

The SOUTHEASTERN Light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Voluntary and open membership • Voluntary and open membership

President's Comments



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

Capital credit retirement checks

As the electric utility industry continues to evolve, face continual change and explore different ways to serve customers, we can all be proud that we are part of the electric cooperative program. Electric cooperatives have a very unique business model that has proven to benefit cooperative members and has stood the test of time for 86 years.

The most profound and distinct difference between electric cooperatives and other utility business structures is that electric cooperatives are not-for-profit organizations that are member-owned and member-controlled. 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 sets electric rates high enough to cover the costs of providing service and at the end of the year, any funds that were collected above the cost of service are allocated to you, our members, in the form of capital credits.

These capital credits are retained by the cooperative and used to build and maintain the infrastructure necessary to serve the members and service the long-term debt of the cooperative. When the financial condition and cash position of the cooperative permits, the capital credits are then retired and paid back to you, as members and owners. Every year your cooperative mails capital credit statements to every cooperative member notifying them of their allocated capital credit balance and the amount of capital credits allocated to them

in the previous year. This statement shows each member their equity and ownership in the cooperative.

I am pleased to inform you, as cooperative members and owners, that your cooperative's board of trustees approved the retirement and return of \$1.68 million of capital credits to the members. The capital credits that are being returned are from the years 1986, 2019 and 2020. This means that if you were a cooperative member in any or all of these years, you will be receiving a check this month (December) for capital credits. Over the past 15 years, your cooperative has retired and returned approximately \$27.5 million to cooperative members.

I would like to close by stating that all of us can be proud to be a part of the electric cooperative program. The founders of the electric cooperative program developed a unique business structure that, by its very nature, makes electric cooperatives very accountable to the members it serves. This unique structure has contributed to the success of your cooperative over the years and remains unchanged even today, some 86 years later. Your cooperative is governed by local people who live and work in your very own communities. Your cooperative is operated by a group of local employees who also live and work in your very own communities. Your cooperative's sole purpose is to provide you, as cooperative member-owners, with reliable and quality service at equitable rates.

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

READERSHIP
PRIZE WINNER:
Richard Urbin,
Herod, IL



Keep your family safe and your holiday season merry with these fire safety tips

Be aware of holiday fire risks

The combination of candles, fireplaces and flammable decorations increases the risk of fires during the holidays. On average, fire departments respond to 150 Christmas tree-related fires and 790 decoration-related fires annually, according to the NFPA.

Candle safety

- * Only burn candles where you can keep an eye on them.
- * Extinguish candles before going to bed, leaving the room or leaving the house.
- * Use heat-resistant surfaces for candles, placing them out of reach of children and pets.
- * Keep candles away from flammable items like trees, decorations, curtains and furniture.
- * Opt for battery-operated candles near flammable objects.

Christmas tree fire prevention

- * A beautiful Christmas tree adds to the festive spirit, but it's essential to ensure it's safe.
- * Choose a fresh tree. Fresh trees have needles that are hard to pull from branches and have a sticky trunk bottom.

- * Keep the tree away from heat sources such as fireplaces, space heaters and vents.
- * Check the water level daily to prevent the tree from drying out.
- * Place the tree away from high-traffic areas and doorways.
- * If using an artificial tree, ensure it is labeled as fire-resistant.
- * When discarding a real tree, place it far from your home and other combustible objects, as dried trees are highly flammable.

Holiday lighting safety

Decorative lights add cheer to the season, but safety is key.

- * Purchase lights from reputable retailers and ensure they are approved by recognized testing labs like UL or CSA.
- * Only use lights designed for outdoor use when hanging outside.
- * Use circuits equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) for outdoor lights.
- * Avoid water and snow when using extension cords and outdoor lights.
- * Stay at least 10 feet away from

power lines while hanging lights.

- * Check for broken sockets and frayed wires before use.
- * Avoid plugging too many devices into a single outlet.
- * Turn off indoor and outdoor decorations when going to bed or leaving the house.

Fireplace safety tips

A cozy fireplace is a holiday favorite, but it requires careful handling.

- * Decorate wisely. Avoid hanging flammable decorations like stockings and greenery directly on the mantel.
- * Perform annual maintenance. Have your chimney and fireplace checked and cleaned at least once a year.
- * Use a screen. Install a screen to prevent embers from landing on floors or carpets.
- * Burn responsibly. Never burn trees, wreaths or wrapping paper in the fireplace, as they can ignite rapidly and cause flash fires.

By following these fire safety tips, you can enjoy a joyful and safe holiday season with your loved ones.



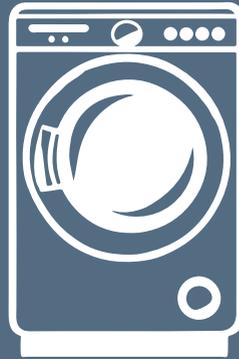
WISHING YOU A VERY
MERRY CHRISTMAS
& THE HAPPIEST OF
NEW YEARS!

*From the Board of Trustees and
Employees of SouthEastern Illinois
Electric Cooperative*

**The office will be closed on
Wednesday, Dec. 25 for Christmas and on
Wednesday, Jan. 1 for New Year's Day.**

Safety Tip

Lint buildup in your dryer can be a serious hazard, as it can easily catch fire if not cleaned regularly. By taking a few moments to clear out the lint trap before each use, you not only improve the efficiency of your dryer, but you also greatly reduce the risk of a potentially dangerous dryer fire.



Safe
Electricity.org

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you're planning to purchase electronic gifts this holiday season, look for the ENERGY STAR® label, which indicates higher energy efficiency performance. Electronics that receive the ENERGY STAR® rating are up to 25% more efficient than standard products. This holiday season, give the gift of energy savings with ENERGY STAR®-rated electronics and equipment.

Source: energystar.gov

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

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SouthEasternIllinoisElectric