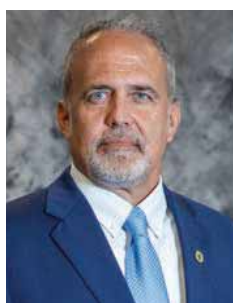




President's Column



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

Aligning rates and cost of power

As your Cooperative closed the books for the year 2025 and completed its financial audit, the financial records reveal an operating loss of approximately \$2 million. Much of this loss was driven by the extraordinary storm activity that impacted Southern Illinois throughout the year. As you know, 2025 will long be remembered for the major storms that plagued much of our region. In fact, Winter Storm Blair was the most significant ice storm in your Cooperative's modern history. In addition, your Cooperative experienced seven confirmed tornadoes in the Spring of 2025, which also caused extensive damage.

In mid-2025, your Cooperative considered implementing a retail rate increase to offset these losses. Instead, the decision was made to temporarily lower the Cooperative's equity position in order to delay the increase. In total, the storm damage experienced by your Cooperative resulted in over \$3.7 million in additional expenses and contributed to the financial loss for the year.

In addition to these storm-related expenses, your Cooperative has experienced significant increases in the cost of materials used to build and maintain the electric distribution system. These increases directly impact the cost of constructing, repairing and strengthening the system that serves you. Over the past six years, the cost of transformers has increased 106%, crossarms 124%, primary wire 88%, and secondary wire 56%. An infographic in this center

section illustrates the cost increases in key distribution components over the past five years.

Your Cooperative strives to keep electric rates as reasonable as possible. The most recent retail rate adjustments occurred in January 2021 when an 8.8% retail rate decrease was implemented. That decrease remained in effect until October 2023, when retail rates returned to 2020 levels.

Given the cumulative cost increases your Cooperative has incurred, including extensive storm damage and rising material costs, your Cooperative must implement a retail rate adjustment that will equate to approximately a 5% increase for the average residential member. The exact percentage may vary slightly depending on monthly energy usage. The rate adjustment will take effect with electric bills seen in your April billing statement.

