

Eastern Illini PowerLines

March 2012



2012
International
Year of
Cooperatives

Message from the President

2012 marks not only our 75th anniversary celebration, but also the international year of cooperatives.

You might be surprised by the number of co-ops around you. Co-ops have been formed to sell produce and electricity, offer financial and banking services, provide housing and health care, and much more.

So where did the bright idea for co-ops come from? It's a matter of principles (seven, to be exact). The modern movement traces its roots to a store started by weavers in the town of Rochdale (pronounced Rotch-dale) in northern England in 1844. The group was guided by a set of principles drawn up by one of its members, Charles Howarth. When introduced into the U.S. by the National Grange in 1874, these "Rochdale Principles" fueled a cooperative explosion.

Although stated in many ways, the Rochdale Principles require that a cooperative must be open for anyone to join. Every member retains one voice, one vote. Electric co-ops hold member business meetings annually, allowing members to elect fellow consumers to guide the co-op and have a say in how

their utility is run. There also have to be real member benefits. For example, members of electric co-ops often get money back when the co-op is in good financial shape. In fact, Eastern Illini paid out over \$300,000 in capital credits in 2011. More than \$9.5 billion has been returned to members by electric co-ops since 1988.

Education remains another big focus. Electric co-ops provide safety information in schools, share ideas on how to make your home more energy efficient to keep electric bills affordable, and make sure elected officials know about the co-op business model. Because there is strength in numbers, co-ops tend to stick together when tackling regional and national issues.

Perhaps most important of all, co-ops are independent and community-focused, not tied to the purse strings of far-flung investors. Co-ops help drive local economic development, fund scholarships, support local charities, and work to make life better in the areas they serve—the heart of the cooperative difference.

Dave Champion

COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISES BUILD A BETTER WORLD



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

How about a little "like"?

"Like" us on facebook for your chance to win!

Once we hit 250 "likes", one random member will win a \$25 bill credit. If we get to 500, then two members will win.

Visit www.facebook.com/easternillini or scan the image below with your smart phone to visit our facebook page.



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Be prepared for spring storms

A few simple steps can help you be ready for adverse weather.

Lightning from thunderstorms kills more people each year than tornadoes or hurricanes, according to the American Red Cross. As spring arrives, make sure you're prepared to handle storms that come with the changing season.

Follow these tips from the Red Cross to stay safe:

Stay away from downed power lines. Electricity could still be flowing through them. If you see downed power lines, report them to Eastern Illini immediately by calling 800-824-5102.

Hear thunder? Head inside. If you can hear it, you could be in danger from lightning. Stay indoors at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder—a recommendation from the National Weather Service. If you're outside and can't seek shelter indoors, avoid high ground, water, tall

isolated trees, and metal objects.

Unplug your electronics. Avoid using electrical items and telephones, which can carry power surges. Keep a battery-powered TV or radio on hand for weather updates.

Delay outdoor activities. If conditions are right for a thunderstorm, postpone the baseball game and stay inside—it doesn't have to be raining for lightning to strike.

Assemble an emergency preparedness kit that includes the following items:

- Water—one gallon per person, per day;
- Non-perishable food;
- Flashlight, with extra batteries;
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (preferably NOAA weather radio) and extra batteries;
- First-aid kit;
- Seven-day medicine supply;
- Copies of personal documents;
- Cell phone with charger;
- Emergency contact information; and
- Cash.

A year of savings

You can trim your energy bills all year long by taking a few simple steps each month.

March: Stop air from escaping your home and money from escaping your wallet! Head down to your home's basement and seal those leaky ducts.

April: A little caulk can go a long way. Air leaks in your home add up. Caulking cracks and openings to the outside could save more than \$200 a year.

May: Make sure your refrigerator is on your spring cleaning to-do list. Throw out expired items, clean the refrigerator inside and out, and check the temperature gauge. For maximum operating efficiency, a refrigerator's temperature should be between 37 and 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

June: When was the last time you changed a filter? Replacing furnace and air conditioner filters regularly can have a big impact on a home's energy use. Dirty filters can restrict air flow and reduce the overall efficiency of your cooling system, forcing it to work harder on hot summer days.

July: Your home's cooling costs can skyrocket—right along with the temperature outside—during summer months. Keeping your thermostat set between 78 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit can save up to 8 percent on monthly cooling bills.

August: Heading out of town on vacation? Be sure to unplug all of your electronic devices like computers, monitors, printers, TVs and cable boxes, DVD players, and microwaves. Electronics with digital displays and instant-on features consume energy even when they're not in use.

