

JAMUP

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Technology continues shaping future reliability



David A. Johnston
Executive VP/
General Manager

As your local power provider, Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative's mission has always been simple: Responsibly and safely

provide services to empower our members and communities. But behind every switch, every warm home and every business that opens its doors is a complex system that requires constant care. Reliable electricity doesn't happen by accident. It requires ongoing investment in our local grid — through system repairs, maintenance, upgrades and the integration of new technologies that help us operate smarter and more efficiently.

Much of the energy system we rely on today was built decades ago. While it continues to serve us well, age alone means that components must be repaired or replaced to maintain performance and safety. From poles and wires to transformers and substations, every part of the grid has a lifespan. Routine maintenance helps

extend that lifespan, but eventually equipment must be updated to meet modern standards. These proactive investments reduce the likelihood of outages, shorten restoration times when disruptions do occur, and create a stronger backbone for our growing community.

J D Ward
The demands on the electric grid are also evolving. Homes and businesses today use more electricity than ever, and that trend will only continue. Electric vehicles, advanced HVAC systems, smart appliances, and new commercial facilities add load to the local distribution system. As these technologies take hold, the grid must be able to support increased demand while maintaining the reliability our members expect. Strategic upgrades are essential to ensuring we can meet these needs both today and in the decades ahead.

At the same time, new technologies are reshaping how electric utilities can operate. Tools such as automated switching devices, smart meters, drones and advanced monitoring systems are becoming more prevalent in our industry, allowing the detection of problems faster and making response times more efficient. These technologies can isolate problems, reroute power to minimize outages, and provide real-time data

that helps us plan and maintain equipment more efficiently.

Implementing innovative technologies into the grid is not just a convenience — it is a necessity for ensuring reliability in an increasingly complex energy landscape. We continue to research and evaluate strategic methods to improve the end-use experience of our membership here at SIEC.

While these improvements require thoughtful planning and financial investment, the return is significant. A stronger grid supports economic growth, improves service quality, and enhances safety for our crews and community. Most importantly, it ensures that the essential power you rely on is available whenever you need it.

Our commitment to reliability runs deeper than infrastructure alone. It reflects our responsibility to the people and communities we serve. Every upgrade, every repair and every technology we deploy is an investment in your daily life — from the comfort of your home to the success of local businesses and schools.

We know that powering our community means preparing for the future, not just maintaining the present. By investing in our local grid today, we are building the foundation for a brighter, more resilient tomorrow.



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Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative directors achieve credentials in today's electric utility competencies

Rushing receives Director Gold Credential certificate

Recently, Randall Rushing received the Director Gold Credential certificate and Gerald "Jerry" Thurston received the Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

An ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors, requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills, and a solid knowledge of the cooperative principles and business model. Electric cooperatives in Illinois have a commitment to work through the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives and the NRECA to sharpen this body of knowledge for the benefit of their electric cooperative consumer-owners.

The Director Gold Credential recognizes directors who have already earned their Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) and Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) and who wish to continue to learn throughout their service on the board. To earn the Director Gold certificate, a director must earn three additional credits from the BLC series.

The NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) program requires attendance and demonstrates



understanding of the basic competencies contained in five core courses: Director Duties and Liabilities, Understanding the Electric Business, Board Operations and Process, Strategic Planning and Financial Decision Making.

"Director Gold and Credentialed Cooperative Director certificates demonstrate to co-op members those directors' ongoing commitment to advancing their knowledge and performing their fiduciary duty to the best of their ability," said David A. Johnston, Executive VP/General Manager at Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative.

Thurston receives Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate

Gerald "Jerry" Thurston from Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative recently received the Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

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Co-op voices in Springfield and D.C.

Electric cooperative leaders, employees and advocates from across the state gathered April 14 at the Illinois State Capitol for Lobby Day, hosted by the AIEC. Later that month, co-op leaders gathered in Washington, D.C., April 26-29, for NRECA's Legislative Conference to address Congress. **Ruth A. Allison**

The annual events provide an opportunity for cooperative representatives to meet with elected officials to discuss key energy issues affecting rural Illinois.

