

The SOUTHEASTERN Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

President's Comments



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

I hope all of you had a merry Christmas and a happy New Year's! As we begin the new year, I wanted to take this opportunity to reflect on some of the significant events that have occurred in the energy industry over the past few years and how that will impact your cooperative's wholesale electricity costs in 2024.

In 2021, the electric utility industry experienced significant reductions in demand and energy consumption due to the COVID pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. With the decreased consumption of coal and natural gas to generate electricity, prices of these fuels remained reasonably stable. As the United States and other countries started to resume normal operations and increase economic activity in late 2021 and early 2022, the electric utility industry experienced increases in demand and energy consumption. Then, in February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. Due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, many countries banned or placed sanctions on the purchase of Russian natural gas and coal in an effort to deter or penalize Russia for the invasion. It is important to note that in 2021, Russia was the world's largest exporter of natural gas, accounting for approximately 20% of the world's natural gas export market, and Russia was the world's third largest exporter of coal, accounting for approximately 17% of the world's coal export market.

As countries began sourcing natural gas and coal from countries other than Russia, the demand for additional exports from other countries increased. In 2021, the United States was the world's second

largest exporter of natural gas. The United States continues to increase its export capacity by constructing new, liquified natural gas (LNG) export terminals. The price of natural gas in Europe and other countries soared in 2022, and the United States was exporting as much LNG as possible.

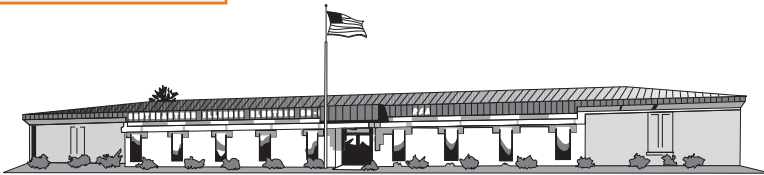
As the price of natural gas in the United States increased significantly in 2022, many utilities began switching from natural gas generation to coal generation. In addition, many generation utilities around the world also began using more coal for electricity generation. This increased the demand for coal, and subsequently, coal prices began increasing significantly as well.

Your cooperative's power supplier, Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC), purchases the coal locally that is used to generate electricity at the Marion coal plant. In 2022, SIPC's former coal contracts were expiring, and SIPC had to purchase some additional coal contracts. As we move into 2024, SIPC will be consuming coal at a price that is significantly higher than in previous years due to many of the reasons stated above. SIPC also has ownership in Prairie State Generation Campus (PSGC) in Lively Grove. As a part-owner in this facility, SIPC also owns its share of the coal that is located underground, adjacent to the plant. Therefore, the coal that is consumed to generate electricity at this plant is not impacted by the market price of coal due to the fact that it was purchased many years ago as a coal reserve for the PSGC plant. Lastly, generation providers are also dealing with inflationary impacts like almost every other industry.

Continued on page 18B ▶

READERSHIP PRIZE WINNER:

Bobby Jones Jr.
Harrisburg, IL



Be ready when Mother Nature strikes

When Mother Nature strikes this winter, make sure you're ready. Hundreds of Americans are injured or killed in the winter months due to car accidents on slippery roads and in home fires caused by improper use of heaters. In addition, winter storms create a higher risk of hypothermia, frostbite, carbon monoxide poisoning and heart attacks due to overexertion.

Because winter brings its own set of challenges, Safe Electricity reminds you to prepare for extreme weather and to stay home during and after storms whenever possible.

Be ready

Prepare ahead of time for massive snowfall, blizzards or ice storms that could last for days at a time. Tune in to local radio or TV stations for the latest winter storm updates. In addition, use a cell phone to stay informed by signing up for weather alerts. Have a portable charger and extra batteries on hand. Also, have a battery-operated radio available (with extra batteries) to listen for updates.

In preparing for a storm, be sure to follow these tips:

- Consider special needs or medical issues in your household; have a supply of medications.
- Have a supply of non-perishable food as well as plenty of drinking water and a first-aid kit.

- Prepare for weather events year-round by keeping a checklist of items to have on hand. Have as many of these essentials at the ready and in one place in case a storm event happens without warning.
- As the winter months approach, prepare your home with proper insulation, caulking and weather stripping. Learn how to keep pipes from freezing. Install and test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors with battery backups.

Stay inside

Stay home during snow and ice storms and wait until roads are cleared. This may sound obvious, but some think whatever they had planned is too important to miss. Whatever the commitment, it's not worth getting into an accident or getting stranded.

If you do drive in extreme conditions, do not leave your car to look for help. Your car should also be equipped with several items during cold months, such as a first-aid kit, portable car charger and batteries, blankets, water, snack food, a windshield scraper, extra warm clothing, tire chains, canned and compressed air with sealant for tire repair, booster cables, emergency flares and road salt and sand for traction.