September: Be a "fan-atic." While they don't replace an air conditioner or a heat pump, fans move the air so everyone feels more comfortable. On a milder day, a fan is a much more energy-efficient choice than

turning the temperature down on the air conditioner. Fans cool people, not rooms, so turn them off when you leave the room.

October: Get ready for winter by insulating your attic. Adding nine or more inches of insulation could save you more than \$150 a year.

November: As the weather cools down, open your window shades. Keeping blinds open during cold weather lets heat from the sunlight in, reducing the need to turn up your home's thermostat.

December: Put a new ENERGY STAR appliance at the top of your Christmas wish list. Upgrading appliances like washing machines to ENERGY STAR-rated models can save up to \$140 per year.

January: Lowering your thermostat just a few degrees during winter months can save as much as \$85 per year. Programmable thermostats make it easy to save by offering pre-programmed settings to regulate a home's temperature throughout the year.

February: Adjust your water heater. Turning down the temperature gauge to below 120 degrees Fahrenheit can heat up your savings.

Eastern Illini is dedicated to being an energy efficiency resource for you. To learn more about how we can help you save money through energy efficiency practices, call us at 800-824-5102 or visit our website at www.eiec.coop.

For even more tips, visit www.TogetherWeSave.com, an online portal that shows how small steps can add up to big savings.

Did you know?

According to the EPA, geothermal heating and cooling systems are the most energy-efficient, environmentally clean, and cost-effective space conditioning systems available today.

Find out more by visiting www.eiec.coop.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Adding insulation to your home? An R-value indicates insulation's resistance to heat flow—a higher R-value means more effective insulation. Every type of insulation has a unique R-value depending on material, thickness, and density. Your ideal R-value depends on whether your home is new or existing, your heating fuel, and where you live. Learn more at www.energysavers.gov.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Co-op Connections Card

Pharmacy discounts, coupons galore, a rewards program, online specials and deals, and savings at local businesses you already visit.

Eastern Illini's free Co-op Connections Card offers something for everyone! Contact us at 800-824-5102 or info@eiec.coop to get your card!

Save the Date

Eastern Illini's Annual Meeting of Members will be held June 14, 2012 in the commons area at PBL High School/Junior High School in Paxton.

More information will be available in the coming months.

We need your help!

We are trying to locate past members to get them their capital credit refunds.

Everybody loves to get some extra cash. One of the great benefits of getting your electricity from Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative is that you are **not only a member - but also an owner** of the company.

Each year, after we pay all of our bills, we set aside - or allocate - some of the remaining funds to each member based on the amount of electricity they used. We call that a capital credit allocation.

Those funds are used to keep up the reliability and infrastructure of our electric system, and enable us to NOT have to take out loans or

raise rates to cover those expenses. When our financial condition allows, we pay you back - or retire - a portion of that money from past years.

In 2011, we paid back over \$300,000 in capital credit payments to people that were members of the cooperative in 1972 and 1973.

Unfortunately, many of our members from back then are no longer members and we can't seem to find them.

Please visit our website at www.eiec.coop and look for the link on the main index page to see a complete list of the former members we are looking for. If you were due some money, you would want someone to check that list!

Please help us find former members at www.eiec.coop

Credentials Committee selected

Nominating petitions for the June 14, 2012 director election will be available March 16, 2012.

Austin Apgar of Tuscola, Brian Koerner of Chatsworth, Marilyn Moore of Rossville, Greg Rueck of Roberts, and Eric Rund of Pesotum have been appointed by Eastern Illini's Board of Directors to each serve a 1-year term on the Credentials Committee. The Credentials Committee will meet at Eastern Illini's headquarters on Tuesday, May 1, 2012, to review the qualifications of all candidates who file nominating petitions to determine their eligibility to serve as directors of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative.

Directors in Directorate Districts 3, 4 and 6 will be elected at the June 14, 2012 Annual Meeting. Nominating petitions can be picked up beginning at 8 a.m. on Friday, March 16,

2012, at Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, 330 W. Ottawa, Paxton.

Each member who desires to be elected to the board of directors must have a petition signed by not less than twenty-five (25) members of the cooperative. Petitions must be filed at the cooperative's headquarters in Paxton no later than 5 p.m. on Monday, April 30, 2012.

Incumbent directors Brad Ludwig of Fithian, District 6; Steve Meenen of Melvin, District 3; and Bruce Ristow of Cissna Park, District 4, have indicated they will seek reelection to the board.

The nominating process is conducted in accordance with Article III of Eastern Illini's bylaws, which are available on our website at www.eiec.coop, or by calling 800-824-5102.