

The SOUTHEASTERN

Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative Eldorado, Illinois

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

President's Comments



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

As your Electric Cooperative, we strive to provide members with a very reliable and cost effective electric energy supply. In order to see how well your Cooperative is performing, the membership is surveyed every two years to receive feedback regarding the service they receive. The Cooperative also participates in a Residential Retail Rate Study with 24 other Electric Cooperatives in Illinois. This month, I would like to share the results of the most recent Member Survey and Residential Retail Rate Study.

Every few years, the Cooperative membership is surveyed by an independent survey firm in order to determine what areas of our operation need improvement. In the summer of 2013, 997 survey questionnaires were mailed to randomly selected members of SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative, in all 280 completed surveys were returned for a completion rate of 28.1%. In addition, an American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) telephone survey was conducted including interviews with 250 members. Respondents were dispersed throughout the service territory with responses from 41 different zip codes.

These results revealed an increase in overall satisfaction with 89% of members being satisfied with the Cooperative. The ACSI survey responses resulted in a score of 85. In comparison, the average Illinois Electric Cooperative score was 81 while investor-owned utilities had a score of 77 and municipal utilities had a score of 76. The survey respondents gave the Cooperative the highest ratings for delivering reliable electric service, having knowledgeable employees, excellent customer service and prompt out-

age response. While these numbers are very good, your Cooperative will continue to strive to improve the level of service members receive.

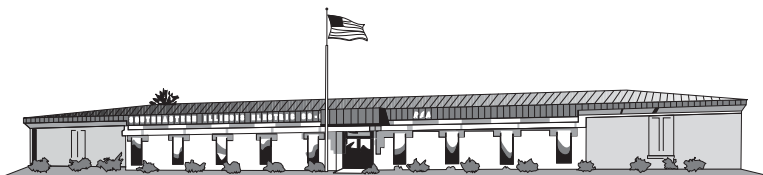
The survey revealed that 82% of members said they prefer the Cooperative use lower cost generation, rather than renewables. The survey also revealed that 84% of the membership would not be willing to pay more than 5% more per month to use more renewable energy. Nearly eight in ten of those responding say they are concerned about how potential future EPA regulations may affect their electric bills. Approximately 84% of the membership has taken steps to reduce energy consumption including turning off lights and other appliances when not in use, using compact fluorescent light bulbs, changing thermostat settings or installing programmable thermostats and by weatherizing their homes.

The use of electric water heaters continues to increase, now the highest level of all previous surveys at 79%, leading propane at 11% and natural gas at 8%. Electricity also continues to be the primary home heating source, increasing to 55%, with propane at 22% and natural gas at 13% while remaining members heat with wood stoves, fireplace, etc.

Approximately 73% receive coop information from Co-op publications. Just over three-fourths have Internet service, most of it high speed. Interestingly, 16% use cell phones or mobile devices as their primary

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READERSHIP PRIZE WINNER:
Stephen Young, Royalton, IL



Lightning safety awareness week June 22-28, 2014

When thunder roars, go indoors!

Lightning kills over 50 people in the U.S. each year and inflicts life-long debilitating injuries on hundreds more. Florida is the “Thunderstorm Capital” of the U.S., but other parts of the country have lots of lightning too, especially in the Southeast, Midwest, and the front ranges of the Rocky Mountains. However, all states have some lightning threat. Fortunately, most lightning deaths and injuries are easily avoided. Remember, **NO PLACE OUTSIDE IS SAFE NEAR A THUNDERSTORM**

Lightning Safety Awareness Week is **June 22-28, 2014**. Each day focuses on a different aspect of lightning. Monday overviews general lightning safety. Tuesday features lightning science. Wednesday looks at outdoor lightning risk reduction. Thursday examines indoor lightning safety. Finally, Friday focuses on medical aspects of lightning. Learn more at www.lightning-safety.noaa.gov.

