

# THE GRID

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Mattoon, Illinois 61938

Phone: 217-235-0341  
or Toll-Free:  
1-888-661-CMEC (2632)  
Office hours:  
Monday-Friday  
7:30a.m. - 4:30p.m.

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Andrew Fearn ....Charleston  
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**Interim President/CEO**  
Jim Wallace

**To Report an Outage**  
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Find your name hidden inside this issue of The Grid and receive a \$50 bill credit. Credit must be claimed by the end of each month in which this newsletter is published.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## CMEC Distribution System Outages — Part 1 (Substations)

By Jim Wallace, Interim President & CEO

The winter/spring of 2025 has been an interesting one for CMEC's electric distribution system. In February, the membership saw widespread outages on Bruce, Sullivan, Fairgrange, Sarah Bush, Mattoon, and Charleston substations, along with 18 other events that affected smaller numbers of members. In March, two major events, one on March 15 and one on March 30, centered around tornadoes that damaged approximately 116 poles between the two dates.

I would like to take some time to explain in more detail the types of outages that occur and how CMEC designs the distribution system to restore service in the most expedient manner possible. In order to understand these types of outages, it's necessary to explain how the electric grid is designed. There is an interconnected electric grid that encompasses a large part of the Midwest stretching from Minnesota to Louisiana. This territory is managed by MISO (Midcontinent Independent System Operator). As electricity is generated, it flows onto the electric grid managed by MISO. While MISO manages the flow, the actual lines are owned by independent companies that specialize in the operation and maintenance of those lines. The lines that provide electricity to CMEC's substations are owned and operated

by Ameren Illinois. CMEC has 14 substations. Thirteen of the substations are supplied by 69,000-volt transmission lines. One substation (Bruce) is supplied by a 34,500-volt line. Ameren supplies the voltage to a metering point for each substation that determines the amount of usage that PPI (Prairie Power, Inc.) will reimburse Ameren for. The lines from the metering point to the substation are operated by PPI. PPI is the generation and transmission cooperative, of which CMEC is a member along with nine other electric cooperatives in Illinois. PPI then invoices CMEC for the usage each month.

Once the electricity reaches the substation, it becomes the sole responsibility of CMEC to see that it flows to the members' residences or businesses. The substation transforms the voltage from the transmission voltage stated above to 12,470 volts for distribution to the members' services. Each substation has a number of three-phase feeders (between two and five) that branch out in different directions. These feeders travel many miles, up to 15, to deliver adequate voltage to the endpoints. Along the way, single-phase lines will tap off of the three-phase lines to ensure all areas needing electric service are covered. Once the high voltage

- Continued on page 18B

lines (12,470 volts) reach the endpoint, a transformer reduces the voltage to make it usable for the member. This is usually 120/240 volts, but can be as high as 480 volts, depending on the need.

The electric grid that I just described to you has multiple sectionalizing devices installed to ensure that, when a fault occurs on the line, these devices open to discontinue the flow of electricity to the faulted section of line. There are breakers on Ameren's 69,000 and 34,500-volt lines to protect the system should a fault occur on the lines up to the substation. Each feeder in the substation has a breaker for each phase. There are breakers located further out on the lines and then there are fuses located in different areas downstream from the breakers.

When a substation outage occurs, there are a few scenarios that can cause that outage.

**1. Ameren's transmission line breaker.** When this occurs, the problem could be on Ameren's line or PPI's line. Ameren personnel and CMEC personnel usually patrol the respective lines simultaneously to determine where the problem is located. Once the problem is found, Ameren will switch the feed to the metering point, if possible, to restore service as quickly as possible. The breaker is designed to open, then reclose, to restore service in the case of a short duration fault such as lightning, animals, or tree limbs hitting the line, then falling off. For those members that are on Bruce Substation, Ameren, PPI, and CMEC personnel recently worked together to determine that the breaker that feeds the substation was failing to reclose. It's possible that the breaker would have reclosed during the February/March outages, causing a blink instead of a long duration outage. That problem has since been resolved.

