

The SOUTHEASTERN Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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President's Comments



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

Ways to pay

The digital age of communication and automation has provided some opportunities for all of us to simplify some of the routine, ordinary tasks that we perform on a monthly basis. The various methods available for our members to pay their monthly electric bill are an example. Your Cooperative offers a variety of options so you can choose what best suits your preferences, lifestyle and needs. In this article, I would like to briefly explain the various options that are available for members to pay their bill.

SEIEC offers an automated payment plan that automatically draws the necessary funds from your checking or savings account to pay your monthly electric bill. With this option, you will still receive a statement in the mail that is virtually identical to the invoice you receive now, but the funds necessary to pay the total amount due will automatically be withdrawn from your checking or savings account on the due date. Please contact the office if you would like an enrollment form for this option.

SEIEC also offers online payments through SmartHub. SmartHub offers members quick and easy access to perform functions including viewing their bill, paying their bill, scheduling a future payment, reviewing past payments, receiving bill reminders, updating your account and viewing daily and monthly electric use. Please visit our website at www.seiec.com to see how you can sign up for SmartHub.

SEIEC also offers a pay-by-phone option. This option allows you to make your payment by calling the toll-free number, 800-833-2611. Once you have dialed the number, select the menu option for account information, then select the pay-by-phone option to make a payment using your debit card or credit card.

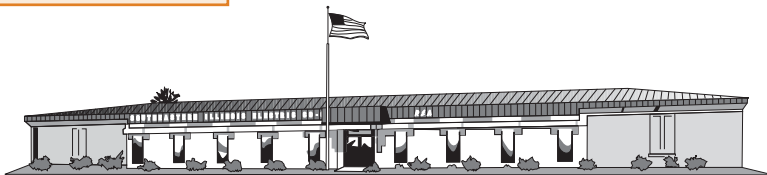
SEIEC also offers recurring credit card payments, which will automatically charge your credit card to pay your monthly electric bill. With this option, you will still receive a statement in the mail that is virtually identical to the invoice you receive now but the funds will be automatically charged to the credit card on the due date. Please contact the office if you would like to receive an enrollment form for this option.

These automated options were implemented to give members a choice in selecting the most appropriate and convenient way to pay their bill. It is great to see that members are taking advantage of these automated options. In fact, SEIEC currently receives nearly 14,000 payments per month through these additional options.

In addition to these automated payment options, your Cooperative offers budget billing. Budget billing, also known as "levelized" billing, allows eligible members to pay the same or a slightly varied amount each month so you know exactly how much your monthly payment will be regardless of the current month's actual usage and charges. This plan provides 11 "fixed" budget months with

Continued on page 18D ▶

READERSHIP PRIZE WINNER:
Morgan Oxford,
Rosiclare, IL



We're ready for storm season. Are you?



Summer is in full swing, and I welcome more opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy the warm weather. Summertime brings with it many of my favorite activities, like cooking out with family and friends, afternoons on the water and simply slowing down a bit to enjoy life.

But, summer months also make conditions right for dangerous storms. These potential weather events can cause destruction to our electrical system, but I want you to know that SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative's crews are ready and standing by to respond should power outages occur in our area.

When major storms knock out power, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines. I would encourage you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during major storms and outages.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends the items below as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness. Visit www.ready.gov for additional resources.

- Stock your pantry with a 3-day supply of nonperishable food, such as canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, water and other essentials.
- Have sanitation and hygiene supplies on hand, including towelettes, soap and hand sanitizer.
- Ensure your first-aid kit is stocked with pain relievers,

bandages and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.

- Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener and a portable, battery-powered radio or TV.
- Organize emergency supplies so they are easily accessible in one location.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will help avert damage from a power surge, and will also help prevent overloading the circuits during power restoration. That said, leave one light on so you will know when power is restored. If you plan to use a small generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information, and, if you can, check SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative's website for power restoration updates.

After the storm, avoid downed power lines and walking through flooded areas where power lines could be submerged. Allow ample room for utility crews to safely perform their jobs, including on your property.

Planning for severe storms or other emergencies can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the weather event and can lessen the impact of the storm's effects. Sign up for NOAA emergency alerts

and warnings and visit the outage map on our website to stay abreast of power restoration efforts and other important co-op news and information.

I hope we don't experience severe storms this summer, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. At SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative, we recommend you act today, because there is power in planning. From our co-op family to yours, we hope you have a safe and wonderful summer.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Did you know ceiling fans can help you save energy? Ceiling fans create a windchill effect on your skin to make you feel a few degrees cooler. Raise the thermostat a few degrees and turn on fans to reduce air conditioning costs.

Set fan blades to rotate counterclockwise during summer months and clockwise during winter months. Remember, ceiling fans cool people but don't actually lower the indoor temperature. Turn them off when you leave the room.

Source: energy.gov



Powering Up After an Outage

When the power goes out, we expect it to be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm or natural disaster causes widespread damage, extended outages may result. Our line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark:

1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines:

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

2. Distribution Substation:

A substation can serve hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself or if problems exist further down the line.

3. Main Distribution Lines:

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

4. Tap Lines:

If local outages persist, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes.

5. Individual Homes:

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issue.

"Ways to pay" continued from page 18A

one "settlement" month each year. Budget billing does not reduce your overall energy expense; it simply allows you to spread out your annual energy expense over a 12-month period.

Last, but certainly not least, your Cooperative still offers the traditional methods of paying invoices, including receiving your checks in the mail, at the front counter or at the drive-thru of the headquarters facility. We certainly understand that automated options for paying invoices may not be appropriate for everyone, but they are available so that members can select the option that best suits their needs.

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



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

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