

PowerLines

A monthly publication for member/owners of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative

July 2014

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Office closing

Our office in Paxton will be closed on July 4 as we celebrate Independence Day. Please call us anytime at 800-824-5102 to report an outage or for other power-related emergencies.

Have a wonderful 4th of July!



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A Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative 

Happy Independence Day

Every July, we take time to reflect on our country's history and remember how the actions of a few helped shape the way we live today. I think back on the rich history of the electric cooperative movement over 75 years ago, and how a small group of determined individuals were able to improve their quality of life and the quality of life for all those who would come after them.

Eastern Illini member/owners and employees are grateful for the legacy of our cooperative founders. Since we are a part of an electric cooperative, we know we have the power to impact our present and shape the future, just like those who came before us.

Through grassroots advocacy efforts, we help influence policy decisions that will affect our rural communities now and for years to come. We are the catalyst for change in our communities. We leverage our collective power to get things done.

We work together, partnering with other co-ops, local businesses and community organizers to achieve economic development goals. Creating better opportunities and increasing the quality of life for our families and communities – just as our founding co-op members did. We understand that the decisions we make today could greatly affect how future generations live.

Eastern Illini is helping to build the next generation of leadership through our Youth Tour Program, where we send high school students to

Washington, D.C. to meet with law makers and get an up-close view of how our government functions.

Youth Tour participants leave our nation's capital feeling

energized. It inspires them to make a difference in their communities and gives them a new perspective. The Youth Tour provides young people from our communities with an opportunity they may otherwise have never known. Next month, in this publication, we will feature our Youth Tour participants and highlight their recent trip to our Nation's capitol.

All of these things, plus so much more, are what make-up the cooperative difference. This Fourth of July, as we recall our nation's founding, we will also think about the future of electric cooperatives and how we will continue to shape our country and our society. We will remember what it took to bring power to our communities and let the determination of those who came before us, guide us.

Sincerely,

Bob Hunzinger



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Annual Meeting Recap

Meeting offered member/owners a chance to participate in their co-op, and relax with some quality food and entertainment.

On Thursday, June 12, 1,046 member/owners and their families (totaling about 2,000 people) attended Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative's 27th Annual Meeting.

The event was geared for family fun and featured several children's activities, including: a bounce house; an inflatable obstacle course; miniature golf; and bucket truck demonstrations.

Other entertainment included the Gene Trimble Band and Oscar the Talking Robot. A very short rain shower cooled things off for the meeting attendees, but didn't provide for any lasting issues.

A full meal was provided by Niemerg's Catering and the Rocking K Chuckwagon provided lighter fare and snacks for those relaxing outside. All registered member/owners in attendance also received a \$25 bill credit.

Multiple seminars were also held during the meeting. The wide-ranging topics included a session by Mary Dickinson, a University of Illinois Master Gardener, offering tips about potted plants. Other topics involved energy efficiency tips, renewable



energy options, geothermal heating and cooling, lighting, and a behind the scenes look at the ever-popular recipe section of the *Illinois Country Living* magazine.

State Senator Jason Barickman attended the meeting to show his support of Eastern Illini. Patrick Doggett, from the staff of U.S. Congressman Adam Kinzinger's office also attended the festivities.

Marion Chesnut of Rossville, Jay Hageman of Fairmount, and Tom Schlatter of Chatsworth were re-elected to the Eastern Illini Board of Directors during the business portion of the meeting.

Of special note during the business portion of the meeting was the presentation of the *Illinois Country Living* Magazine Father of the Year to Ernest Sjuts of rural Urbana. Sjuts was selected as the statewide recipient of this honor based on his

