

# JAMUP

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

## Do you need an alternative to paying a meter deposit?

*Soon you can make corrections to the names on your bill without paying a deposit*

Many of our members have had homes or farms passed down to them by their parents, grandparents, or even great-grandparents. Although you may have taken ownership of the land years ago, your Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative (SIEC) bill may still be in your relative's name and you are paying the bill.

We realize that some families may have kept the names unchanged because new members are required to pay a deposit. So, in an effort to get our records up-to-date, we are offering a moratorium for members putting their accounts into the correct name. As long as the account is in good standing, we will make the changes without charging a deposit. Please note this is a limited time offer and you must be able to provide evidence that you have been paying the bill. This offer is only available until May 31, 2016.

Keeping account names updated

benefits both you and the Cooperative. We are unable to discuss account information with people whose names are not on the account, so taking advantage of this moratorium will allow us to provide you with the best possible customer service when needed. It will also ensure that future capital credits are rightly allocated to the person paying the bill, not the previous owners who may even be deceased.

To request a name change, please contact our billing department at 1-800-762-1400 or email us at [siecbilling@siec.org](mailto:siecbilling@siec.org).

### **Pre-paid metering offers members another option instead of paying a deposit**

In July of 2015, SIEC began offering members an option for pre-paid meters. Since then, well over one hundred members have signed up for this service. Pre-paid metering is



a pay-as-you-go plan that offers you the opportunity to pay when you want and in the amounts you want. Instead of receiving a traditional paper bill that is generated once each month, usage is calculated daily. Prepay members never pay a late charge, and avoid paying large deposits. If it would be easier for you to make daily, weekly, or bi-weekly payments rather than one large payment each month, then prepay may be your best option. If you have any questions or want to sign up for this service please contact our billing department. **Henry Hileman**




Chris Boyd,  
Director of  
Member Services

## How to be energy efficient in humid climates

Why does a 95°F day in southern Illinois feel hotter than the same temperature in the Southwest? Why do dry heat and humid heat feel so different, and how does this affect your strategy for home energy efficiency? While there are many common ways to achieve energy efficiency across all warmer climates, there are some important differences that vary by geography.

### Heat and humidity vs dry heat

Generally speaking, when there is more moisture in the air, the temperature feels hotter than it actually is because moist air is closer to saturation than dry air. On a humid day, when the air is saturated with water, evaporation is much slower. Simply put, high humidity will make the air feel hotter while low humidity will make the temperature feel cooler.

### Heat reduction is priority one

In warm climates, the majority of energy used to make the home feel comfortable is spent on home air conditioning and cooling. The first priority is heat reduction. However, in humid areas, moisture reduction is nearly as important as lowering the indoor air temperature. If a home has too much moisture, indoor air quality

can be comprised and mold and mildew problems can develop.

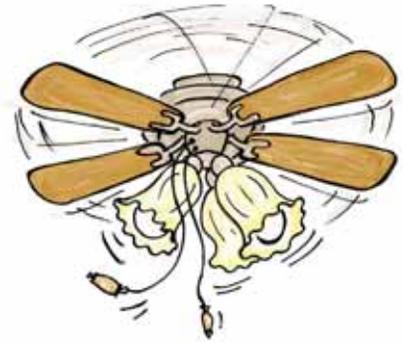
### Energy efficiency for hot and humid climates

The first line of energy defense is to ensure that your home is properly insulated and sealed in order to keep the heat and humidity that surround the house from getting inside. Leaky ducts, windows and doors can cause energy loss, making the HVAC system work much harder to wring the moisture out of the air and exacerbate potential indoor air quality issues. Homes that are “sealed tight” are



easier to keep cool and dry.

Next, make sure your HVAC system is the right size. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that most current residential systems are oversized. If your unit is too big, you will pay higher energy bills, and you won't get the efficiency level or comfort you want and expect. It is also likely that the unit is “short cycling,” constantly turning off and on, never achieving optimum efficiency. When the unit runs in short bursts, it will not operate long enough to eliminate all of the humidity in your home. Damp, cool indoor air creates a muggy atmosphere that can lead to the growth of mold and mildew. This can be a particular concern for those who suffer



from allergies, as many allergens thrive in damp conditions.

If you are considering a new HVAC system, consult Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative to help you choose equipment that is the correct size and meets or exceeds the SEER (seasonal energy efficiency ratio) for the capacity requirement, such as Energy Star-rated systems.

