



Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative's 74th annual meeting

Nearly 600 members of Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative (SIEC) attended the co-op's 74th annual meeting. Members learned that 2013 is a financially smooth year, thus far. An announcement was made regarding the upcoming retirement of capital credits toward the end of 2013. The most important message of the evening was that of no anticipated electric rate increase through 2014. Members also heard reports on local and national issues, including many benefits of being a member of a cooperative. Co-op officials spoke about power marketers who may still be contacting members, and shared news of regulatory concerns facing the cooperative. The meeting was held Thursday, August 8 at Shawnee Community College in Ullin.

Board President Carole Kelley of Buncombe reported that safe, reliable electric service remains SIEC's core business and mission. Kelley reminded members that several advancements have been made toward providing reliable power.

"Reliability means each time you flip the switch, you have power," said Kelley. "One specific area of attention within the past several years is our right-of-way maintenance program. While we have removed several trees, we still focus on our responsibility to protect the environment."



During the 74th annual meeting of the members of Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative, members elected three directors. From the left are General Manager Chris L. Bennett, Bob L. McIntosh of Pulaski County, Scott L. Ury of Union County and Richard D. Moss of Alexander County.

Kelley also discussed the co-op's qualified management staff and employees. In 2013, the board of directors engaged in a first time, national executive search for a general manager, to ensure members the best candidate would be hired to guide the co-op in a strong, positive direction. She later introduced the members to SIEC's new General Manager and Executive Vice President Chris Bennett. **Mark Wilson Jones**

Member service was emphasized during Kelley's speech as well. She

explained that throughout the co-op's 75 year history, true member service to its members has evolved. She stressed membership value is what sets a co-op apart from an investor-owned utility.

In conclusion, Kelley announced SIEC's latest member service, the Touchstone Energy Co-op Connections Card program. It is a free, card-based member program designed to deliver discounts at local

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74th annual meeting

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and national participating businesses. She asked the members to look for the delivery of the card with their December issue of the Illinois Country Living co-op magazine.

Chris Bennett then gave his first annual meeting speech, addressing three main points to the members – aggregation, capital credits and electric rates. He continued by discussing the letters and calls that members have received from power marketers regarding aggregation.

Bennett explained, “Most experts agree, the low priced deals being made today by Alternative Retail Electric Suppliers (ARES) are temporary and will not last. Electric cooperatives have made long-term plans for reliable electricity sources and stable electric rates. Our future power agreements and solid infrastructure are protecting you from market uncertainty and potential spikes in your energy costs for years to come.”

Bennett compared current ARES “deals” to that of an adjustable rate home mortgage. “The adjustable rate might provide some short-term savings, but when interest rates increase, it could become an unaffordable deal,” said Bennett.

In his closing, he echoed Kelley’s sentiments of membership value. Bennett announced the planned distribution of over \$500,000.00 in capital credits toward the end of 2013 for 1985 to members. He also explained there would be no electric rate increase in 2013 and no expected rate increase in 2014.

“As your new general manager, I plan to make certain our focus is on service and we do not waste your hard-earned money,” stressed Bennett.

2013 Miss Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative Pageant Winners



Four area ladies were winners in the 60th Miss Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative Beauty Pageant, which was held during the annual meeting of members on Thursday, August 8 at Shawnee Community College in Ullin. From the left stood: Miss Congeniality, Abby Brumleve, daughter of Kevin

and Christina Brumleve of Cobden; Second Runner-up, Valerie Pender, daughter of Darrell and Cindy Pender of Jonesboro; Miss Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative, Janna Harner, daughter of Scott and Janet Harner of Dongola; and First Runner-Up, Clare Bunyan, daughter of Chris and Jill Bunyan of Cobden.

New Director of Administration & Finance

SIEC would like to introduce its newest team member, Director of Administration & Finance David A. Johnston of Anna. David is a former accountant with Electric Energy, Inc. in Joppa and has a bachelor’s degree in accounting from Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville.

Johnston is married to Aimee Fear of Anna and they have four children, Allen-Michael, Jon-David, Madison and Wyatt. He is a Cardinal baseball fan and enjoys spending time with his family at Anna-Jonesboro High School football games each fall.

“I grew up in Dongola and have always known several employees at



the Co-op. They all seem like solid, happy and successful people,” explains Johnston, when asked why he thought he would enjoy working for SIEC. **Melvin Walls**

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ATTENTION TEACHERS & LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS!

