

# POWERLINE

NEWSLETTER FOR CO-OP MEMBERS OF CORN BELT ENERGY



EDITION: MAY 2026

## Welcome home: Electrical safety for new homeowners

Moving into a new house is an exciting time. From unpacking boxes to decorating, there's a lot to do. During this busy time, don't overlook a vital aspect of your new home: its electrical system.

### Get to know your electrical panel

Knowing your breaker box means understanding its parts, like the main breaker for the whole house, individual switches for circuit breakers and their functions.

- Familiarize yourself with your electrical panel and label each breaker and panel by appliance or room.
- Test how to reset a tripped breaker.

**AVOID  
OVERLOADING**  
electrical  
circuits.



- Find the main shut-off switch in case of an emergency.

### Avoid electrical hazards

Knowing what to look for around your home and identifying potential hazards can ensure your family's safety, prevent fires and reduce costly repairs.

- Have only one heat-producing appliance, such as a coffee maker, microwave or space heater, plugged into an outlet at a time.

- Major appliances (refrigerators, dryers, washers, stoves) should be plugged directly into a wall receptacle outlet. Extensions cords and outlet strips should not be used.
- Inspect cords for signs of fraying or damage and replace or repair them immediately.
- Only use extension cords temporarily. Don't run cords under rugs, carpets, doorways or windows. Have a qualified electrician add more outlets if needed.

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# Welcome home: Electrical safety for new homeowners

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- Use surge protectors to safeguard devices such as computers, televisions and appliances from sudden power spikes.
- Always keep electrical devices away from water sources such as sinks, tubs and pools. Unplug items like hair dryers after use.
- Reduce risk of shock by using ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) around water sources such as kitchens, bathrooms, garages, basements and outdoors.
- Use outlet covers to prevent children (and pets) from inserting objects into unused outlets.
- Use light bulbs with the correct wattage — lamps and fixtures have a sticker

to indicate the maximum wattage.

- Have a working smoke and carbon monoxide detector on every floor of your home and ensure there are units installed near your sleeping area.
- Keep outdoor ladders away from overhead power lines, including the electrical service into your home.
- Schedule an electrical inspection with a qualified electrician for peace of mind and to catch issues early.

Call a professional if you notice these signs of an electrical problem:

- Frequently blown fuses, tripped circuit breakers

and unexplained power outages.

- A tingling feeling when touching an appliance.
- Discolored or warm outlets or switch plates.
- A burning or rubbery smell, or a buzzing or sizzling sound.
- Flickering or dimming lights.
- Sparks from an outlet.

As you settle in, keep electrical safety on your new-home checklist. Pair these habits with energy-smart steps like turning off lights and unplugging unused devices, and you'll reduce risk while lowering your utility bill. The little choices you make every day add up to a safer, more efficient household. Welcome home.

## Annual Report Goes Digital

### Annual Report

As a member-owned cooperative, we're always looking for ways to use resources wisely. This year, we're excited to share that our annual report will be available in a digital format.

This change helps reduce printing and mailing costs while still delivering the important updates, financial information, and cooperative highlights you expect.

Providing the report digitally allows us to use cooperative dollars more efficiently and gives you the convenience of accessing your report anytime, anywhere.

### Prefer a Printed Copy?

We understand that some members may still prefer a printed version—and that's perfectly fine. Requesting one is simple:

Stop by our office  
Call 309-662-5330  
Visit [cornbeltenergy.com](http://cornbeltenergy.com)  
Or scan the QR code below



We'll gladly send a copy your way.

### Annual Meeting

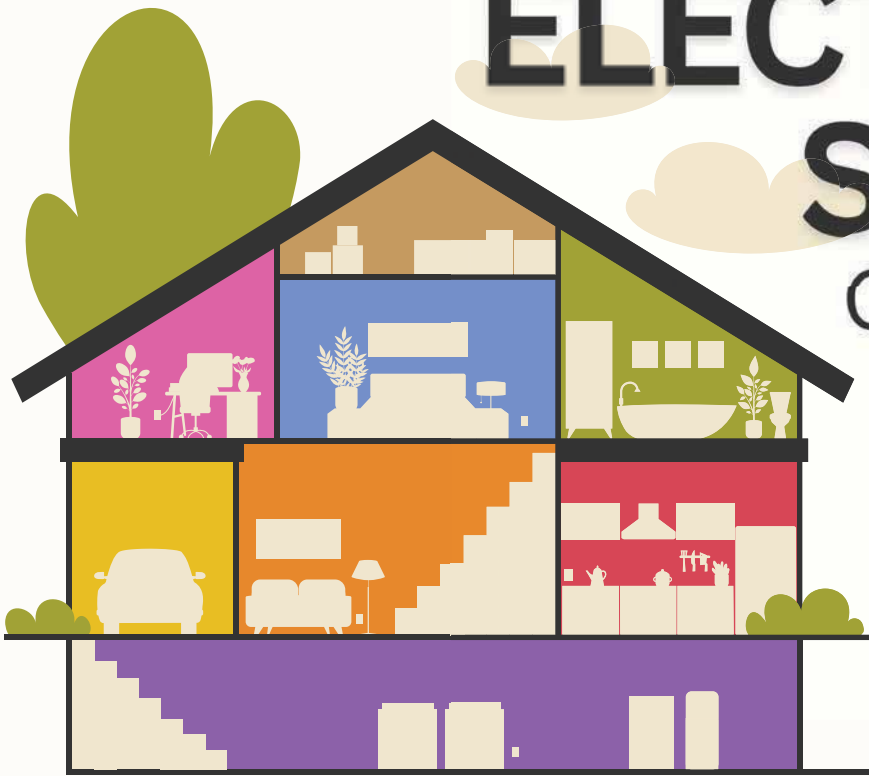
Join us on Friday, June 5, at Normal Community High School (3900 E. Raab Rd., Normal).

