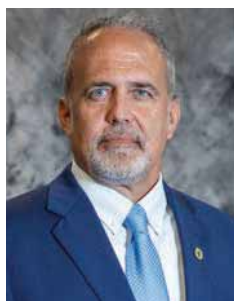


The SouthEastern LIGHT

September 2026

President's Column



Dustin Tripp
President/CEO

READERSHIP
PRIZE WINNER:
Monica Quigley of
Goreville, IL

87th Annual Meeting Recap

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative held its 87th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2026, with 932 members registered and approximately 1,200 in total attendance. For those of you who were unable to attend your Cooperative's annual meeting, this article will summarize the report members received at the annual meeting.

In 2025, your Cooperative invested \$10.4 million in system improvements to replace aging infrastructure and invested \$7.8 million to perform strategic maintenance activities in order to ensure that members receive a reliable electric supply while also maximizing the life and value of Cooperative assets. System improvement activities included rebuilding 13.4 miles of distribution line and replacing over 550 distribution poles. Just a few examples of the maintenance activities include the Pole Testing and Treatment program and the Vegetation Management Plan. Over the past several years, your Cooperative has performed an advanced testing and select treatment program on over 74,000 poles. This program extends the life of the Cooperative's pole plant while also identifying poles that need

to be replaced to prevent outages. The Vegetation Management Plan, which is crucial to electric reliability and resiliency, ensures that we perform trimming and clearing along approximately 800 miles of distribution line every year.

Your Cooperative delivered approximately 770 million kWh in 2025 and continues to lead the way in the State of Illinois by delivering more electricity than any other cooperative. Your Cooperative constructed 216 new services to homes, farms and businesses and upgraded 38 services to provide additional energy capacity.

Your Cooperative started the year 2025 with Winter Storm Blair, a devastating ice storm on January 5th that resulted in approximately 16,000 members without service at the height of the storm. 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

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County just south of Marion. Due to the extensive damage from these storms, the Cooperative's storm expenses were \$3.7 million over budget, leading to an operating loss of \$2 million for the year.

Your Cooperative is currently experiencing an increase in our wholesale power costs, primarily due to higher-priced fuels consumed to generate electricity. These increased fuel costs are reflected in the wholesale power cost adjustment charge that varies monthly in your retail rate. Your Cooperative has also experienced significant increases in the cost of materials used to build and maintain the electric distribution system. Just to provide some examples of the material price increases over the past six years, the cost of transformers increased 106%, the cost of high-voltage wire increased 88%, the cost of crossarms increased 124% and the cost of secondary wire increased 56%. Given the cumulative cost increases your Cooperative has incurred, including extensive storm damage and rising material costs, your Cooperative implemented a retail rate adjustment in April that equated to an approximate 5% increase for the average residential member.

Cooperative members learned that the electric generation industry is becoming more vulnerable during peak demand conditions at the same time the industry is facing a significant increase in the demand for electricity over the next several years. This growth in demand is primarily attributed to new artificial intelligence data centers, increased domestic manufacturing, increasing industrial growth and the ongoing transition to electrification. The ongoing transition to electricity includes items such as the increased electrification of the transportation sector and the adoption of electric heat pumps and water heaters versus traditional gas resources.

With increasing demand for electricity, supply and demand economics lead to increasing supply prices and that's what is happening. Just to provide some perspective on the market price increases in capacity — over the past two years, the average auction price for summer capacity in the Midwest has risen from \$20 per MW-Day to \$463 per MW-Day (a 23-fold increase). Electricity prices across the nation have increased between 6% and 24% over the past two years depending on the state you live in,

with Illinois experiencing an average electricity price increase of 16%. Fortunately, your Cooperative is part owner of Southern Illinois Power Cooperative located at the Lake of Egypt. SIPC owns and operates its own generation resources and has long-term contracts with other generation resources, which limits your Cooperative's exposure to rising market prices in the generation industry.

The electric generation industry has become increasingly reliant on intermittent renewable resources, such as solar and wind, to meet generation capacity needs. This transition, combined with growing electricity demand, has made the electric grid more vulnerable during peak demand conditions. The Midwest has already experienced two generation capacity emergencies in 2026. The first occurred on January 24th during Winter Storm Fern when cold temperatures caused significant generation outages while wind generation dropped sharply due to ice and limited wind supply. The second grid emergency occurred on July 15th during a major heat wave at a time when there were unplanned generation outages and low generation output, resulting in a





Level 2 out of 3 grid emergency in the Midwest.

As we look to the future, your Cooperative has implemented the Peak Power Rewards Program and has already enrolled over 1,200 accounts. This voluntary program alerts Cooperative members when the grid is experiencing peak demand and pays members to reduce their electricity consumption during these events. There is no penalty if a member is unable to participate in an event. Your Cooperative also plans to introduce additional

programs designed to help reduce peak demand and allow members to save money in the process.

Your Cooperative was formed more than eight decades ago to bring electricity to rural areas of southeastern Illinois. We appreciate the opportunity to serve you, and we want you to know that your Cooperative is owned by the people it serves and will continue to be an electric cooperative that is truly operated “for the people and by the people.”



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TIP OF THE MONTH

September kicks off the fall shoulder season, when cooler mornings and milder evenings often mean you can give your heating and cooling system a break. Open windows, use ceiling fans and enjoy the fresh air whenever temperatures allow. It's also the perfect time to schedule annual HVAC maintenance before colder weather arrives. Because demand is typically lower during the fall, heating and cooling professionals often have greater availability, making it easier to book an appointment. Regular maintenance can improve your system's efficiency, help prevent unexpected breakdowns and keep your home comfortable all year long.

Source: Dept. of Energy



HOW PEAK POWER REWARDS WORKS

1

ENROLL

Sign up online in minutes.

2

GET NOTIFIED

We'll notify you before a Peak Power Event.

3

REDUCE USAGE

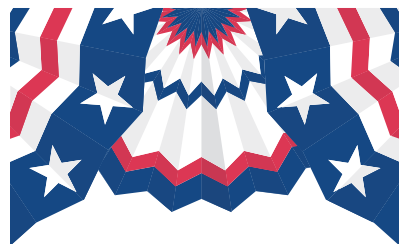
Use a little less electricity during the event window.

4

EARN BILL CREDITS

Earn \$1 for every kWh you reduce.

Scan to enroll in minutes or visit
SEIEC.com/PeakPower



We will be
Closed
on
Labor Day

Monday, September 7



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

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618-273-2611 or 800-833-2611 • Office hours: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. M-F

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