### DIY humidity reduction

There are some basic steps you can take to lower the humidity in your home to help make it feel cooler and more comfortable. Start by reducing the humidity you are already producing. The kitchen and bathrooms are the biggest contributors to higher humidity levels. Check to ensure that your range hood is ducted to the outside, as recirculating range hoods are not effective in controlling moisture (or odors). When cooking, and especially when boiling water, run



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

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"How to be energy efficient in humid climates" continued from 16b

the vent fan. In the bathroom, run the vent fan when bathing or showering. Keep the fan on up to 30 minutes after you have finished in order to eliminate the residual moisture in the air.

If you can reduce the indoor humidity level, you may be able to maintain a comfortable indoor temperature with a higher thermostat

setting and ceiling fans. The air movement from the ceiling fan will create a "wind chill" effect, lowering the temperature and increasing comfort. Finally, check gutters and downspouts for leaks or blockage. If rainwater leaks out and saturates the ground surrounding your home, some of the moisture can eventually

migrate into your house. If you would like more information about how to save energy, contact our energy expert, Chris Boyd, Director of Member Services at 618 827-3555.

*Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for NRECA.*



## Don't TOY with your SAFETY

When you are playing outdoors, keep a safe distance from power lines, substations and other equipment your electric co-op uses to send electricity to your home.



Flying remote controlled toys are a great way to have fun, but accidentally making contact with a power line or other electrical equipment can be dangerous and in some cases, even deadly.

- Never fly kites, or remote controlled toys near power lines.
- Stay away from power lines, meters, transformers and electrical boxes.
- Never climb trees near power lines.
- If you get something stuck in a power line, call your electric co-op.
- Never touch or go near a downed power line.

## Energy Saving Products to Avoid

When it comes to saving energy, caveat emptor is alive and well. We are all bombarded by claims that border on outright falsehoods, so it pays to view savings claims from third parties cautiously. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it generally is.

**Electric space heaters drain**



energy savings from your home if used incorrectly. Companies make elaborate claims about the amount of money you can save and charge exorbitant sums for their products. The advertisements frequently target those on a fixed income, presenting false hope while extracting precious dollars from their customers. I have seen a number of these space heaters and admit they appear to be well made, but they typically offer no better economy than any other 1,500-watt electric heater. Bottom line, electric space heaters should only be used to heat small spaces not your entire home.

**Black boxes** that claim to clean up power, protect appliances and reduce energy use come and go. These often require an electrician to

install and claim to improve power quality, smooth out power fluctuations and store energy so you can reduce your bills. Save your money. The concepts they present are already in use by Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative (SIEC) and require utility-size equipment to deliver them. Something that can fit in a shoebox is not going to deliver any value, at least not in the areas promised. If you are concerned about protecting your sensitive appliances and electronics, talk to SIEC about surge protection.



**When you see the ad that reads,** "The power companies don't want you to know," skip it. These are generally claims around building your own renewable energy source from parts easily obtained at the local hardware store or a motor that produces limitless "free" electricity. I would equate these with the emails I get from foreign countries telling me I can receive millions of dollars by simply sending all my banking information. At least in the case of the homemade renewables and limitless motor you get some cool plans and parts lists. You decide if it's worth \$50 – \$200. I'd give it a pass.

There is a product that claims it will **replace basement dehumidifiers** and save tons of money. It basically is a fan system that vents all the basement air outside. Yes, dehumidifiers can be expensive to run and are a nuisance

when you have to empty the water. Knowing that, I asked the Cooperative Research Network (an arm of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association) a few years ago if these products delivered on their savings claims. They said no. The problem is that when you blow all the basement air outside, it is replaced with conditioned air from other parts of the house. Now your HVAC system works harder and dramatically reduces the promised savings. Here's my solution: I set my dehumidifier to 60 percent and run a hose to my floor drain. This resolves the water emptying hassle and really reduces the power use while keeping my basement acceptably dry.

I will close with a **non technology warning**. Scammers love to call or stop by claiming they represent the local power company. Never give anyone personal or financial information who claims to be a SIEC employee without confirming their identity. Ask for a call back number from the caller, then check with SIEC. If they really are a co-op employee, they'll be able to prove it. **Mary Land**

Most of us want to save energy and keep our bills manageable. Technology can help do this, but be careful. Call us at 618 827-3555 before making any investments in technology that seem too good to be true. You'll be glad you did.

*Tom Tate writes on cooperative issues for the NRECA in Arlington, Va.*



### 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 Cathy with your account number at 800-762-1400 to claim your prize.



Help us honor the men and women who power our lives and help keep the lights on!!! April 11 is National Lineman Appreciation Day