Registration: 8 a.m.  
Business meeting: 10 a.m.

Enjoy coffee, donuts, workshops, fun activities, and more.

We hope to see you there!

# ELECTRICAL SAFETY CHECKLIST



## ROOM BY ROOM

Check these monthly to keep your home and family safe.

### Kitchen

- Clean refrigerator coils and allow space for airflow.
- Store and use appliances away from the sink.
- Use and test GFCI outlets.
- Inspect cords for cracks or frays.
- Keep cords off counters; unplug when not in use.

### Bedroom

- Place and test smoke and CO detectors on every level and near sleeping areas.
- Keep cords out from under rugs or furniture.
- Unplug devices and chargers when not in use.
- Make sure lightbulbs are the correct wattage.
- Plug window AC units into a dedicated circuit.

### Basement

- Ensure washer and dryer are stable and ventilated.
- Remove dryer lint after each use.
- Set water heater to 120°F or lower.
- Have furnace inspected and confirm proper ventilation.

### Bathroom

- Keep appliances away from water (sink, toilet, tub, shower).
- Unplug appliances when not in use.
- Use and test GFCI outlets.

### Living Room

- Use safety caps on unused outlets, especially if children or pets are present.
- Ensure electronics have space for airflow.
- Replace cracked light switch or outlet covers.
- Avoid overloading outlets, power strips and surge protectors.

### Garage

- Use and test GFCI outlets.
- Inspect cords for cracks or damage.
- Unplug tools and appliances when not in use.
- Place garage refrigerators/freezers on dedicated appliance circuits.

Learn more at: [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org)

# Co-op students engage lawmakers during annual Youth Day



Students representing Corn Belt Energy met with State Senator Chris Balkema and State Representative Travis Weaver

On March 25, 168 students sponsored by 24 electric and telephone cooperatives across the state gathered in the Illinois State Capitol for Youth Day, an annual event designed to introduce young leaders to state government and the cooperative principles that serve their communities. Students met with elected officials, explored historic sites and experienced the workings of state government firsthand.

“As cooperatives, we’re committed not only to providing reliable service but also to investing in the next generation,” said Brooke Gross, member services manager at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives and facilitator of its youth programs. “Youth Day helps students understand the cooperative difference and the impact they can have as informed citizens.”

State Senator Chris Balkema and State Representative Travis Weaver met with the students representing Corn Belt Energy.

In addition to meeting elected officials, the students also learned more about their cooperative’s role in their own communities and had

the opportunity to tour the Capitol Building and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

During lunch, Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs addressed the students. He shared his journey from a small town in Illinois to his current role, emphasizing the importance of finding interesting and challenging opportunities. He encouraged students to pursue their passions, participate and become lifelong learners.

“You have found time to participate in here today by coming to Youth Day,” Frerichs said. “You’re talking to people. You are learning. And I’ll tell you that learning never stops. It only stops when you decide you don’t want to learn anymore. ... If you decide to push yourself and become a lifelong learner, you’ll grow from it.”

Participants also met Micah Anderson, the 2025-26 Illinois Youth Leadership Council representative, who was sponsored by Adams Telephone Co-Operative during the 2025 Youth Day and Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. He spoke of his experiences over the past year, saying that representing Illinois has been one of the most

fulfilling things he’s done in his life. “Throughout the year, I’ve grown in many ways that I could have never imagined,” Anderson said. “I never thought that I would be able to see myself as a leader. I never thought that I would be confident enough to get in front of a crowd and deliver a speech. ... But here I am in front of all you today. I’m a testament to the growth that you can undergo if you take advantage of the opportunities that are placed in front of you. I challenge you all to do the same.”

At the end of the day, attendees were interviewed for the chance to participate in Youth Tour, an annual trip to Washington, D.C., also sponsored by Illinois electric and telephone cooperatives. This year’s trip will be held June 15-22. Colton Leonard and Pranika Kurella will represent Corn Belt Energy on the weeklong trip to see historic sites, learn firsthand how cooperatives work and gain valuable leadership skills.

“From touring Washington, D.C., to learning the cooperative difference, Youth Tour is much more than a trip,” said Gross. “It’s an experience they will carry long after high school.”

## CONTACT US

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