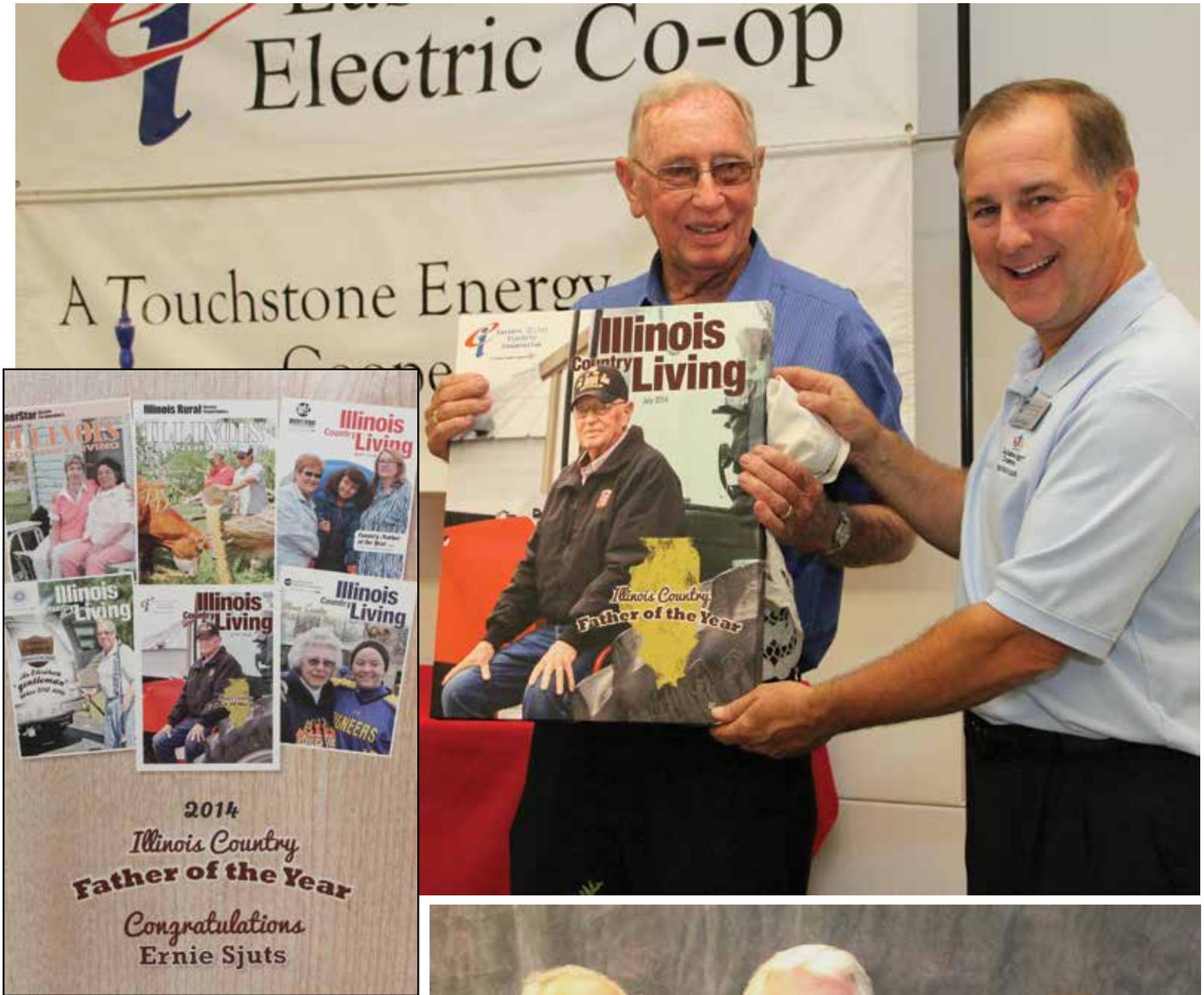
contributions to not only his family, but also to the entire rural community of east central Illinois.

Board Chairman Marion Chesnut of Rossville, and Eastern Illini's new President/CEO Bob Hunzinger, discussed the current state of the cooperative during their executive report.

In 2013, all financial goals were met, and kilowatt-hour sales were well above average. Over \$1.1 million was paid back to member/owners that received electric service from 1979 - 1981 through the retirement of capital credits. That retirement was part of an on-going effort to get to a 25-year capital credit retirement schedule.

Each year, Eastern Illini's Annual Meeting is a tangible benefit of being much more than simply a customer. You are a member and an owner of your locally owned and governed electric cooperative.

Annual Meeting images



Left page: A short rain shower didn't dampen the spirits of meeting attendees. There were activities for kids of all ages at the 2014 annual meeting, including inflatables and mini-golf for youngsters.

Top: Ernest Sjuts was officially awarded his Father of the Year honor during the co-op's annual meeting. Approximately 30 family members attended the ceremony.

Right: Three board members were re-elected to Eastern Illini's Board of Directors during the 2014 annual meeting. From left to right are Jay Hageman, Marion Chesnut and Tom Schlatter.

Why animals and power don't mix

This simple new step helps to deter animals and increase our system reliability.

What do birds, squirrels, and power outages have in common? Animals trigger 11 percent of power outages across the nation.