**Roy Snively**

**2. CMEC's substation fuses.** If a fault occurs between the substation fuses and the feeder breakers, the fuses blow, shutting down the substation. This can be an animal on the structure, a failed piece of equipment, a failed transformer, etc. CMEC personnel must determine the cause and make the necessary repairs to restore service as soon as possible.

In either case mentioned, if repairs will take longer than a few hours, CMEC can make the decision to transfer the affected members to another substation until their designated substation has service restored. Depending on the circumstances, this is not always possible. Temperatures and electrical load sometimes prohibits transfers to certain areas.

To ensure that the infrastructure is maintained properly, routine inspections are performed on the transmission lines and poles that feed the substations. Substations are inspected by CMEC personnel on a monthly basis. Every two years, the substation is deenergized in order to perform electrical testing on the substation equipment in addition to crew inspections of all equipment and connections. Data collected during this testing is compared to the data from two years prior to determine any deterioration of equipment. Infrared inspections are performed as needed to determine "hot spots" that can be potential sources of equipment failure.

CMEC staff and the Board of Directors take our responsibility to provide reliable, consistent service to the membership very seriously. At times, incidents occur that are out of our control. When incidents occur that are in our control, decisions are made to improve the situation as expediently as possible. Communication from you, the member, is important to us. If you have a concern, we stand ready to hear from you. You are the reason CMEC exists.

Next month, I will discuss outages that occur from the substation to your service.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Take advantage of the warmer weather to reduce home energy use. Avoid using your oven and use a grill instead. Not only will cooking outdoors eliminate the energy used to power the oven or stove, but it will also avoid raising the temperature inside your home, reducing the need for additional air conditioning.

You can also avoid using the oven with tasty no-bake recipes. Get creative in the kitchen and explore new ways to save energy!

*Source: energy.gov*

# FREE AND EASY WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY

Here are 10 easy, no-cost ways to save energy this summer:



**1.** Close or lower window coverings during the heat of the day



**2.** Set your thermostat a few degrees higher



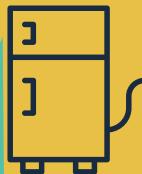
**3.** Take cooler showers (this feels better in the summer, anyway)



**4.** Use countertop appliances or a microwave instead of your oven



**5.** Better yet, grill or smoke food outdoors



**6.** Unplug that extra fridge, especially older, inefficient models (they have to work even harder in a hot garage)



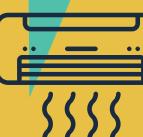
**7.** Optimize your programmable thermostat's features (around 40% of homeowners never program them)



**8.** Check the airflow around windows and doors (add weather stripping if needed)



**9.** Unplug all chargers and electronics before leaving the house



**10.** SHUT THE FRONT DOOR (don't air condition the outdoors)

**Safe Electricity.org®** Learn more at:

# SAVE THE DATE

85th Member  
Celebration &  
Annual Meeting

**Friday, Oct. 3rd**

Peterson Park, Mattoon

## Vegetation Management

During June, our vegetation management crews will be working diligently with contracted Kendall (formerly Endrizzi) crews near our Union Center Substation area along the rights-of-way of our power lines. This proactive



measure is essential to mitigate the risk of outages caused by trees and vegetation encroaching on power lines, especially during extreme weather conditions. This is part of our commitment to ensure the continued reliability and safety of our electric distribution system.

**Why It's Important** — Effective vegetation management helps minimize the occurrence of power outages, enhances system reliability, and ensures the safety of our members and employees. By trimming or removing trees and vegetation that pose a threat to our lines, we can prevent potential hazards and maintain the integrity of our electrical infrastructure.

**Safety First** — We prioritize safety in all our operations. Our crews and Kendall are trained

professionals equipped with the necessary tools and expertise to carry out vegetation management safely and efficiently. We kindly ask for your cooperation and understanding as they work in your area.

