

The SOUTHEASTERN light

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative

President's Comments



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

The digital age of communication and automation has provided some opportunities for all of us to simplify some of the routine and ordinary tasks that we perform on a monthly basis. One example of this is the various methods that are available for members to pay their monthly electric bill. Your cooperative offers a variety of options that you can select that best suit 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identical to the invoice you receive now, but the funds necessary to pay the total amount due will automatically be withdrawn from your checking or savings account on the due date.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.

READERSHIP
PRIZE WINNER:
Virginia Bailey,
Stonefort, IL

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

- **SEIEC also offers a pay-by-phone option.** This option allows you to make your payment by calling the toll-free number at 800-833-2611. Once you have dialed this 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 reoccurring 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 14,197 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 slightly varied amount each month, so that 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 ▶



No game is worth getting struck by lightning

If you've been a parent, coach or player at an outdoor sporting event, you may have found yourself in this predicament. The clouds roll in and the sky gets dark, but you have "finish-game-itis." After all, it will only take a few more minutes.

This is one situation when finishing the game, match or inning is not worth the risk. Each year, thunderstorms produce an estimated 20 to 25 million cloud-to-ground lightning flashes in the U.S., each of which is a potential killer, according to the National Weather Service (NWS).

Some flashes strike directly under the storm where it is raining. Other times, the flashes reach away from the storm in places where people perceive the lightning threat to be low or nonexistent and catch people off guard.

About 30 people are killed by lightning each year and hundreds more are injured, some suffering permanent neurological injuries. About two-thirds of the deaths are associated with outdoor recreational activities.

The NWS recommends that outdoor recreation organizers have

an established **lightning safety plan** and follow it every time inclement weather conditions are present.

As part of the plan, coaches or organizers should establish who will listen to the latest accurate weather forecasts prior to a sporting event. It should also be clear who will make the decision to postpone or cancel if necessary.

The lightning safety guidelines should also address the following, according to the NWS:

- Once in play, when should the activities be stopped? *The short answer: When you see lightning, hear thunder or the skies look threatening, all activities should be stopped.*
- Where should participants, officials and spectators go for safety? *No place outside is safe. Substantial buildings with wiring and plumbing are ideal. Small outdoor buildings, including dugouts, rain shelters, sheds and pavilions are NOT safe places to seek shelter.*
- When should activities be resumed? *A minimum of 30 minutes after the last clap of*

thunder. Electrical charges can linger in clouds after a storm has seemingly passed.

- Who should monitor the weather and make decisions about play? *A level-headed and objective person should be the designated weather and lightning monitor. This should NOT be the coach, umpire or referee. The lightning monitor should know the weather safety guidelines and be empowered by teams, parents, coaches and spectators to make decisions.*
- What should be done if someone is struck by lightning? *Call 911 for immediate medical attention. Victims do not carry an electrical charge. CPR or AED may be needed if the individual's breathing or heart has stopped.*

Don't make decisions on when to call the game or match based on personal experience or pressure from others. For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

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 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, but visit www.ready.gov for additional resources.

- Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of nonperishable food, such as canned

goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, water and other essentials.

- Have sanitation and hygiene supplies 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 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 an NOAA weather radio for storm and emergency information, and 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.



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.

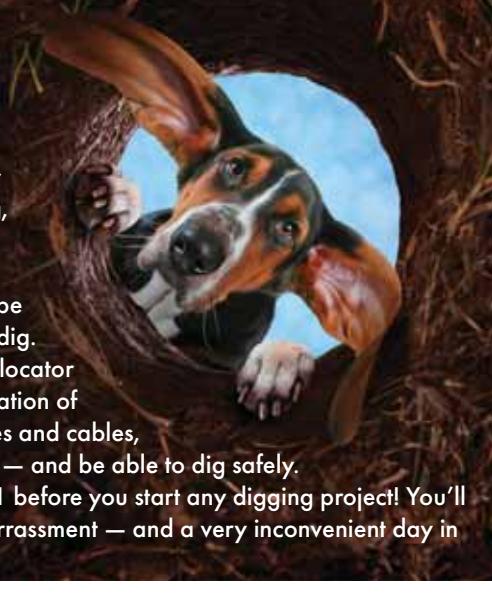
Last, but certainly not least, your cooperative still offers the traditional methods of paying invoices, including receiving your checks in the mail, at the front counter or the drive-thru at the headquarters facility. We certainly understand that automated options for paying invoices may not be appropriate 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."

Call JULIE before you dig

If you are planning a project, call 811 or 800-892-0123 a few days prior to digging, and your call will be routed to your local One Call Center. Tell the operator where you're planning to dig, what type of work you will be doing, and your affected local utilities companies will be notified about your intent to dig. In a few days, they'll send a locator to mark the approximate location of your underground lines, pipes and cables, so you'll know what's below — and be able to dig safely.

Remember, always call 811 before you start any digging project! You'll avoid injury, expense, embarrassment — and a very inconvenient day in the dark.



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