“Our members sometimes shake their heads in disbelief when I blame a squirrel for an outage,” shares Brad Smith, Operations & Safety Coordinator at Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative. “We spend a lot of money each year addressing animal management and removal.”

To ensure safe, reliable power delivery (and healthy wildlife),



Eastern Illini goes to great lengths to keep animals away from electricity.

Animal Attraction

Electricity seeks the fastest route to the ground. Utility pole insulators keep power flowing safely in your neighborhood, but unwitting squirrels offer high-voltage electricity a way around insulators. If a squirrel doesn't jump far enough, a powerful electric current - up to 12,500 volts - makes the squirrel a path to the ground.

When that happens, the squirrel does not survive. If a squirrel's body falls to the ground, the power blinks but stays on. If it falls into equipment like a transformer, built-in safety measures shut off the power. We then have

to send a lineman out to remove the dead animal and restore power.

Squirrels are the main culprit, but they're not alone. Opossums, raccoons, cats, foxes, snakes, birds, and other animals trigger outages, too.

Animal attraction to power infrastructure not only hurts animals but can also leave you frustrated and in the dark.

Clean up, recovery, and restoring power costs utilities between \$15 and \$18 million a year, estimates Tyco Electronics, a utility equipment firm.

What can we do?

No one wants wildlife hurt. Eighty percent of electric co-ops, public power districts, and public utility districts install

Causes of power interruptions

Power outages may be caused by car accidents damaging poles or other unknown factors. But bad weather remains the primary cause.

Weather	31%
Equipment	14%
Maintenance	12%
Animals	11%
Planned	7%
Other	7%
Power Supply	5%
Public	5%

animal guards to protect equipment and wayward animals. We are no exception.

3M's Electrostatic Animal Guard resembles a tarantula. A dozen metal rods arch like bent legs around an insulator, forming an electrostatic barrier. Errant wildlife receives a mild shock if they get too close; the guard acts as an electrified fence.

“Electric co-ops can minimize outages without injuring animals. Guards can be installed easily without de-energizing the circuit,” notes Jim Stanley, a product marketing manager in 3M's Electrical Markets Division. Alternatives such as the Rauckman Wildlife Shield™ and ZAPShield™ create a barrier to keep teething squirrels, rodents, snakes, and other animals away from dangerous parts of electrical infrastructure. Frisbee-sized plastic or metal discs guard equipment in substations, too.

Animal guards are not foolproof, but the measures help reduce the number of outages caused by animals. Another option is building

habitats to help animals and power safely co-exist. Osprey and other birds of prey don't use power lines as highways. Instead, they're attracted to poles as perches. Raptors often nest on top of utility poles—a dangerous spot. An osprey's nearly five-foot wingspan can form a conduit between an energized power line and a neutral wire. Like squirrels, these birds may get hurt as high-voltage electricity looks for a path to the ground.

What's up with that black strip?
You might have noticed some of our poles with a black strip of plastic on them - about four feet up the pole. Those strips are designed to deter animals like squirrels, cats and raccoons from climbing the poles.

When the animal gets to that plastic strip, they simply can't get enough traction to continue up the pole. Smith

noted, "It's amazing that a simple piece of plastic has helped us so much. Animal related outages are down, and that helps us provide better service to our member/owners.

Right: These web-like animal guards help deter animals from contacting transformers. They help keep the animals safe - and help keep your lights on.

Left: The black strip of plastic helps to keep animals from climbing electric poles. The normally agile critters can't get good traction on the plastic.



SUMMER ENERGY EFFICIENCY: *Myth vs. Fact*

Myth #1: When I'm not home, keeping my air conditioner at a lower temperature throughout the day means it doesn't have to run harder to cool my home when I return.

FACT: To save energy, set your thermostat to a higher temperature during the day, and lower it when you return home.

Myth #2: Closing vents on my central air conditioning system will boost efficiency.

FACT: Closing vents can cause the compressor to cycle too frequently and the heat pump to overload. You'll also use more energy.

Myth #3: Time of day doesn't matter when it comes to running my appliances.

FACT: Time of day does matter when running electrical loads. For example, take advantage of the delay setting and run your dishwasher at night to avoid peak times of use and save energy.

Myth #4: Bigger is always better when it comes to cooling equipment.

FACT: Too often, cooling equipment isn't sized properly and leads to higher electric bills. A unit that's too large for your home will not cool evenly and might produce higher humidity indoors.

More annual meeting images

