

POWERLINE

NEWSLETTER FOR CO-OP MEMBERS OF CORN BELT ENERGY



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National Co-op Month: Preserving What Matters

Every October, we celebrate National Cooperative Month. Why? Because it's a time to reflect on what makes co-ops special. This year, we're adding a little extra flavor with our slogan, letting you know as a cooperative, members are our jam.

It might sound like a silly slogan we're using to spread the fun, but it's the truth. Cooperatives put people before profits, serve the community and give you and your neighbors the power to make local decisions. And to me, that's as sweet as it gets.

Just like your favorite jam, Corn Belt Energy is made of real ingredients. Real people. Real care. Real principles. Seven principles, to be exact, that guide everything we do and remind us why the cooperative model is worth preserving.

Our Recipe for Success: The Seven Cooperative Principles

1. Open and Voluntary Membership

Everyone is welcome. It doesn't matter your race, religion or gender. If you need our services



and accept the responsibilities of membership, you're a member.

2. Democratic Member Control

You're not a customer, you're a member. That means you help guide the direction of your cooperative by electing fellow members to serve on our board of directors and make decisions on your behalf.

3. Members' Economic Participation

When you invest in us, we invest in you. At Corn Belt Energy, we spread your dollars across the

community, improving your service, strengthening local nonprofits and, when possible, returning any leftover money to you.

4. Autonomy and Independence

We're local through and through, which means we answer to you, not faraway investors. It also means we won't enter into any agreements or partnerships that put local control of the co-op at risk.

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5. Education, Training and Information

Knowledge is power. We prioritize education, training and sharing information about the issues that affect our co-op.

6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Have you tried a mixed-berry jam? The flavors support each other just like co-ops support each other. Together we're stronger. We work

with other cooperatives at the local, state and national levels to share knowledge, improve services and strengthen the communities we serve.

7. Concern for Community

This is our home, too, and Corn Belt Energy succeeds when our communities do. That's why we care deeply about supporting you through educational programs, grants, scholarships, youth initiatives, safety education,

volunteer efforts, and more.

These aren't just words on paper, they're the ingredients that make Corn Belt Energy a sweet addition to our community. Members are our jam not only in October but all year long.

Thanks for being part of something meaningful.

Thank you for being a member!

Corn Belt Energy hosts Kilowatts and Brats

Corn Belt Energy recently invited members to Kilowatts and Brats, formerly known as regional member meetings, to learn more about their electric cooperative and hear how we're working to meet their long-term needs.

This year's meetings were hosted in Argenta, LeRoy, Tremont, Kewanee, Princeton, and Marseilles. Thank you to all who joined us and shared in the conversation.

To maximize our reach and connect

with as many members as possible, we will continue to rotate meeting locations across our service territory each year. This way, more members have the opportunity to engage with their cooperative close to home.



Four Best Bets to Stay Cyber Safe

Protecting yourself online doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. A few simple habits can dramatically reduce your risk of falling victim to cybercrime. While you can never be "hackproof," you can become resilient in the online world.

At the heart of online safety are four essential behaviors we at the National Cybersecurity Alliance call the Core 4. These simple steps will help shield your personal information, protect your online accounts and keep your devices secure.

1. Use long, unique, and complex passwords. Your passwords are the first line of defense between a criminal and your sensitive information. Here's how to have amazing passwords:

- Every password must be long, unique and complex. Nowadays, every password should be at least 16 characters long, which significantly overwhelms password-cracking programs. Use a random mix of letters, numbers and symbols.
- Don't reuse passwords. Every account needs a unique password. Unfortunately, making small changes, like adding numbers or switching out an S with a \$, doesn't count as a unique password.
- Use a password manager to store and generate strong passwords. If you're wondering how to manage so many unique, long passwords, the answer is a password manager! There are many free, secure options. Password managers are the safest way to store your passwords. If you prefer to keep a password notebook, treat it like cash.

2. Enable multifactor authentication (MFA). Multifactor authentication (sometimes called

2FA) adds an extra security layer by requiring something more than just your password to log in. Think of it as using two locks on your digital door instead of only one. This could be:

- A one-time code sent to your phone
- A biometric scan like a fingerprint scan or FaceID
- A physical security key

Enable MFA on your accounts—especially email, banking and social media. It's a simple way to supercharge the security on your accounts. Also, never share MFA codes with anyone—this includes not sharing them over the phone, through texts or via email. Only scammers will ask for MFA codes.

3. Keep software updated.

Software updates don't just bring new features. They often fix security flaws that criminals exploit. It usually takes a few minutes, but updates are worth it. Here are some tips:

- Turn on automatic updates when possible for your devices and apps. You can usually find these options in your Settings menu.
- Install updates promptly for your operating systems, browsers, antivirus tools and apps.

- Don't click Remind Me Later—the security is worth it.
- Remember your phones, smartwatches and tablets are computers, so keep these devices updated as well!

4. Look out for phishing and scams.

Phishing remains the most common online threat. Criminals send fake emails, texts or social media messages to trick you into revealing sensitive information or clicking malicious links. These messages aim to get you to click before you think by playing your emotions. Scammers will even call you! Here's how to look out for phishing and scams:

- Be highly skeptical of unexpected messages, especially those urging immediate action or asking for personal details.
- Phishing emails can light up positive emotions ("You've won our sweepstakes!") or negative ones ("You've been hacked!").
- Don't click suspicious links or download unexpected attachments.
- Report phishing attempts to your email provider, social media platform or IT department.
- If you're unsure if a message is legit, ask a friend, coworker or family member. A second set of eyes can be invaluable in spotting scams.



POWERING YOUR FUTURE

17 SCHOLARSHIPS
\$3,000 EACH

The electric cooperatives of Illinois are proud to offer scholarships to deserving students in our co-op family. Whether you're a high school senior planning to attend college or interested in a career as a lineworker, there's a scholarship opportunity for you.




Applications are now open for the 2026 Illinois Electric Cooperatives Memorial Scholarships.

Apply by December 31, 2025, for most scholarships, or by April 30, 2026, for the lineworker scholarship. Scan the QR code or go to <https://bit.ly/IECScholarships> for more details.



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