**Member Support** — Your support and cooperation are vital in helping us maintain a reliable and safe electrical system. If you have any questions or concerns regarding vegetation management activities, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We value your feedback and are here to address any inquiries you may have.

**Stay Informed** — For updates and additional information about our vegetation management program and other cooperative initiatives, please visit our website or follow us on social media.

## Words of Thanks

I just wanted to say 'thank you' to CMEC for joining us for the 8th grade Career Conference. We appreciated having you there to share with the 8th graders about your career. Thank you for your investment in our area youth!

*From Lake Land College*

*Pictured left to right: CMEC employees  
Summar Smith and Carla Bradbury*



**Thanks for brightening up our day! Just a card to say you're amazing! Thanks for putting in long hours so that we could get our electricity in a timely matter. We appreciate you all.**

*From a member in Rural Lovington*



Did you know that you can manage notifications in SmartHub?

Members can set up payment reminders and more by logging into SmartHub and managing notifications. For assistance, call the office at 217-235-0341.

## CLOSED FOR CONSTRUCTION

Our lobby will be closed starting **JUNE 11TH** for a minimum of two weeks as we make changes to our front entrance. CMEC personnel are available in the office for appointments only by calling 217-235-0341 or sending an email to [info@cmeccoop.com](mailto:info@cmeccoop.com).

For your safety, please try to utilize other methods of paying your bill such as:

- **DROPBOX** — Payment drop-off boxes are located next to our parking lot and inside our building.
- **PHONE** — Call 217-235-0341 or toll-free 888-661-2632, Option 2 for automated or Option 3 for a person.
- **ONLINE** — Log in and/or download the SmartHub app today. Find details at [cmeccoop.com](http://cmeccoop.com).
- **AUTOMATED** — Deduct from a bank account or charge to a credit card each month.
- **VANILLA DIRECT** — Pay at convenient locations using your SmartHub account barcode. See [pay.vanilladirect.com/pages/](http://pay.vanilladirect.com/pages/) retailers for locations.
- **BANK** — Pay at any First Mid Bank & Trust in our service territory.

# Proposed Bylaw Amendments

CMEC will have four proposed amendments to our bylaws in 2025. The membership will have the opportunity to vote on these proposals during our election, to be held Sept. 9-30, 2025. Details of these amendments are explained in the following memo from our Corporate Counsel, Aaron Leonard.



Dear Coles-Moultrie Members,

As Corporate Counsel for the Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative, I offer this letter to discuss the proposed amendments to your bylaws. On this year's ballot, there are four (4) proposed amendments. I will address each of them in turn.

The first proposed amendment addresses various grammatical and related edits to the bylaws as a whole. These edits include using defined terms instead of full terms (e.g. Cooperative, instead of Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative, Board, instead of Board of Directors, and President & CEO, instead of Chief Executive Officer), using consistent grammatical rules for numbers, and correcting misspelled words and other grammatical errors. There are at least 79 of these edits the Board has proposed to fix. Typically, the Board would not redress such non-material issues in a standalone amendment process, but since material bylaw revisions have been proposed, the Board felt it appropriate and necessary to address any known issues within the bylaws. If you wish to review the proposed edits in full, a complete copy of the proposed bylaws is available at the Corporate Headquarters for your review.

The second proposed amendment arises under Article IX, Section 3 concerning the assignment and transferability of capital credits. To address a frequent membership concern, the Board has been exploring a more streamlined approach to retiring capital credits for the estate of a deceased member. Currently, the family of a deceased member must comply with general Illinois law to facilitate an assignment or transfer of a deceased member's capital credits, including but not limited to obtaining letters of office for the deceased member or obtaining an Illinois small estate affidavit. However, not all estates require formal probate and the process to obtain an Illinois small estate affidavit can be time consuming, confusing, and costly. The proposed amendment allows the Board to adopt a proposed "Transfer on Death" policy allowing members to designate a family member or third party to automatically receive the member's capital credits upon death and would only require a death certificate to initial and finalize the transfer process. The current bylaws restrict such an assignment to the continued occupancy of the deceased member's premises, which does not address a significant number of situations the Cooperative encounters.

