

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 Credits

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 unique business model that has proven to benefit cooperative members and has stood the test of time for 87 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 the 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.

For the past 15 consecutive years, your Cooperative has retired and returned capital credits to members. However, the year 2025 has been a very challenging for your Cooperative due to the damaging storms experienced. The first storm, officially named Winter Storm Blair, brought significant amounts of freezing rain and ice on Jan. 5, followed by an arctic blast and snow on the 10th. This is one of the most damaging storms on record in your Cooperative's 87-year history. This storm resulted in ice accumulation throughout the Cooperative's service territory, with some locations exceeding over an inch of ice, and approximately 16,000 outages.

After experiencing Winter Storm Blair, the Spring season began and more severe storms, including damaging winds and devastating tornadoes traveled through your Cooperative's service territory. In total, your Cooperative's distribution system experienced damage from seven confirmed tornadoes, including a devastating EF4 tornado in Williamson County just south of Marion. The year 2025 will long be remembered for the very devastating storms that plagued Southern Illinois and proved to be very challenging — not just for our Cooperative but for many people in our communities who have suffered tremendous losses as well.

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READERSHIP PRIZE WINNER:
Roger Hopkins,
Herrin, IL

Should I use a space heater or turn up the heat?

Drafty room? Before reaching for your space heater, consider whether it's better to plug it in or simply turn up the thermostat.

Space heaters are designed to warm small, targeted spaces — not your entire home. If you find yourself relying on one often, it may be time to address your home's energy efficiency.

Fix efficiency first, then supplement with a space heater

Improving your home's efficiency helps it retain heat, reduces drafts and reduces your energy use. Many solutions are affordable and DIY-friendly, such as:

- Sealing air leaks. Use caulk and weatherstripping around windows and exterior doors to prevent drafts.
- Adding insulation where it matters. Attic insulation has the biggest return on investment, and loose-fill insulation is an affordable option.
- Checking your heating system. Schedule regular service for your furnace or heat pump. If it's outdated or struggling,

it could be time for an upgrade. Check with your utility for potential rebates and incentives.

- Using programmable thermostats. These can help reduce energy waste by heating only when and where needed.

Once your home is sealed and insulated, a space heater can be used to increase comfort and warm specific rooms, like a home office or bedroom, without turning up the heat for the whole house. A space heater is like a ceiling fan; it can improve comfort in a small area, but it's not a whole-house solution.

Use space heaters efficiently

- Heat only the room you're currently in.
- Close doors to keep heat contained.
- Choose the right size — too small and it won't warm you; too big and it wastes energy. Check manufacturer sizing guides.
- Use a heater with a thermostat and timer to avoid overheating the room or wasting electricity.

Stay safe while staying warm

- Place the heater on a solid, flat, nonflammable surface — never on carpets or rugs.
- Plug the heater directly into the wall outlet. Never use extension cords or power strips.
- Keep children, pets and anything flammable, such as curtains or bedding, at least 3 feet away from the heater.
- Choose a heater with built-in safety features including:
 - An overheat sensor;
 - A tip-over shutoff switch; and
 - A UL, ETL or CSA International certification label.
- Never leave a space heater unattended, especially around children or pets.
- Turn off the heater when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Unplug it when not in use to prevent electrical hazards.





Wishing you a
Very Merry Christmas
&
The Happiest of New Years

*From the Trustees & Employees
of SouthEastern Illinois
Electric Cooperative*

*The office will be closed on
Thursday, December 25th
for Christmas and Thursday,
January 1st for New Year's Day.*

"Capital Credits" continued from page 18A

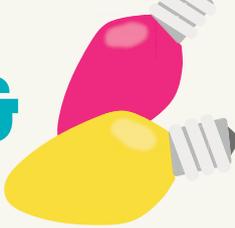
Given the extensive storm restoration expenses incurred this year (\$3.7 million above budget) which will result in a significant operating loss for the year and your Cooperative's desire to keep rates as reasonable as possible, the Cooperative will need to forgo the retirement and return of capital credits this year.

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 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 87 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."

Keep Your Holidays

MERRY & BRIGHT



 <p>Make sure your home's electrical system can handle the load.</p>	 <p>Unplug lights or decorations before changing a bulb or other parts.</p>
 <p>Do not use cords or plugs that are damaged, frayed or cracked.</p>	 <p>Only use lights certified by a reputable testing lab.</p>

SafeElectricity.org

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

Find us on 
 Facebook.com/
 SouthEasternIllinoisElectric

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.