If you're at home during an outage,



please know we will restore power as fast as possible without compromising safety. Do not turn on the stove for heat. It's not safe. Instead, use blankets, sleeping bags and warm coats. You can also use an up-to-code fireplace or portable heaters.

When it comes to portable heaters, follow all instructions for use, and remember these guidelines:

- Don't place clothing on or near a portable heater.
- Don't put a portable heater on the counter or other surface.
- Don't leave it unattended.
- Don't place on rugs, near paper or anything else that could ignite. Make sure there is 3 feet of unobstructed area.

When using a portable generator, never use it indoors and make sure it is not close to windows, doorways or air-intake vents. Do not use it in an attached garage, even with the doors up. Never touch it with wet hands or use in areas with rain, snow or standing water.

For additional safety tips, go to SafeElectricity.org.

"President's Comments" continued from page 18A

Cost increases are occurring in materials, supplies, contractors, etc.

Fortunately, your cooperative still has an ownership share in its own generation resources and has minimal exposure to the volatile market prices for capacity like other utilities' customers have experienced over the past few years. However, SIPC is incurring cost increases, as mentioned in this article. These increases in the cost of wholesale electricity

generation will be reflected in the wholesale power cost adjustment charge in the retail rate. In reviewing these wholesale cost increases, your cooperative is projecting the increases in wholesale electricity will equate to an approximate 2.3% increase in residential retail rates in 2024.

As a not-for-profit organization, your cooperative does not strive to produce profits for shareholders and investors but must maintain a sound

financial position for the membership. Your cooperative's sole purpose is to provide you, as cooperative member-owners, with reliable and quality service at equitable rates. We thank you for the opportunity to serve you, and we want you to know that your cooperative is owned by the people it serves and will continue to be an electric cooperative that is truly operated "for the people and by the people."

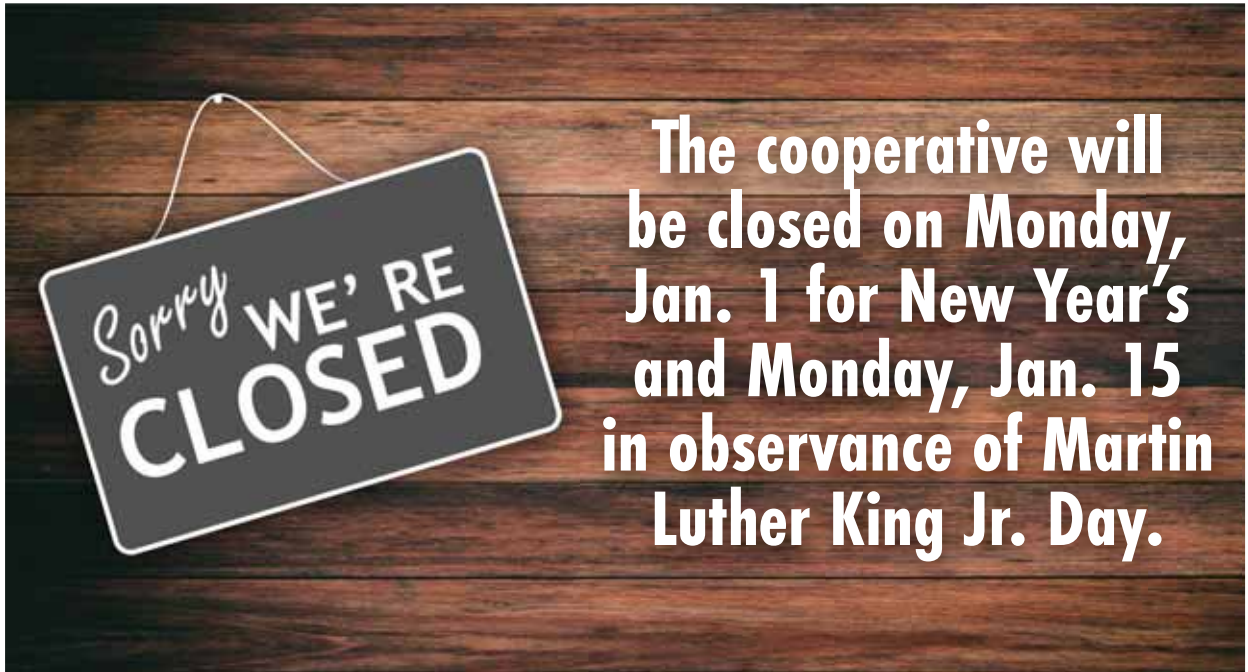


No matter the weather, your cooperative's lineworkers are on duty. They brave the elements to make sure you and your family are warm, safe and comfortable at home.



SouthEastern Illinois
Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative 



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.
100 Cooperative Way • Carrier Mills, IL 62917-2275
618-273-2611 or 800-833-2611 • Office hours: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. M-F

Find us on 
Facebook.com/
SouthEasternIllinoisElectric