The third proposed amendment arises under Article V, Section 3, subparagraph (b) (2) concerning Director Qualifications. This proposed amendment clarifies that a felony conviction during an active term of a director would result in the disqualification of such a director. The current bylaws only provide for disqualification during the nomination and election process and is silent on disqualification for convictions during an active term.

The fourth and final proposed amendment arises under Article V, Section 3, subparagraph (d) and concerns Director Qualifications related to term limits. Under the proposal, the term limits as set forth in Article V, Section 3, subsection (d) of the bylaws will be removed in its entirety and the current and any future directors will not be subject to term limits. The purpose for this proposed amendment is multifaceted. First, the interest expressed by the membership for Board service has been limited and terms limits could result in vacancies on the Board. Second, Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative makes significant monetary investments in training for Board service, which is squandered with term limits. Third, members are allowed and encouraged to run for the Board. Term limits result in the membership forfeiting its right to vote for Board representation by artificially removing viable and willing candidates that wish to run for Board service. Lastly, there are directors currently serving, and directors that have served in the past, on boards that directly impact the governance of Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative. Serving on the statewide board and the Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative's power provider board requires years of commitment, growth, knowledge, and experience in the industry to be a part of decisions that allow Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative to have the best advantage to serve the Membership in the most efficient way possible. Term limits result in a loss of this institutional and industry knowledge that are both time consuming and costly to regain.

Your Board of Directors, the interim President & CEO, Jim Wallace, and I recommend the proposed amendments and hope that you will join us in supporting them. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the same, please feel free to reach out to your Board of Directors or Jim Wallace and they will endeavor to appropriately address any questions, comments, or concerns you might have. Further, I will be available at your annual meeting to address any questions you may have about the amendments or any other issues facing the Cooperative.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative, and I look forward to seeing you at the annual meeting.

Very truly yours,

Taylor Law Offices, P.C.

Aaron K. Leonard, Partner  
Corporate Counsel for CMEC

Check out our  
**NEW**  
**WEBSITE!**

CMEC.COOP

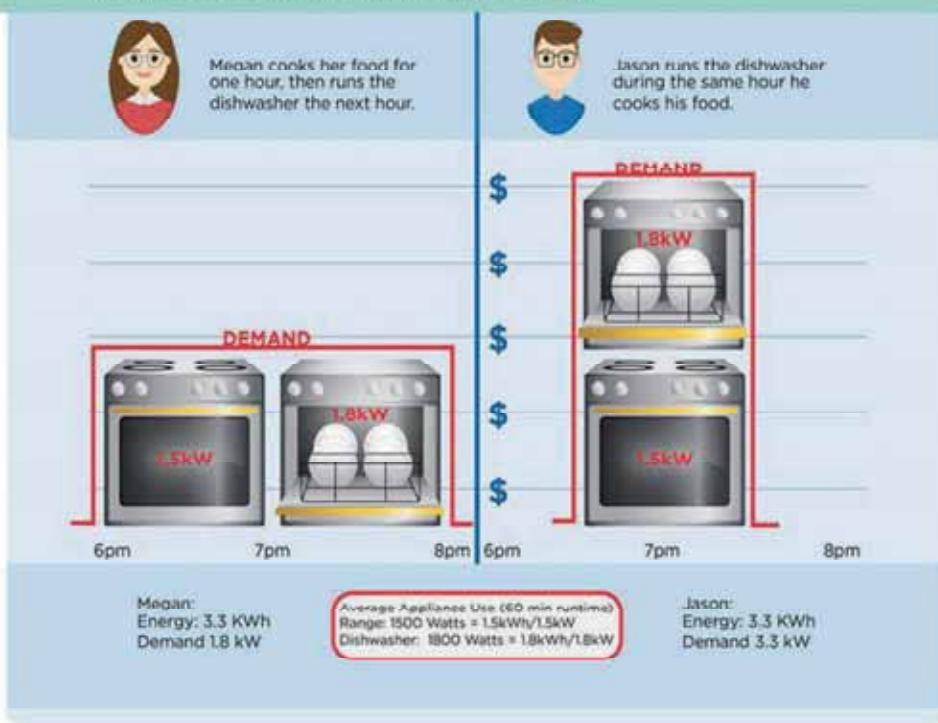
# WHAT IS THIS DEMAND CHARGE LINE ITEM ON MY BILL?

