



Clinton County Connection

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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2026 rate information for CCEC members



Bob Kroeger
President/COO

At the Dec. 22, 2025, Regular Meeting of the Clinton County Electric Cooperative (CCEC) Board of Trustees, the board approved the 2026 Operating and Capital Improvement Budget. The budget outlines the cooperative's expenses for 2026, as well as the appropriate amount of revenue needed to cover those expenses. CCEC's primary

source of revenue comes from our rates. In 2026, we expect to see increases in purchased power costs and distribution costs compared to 2025.

CCEC's largest expense is the power we purchase from Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC). Sixty-five cents of every dollar billed to a member pays for the generation and transmission expenses it takes to get power to the distribution substations before we deliver it to the CCEC membership. In 2026, SIPC's purchased power costs are expected to be 4.5% higher than 2025. This increase is due primarily to higher fuel costs and operating expenses at the Marion generating plant. Fortunately, SIPC's diverse mix of generation resources, including coal, natural gas, solar, wind and hydro, reduces the need to purchase energy from the market. This has helped stabilize their rates when compared to other utilities.

The remaining 35 cents of every dollar billed to a member pays all distribution expenses associated with delivering power from the distribution substations to the CCEC membership. Those expenses include trucks, wire, poles — whatever it takes to get power to your electric meter. Since the cooperative is not exempt from inflation, the 2026 budget reflects an increase of 7.7% in the costs of the goods and services necessary to provide the CCEC membership with reliable service.

The increases in purchased power and distribution costs have forced CCEC to implement a rate increase for 2026. The average residential member uses 1,200 kWh per month and will experience an average increase of 6.6% across the 12 months of 2026. The average member consuming 1,200 kWh per month can expect to begin the year with an increase of 6.4%, increasing slightly each month after that, and finishing the year with a 6.9% increase. Please note the word average. Some members may see less of an increase, and others may see more of an increase. The increase will vary with their monthly consumption.

Like last year, the monthly increases will reflect the monthly power cost adjustment (PCA) billed to CCEC by SIPC. If SIPC's PCA is more than budgeted, CCEC will pass the additional expense along to the membership. If SIPC's PCA is less than budgeted, CCEC will also pass that savings along to the membership. The monthly increases can be monitored by looking at the SIPC Power Cost Adj. line on your bill. This change will first appear on the bills received in February for January consumption and will appear on all bills for the remainder of 2026.

The February bills will also include a CCEC Power Cost Adjustment of \$0.02232 per kilowatt-hour or \$22.32 per 1,000 kilowatt-hours to cover the increases in distribution expenses. This increase can be seen by looking at the CCEC Power Cost Adj. on your bill. This charge will also appear on all bills for the remainder of 2026.

On a related topic, the second and final phase of the new wholesale rate for the energy we purchase from SIPC took effect on Jan. 1, 2025. This new wholesale rate gave us the opportunity to complete a cost-of-service study in 2025 to assess how the new wholesale rate is impacting CCEC's rates and is also serving as a foundation for base rate adjustments and a new rate structure. At the Dec. 22, 2025, board meeting, CCEC's Board of Trustees also approved the implementation of a new rate structure. Beginning in January 2027, Clinton County Electric

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Energy policies vs. rates and reliability

Across Illinois, investor-owned utilities, electric cooperatives and municipals continue to grapple with energy policy that is reshaping how electricity is produced, delivered and priced. In 2021, the Illinois legislature passed the **Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA)**, a set of ambitious goals for reducing carbon emissions from the power sector and expanding the use of renewable energy. While CEJA is designed to reduce environmental impacts and transition the energy sector toward cleaner resources, they are also creating real cost pressures and reliability concerns for electric cooperatives and the members we serve.

What CEJA requires

CEJA commits Illinois to a carbon-free electric grid by 2045, with interim steps that encourage early retirement of fossil-fueled power plants and rapid expansion of green energy resources. Some of the key elements include:

- Accelerated retirement schedules for coal-fired generation
- Operational limits on existing fossil-fueled generation
- Expanded renewable energy and electrification programs
- Incentives for energy efficiency and clean energy projects

These changes were intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote long-term environmental benefits. However, energy transitions of this scale don't come without challenges and even possibly consequences.

How Is CEJA driving costs up?

One consequence of CEJA's timelines is that some traditional power plants are retiring sooner than they might have otherwise. These fossil-fueled plants, especially those generating electricity around the clock, have historically provided

reliable, on-demand power that helps balance the grid.

As those plants are retired, a few things will likely happen:

1. Fewer dispatchable resources means higher market prices

Dispatchable generation or power plants that can be turned up or down as the demand for electricity changes help stabilize the grid and keep prices competitive. When these units retire ahead of replacement resources, it reduces competition in wholesale markets and puts upward pressure on energy and capacity costs. Those costs are passed through to electric cooperatives and, ultimately, to members.

2. Increased dependency on out-of-state power

With local generation retiring, Illinois utilities increasingly rely on electricity imported from neighboring states. While electricity flows freely between regions, import dependence exposes the grid to external market volatility and infrastructure constraints that can push prices higher. However, a recent Illinois Resource Adequacy Report stated that due to a lack of available generation in surrounding states, Illinois' ability to import power may cause reliability issues during times of peak demand.

3. Resource planning and reliability questions

CEJA's aggressive timeline makes it harder for utilities to ensure that enough new capacity comes online before older plants retire. This timing mismatch can create gaps in available power during peak usage times — especially during extremely hot summers or cold winters — when the grid needs dependable, dispatchable generation the most.

