touching power lines or near fallen lines.

Overhead electric wires aren't the only electrical contact that can result in a serious incident. Pole guy wires are grounded to the neutral; but, when one of the guy wires is broken, it can cause an electric current disruption. This can make those neutral wires anything but harmless. If you hit a guy wire and break it, call the utility to fix it. Don't do it yourself. When dealing with electrical poles and wires, call the electric utility.

"Operators of farm machinery or moving equipment also should know what to do if the vehicle comes in contact with a power line," Hall says. "It's almost always best to stay in the cab and call for help. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until the electric

utility arrives to make sure power to the line is cut off."

"If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path to the ground and electrocution is the result," Molly Hall says. "Even if a line has landed on the ground, there is still potential for the area to be energized. Stay in the vehicle unless there's fire or imminent risk of fire."

In that case, the proper action is to jump – not step – with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Hop or shuffle to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area.

Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment. Many electrocutions occur when the operator dismounts and, realizing nothing has happened, tries to get back on the equipment.

For more electrical safety information, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

Before you build

Warmer weather is here and with it many of you are starting various projects such as building new homes or other structures, expanding existing homes or putting in swimming pools. Before you build or expand a structure, it's important to think about how close it might be to power lines. This is for your safety, but it is also a requirement of the National Electric Code which your Cooperative must follow.

Power lines bring electricity to our homes, properties and businesses, safely and efficiently supplying the energy essential to running our modern lives. But electricity should always be treated with respect, especially when working near power lines. Most people understand that touching a power line is dangerous and can result in death or serious personal injury or property damage. However, you don't need to touch a power line for this to happen – electricity can spark or jump across a gap. A person can be some distance away from a power line and still be in danger of receiving an electric

shock or severe burns. In addition, aerial lines move due to the effects of wind, temperature and load on the line.

To protect people and property, minimum safe clearances from power lines have been established. Under the National Electric Safety Code, line clearances must be maintained in all directions. This means you must create and keep a buffer between your structure and the Cooperative's power line whether the line is above or to the side of your project. The minimum safe distance is the total length of the "conductive object" you are using plus 10 feet. Overhead power lines do not have an insulated covering which means that any conductive object that makes contact will become energized and dangerous. The structure you are building should be at least 25 feet from the closest part of the distribution line. This distance is measured horizontally from directly below the nearest conductor to the closest point on the structure. Normally this distance allows indi-

viduals to stay at least 10 feet from power lines while working on the structure.

Swimming pools should also be located at least 25 feet from power lines. Everyone using long handled pool skimmers must maintain a safe distance from overhead power lines – the length of the pool skimmer handle, plus 10 feet.

Also, think about safety before moving construction equipment and other long items. Don't raise or carry ladders, poles or rods near power lines and stay clear of overhead wires when installing or removing television or radio antennas.

If you or your contractor will be building a home, swimming pool or other structure – or expanding a structure or using tall equipment such as a crane – and clearances to a power line may be a problem, call the office at 1-800-833-2611. We will be pleased to meet with you and discuss the best location for your facilities. Your safety is our first priority.

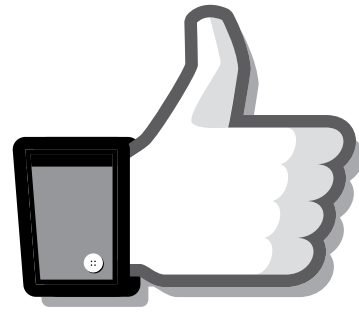


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experienced lower energy consumption during the previous winter months and subsequent lower energy bills. The electric bills are lower than average due to the warmer temperatures we encountered, equating to lower heating degree days which required the heating systems in our homes and businesses to run less, consuming less energy than they normally would have. In many homes that have a combination heat pump with electric resistance backup heat, the heat pump was able to extract enough warm air to heat the residence due to the warmer temperatures outside and this resulted in the electric resistance heat supplying less of the heat for the residence.

With winter over, I certainly hope that all of you have the opportunity to enjoy the Spring weather and look forward to the Summer months ahead.

See you next month and as always, “We’ll keep the lights on for you.”



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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.

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618-273-2611 or 800-833-2611 • Office hours: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. M-F