Residential and general service members are not currently charged for electric demand, but about half of the Cooperative's power supply costs are based on demand. CMEC believes that **knowledge is power** and we want to give you more information on how your electric demand impacts the system, in turn affecting the cost for all members. The newly designed bills will now list your electric demand as a line item.

Demand is measured in kilowatts (kW) and represents the rate at which electricity is being used. In other words, it is the amount of power required in an instant to satisfy the needs of all your connected appliances, lighting, heating, and anything else in your home requiring electricity at the exact same time.

## UNDERSTANDING DEMAND

As more appliances in your home run at the same time, your demand for power increases. The members in the following example use the same amount of energy to run their appliances, but each member is putting a different demand on the electric grid.



For More Information  
[www.cmeccoop.com](http://www.cmeccoop.com)  
Understanding Your Bill



Our Location  
104 Dewitt Ave E  
Mattoon, IL 62447



Contact Us  
217-235-0341  
[info@cmeccoop.com](mailto:info@cmeccoop.com)

# ILLINOIS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

POWERING EVERYDAY  
LIFE FOR RURAL ILLINOIS



## MEMBER OWNED

Electric co-ops are owned by the people they serve. Members elect directors to represent their interests and set policy and procedures for the co-op.



## COMMUNITY FOCUSED

Electric co-ops work to improve everyday life in our rural communities. We do this through reliable energy and efforts in education and community development.



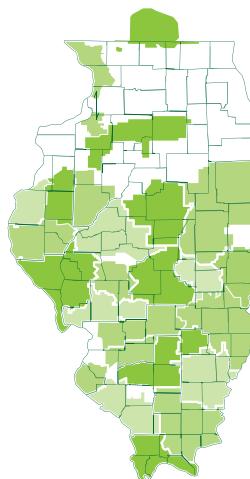
## NOT FOR PROFIT

Co-ops distribute and sell electricity to their member-owners. Any excess revenues are shared back with the co-op's members.

## POWER AND OPPORTUNITY: CO-OPS IMPACT ILLINOIS



CO-OPS SERVE



OVER  
**600,000**  
ILLINOISANS

**90 OF 102**  
COUNTIES

**59,152 MILES**  
OF DISTRIBUTION LINES

The power lines we own and maintain would stretch from Springfield to London, England

**OVER  
<14 TIMES>**



COMMUNITY IMPACT

**25**  
DISTRIBUTION  
CO-OPS

**5**  
GENERATION &  
TRANSMISSION CO-OPS

**OVER  
1,000**  
EMPLOYEES

YOUTH PROGRAMS  
**\$314,000 IN**  
SCHOLARSHIPS  
AWARDED



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT  
**12,000**  
FUTURE LEADERS  
IMPACTED



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
**\$30 MILLION IN USDA**  
LOANS & GRANTS TO  
COMMUNITIES



Association of Illinois  
Electric Cooperatives

A Touchstone Energy® Member

The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives represents 25 not for profit member owned distribution cooperatives and 5 Generation and Transmission Cooperatives which provide energy to more than 600,000 Illinoisans.