Why we need to use remaining fossil-fueled plants more efficiently

As this major policy change reshapes the electric grid in Illinois, cooperatives and municipals will need to make the best possible use of the power plants that remain available. Fossil-fueled generating units that are not directly impacted by these regulations will continue to play a critical role in maintaining reliability — especially during periods of peak demand or when renewable resources are limited.

In simple terms, this means using the electric system more evenly throughout the day. The power system must be built to serve short periods of very high demand, even though much of that equipment sits underused at other times. Those peaks drive costs for everyone. Two key approaches can help:

1. Operational improvements

Utilities and power suppliers are examining ways to run existing generators more efficiently. This includes optimizing how and when plants are dispatched to match real-time demand, reducing fuel waste, and minimizing wear and tear on equipment. Making the best use of these assets helps capture more value from generation we already have — without large new investments.

2. Encouraging better overall energy use through rate design

One important concept in managing costs is improving load factor. Put simply: Load factor means how evenly electricity is used throughout the day. When usage spikes dramatically in short periods — like hot summer afternoons — utilities must be ready with more generation capacity, even if most of the time that capacity sits idle. That drives up costs for everyone.

By designing rates that encourage members to shift energy use to times when demand is lower or generation is plentiful, utilities can:

- Reduce peak stress on the system
- Improve overall plant utilization
- Lower wholesale power costs
- Delay or reduce the need for new generation capacity

An example of innovative rate design is demand-based rates or demand response programs that afford members the ability to control their energy costs by using electricity during off-peak hours.

This approach is consistent with CCEC's longstanding fair and reasonable rate philosophy, which is based on the principle that members should pay their fair share of the costs required to serve them. By encouraging energy use at times when power is more readily available and less costly, rather than during high-cost peak periods, cooperatives can reduce overall system costs while maintaining reliable service. Using the system more efficiently helps limit the need for new

infrastructure, lowers wholesale power costs, and ensures that costs are shared equitably among members.

Looking ahead

Electric cooperatives support responsible environmental stewardship, but we also have a duty to protect our members from unnecessary cost increases and reliability risks. That is why Clinton County Electric Cooperative and Southern Illinois Power Cooperative continue to advocate for balanced energy policies — ones that recognize the importance of affordability, reliability and local control while pursuing long-term environmental goals.

We will continue working with the legislative departments at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) and the National Rural Cooperative Association (NRECA) to ensure the voice of cooperative members is heard as Illinois and the nation navigate this energy transition.

Please do not hesitate to contact the office at 800-526-7282 or email kroeger@cceci.com with any questions.

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will move to a rate structure that will not only reflect how much electricity you use but also when and how you use it. The new structure will give the membership the ability to better manage energy costs by taking advantage of lower rates during off-peak periods. This isn't a rate increase but a change in how bills are calculated to better match how we're billed by our power supplier. Some members may see a small increase, and others a decrease, depending on usage. We'll share more details throughout the year as the new structure takes shape. As always, our focus remains on serving you, our members, with affordable and dependable power.

Please do not hesitate to contact the office at 800-526-7282 or email kroeger@cceci.com with any questions.

February Years of Service

Clinton County Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Bob Kroeger
25 Years

Carrie Trame
15 Years

Thank you for your dedication!

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Mid-winter is a great time to ensure you're making the most of your home heating system. Replace or clean filters to keep your furnace or heat pump running efficiently. Listen for strange noises and check for uneven heating—these signs indicate that the system may need servicing. Ensure vents and radiators aren't blocked by furniture or rugs as proper airflow helps your system work less and saves energy. A little maintenance along the way can prevent costly repairs and keep your home cozy through winter.

APPLICATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED FOR 2026 YOUTH DAY AND YOUTH TOUR



Clinton County Electric Cooperative will again sponsor up to 12 area sophomores, juniors or seniors to attend Youth Day in Springfield, to be held on March 25, 2026. This event is sponsored by the cooperative and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. Two students will be selected to go to Washington, D.C., June 15-22, 2026, for an all-expense-paid trip.

WHO MAY ENTER?

Youth Day in Springfield and Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., are open to high school sophomores, juniors or seniors whose primary residence is served by Clinton County Electric Cooperative members. Children of Clinton County Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees or employees may attend at their own expense.

YOUTH TO SPRINGFIELD

Up to 12 students will participate with more than 125 students from other Illinois electric cooperatives in Illinois Rural Electric Youth Day in Springfield, set for March 25, 2026. The day's activities in Springfield will include touring the State Capitol complex, visiting with legislators

and a luncheon. Transportation to Youth Day in Springfield will be provided by CCEC.

YOUTH TOUR TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

Of the 12 students attending Youth Day in Springfield, two will have the opportunity to participate in the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. The two local winners will join about 70 other Illinois students who are winners of similar contests sponsored by other Illinois electric cooperatives. They will travel on air-conditioned buses, leaving on June 15 and returning June 22, 2026. While in Washington, they will visit such attractions as the White House, U.S. Capitol, Smithsonian Institution, Arlington National Cemetery, Lincoln Monument and many other national monuments and places of interest.

Applications are available at www.cceci.com/youth-programs. Completed applications need to be returned to the cooperative office no later than **FEB. 13, 2026**. Feel free to contact Katy Singler at singler@cceci.com or 800-526-7282 with any additional questions.

COMING SOON...



Clinton County Electric Cooperative is excited to announce we will be hosting Area Meetings. Each member in attendance can enjoy refreshments and will receive a \$20 bill credit. To hear details about your cooperative, rates, reliability and the electric grid, please mark your calendars to join us at one of the following meetings:

- Monday, March 16 at 7 p.m. — Albers American Legion
- Tuesday, March 17 at 1:30 p.m. — Breese Knights of Columbus
- Tuesday, March 17 at 7 p.m. — Carlyle Knights of Columbus Hall