Lobby Day began with the presentation of a gold hard hat to Jay Hoffman, Assistant Majority Leader of the Illinois House of Representatives. In 2004, he received the Public Service Award, and he was recognized again for all his support of the rural electric cooperative program over the years.

"Thank you for what you do and the energy you provide," Hoffman said to Illinois electric cooperative leaders. "I would not have any idea of the complexities of [electric industry] issues if you didn't come explain them to me."

Participants went on to the Capitol to thank lawmakers for their engagement during last year's energy omnibus bill discussions, emphasizing that their leadership helped ensure electric co-op members had a voice in shaping policy.

During meetings with legislators, cooperative representatives outlined several priority issues, including the opposition of House Bill 3762, which would impose additional costs and operational constraints, and the support of House Bill 5195, which would create the Illinois Future of Energy Choice and Economic Impact Commission to bring together industry stakeholders and state agencies to address emerging energy challenges.

Reliability concerns were also a central focus of Lobby Day, as cooperative leaders warned about the premature retirement of always-available baseload generation resources and the risk it poses to grid stability.

Throughout the day, cooperative representatives reinforced their commitment to the member-owners they serve, urging policymakers to consider the real-world impacts of legislation on reliability and affordability.

The Legislative Conference in D.C. focused on the top federal issues affecting co-ops and provided strategies for how to engage effectively with members of Congress and agency officials. Primary topics discussed included the following:

- **Pass FEMA reform.** NRECA supports the bipartisan Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act, which would streamline the agency and dramatically speed up delivery of crucial disaster relief funds to electric cooperatives devastated by natural disasters.



- **Pass permitting reform legislation.** This would help protect affordable power nationwide by reducing delays for co-ops seeking federal approval to make crucial improvements to their systems.
- **Increase funding for the Rural Utilities Service Electric Loan Program.** This essential program helps electric cooperatives pay for construction, improvement and modernization of their systems. Co-ops are asking Congress to continue to boost funding and urging RUS to raise its loan cap to help meet demand for the popular program.

The Illinois delegation met with Senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth and U.S. Representatives Mike Bost, Nikki Budzinski, Mary Miller and Darin LaHood, and the office of Representative Eric Sorensen.

Thank you to everyone who made both events a success.

Member prize

In this issue of the JAMUP, we printed the names of three SIEC members who are eligible to receive a \$10 credit toward their utility bill. If you find your name printed in this center section and it's not part of the story, call Brent with your account number at **800-762-1400** to claim your prize.

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Lightning Safety Word Search



**Did you know June 21-27
is National Lightning
Safety Awareness Week?**

Lightning can happen fast and be very dangerous but staying safe is easy when you know what to do! Read the following safety tips, then find and circle the **bolded** words in the puzzle below.

- When thunder roars, go **indoors!** If you can hear thunder, **lightning** is close enough to be dangerous.
- Stay away from all **water** sources. Don't swim, use hoses or play near standing water when a **storm** is present.
- Avoid tall things and open spaces. Stay away from **tall trees**, poles and open fields where lightning tends to **strike**.
- Wait 30 minutes after the last sound of **thunder**. Even if the rain stops, **wait** at least 30 minutes before going back outside.

H	M	E	K	H	I	S	O	D	G	W	R	D	A	Q
I	L	Y	T	U	O	K	Y	K	P	A	E	G	Z	T
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W	D	J	I	H	P	Q	J	M	G	R	U	Z	R	P
M	S	E	E	R	T	L	L	A	T	S	H	W	S	R
N	D	O	T	Z	T	N	G	L	L	T	T	J	V	I
Q	D	O	R	Z	H	S	I	P	Y	T	L	J	W	V
E	G	J	R	T	Y	J	D	N	U	P	V	T	T	Q
V	I	A	Y	X	C	U	Y	N	G	W	Z	B	M	X
I	I	A	T	V	D	O	M	W	P	A	L	S	T	V
D	O	U	J	S	B	W	A	R	X	C	T	W	O	H
E	Y	E	S	J	P	P	P	R	B	O	F	M	Q	H
V	O	K	R	M	C	G	X	O	R	D	A	O	D	V
T	G	B	X	N	B	R	K	M	X	B	I	F	K	U