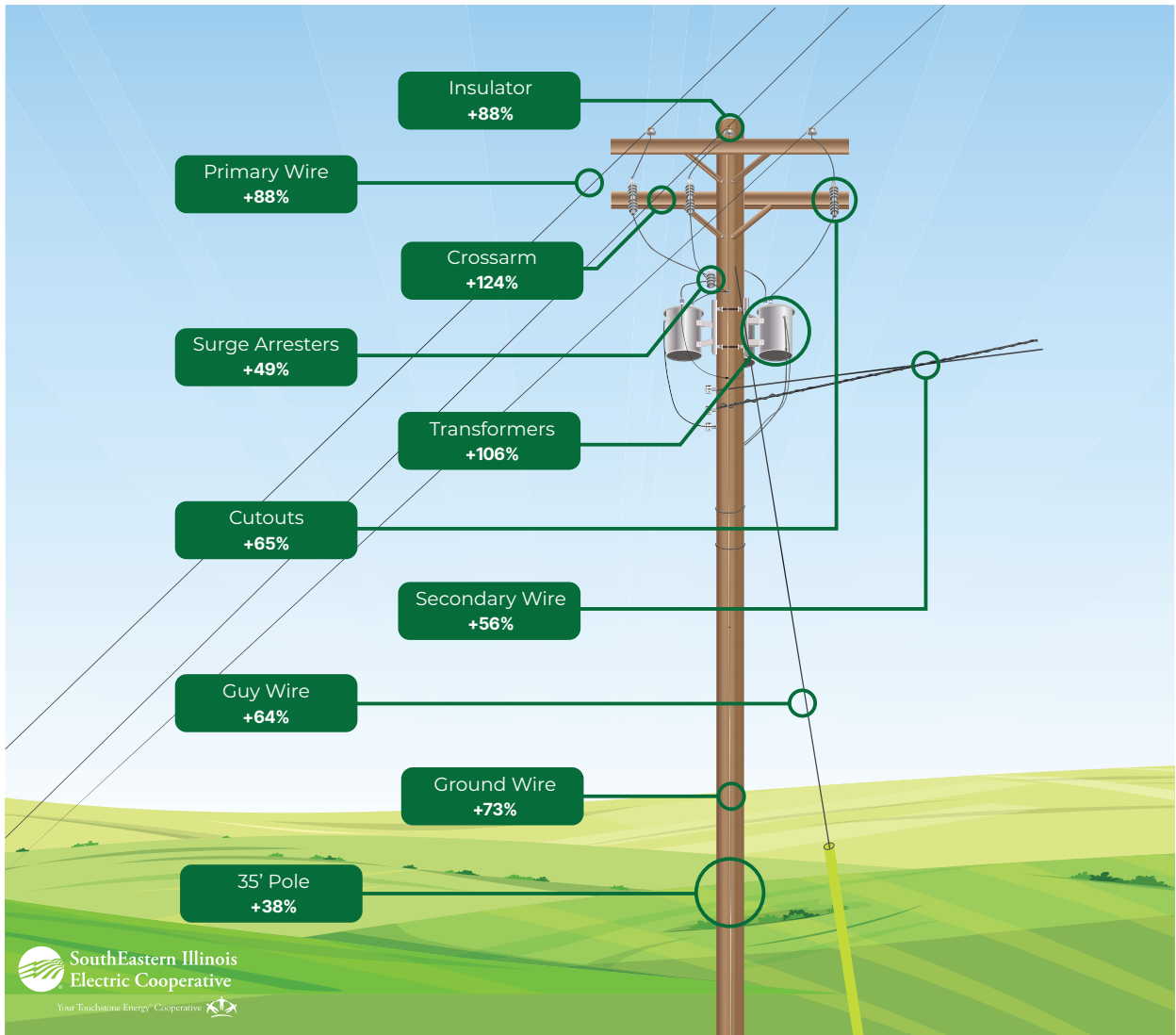
In addition, your Cooperative is restructuring how the Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment (WPCA) is reflected in retail rates. The WPCA will continue to appear as a separate line item on your monthly bill; however, moving forward, a portion of that charge will be moved directly into the retail energy rate. This WPCA change is revenue-neutral and will not increase your total charges. The energy (kWh) charge will appear higher than in previous months; however, the WPCA charge will appear lower than in previous months. This restructuring will allow better alignment with retail rates and the cost of wholesale power.

Continued on page 18B ▶

READERSHIP
PRIZE WINNER:
Kenneth Lewis,
Stone Fort, IL

Breaking Down the Rising Costs for SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative & Members

Percentage Increase From 2020 to 2026



Your Cooperative's rates consistently rank among the lowest in Illinois. In 2025, your Cooperative's electric rate for the average residential member ranked second lowest out of 25 electric cooperatives in the state. Even after this adjustment is implemented, your Cooperative's retail rates will remain among the lowest in Illinois.

We recognize that every dollar matters for the families and businesses we serve. That understanding

guides the decisions your board and leadership team make. While maintaining a reliable electric system requires ongoing investment, we remain committed to controlling costs wherever possible and balancing affordability with the dependable service our members expect.

As a not-for-profit organization, your Cooperative does not operate to generate profits for shareholders or investors. Every dollar collected is used to purchase power, maintain

and strengthen infrastructure, restore service after storms, and ensure the long-term financial stability of your Cooperative. On behalf of the Trustees and all employees, we want you to know that your Cooperative is committed to providing reliable and quality service while keeping rates affordable. We thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

See you next month and, as always, "We'll keep the lights on for you."



CELEBRATING OUR LINEMEN

Linemen are the backbone of our electric cooperative communities, working tirelessly – often in the harshest weather – to keep the lights on across Illinois. Whether restoring power after storms, repairing lines in the middle of the night or maintaining miles of rural infrastructure, their skill, courage and commitment provide families, farms, schools and businesses with safe and dependable electricity. They climb poles, operate heavy equipment and face challenging conditions with pride, putting service above self. We celebrate our linemen for their dedication and resilience, and the vital role they play in powering our communities every single day.

National Linemen Appreciation Day
April 18, 2026

 **South Eastern Illinois
Electric Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



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

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SouthEasternIllinoisElectric