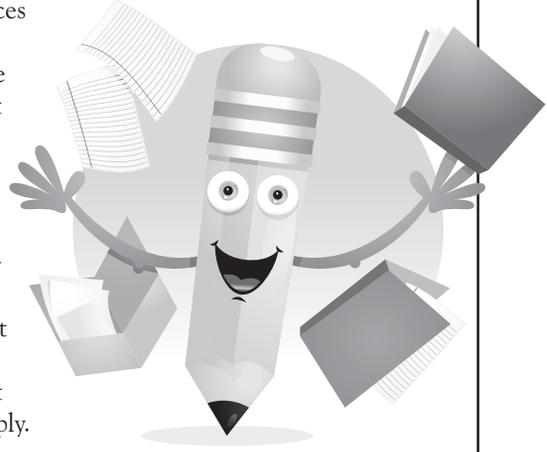
Apply for your 2013-2014 Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants

Does your school or classroom need new materials? Can your students benefit from new programs and educational resources? We thought so.

SIEC is again coordinating this grant program with Touchstone Energy for our local private and public K-12 teachers and administrators. Seven grants of \$500 will be provided for innovative, unfunded projects or materials. Qualifying projects are those that improve the learning environment

or increase educational resources for the school.

Grant applications are due by **November 5, 2013**. Grant awards will be announced on **December 5, 2013**. An objective panel of judges will determine which projects will be awarded the grants. For grant applications and guidelines, please visit our website at www.siec.coop or contact Jerri Schaefer at 1-800-762-1400. It only takes a few minutes to apply.



SIEC Member Topics

A few months ago, we began a monthly "Member Topic" section in our local newspapers, in an effort to better educate you, our members, on what's happening at YOUR electric Co-op. Please take time to find Willie Wiredhand and our message in one of southern Illinois' fabulous local publications such as The Gazette Democrat, Vienna Times, Monday's Pub, Cairo Citizen, Goreville Gazette, Metropolis Planet and Southern Scene.

Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative Member Topic

"What is the FACILITY CHARGE on my electric bill statement?"

This is probably one of the most popular questions we receive. If you remember the old rate books (before automated meter reading), this same charge was called the "Minimum Monthly Charge". The facility charge at the top of your line items on your bill statement is for maintaining infrastructure and providing availability of services, and does not include energy consumption charges. It is **not** an additional or new charge. It is not a charge to read your meter. It is just more visible due to our automated bill statements.



Keep an eye out for our July member topic... Are you a member or a customer? There really is a big difference.



Lite 4 Bite 2013

SIEC began a new event at last year's annual meeting of members to help local food pantries assist local residents in need. Each year SIEC now asks its members to donate canned goods at the annual meeting, in exchange for free CFLs for energy efficient lighting in members' homes. This successful member service is called Lite 4 Bite. The 2013 deserving winner is the Karnak First Baptist Church Food Pantry. Hundreds of food items were delivered to the food pantry by SIEC employees after the meeting.



Gail B. Smithson



Watch for your Co-op Connections Card in your December issue of *Illinois Country Living!*

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Help our dispatchers provide you better service during power outages!

SIEC dispatchers monitor your outage calls 24-hours per day through our automated outage reporting system. There are some simple things you can do to help our dispatchers provide you with better service.

- Make sure your primary telephone number is up-to-date in our records. The primary number we have on file is listed on your monthly bill. This is the number our outage system will key to when you report an outage. If this number is incorrect or if you have recently changed your primary number, please call us to have your records updated. If

you call to report an outage using a different telephone, the system will ask if you know the primary number on your account. You may still enter this number to report your outage.

- Have your 8-digit account number available before calling in your outage. The 8-digit account number is listed on your monthly bill. Some account numbers have leading zeroes, which are important. If the system does not recognize your telephone number or if you have more than one account, you will be prompted to enter your 8-digit account number.

- Do not leave a message unless the system does not recognize your telephone or account information, or unless you know the specific cause of your outage. Not having to listen to messages helps our dispatchers more efficiently get crews out to restore your service.

Again, SIEC dispatchers monitor your outages calls 24-hours per day through our automated system. This system helps to efficiently group outages by location, and helps our dispatchers serve you better. Each member can help by following the above recommendations.

To see the Member Prize Listing from our Annual Meeting of Members, turn to page 9.

ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS



Keep checking www.siec.coop for information on our IEC Memorial Scholarships

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

Some of you may have already received a Cooperative survey in the mail, or have been contacted by telephone. This is a valid survey from the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives and we would greatly appreciate your cooperation in participating. We use this information to find ways to serve you better. Please fill out the paper survey and/or answer the questions by telephone if you are chosen. You could win a \$100 electric bill credit! Thank you very much.

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 Jerri with your account number at **800-762-1400** to claim your prize.

Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative

7420 U.S. Highway 51 South • P.O. Box 100 • Dongola, Illinois 62926
 618-827-3555 • Office hours: 8 a.m. — 4 p.m. • Web address: www.siec.coop

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