The first step in lightning safety is to plan your outdoor activities to avoid as much of the lightning threat as you can. Watch the local weather forecasts and know your local weather patterns. The forecast from your local National Weather Service office can be found at www.nws.noaa.gov.

When outside, keep an eye on the sky. If you are planning an outdoor event, bring along a NOAA Weather Radio or AM radio or Internet Weather Alert system and check it regularly. Most people are struck by lightning before or just after a storm. Why? Because they wait too long to seek shelter or go back outside too soon. So if you hear thunder roar, go indoors--immediately. Don't go outside until **30 minutes** or more after hearing the last thunder.

The safest place from lightning is inside a large, fully enclosed build-



ing with wiring and plumbing, e.g., a typical house. But stay away from any conducting path to the outside: corded telephones, electrical appliances and plumbing. Don't watch lightning from doorways or windows. If you can't get to a house, a vehicle with a metal roof and metal sides is a good second choice. Roll-up the windows, lean away from the door, and don't touch any conducting path going outside, e.g., radio, keys in the ignition, steering wheel, etc. Remember, it's not the rubber tires insulating you from the ground that make vehicles safe, but rather the metal shell that conducts the electricity around you. Convertibles, motorcycles, cars made of fiberglass and plastic, and open shelled outdoor recreation vehicles aren't safe.

If you can't get to a house or vehicle, than at least avoid the most hazardous places and activities. Stay off elevated places, like mountains, buildings, high playground equipment, etc. Keep away from open areas, including sports fields and

beaches. Get away from tall isolated objects like trees. Going under trees to keep dry persists in being the 2nd leading cause of lightning casualties in the U.S. Don't do it! Stop water-related activities, including swimming, boating, and fishing. Get out of the at the first hint of lightning threat. Get off of open vehicles like cabin-less tractors, bulldozers, four-wheel recreational vehicles, etc. But remember, **NO PLACE OUTSIDE IS SAFE NEAR A THUNDERSTORM**. You are much safer going inside a house or car.

All lightning deaths result from cardiac arrest. If you're with a victim, call 9-1-1 to get professional medical help then apply CPR if possible. A common myth is that lightning victims are electrified and dangerous to approach. **False!** About 90% of lightning victims survive, so your first aid may save a life.

For more information on lightning safety, visit www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov.



Beat the peak, and have more fun!

It's finally summertime, and that means two things—outdoor activities and blazing heat. To have more cash and make the season more enjoyable, do chores like vacuuming, washing clothes and running the dishwasher at night when it's cooler. Close window coverings during the day on the sides of your house that are exposed to the sun, and bump the thermostat up a degree or two. Don't leave TVs or lights on in rooms that aren't in use, and turn the water heater down. Keeping an eye on when your electric use is at its peak will go a long way in holding down costs.

For more energy efficiency tips and resources, log on at www.togetherwesave.com.



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Cooperatives

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Internet connection. Six in ten of those with Internet use social media, primarily Facebook. Nearly 69% say they are interested in using social media for co-op communication, primarily for things like power outage updates.

Lastly, your Cooperative just received the results of the Residential Retail Rate Study for Illinois Electric Cooperatives. I am pleased to inform you that your Cooperative's standard residential retail rate was ranked the 3rd lowest out of 25 Electric Cooperatives in Illinois that participated in the study.

Your Cooperative remains committed to finding new and better ways to serve its members. Your Cooperative will continue to work diligently to improve and enhance the level of service and reliability that you receive while keeping rates as affordable as possible.

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

Call 811 before you dig

Dial 811 from anywhere in the country a few days prior to digging, and your call will be routed to your local One Call Center. Tell the operator where you're planning to dig, what type of work you will be doing and your affected local utilities companies will be notified about your intent to dig. In a few days, they'll send a locator to mark the approximate location of your underground lines, pipes and cables, so you'll know what's below - and be able to dig safely.

Remember, always call 811 before you start any digging project! You'll avoid injury, expense, embarrassment - and a very inconvenient day in the dark.



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

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